

Bridging the Gap between Member States and the UNESCAP Secretariat, Using Trust-building Mechanisms

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Abstract

The Purpose of this study is to develop a trust-building mechanism for ordering collaborative relations among key stakeholders and demonstrate its importance as a tool for bridging the gap between member states and the UNESCAP Secretariat. The researcher used qualitative methodology and action research to emulate change. The results of this study show that the trust-building impacted the collaborative roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in the organization. Indeed, the higher the collaborative roles and responsibilities, the more instrumental the tool. However, while some improvement in respect to the roles and responsibilities of ACPR were noted, the analysis shows that further action is required for increasing collaborative roles and responsibilities in subsidiary committees.

Key words – Institutional adjustment, normative works, moral obligation, building trust

Introduction

UNESCAP has 54 members and nine associate members. It covers two thirds of the world's population and is the biggest Economic Commission of the United Nations. ESCAP, as it is known, is the only regional intergovernmental organization that covers all Asia and the Pacific, and it is the top legislative organization of its body. The initials stand for "Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific."

An Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives (ACPR) and other representatives designated by the Commission is linked with subsidiary committees to form the main governance mechanism for the Commission of the UNESCAP. Together, ACPR and the subsidiary committees are the main subsidiary organs of the Commission, are participated by member states, and are known as its "conference structure." They carry the important roles and functions in the process of decision making and determine the effectiveness of the conference structure. They work in

parallel with the sub-programmes (or divisions) of the Secretariat, which provide executive action.

Member states believe the outcomes of conferences are driven by the Secretariat rather than member states and this has been an outstanding challenge between member states and the Secretariat for a long time. The results of surveys and interview guidelines endorse the gap between member states and the Secretariat; this is not the only challenge between member states and the Secretariat in UNESCAP as the regional forum, but it has been a challenge at UN as the global forum too.

Therefore, responding to this gap and finding a solution for that may set up a secure foundation to respond to others substantive challenges in the UNESCAP region.

Finding a mechanism for bridging the gap between member states and the Secretariat, depend to reliable cooperation and relationships among key stakeholders through an institutional adjustment framework of UNESCAP conferences. Figure 1.1 (see Appendix A) shows the roles of key stakeholders in the institutional framework of the Conference in UNESCAP.

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According to this figure, ACPR and subsidiary committees bear the key roles on behalf of the member states, and the eight sub-programmes bear the key roles on behalf of the Secretariat to conduct the conferences in UNESCAP. Thus the researcher aims to respond to this question of how to adjust the roles of key stakeholders in the institutional framework of the Conferences in UNESCAP in order to get the results in a way that they are driven by the member states rather than the Secretariat?

Institutional framework adjustment requires engagement of key stakeholders in conducting their own responsibilities. In other words, it requires adjustment of responsibilities of key stakeholders to their roles? Thus, in the institutional framework adjustment of UNESCAP, ACPR and subsidiary committees in cooperation with eight sub-programmes need to carry the cooperative responsibilities in respect to implementation practices. What could be the implementation practices in UNESCAP? Investigations indicate that the implementation practices are the programme planning cycle for conducting conferences on formulating, planning, budgeting and evaluating resolutions. Thus the next question could be what are the cooperative responsibilities that ACPR and subsidiary committees been authorized in respect to the programme planning cycle. The terms of reference of ACPR and subsidiary committees show that ACPR is authorized to communicate with eight sub-programmes to develop a strategic framework or a plan for mandated resolutions, and subsidiary committees are authorized to communicate with eight sub-programmes to generate the mandate or to formulate resolutions. Thus the key question could be as follows:

Are the ACPR and subsidiary committees authorized to cooperate in their responsibilities in relation to eight sub-programmes, during conducting conferences?

If not, as the investigation indicated (see Appendix B), how could a mechanism for ordering collaborative roles and responsibilities

of key stakeholders be developed through an institutional framework of conferences in UNESCAP?

Based upon the above key question, the hypothesis could be as follows:

There is a significant relationship between mechanisms of trust as the basic communication system mechanism, [Hurwicz, L. (2002) and (4 nations initiatives, 2007)] and ordering cooperative roles and responsibilities of ACPR and subsidiary committees in implementation practices of UNESCAP.

In this context, the researcher investigated to what extend ACPR and subsidiary committees used standard mechanisms of building trust in cooperative roles and responsibilities in relation to sub-programmes before changing the Conference Structure. While the first hypothesis had approved, then the researcher¹ used the standard mechanism of trust as feasible procedural guidelines or Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. Thus the second hypothesis could be as follows:

There is a significant relationship between mechanisms of trust and procedural guidelines for ordering cooperative roles and responsibilities of ACPR and subsidiary committees in Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure.

In this context, the researcher investigated to what extend standard mechanisms of building trust impact on procedural guidelines or Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure after change.

Thus, the researcher used institutional adjustment and change theory as the basic theoretical framework that introduced moral obligation as a standard mechanism for ordering cooperative states among key stakeholders according to their ranking, Tool, R.Marc & Bush, Dale. Paul. (2002). In other words, he attempted to develop the basic framework for moral obligation mechanisms to order

¹ The researcher was the member of ACPR during the process of change in the Resolution To Restructure the Conference Structure

cooperative states among key stakeholders based upon their roles and responsibilities in implementation practices.

Institutional Adjustment, Normative Works and Moral Obligation

The theoretical problems underlying cooperation can be states that: what is the minimal amount that one agent needs to be able to form coherent notions about their behavior, and for this knowledge to be communicated to others? This problem seems to be at the heart of any analysis of community, convention and cooperation (North, 1990).

Viewed more objectively, from the standpoint of the social analyst, institutions are appropriately seen as a system of norms that “regulate the relations of individuals to each other,” (Scott, 2001).

Scott (2001) analyzed the work of Parsons, (1934) on “what the relations of individuals ought to be”. He highlighted the formulation of Parsons that the primary motive for obedience to an institutional norm lies in the moral authority and the actor conforms because of his or her belief in a value standard, not out of expediency or self interest. He added that the contemporary theories note several kinds of limitation with the Parson Formulation. They believe his conception of institutionalization put too much weight on cultural patterns, overemphasizing the control exerted by values over conditions. Scott stated that each of these emphases drew Parsons away from examining the interplay of the instrumental and the normative in social action.

This study based upon the theory of Bush’s institutional adjustment and change, Tool (1988) and in line with the view point of Parsons, emphasis on developing moral obligation as value for ordering cooperative states among key stakeholders rather than just investigating through the condition of stakeholders. The history of reform on bridging the gap between member states and the Secretariat, indicate they continuously had been emphasized and investigated on stakeholders’ condition rather

than mechanism that create relationship among key stakeholders. To solve the problems they normally changed the conditions of stakeholders; they select sectoral or thematic clusters for procedural work rather than they investigate through moral obligation as a basic norm that orders cooperative states between ACPR and subsidiary committees in relation to sub-programmes. Bush elaborated those moral obligations as values generated from ceremonial patterns of behavior or implementation practice of ESCAP. This value hidden but inherent in instrumental patterns of behavior or Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure of ESCAP.

The neoclassical discussion of the role of values in economics takes place within the framework imposed by the positive vs. normative dichotomy „positive analysis; is defined as an analysis of what is based on scientific facts, while „normative analysis; is defined as an analysis of what ought to be based on value – judgment.

In this context, Polanyi, Sasan and Tool (1998) stated that these are the norms that guide the actions taken in an ongoing social process. The dependent variables of this study developed based upon standards norms of moral obligation, and the researcher used that as a standard value – judgment for bridging the gap through qualitative methodology. They determine the patterns of collaborative roles and responsibilities between member states and the Secretariat in actions and in the procedurally guidelines. Polanyi emphasized the constant motion of social process. Thus, normative components are action oriented.

Tomas Pink in his paper (2002) in consistent with the work of Bush and Polanyi, stated the intuitive tie of moral obligation to the direction of action may in fact be best explained on quite a different basis: in terms of the idea of a special kind of agency-specific justificatory force, a force which directly addresses a capacity which we have for exercising reason practically and so in the form of action - a capacity exercised in the

will, in our decision making and intention-formation, as much as in action that is voluntary.

Therefore normative works are the basic mechanisms for any obligations including moral obligation in organization. According to Bush, (1983), normative works stem from habitual life of individuals in organization and impact on key stakeholders behavior; functions and roles in the organization. This is consistent with the work of Veblen (1953) that stated a habit formed in response to a given stimulus will necessarily affect the character of the response made to other stimuli. A modification of human nature at any one point is a modification of human nature as a whole.

To conceptualize moral obligation as value to order cooperative states among stakeholders according to ranking, the researcher used a mechanism of building trust. In this context, Russel Hardin (1991) stated, trust is an attitude that can be grounded in moral obligations, as public officials may be regarded as morally obligated to behave in certain ways towards their constituents. But it need not be. And it can be grounded in expectation about the moral commitments of others. But again, it needs not to be. On the encapsulated interest account, trust and cooperation are related problems; they are not always the same problem. Cooperation may generally require conditions that make for trust, but not all trusting relationships are sensibly grounded in ongoing cooperation. In this context, Bush (1989) delineated progressive ceremonial encapsulation in which mechanism of building trust as moral obligation stem from implementation practices, rather than dictated from outside.

Developing Trust-building Mechanism as Moral Obligation

The trust in which Stakeholders are beneficiaries is, as noted above, largely set up to reflect many features of the corporate form of organization. It replicates roles and responsibilities provided to stakeholders by corporate statutes. Weigelt (2005) argue that

trust delivers its greatest social value as a linchpin to low-cost cooperative behavior among strange key stakeholders.

Ralph Baslin (2006) stated "Trust is the foundation on which strong relationships are built. A company is nothing more than a series of relationships". He referred in his paper to Deloitte's Mehta comments that says: "To see whether you've succeeded in building trust, what's important is to measure the drivers of trust: trustworthy leadership; open, frequent and credible communication; and consistency in walking the talk." To create a trusting environment, communications must be authentic, two-way, open and honest. He says "our role is to ensure that we continue to strive to achieve such communications."

However, trust can be built and consequently maintained because of the cost to repair the relationship or the damages to the organizational or personal reputation. The fact will push a party to proceed in the best interest of the relationship (Saeedi, 2006).

This study based upon a theoretical framework of building trust (Koeszegi, 2004) focuses on the relation between stakeholders and the Institution. Koeszegi refers to the behavioural dimension of trust, which links the concept to interactions between actors rather than to the actors themselves and calls for an analysis of interaction processes and patterns.

Koeszegi (2004) elaborated that every communication unit has two aspects: the "report", conveying information that refers to the content of a message and a "command" referring to how the message should be interpreted and, therefore, defines the relationship between the communicators. He identifies three steps which enhance trust-building; First of all, the circularity of interaction patterns makes trusting, as well as distrusting behaviours, self-enforcing processes. Trust-building is a dynamic process where initial trusting acts lead to responses in kind which in turn evoke reinforcement of the initial trust. This type of trust responds to standard communication systems between ACPR

that works in the position of strategic planning in relation to eight sub-programmes and makes a congruence in the components of programme planning cycle-- formulating, planning, budgeting and evaluating resolutions to be worked in sequence and in a consistent manner. Second, building trust is the construction of reputation. This type of trust responds to standard communication systems between ACPR and subsidiary committees from one side and the Executive Secretary from the other side, to make alignment between programme planning cycle and Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. Third through exchange theory concepts, such as the norm of reciprocity and fairness principles, have recently received some attention in negotiation research. This type of trust responds to standard communication systems between subsidiary committees and eight sub-programmes and lead to streamlining components of Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure; subsidiary committees under the identified priorities in Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure discuss and analyze the practical challenge of the region.

The researcher on the basis of the work of Sabine, Foster and Bush (2004) developed a Model for trust and institutional adjustment that shows a mechanism of trust, order cooperative states according to stakeholders' ranking to make congruence, alignment and streamlining between and among components of Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure and programme planning cycle in ESCAP.

For an agent to successfully establish cooperation, it must know of trusted agents that have suitable capabilities. If there is insufficient knowledge of others' trustworthiness or capabilities then it may not be possible to establish cooperation (Griffiths, 2005).

Trust in relation to ACPR that deals with organization learning is to promote the capability of this body that is in the position of decision maker (collective leadership in relation to eight sub-programmes). Nevertheless, trust in respect to subsidiary committees that deal with

knowledge sharing, which involves bodies with feasible processing and exchange of information in relation to eight sub-programmes that are rooted in ownership.

Developing Instrumental Tool Based upon Trust-building Mechanism

The Researcher, based upon theoretical framework, did an in-depth study through successful organizations that create relationship between trust as moral obligation and action of stakeholders. In this regard Patrick Mckenna (Mckenna.Patrick J and Maister.Daivid H, December 2002) stated to help the group understand their behavior at first step needs to identify specific elements in a trusting relationship; describe specific behavior and observable actions, and at the second Step, develop shared guideline for personal conducts; to do real work together. Robert Galford (Galford. Robert and Seibold-Drapeau. ANN, 2003) also emphasize clarifying shared framework guidelines based upon practical roles and responsibilities for ordering cooperative states among key stakeholders. Wenhong (2004) in the same way cited two factors for building trust: *Ability* refers to whether an individual has a set of skills and competencies that would enable him/her to perform the promises i.e. individual carries a clear role and responsibility, and integrity refers to whether an individual adheres to a set of principles that are acceptable to those who may trust him.

Therefore the basic and first step for building a mechanism of trust to order cooperative states between member states and the secretariat in UNESCAP is relying on identifying responsibilities for cooperation. It is to say that, what could be the cooperative responsibilities that need to be undertaken by ACPR in relation to eight sub-programmes, and what could be the cooperative responsibilities that need to be undertaken by subsidiary committees in relation to eight sub-programmes? Accordingly in the next step, it needs to develop shared guidelines

for conducting cooperation based upon identified responsibilities.

For this purpose, the researcher used the work of Koeszegi, (2004), which elaborates three processes for building trust. According to him, at first, building trust in the dynamic process where initial trust leads to responses that reinforce the trust act. This process makes components of the programme planning cycle congruent through dynamic communication between ACPR and the sub-programmes. That is to say it identifies the role and reasonability of ACPR in the relationship between the strategic framework and the programme of work for the sub-programmes. The second process could be construction of reputation between member states and the Secretariat through alignment between the planning cycle of programmes and the Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. In other words the process should be consistent among mandates, programmes, budgets, evaluation of programme planning cycles, and their standards in the Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. Member states need to ensure that the planning cycle programmes of ESCAP are exactly supervised by the Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. This type of interaction grows trust and facilitates cooperation between the Secretariat and member states allowing operative works to interrelate. The third process could be likened to the exchange theory concept, which will bring mutual privilege between members of subsidiary committees in the formulation of fairness policy. This process helps to streamline the generation of mandates for sub-programmes and the evaluation of their performance in subsidiary committees. Fairness, inclusivity, and a policy for comprehensive action require negotiation in subsidiary committees as an aspect of trust.

In Figure 1.3 (see Appendix C), the researcher has developed a three-step diagram as an instrumental tool for measuring the mechanism of building to order the level of trust around cooperative states in the relationship between the

Secretariat and member states. He has based his work on that of Koeszegi, (2004), which is elaborated in Figure 1.3, but is inconsistent with design mechanism theory.

The diagrams illustrate three levels of trust-building for arranging roles and responsibilities between the Secretariat and member states. At the first step, the Secretariat (eight sub-programmes) communicates with ACPR to find out methods for achieving consistency between the strategic framework and the programme of work of sub-programmes. This step is the dynamic aspect of trust in which ordering the roles and responsibilities of ACPR develops collective leadership and gives more congruence and consistency to the components of the programme planning cycle. At the second step the Executive Secretary communicates with member states in moves to align the programme planning cycle with a Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. Alignment between the programme planning cycle and the Resolution to Restructure Conference Structure requires the construction of a reputation between the Executive Secretary and member states. This reputation is one that means stakeholders of the organization can feel that all facets of the programme planning cycle are supervised by the Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. In the third step, subsidiary committees communicate with sub-programmes on how to negotiate the generation of mandates and the evaluation of performance to help in streamlining with standards priorities in Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. Developing negotiation exchange in subsidiary committees provides ownership to the organization.

The Researcher based upon the conceptual framework of building trust developed a methodology for measuring cooperative roles and responsibilities between member states and the Secretariat before and after the change in Conference Structure.

Methodology for Measuring Cooperative Roles and Responsibilities

The Researcher collected data through investigating on 'Résumé' of regular meetings of ACPR; the meetings demonstrate the degree of cooperative roles and responsibilities between ACPR and eight sub-programmes. In addition data collected through reports of subsidiary committees meetings; the reports express the degree of cooperative roles and responsibilities between subsidiary committees and eight sub-programmes.

The research was a purely qualitative one in which the researcher through;

- Observation
- Interview with member states and External Evaluation Consultants
- Interventions, presentations, statements in related working groups, panels and Commission and
- Interview guideline, Participated in the process of change in the conference structure.

In this context the researcher developed the following Table based upon the conceptual framework as check-list matrix as a standard mechanism to measure the degree of cooperative roles and responsibilities between member states (ACPR and subsidiary committees) and the Secretariat.

After a tool was designed for collecting the results of data analysis and a chart line was developed for demonstrating the rate of cooperative roles and responsibilities between member states (ACPR and subsidiary committees) and the Secretariat (eight sub-programmes).

Conclusion and Findings

Data analysis indicates the scale of cooperative roles and responsibilities between member states (ACPR and subsidiary committees) before and after change in conference structure.

Data analysis before change indicate, ACPR except in relation to transport sub-programme, partially cooperates in roles and responsibilities

with other sub-programmes; ACPR collectively cooperates in roles and responsibilities with transport sub-programme; participate actively in planning and budgeting resolutions for transport sub-programme. Data analysis approves hypotheses that there is a significant relationship between mechanisms of trust and ordering roles and responsibilities in ACPR in relation to transport sub-programme. That means, ACPR has succeeded in driving the results in respect to Transport sub-programme; that also means the result of conferences in respect to transport sub-programme was driven by member states. The same result achieved in respect to data analysis in subsidiary committees. Data analysis of regular meetings of subsidiary committees indicated, there is a significant relationship between mechanism of building Trust and cooperative roles and responsibilities in respect to Transport sub-programme; Transport sub-programme, attempts to generate mandates from priorities of member states; this type of cooperation give ownership to member states.

Data analysis after changing the conference structure indicates improvement in collective cooperative roles and responsibilities between ACPR and sub-programmes of transport-statistics – ICT and Environment; in fact, the mechanisms of building trust increase in ACPR in relation to that sub-programmes. That is because; they consider standard guidelines for roles and responsibilities of ACPR in relation to sub-programmes in new Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure.

Data analysis after change in conference structure indicates no improvement in cooperative roles and responsibilities in subsidiary committees in relation to four sub-programmes that had been held in 2009. That means still there is not a mechanism of building trust between subsidiary committees and sub-programmes; still the mandates generated through priorities of sub-programmes rather than priorities of member states. That is because there are no guideline for cooperative roles and responsibilities between subsidiary committees

and sub-programmes in new Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure. Table 1.1 shows the ordering of cooperative roles and responsibilities between member states (ACPR and subsidiary committees) and the Secretariat (sub-programmes) after change in the Conference Structure.

Table 1.1: Matrix for Measuring the Mechanism of Trust in Ordering Roles and Responsibilities between Member states (ACPR and Subsidiary Committees) and the Secretariat

| <i>Matrix for ordering dual roles and responsibilities between Secretariat and member states</i> | <i>Dynamic role of member states in ACPR</i> | <i>Negotiation role of member states in subsidiary committees</i> | <i>Reputation role of ESCAP's Commission</i> |
|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Dynamic role of sub-programmes (Director of divisions , Secretary of commission and PMD)</i> | <i>Responsibility: need to focus on communicating about relationship between strategic framework and programme of work</i> | <i>Responsibility: need to focus on communicating about generating mandates from priorities of the member states</i> | <i>Responsibility : need to focus on communicating about feasible planning and budgeting resolutions</i> |
| <i>Negotiation role of sub-programmes (Director of divisions , Secretary of commission and PMD)</i> | <i>Responsibility: need to focus on communicating about performance evaluation of programme of work</i> | <i>Responsibility: need to focus on communicating about relationship between mandate generation and evaluation performance</i> | <i>Responsibility : need to focus on communicating about feasible formulating and evaluating resolutions</i> |
| <i>Reputation Role of Executive Secretary in ACPR and Subsidiary committees</i> | <i>Responsibility: need to focus on supervision guideline under the TOR of ACPR over developing strategic framework and programme of work</i> | <i>Responsibility: need to focus on supervision guideline under the TOR of Subsidiary committees over generation mandate and evaluating performance</i> | <i>Responsibility : need to focus on communicating about feasible TOR of ACPR and subsidiary committees in Resolution to Restructure the Conference Structure</i> |

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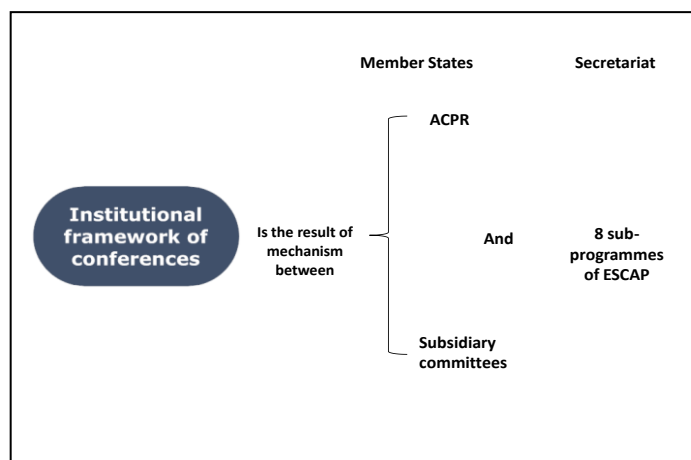
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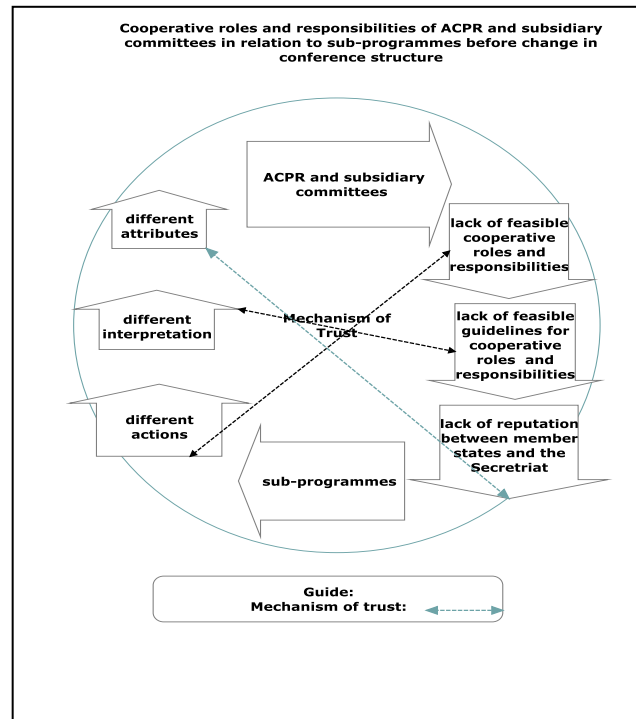
Figure 1.1 - Roles of Key Stakeholders in the



Institutional Framework of Conferences

Appendix B

Figure 1.2 - Lack of Mechanism in Ordering Cooperative Roles and Responsibilities of ACPR and Subsidiary Committees



Appendix A

Appendix C

Figure 1.3 - Three-step Instrumental Diagram Tools for Measuring Building-trust Mechanism

