

ECOSOC Resolution 2008/7

Restructuring of the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Council

Recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

“The General Assembly,

“Noting the adoption by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its sixty-fourth session, held in Bangkok from 24 to 30 April 2008, of resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission,¹

“1. Endorses Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,¹ as set out in annex I to the present resolution;

“2. Also endorses the annexes to resolution 64/1, on the conference structure of the Commission, on issues to be addressed by the committees subsidiary to the Commission, and on the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission, as set out in annexes II, III and IV to the present resolution.

“Annex I

“Resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

“The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

“Recalling its resolutions 143 (XXX) of 5 April 1974, 210 (XXXVI) of 29 March 1980, 262 (XLIII) of 30 April 1987, 47/3 of 10 April 1991, 48/2 of 23 April 1992, 51/3 of 1 May 1995, 52/1 of 24 April 1996 and 53/1 of 30 April 1997 on the conference structure of the Commission,

“Recalling also its resolution 58/1 of 22 May 2002 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission, and in particular paragraph 7 thereof on the requirement for a review to be conducted at its sixty-third session,

“Recalling further its resolution 61/1 of 18 May 2005 on the midterm review concerning the functioning of the conference structure of the Commission,

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 19 (E/2008/39)*, chap. IV, sect. A.

“Recalling its resolution 63/3 of 23 May 2007 on the review of the conference structure of the Commission and, in particular, paragraph 1, in which the Commission decided to defer the review of the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic and sectoral priorities and subsidiary structure, to its sixty-fourth session,

“Recalling also General Assembly resolution 61/266 of 16 May 2007 on multilingualism, in particular paragraphs 4, 7, 9 and 11 thereof, as applicable to the Commission,

“Noting the Commission’s unique role as the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region and its comprehensive mandate as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region,

“Noting also the importance of further cooperation between the Commission and subregional organizations, and the need to achieve synergies and build effective partnerships,

“Taking note of the report on the external evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: key findings and proposals for action² as well as the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the inspection of results-based management practices at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,³

“Taking note also of the evaluations and recommendations of members and associate members concerning the outcomes of sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary structures held under the conference structure,

“Having considered the report on the implementation of Commission resolutions 58/1, 61/1 and 63/3,⁴

“Commending the initiatives of the Executive Secretary in facilitating an effective process of consultation among members and associate members on a comprehensive and thorough review of the conference structure of the Commission,

“Underlining the fact that an effective conference structure requires a strengthened evaluation system, added transparency and enhanced communication with the member States,

“1. Decides to revise its conference structure, with immediate effect, to conform to the pattern outlined in annex I to the present resolution;

“2. Requests the Executive Secretary to take into account the revision of the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission in the future programme of work and strategic framework of the organization;

² E/ESCAP/63/19.

³ E/ESCAP/64/30.

⁴ E/ESCAP/64/19.

“3. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary, bearing in mind the goal of maximizing the impact of the United Nations in the field of economic and social development in the Asian and Pacific region, to reorganize the secretariat so as to enhance its capability to service the subsidiary structure of the Commission;

“4. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to provide members and associate members with a preliminary assessment of the organizational and staffing implications of the revision of the intergovernmental structure subsidiary to the Commission within the next six months;

“5. *Commends* the secretariat on the implementation of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the official and working languages of the Commission and urges the Executive Secretary to continue efforts to monitor closely the strict implementation, as applicable to the Commission, of General Assembly resolution 61/266;

“6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of the conference structure and its link to the programme priorities of the Commission;

“7. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution, focusing in particular on whether the conference structure has served the purpose of improving efficiency and attracting higher and wider representation from members and associate members, which would serve as the basis for a midterm review of the functioning of the conference structure to be conducted during the sixty-seventh session;

“8. *Decides* to conduct, at its sixty-ninth session, a review of its conference structure, including its subsidiary structure, taking into account the outcome of the midterm review referred to in paragraph 7 above, and requests the Executive Secretary to submit to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session a report analysing the functioning of the conference structure in order to facilitate the review.

“Annex II

“Conference structure of the Commission

“I. The Commission

“1. The Commission shall meet annually, with each session comprising a senior officials segment followed by a ministerial segment, for up to a maximum of seven working days to discuss and decide on important issues pertaining to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the region, decide on the recommendations of its subsidiary bodies and of the Executive Secretary, review and endorse the proposed strategic framework and programme of work, and take any other decisions required, in conformity with its terms of reference.

“2. The sessions of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries and the Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries shall be held for a

maximum of one day each in alternate years, during the senior officials segment and shall have a status commensurate with the Committees of the Whole.

“3. The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission Informal Working Group on Draft Resolutions convened prior to the Commission shall be reconstituted as the Working Group on Draft Resolutions during the senior officials segment and shall have a status commensurate with the Committees of the Whole.

“4. The number of simultaneous meetings of the Committees of the Whole, including their commensurate bodies, held during the senior officials segment of the annual session of the Commission, shall not exceed three.

“5. Without prejudice to rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, members of the Commission intending to submit draft resolutions to the Commission are strongly encouraged to submit them to the Executive Secretary at least one month prior to the commencement of the session of the Commission in order to allow sufficient time for review by members and associate members of the Commission.

“II. Subsidiary structure

“6. The subsidiary structure of the Commission shall consist of the following eight committees:

“(a) Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development;

“(b) Committee on Trade and Investment;

“(c) Committee on Transport;

“(d) Committee on Environment and Development;

“(e) Committee on Information and Communications Technology;

“(f) Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction;

“(g) Committee on Social Development;

“(h) Committee on Statistics.

“7. The eight committees shall meet biennially, with four committees meeting each year, for a maximum duration of five days for each session.

“8. Within their respective areas of purview, the committees shall:

“(a) Review and analyse regional trends;

“(b) Identify priorities and emerging issues and consult on regional approaches, taking into consideration subregional aspects;

“(c) Promote regional dialogue, including its subregional synergies, and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes;

“(d) Consider common regional positions as inputs to global processes and promote regional follow-up to their outcomes;

“(e) Propose issues for consideration by the Commission as possible resolutions;

“(f) Monitor the implementation of Commission resolutions;

“(g) Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges of the region, where appropriate, between Governments and civil society, the private sector and United Nations and other international institutions at the regional and subregional levels.

“9. Further, within their respective areas of purview, the committees shall provide the secretariat, including its regional institutions, with guidance in reviewing the proposed strategic framework and programme of work.

“10. The following areas shall be mainstreamed into the work of all committees:

“(a) Implementation of the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

“(b) Poverty reduction and sustainable development;

“(c) Gender equality;

“(d) Priority needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

“11. The specific issues to be addressed by each of the eight committees in carrying out the above functions are listed in annex II to the present resolution.

“III. Ad hoc ministerial conferences and other intergovernmental meetings

“12. Subject to the approval of the Commission, ad hoc ministerial conferences and other intergovernmental meetings may be organized on specific and cross-sectoral issues.

“13. No more than six such ministerial conferences or other intergovernmental meetings may be held during a calendar year, and the total number of days shall not exceed twenty.

“14. In those years when a ministerial conference or intergovernmental meeting is held covering issues normally discussed in a committee, the corresponding committee need not be convened.

“IV. Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

“15. The functions of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission shall be in accordance with the terms of reference contained in annex III to the present resolution. The Advisory Committee shall advise the Executive Secretary on the provisional agenda for the sessions of the Commission and committees subsidiary to the Commission, bearing in mind the need to ensure a results-oriented and focused agenda that is aligned with the development priorities of member States, in accordance with paragraph 5 of the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee.

“16. The Advisory Committee may, if necessary, establish its own working groups for the consideration of specific issues.

“17. The number of formal meetings of the Advisory Committee shall not exceed twelve per calendar year. Any additional meetings, formal or informal, will require the concurrence of the Advisory Committee and the Executive Secretary, and will not require documentation by the secretariat, unless otherwise requested on an exceptional basis by the Advisory Committee.

“18. Should the need arise to seek the views of United Nations entities or other intergovernmental organizations on subjects of interest to the Advisory Committee, members of the Advisory Committee can, if consensus has been reached, request the secretariat to invite representatives of particular United Nations entities or other intergovernmental organizations to attend a subsequent session of the Advisory Committee.

“V. Existing regional institutions under the auspices of the Commission

“19. The following institutions under the auspices of the Commission shall continue to function as prescribed in their respective statutes and terms of reference:

“(a) Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology;

“(b) Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific;

“(c) Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific;

“(d) United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery;

“(e) Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development.

“VI. General provisions

“A. Rules of procedure

“20. Unless otherwise specified by the Commission, the rules of procedure of the Commission, including those pertaining to the decision-making process, shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the committees.

“B. Informal session

“21. An informal session among the heads of delegations during the ministerial segment of each Commission session may be organized but shall not be institutionalized. The agenda for the informal session shall be decided by consensus and the annotated agenda shall reach members at least thirty days before the opening of the session to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the session. Simultaneous interpretation shall be provided.

“Annex III

“Issues to be addressed by the committees subsidiary to the Commission

“1. Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development:

- “• Experiences and practices in formulating and implementing macroeconomic policies to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable and inclusive development
- “• Regional economic development policies and options, including in the area of financing for development
- “• Strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with a special focus on poverty reduction
- “• Pro-poor economic growth for increasing the income and employment of the poor
- “• Progress towards graduation of the least developed countries through the mobilization of regional efforts to address poverty reduction and other identified concerns of countries with special needs⁵
- “• Policy options and programmes for reducing rural poverty, including those with a gender dimension, through the sustainable development of secondary crops

“2. Committee on Trade and Investment:

- “• Regional cooperative mechanisms and agreements in trade, investment and finance, including the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement
- “• Policy options on trade and investment, enterprise development and finance

⁵ The report of this Committee would be submitted to the Special Bodies on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries and on Pacific Island Developing Countries.

- “• Policy options and strategies for sustainable economic growth and rural poverty reduction through agro-technology transfer and agro-based enterprise development
- “• Technology transfer to address regional development challenges
- “3. Committee on Transport:
 - “• Transport policy options and programmes, including those targeting the Millennium Development Goals
 - “• The Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and other initiatives promoted by the Commission for planning international intermodal transport linkages
 - “• Measures to improve road safety and the efficiency of transport operations and logistics
 - “• Support for the accession and implementation of international transport agreements
- “4. Committee on Environment and Development:
 - “• Integration of environmental sustainability in development policy
 - “• Policies and strategies for the use of sustainable planning and the use of water resources
 - “• Regional cooperation for enhanced energy security and the sustainable use of energy resources
- “5. Committee on Information and Communications Technology:
 - “• Integration of information and communications technology-related issues in development policies, plans and programmes
 - “• Transfer and application of information and communications technology at the regional and subregional levels
 - “• Development of human and institutional capacity in the use of information and communications technology
 - “• Information and communications technology applications for disaster risk reduction
- “6. Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction:
 - “• Policy options and strategies on multi-hazard disaster risk reduction and mitigation
 - “• Regional cooperation mechanisms for disaster risk management, including space and other technical support systems
 - “• Multi-hazard assessment, preparedness, early warning and response to disaster risks
- “7. Committee on Social Development:

- “• Implementation of internationally agreed commitments, including those agreed at the United Nations on social development, population, ageing, disability, youth and disadvantaged groups, gender equality and health
 - “• Policy options, strategies and good practices in social policy and protection
 - “• Social policies and financing aimed at building inclusive societies
- “8. Committee on Statistics:
- “• Tracking key socio-economic and environmental trends in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific region, especially progress towards the Millennium Development Goals
 - “• Identifying data requirements for economic, social and environmental analysis in accordance with internationally agreed standards and good practices
 - “• Capacity-building for national statistical offices in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific region to produce, disseminate and analyse data in accordance with internationally agreed standards and good practices

“Annex IV

“Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

“The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission shall have the following functions:

“(a) Maintain close cooperation and consultation between the members and the secretariat of the Commission;

“(b) Advise and assist the Executive Secretary in drawing up proposals for the strategic framework and programme of work, consistent with the guidance provided by the Commission;

“(c) Receive on a regular basis information on the administrative and financial functioning of the Commission, and assist and advise the Executive Secretary in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the programme of work of the Commission;

“(d) Review the draft calendar of meetings prior to its submission to the Commission at its annual session;

“(e) Advise the Executive Secretary on the provisional agenda for sessions of the Commission and committees subsidiary to the Commission, bearing in mind the need to ensure a results-oriented and focused agenda that is aligned with the development priorities of member States, as well as chapter II of its rules of procedure;

“(f) Advise the Executive Secretary on the identification of emerging economic and social issues and other relevant issues for incorporation into the provisional agendas of the Commission sessions;

“(g) Assist the secretariat in the formulation of the annotated provisional agenda for each session of the Commission before it is finalized;

“(h) Carry out any other tasks to be entrusted to it by the Commission.”

*38th plenary meeting
22 July 2008*