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Executive Board of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme
Third session of 2023
Nairobi, 28–30 November 2023
Item 17 of the provisional agenda*
**Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the
session, including the provisional agenda for the first
session of 2024**

Results of the survey conducted by the secretariat following the first session of the Executive Board of 2023, to evaluate the effectiveness of that session so as to further improve the process and outcome of future sessions**

Note by the secretariat.

I. Introduction

A. Background to and purpose of the survey

1. In line with rule 1.1 of its rules of procedure, the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) “shall meet in regular session two or three times per year, as appropriate, at such times and for such duration as it shall determine”. The functions of the Executive Board are set out in rule 5 of the rules of procedure and include overseeing the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat and ensuring the accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

2. In Recommendations on the methods of work of the Executive Board contained in document HSP/EB.2020/20 and which were adopted by the Executive Board at its second session of the year 2020 through Decision 2020/6, paragraph 2, the secretariat is expected to “conduct a survey following each meeting of the Executive Board to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting, so as to further improve the process and outcome of future meetings”.

* HSP/EB.2023/10.

**The present document is being issued without formal editing

3. Following the first session of 2023 held from 28 to 29 March 2023, the secretariat therefore conducted a survey, the aim of which was to evaluate the effectiveness of that session and explore ways to further improve both the process and outcome of future sessions.

4. On 29 March 2023, the secretariat circulated an electronic link to the survey to all 103 permanent missions accredited to UN-Habitat, with a deadline for submitting responses of 27 April 2023.

5. This report which relays the results of the survey is for information to the Executive Board at its third session of 2023.

II. Participation

4. By 27 April 2023, the secretariat had received eight (8) responses only. The eight respondents had completed the online survey, which had been set up in such a way, that the responses received were anonymous and the submitters could not be identified. The response rate stood at 7.8 per cent (8 of 103 potential respondents, which are the Permanent Missions accredited to UN-Habitat).

III. Approach and methodology

6. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2023 first session of the Executive Board, the survey was designed to explore various themes. Under each of these themes, various questions were designed. The survey followed the same structure used to evaluate the second session of the Executive Board of the year 2022 session. The survey was structured in the following six sections:

- (a) Alignment of the functions and competence of the Executive Board with the provisional agenda of the sessions of the Board.
- (b) Quality and usefulness of the pre-session documents.
- (c) Briefing by the Executive Director.
- (d) The number of sessions per year for the Executive Board; (e) Preparations and implementation of the first session of 2023 of the Executive Board.
- (f) Other questions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Executive Board.

7. The survey comprised of open-ended questions, ranking questions, multiple-choice questions and single choice questions to explore themes.

8. For ranking questions, a rating scale of level 5 (Strongly agree) to level 1 (Strongly disagree) was used. The scale was as follows:

- Level 5: Strongly agree
- Level 4: Agree
- Level 3: Somewhat agree
- Level 2: Disagree
- Level 1: Strongly disagree

9. The survey comprised 20 questions. Below are the results of the Survey based on the questions.

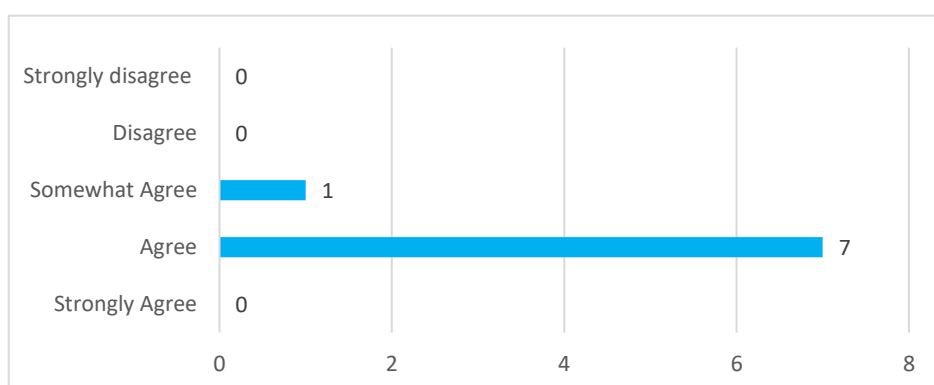
IV: Survey Results

A: Alignment of the functions and competence of the Executive Board with the provisional agenda of the sessions of the Board.

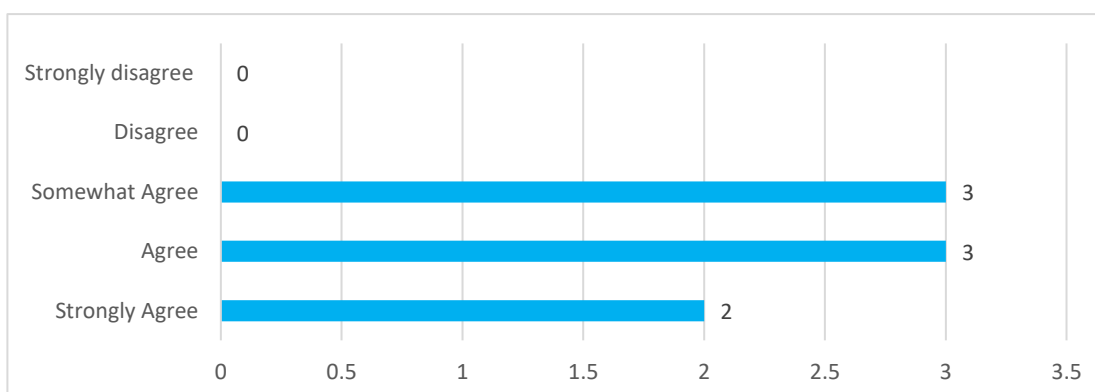
Question 1: How well aligned is the Agenda for each session of the Executive Board, to its functions and competence of strengthening the accountability and transparency of UN-Habitat, and providing an effective oversight mechanism to enhance its normative and operational activities?

Responses:

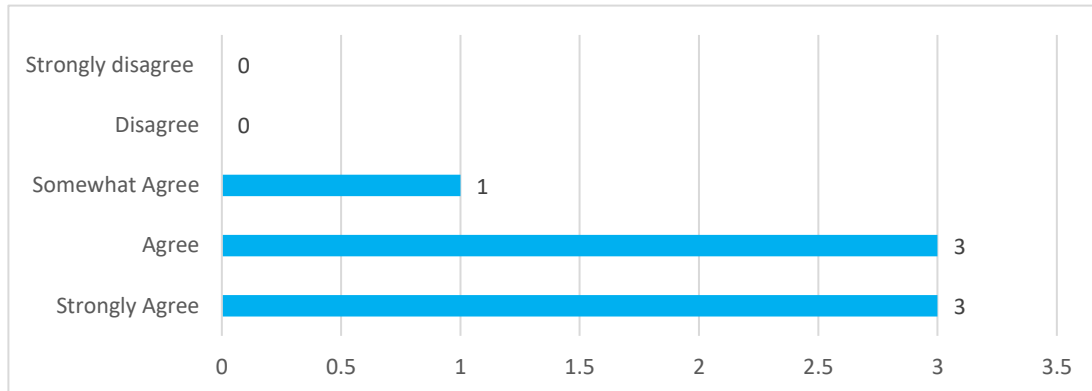
The Executive Board's functions and competence are clearly understood and consistently adhered to.



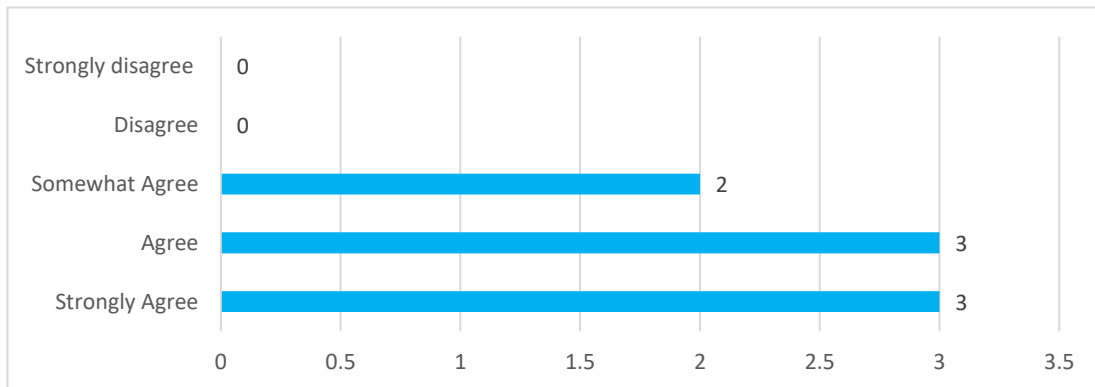
The Agenda for each session is well aligned with the functions and competence of the Executive Board.



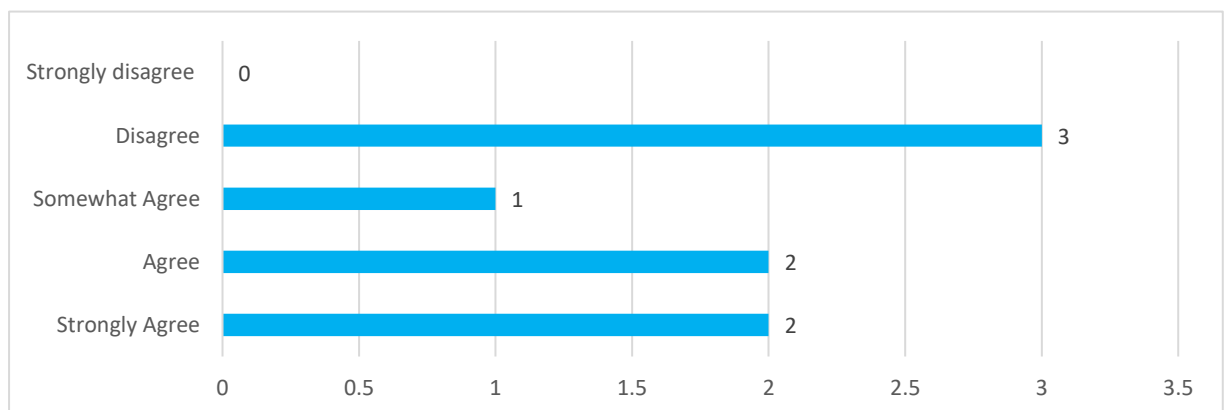
The provisional Agenda is clearly communicated to the Executive Board members for their inputs before being finalized.



The Executive Board Bureau is flexible and responsive in the planning process of the provisional Agenda of the Session to ensure effective oversight role of the Executive Board.

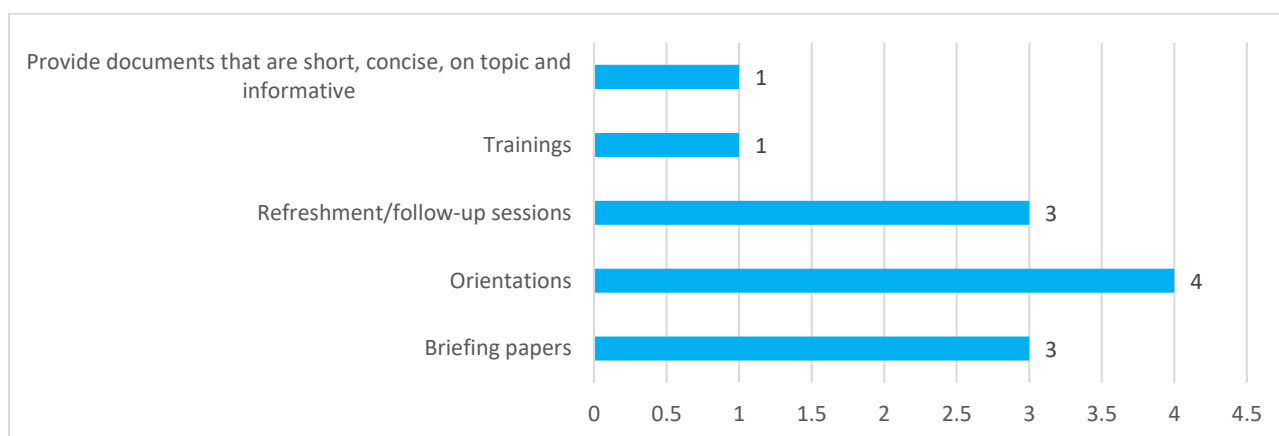


The Executive Board should review its decision 2019/ 4 which pre-determined what agenda items must be covered at each session.



Question 2: If the Secretariat were to help Member States and their Delegation understand the functions and competence of the Executive Board, what would be a better way to do so?

Responses:



Question 3: Please provide your views/ideas on how the process of drafting of the provisional Agenda for each session of the Executive Board can be improved?

Responses:

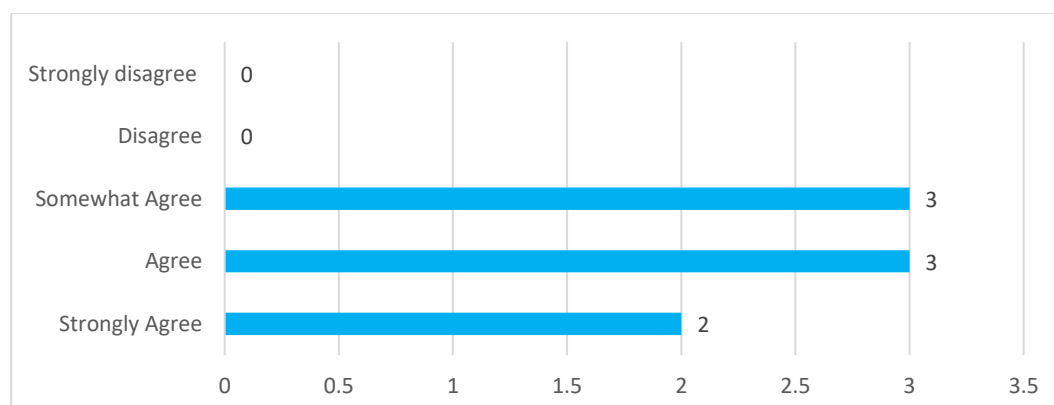
- There were no responses to question 3.

B: Quality and usefulness of the pre-session documents.

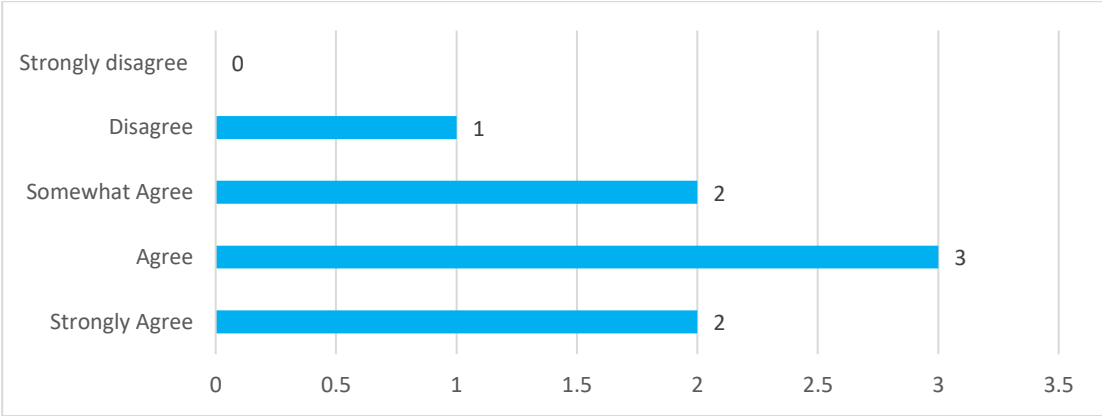
Question 4: How useful are the pre-session documents in their timing submission, accesibility, content and length in helping delegates to prepare adequately for the Executive Board sessions?

Responses:

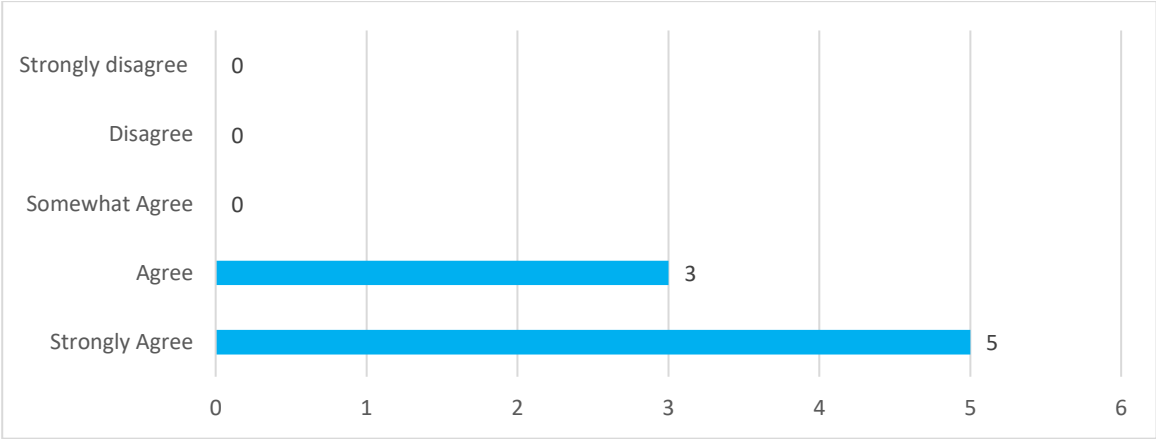
Timely submission and distribution of pre-session documents, in accordance with the Rules of the Executive Board of 4 weeks is adequate.



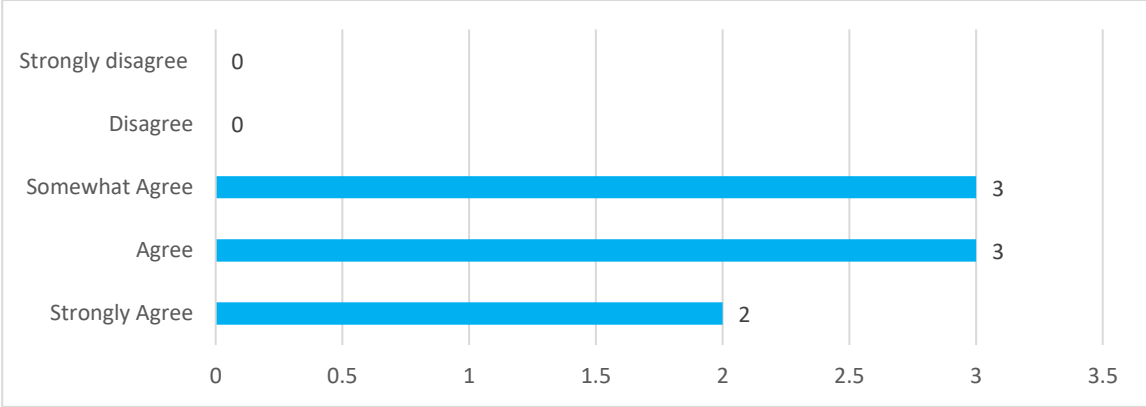
Pre-session documents of 2023 first session were easily accessible to the Executive Board members in a timely manner.



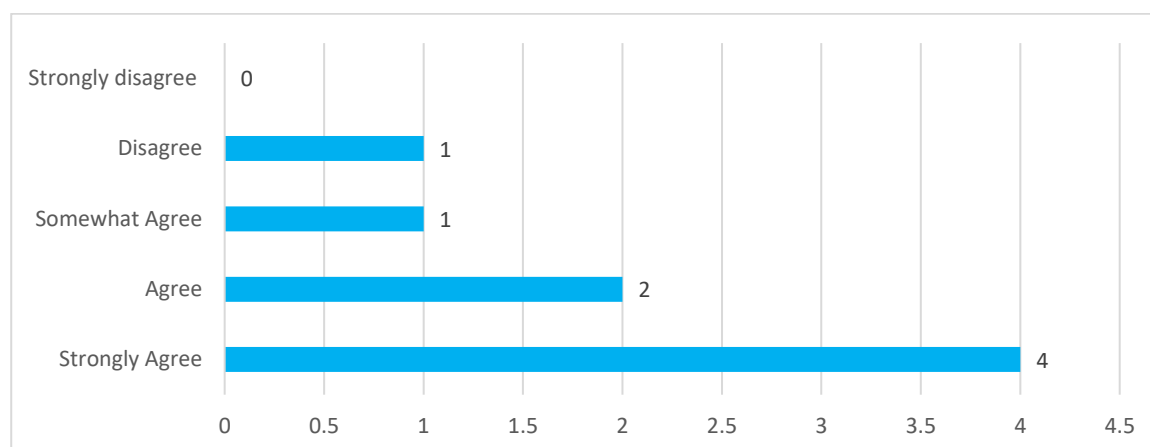
The General Assembly guidance on the length limit of 8,500 words per pre-session document is sufficient, with the exception of specific documents like the work programme and budget and the strategic plan.



The documents presented at the 2023 first session of the Executive Board were informative and focused in content.



Sharing Executive Director/Secretariat presentations prior to the Executive Board sessions would bring about effective and active participation during discussions of Agenda Items.



Question 5: Please suggest on how the quality and the usefulness (including content and length) of the pre-session documents be improved.

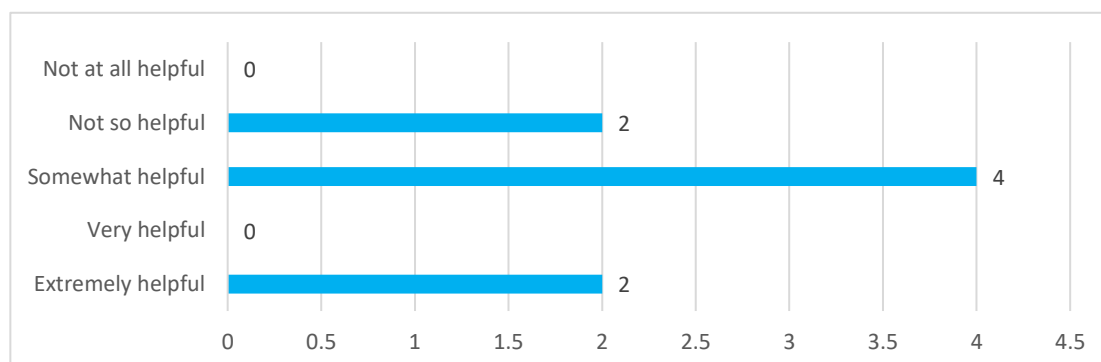
Responses:

- i. Sharing of the presentations before sessions could be helpful to guide discussions.
- ii. Sharing presentations prior to the sessions would result in more meaningful engagement by Board members.
- iii. Pre-session documents under each agenda items should have unique numbers.
- iv. Some documents were made available late, not allowing Member States with smaller delegations to correctly analyze them.
- v. Timely submission of documents is also important for the secretariat to assess whether the documents produced are in line with what is expected by the Member States and come up with any additional documents required to specific areas such as in the adoption of a supplementary budget.

C: Briefing by the Executive Director.

Question 6: Please rate the usefulness of the Executive Director's pre-session briefing which takes place two weeks prior to each session as provided for under rule 6.10 of the rules of procedure.

Responses:



Question 7: Please provide your views and ideas on how the Executive Director’s pre-session briefings can be improved for both Member States and the Secretariat.

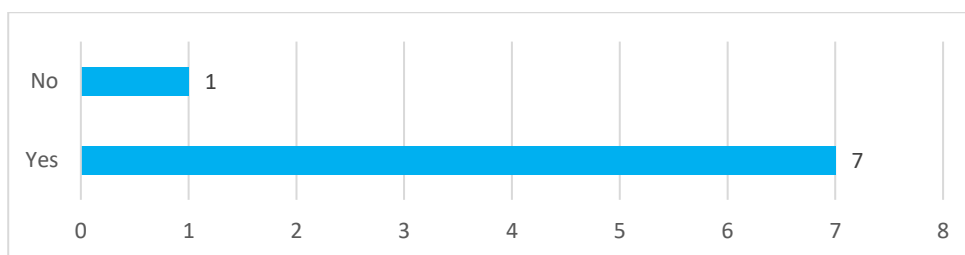
Responses:

- i. Briefings are only useful if additional information is provided and if used as pre consultations.
- ii. It depends on what kind of information is shared. Walk through of program is not very useful, focus on issues which will be debated is more useful.

D: The number of sessions per year for the Executive Board.

Question 8: Rule 1 of the [rules of procedure](#) of the Executive Board provides that The Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme shall meet in regular session two or three times per year.” Since the establishment of the Board in May 2019, the Board has met twice in 2020, twice in 2021, twice in 2022. As per your experience, do you think holding two sessions per year is adequate to cover necessary agenda items and relevant matters?

Responses:



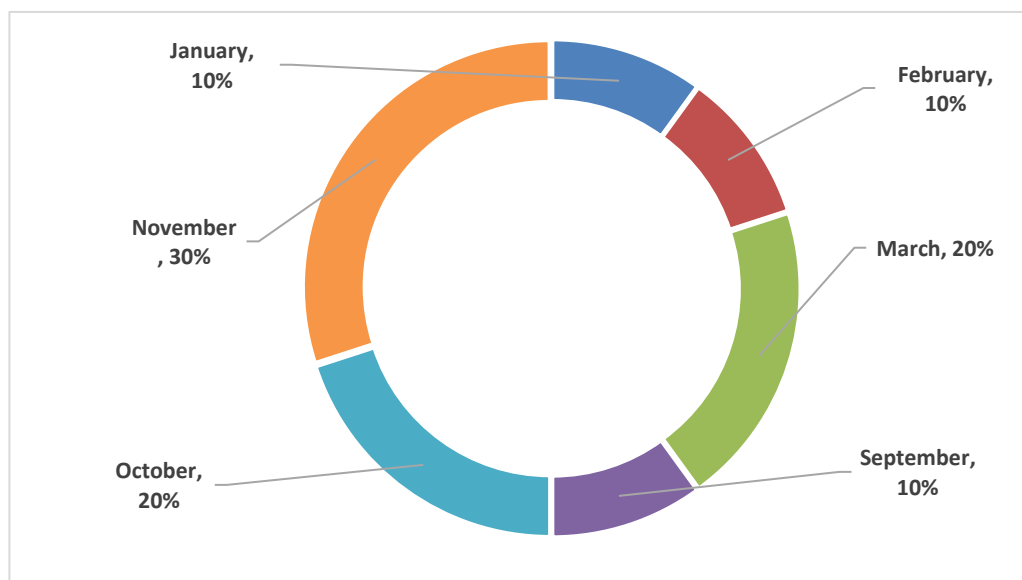
Comment on the answers given above. If ‘Yes’, why; If ‘No’, why.

Responses:

Yes	No
In principle sufficient, depending on agenda, meetings could be longer in duration.	As an observer, I prefer the current set-up of three sessions a year, with each session to be held for 2 days only. Ultimately though, the number of EB sessions per year would depend on the exigencies of the Program.
Meetings should continue to be organized as work/technical meetings, not high-level meetings.	
CPR and bureau will act on behalf.	
In general, two sessions are adequate. However, we should maintain the ability to hold three as needed. It has been useful to have the option for three meetings in 2023.	
It encompasses the needed balance between giving the Secretariat room to work and show results and assuring that MS can fulfil their overview role.	

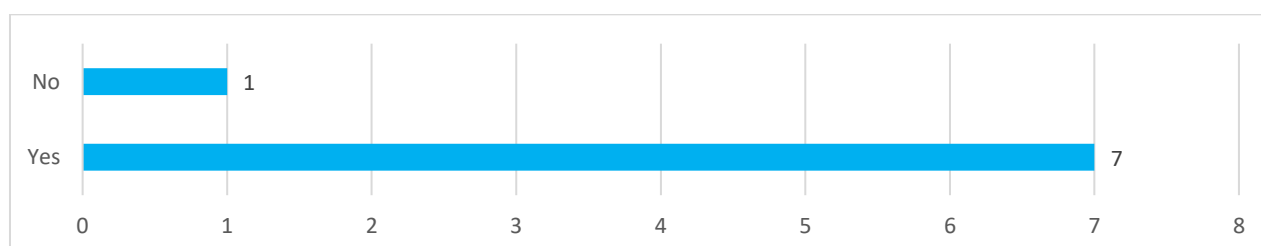
Question 9: With the understanding that the General Assembly and the Executive Board rules on documentation require about 12 weeks of preparations of pre-session documents, and with the understanding that in line with Rule 1.3, the dates of the sessions of the Board when being set, should take into account the dates of meetings of the UN-Habitat Assembly and other United Nations bodies, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development, when, in your view, during the year should the Executive Board sessions take place? (Indicate months)

Responses:



Question 10: The 2023 first session of the Executive Board was held over two days. Was the allocated number of days for that session adequate?

Responses:

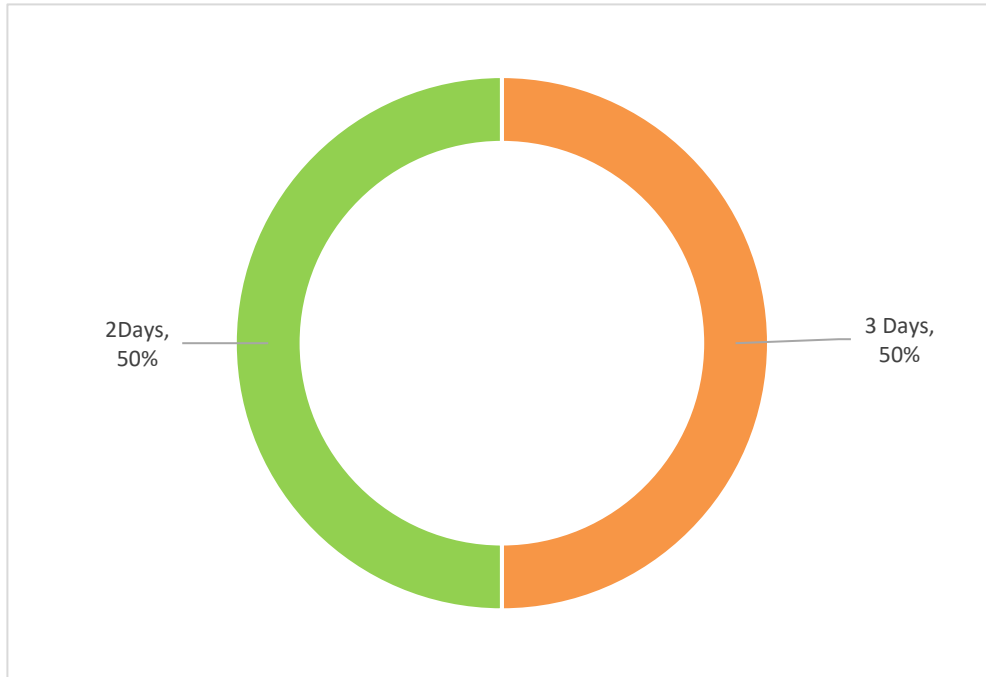


If 'No', please specify why not

- i. Allocated time was not enough for the informal consultations and final consideration of the session outcomes.

Question 11: In your view, how many days should each Executive Board session be and why? (Indicate number)

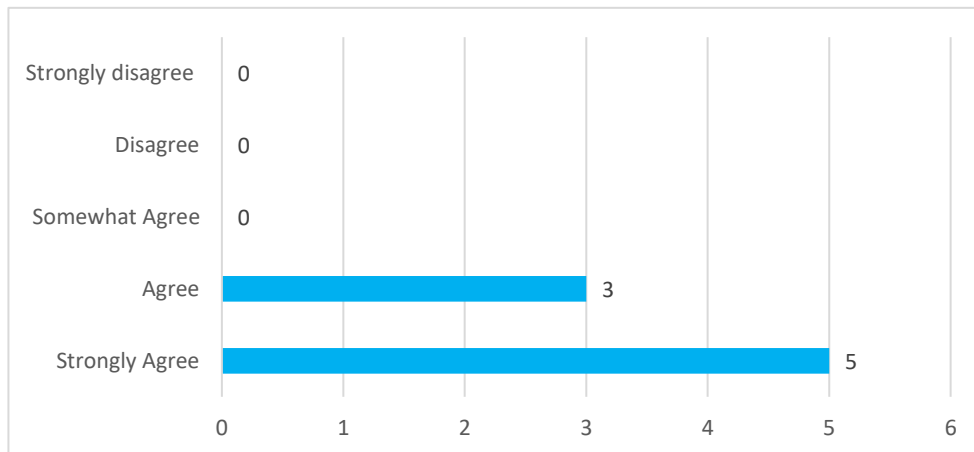
Responses:



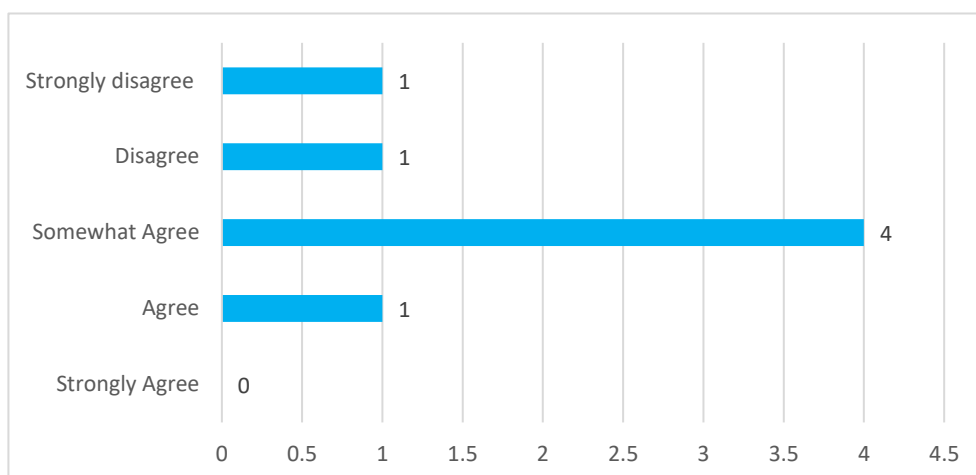
Question 12: The 2023 first session of the Executive Board was held in a hybrid format. How do you evaluate the hybrid format of 2023 first session and its possible application to future Executive Board sessions?

Responses:

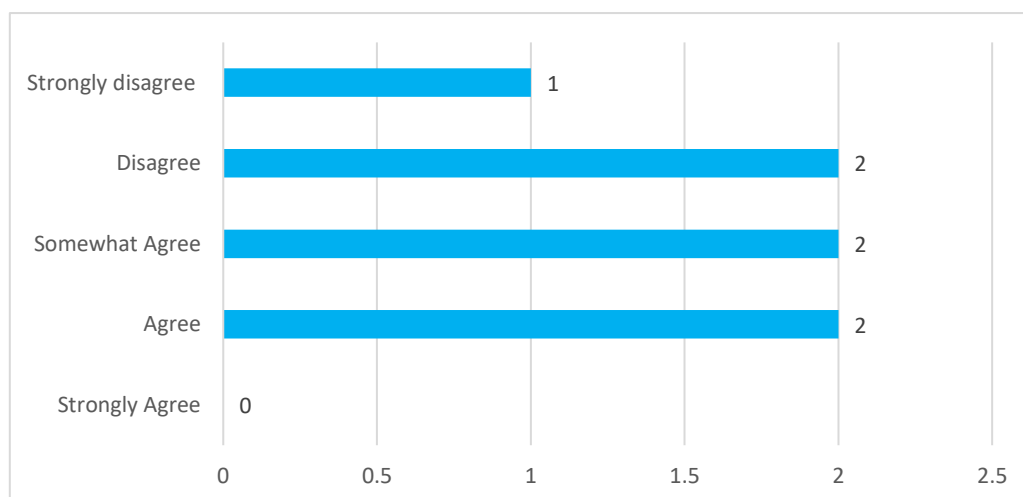
Hybrid format, where in-person participation combined with remote connected participants resulted in the 2023 first session of the Executive Board being successful.



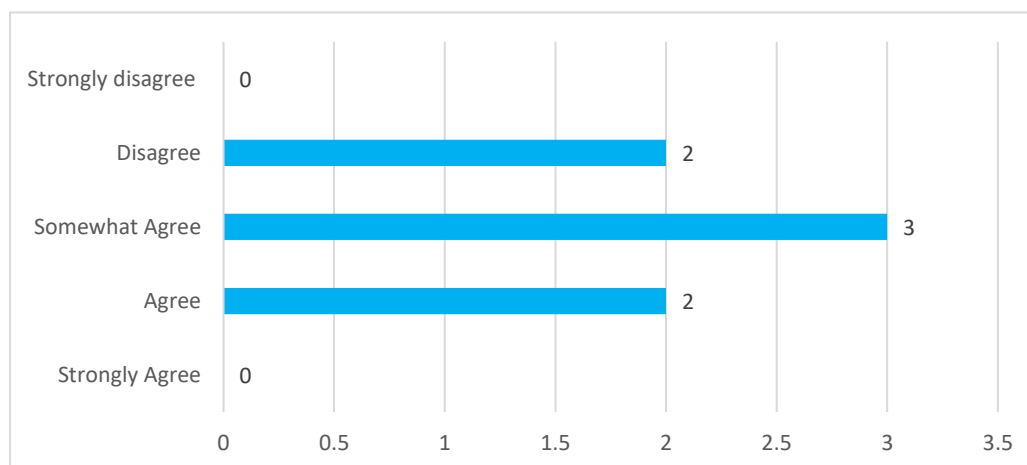
Hybrid format put remote participant at a disadvantage as some struggled to have their voices heard or experienced technical issues that made participation less active.



Hybrid format was less conducive format for complex discussions like on taking decisions on resolutions.

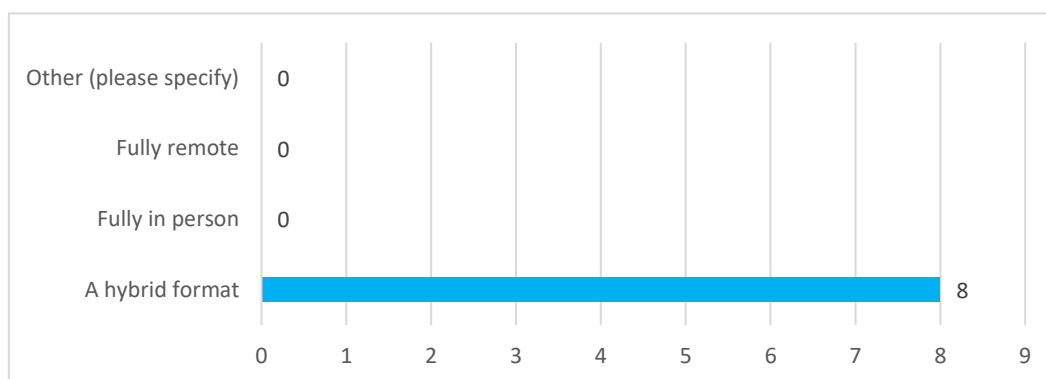


Hybrid format was successful but missed body language, facial reactions for remote connected participants.



Question 13: For future Executive Board sessions, what format would you recommend? (single choice only)

Responses:



Question 14: Please, provide reasons for choosing the format you recommend.

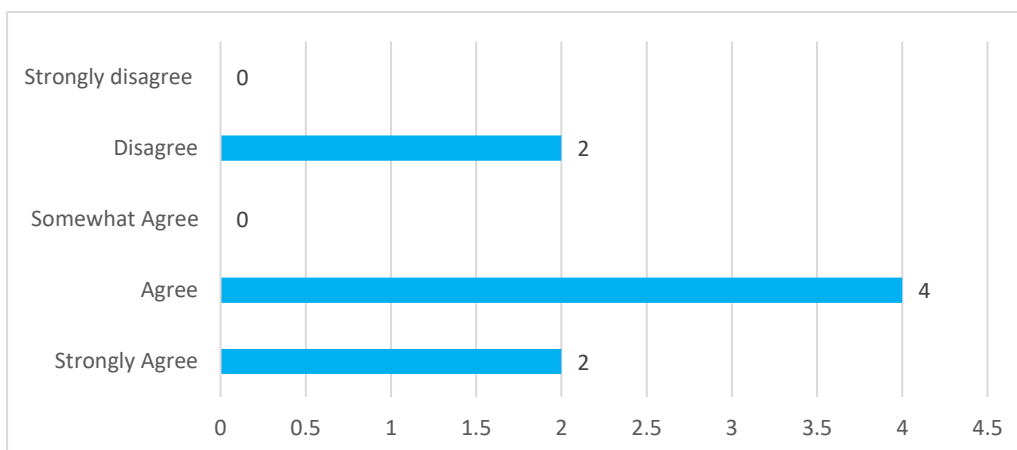
- i. Hybrid still allows more countries to participate.
- ii. Enable remote participation and saves on travel.
- iii. Allows all interested delegations to participate; allows for capitals to listen in or participate.
- iv. Even though there are issues with online participation, especially concerning connectivity, it is more inclusive to allow the option and delegations can decide on the best way to participate given their circumstances at the time.
- v. Hybrid formats should be encouraged but keeping always in mind the needs to strengthen Nairobi HQ and bring more Member States to establish missions here in Nairobi.
- vi. Allows maximum participation by Member States and stakeholders.
- vii. Allows the participation of experts from capital, as well as of missions without permanent location in Nairobi, without causing a huge ecological footprint every six months.
- viii. A hybrid format allows for an inclusive and participatory process.

E: Preparations and implementation of the first session of 2023 of the Executive Board.

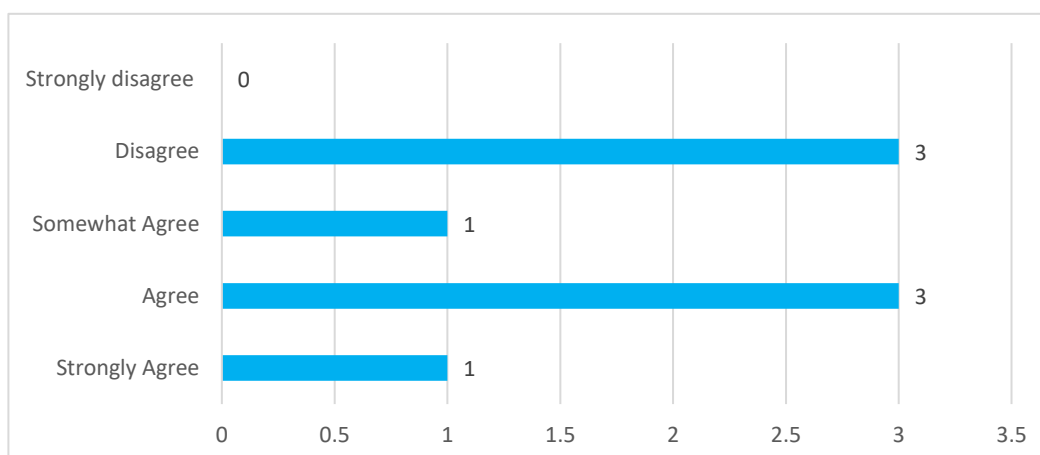
Question 15: How adequate were preparations for the 2023 first session of the Executive Board including meetings of the ad hoc working groups and informal consultations on draft decisions?

Responses:

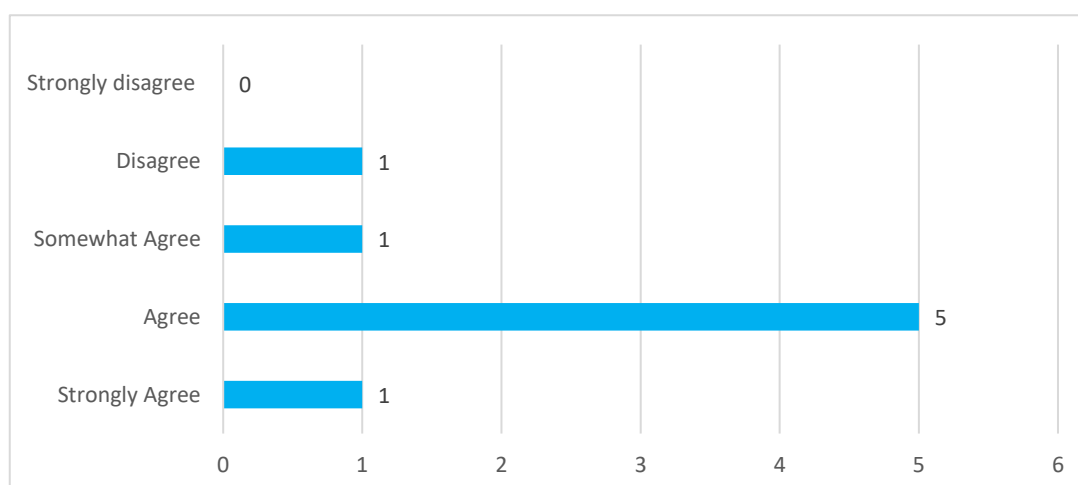
Number of informal consultations on draft outcomes and decisions were adequate.



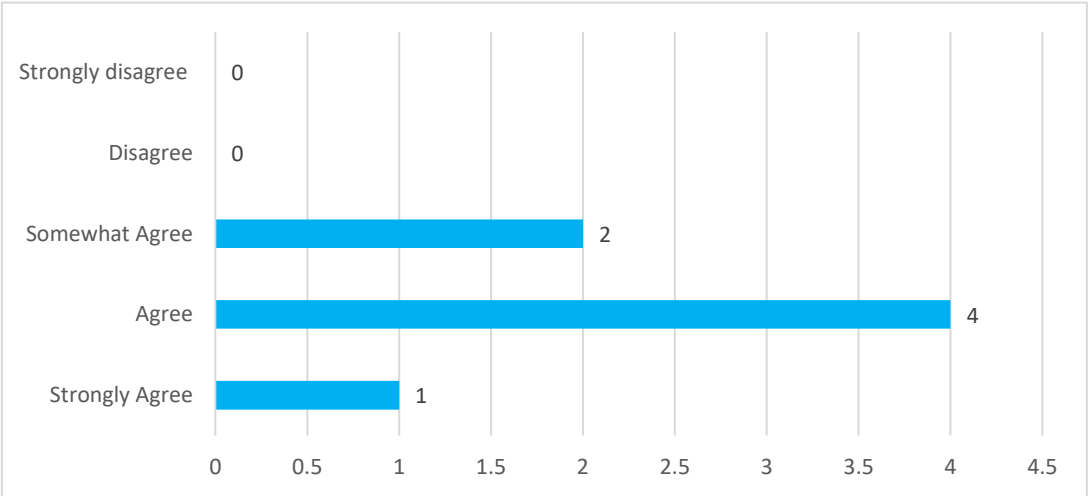
Time allocated to informal consultations on draft outcomes during the session itself was adequate.



The delegates discussed openly, stimulating inclusive debate and dialogue on substantive items that resulted in outcome decisions.



Draft decisions and technical inputs prepared for the Executive Boards' consideration were manageable, in line with the mandate of the Executive Board.



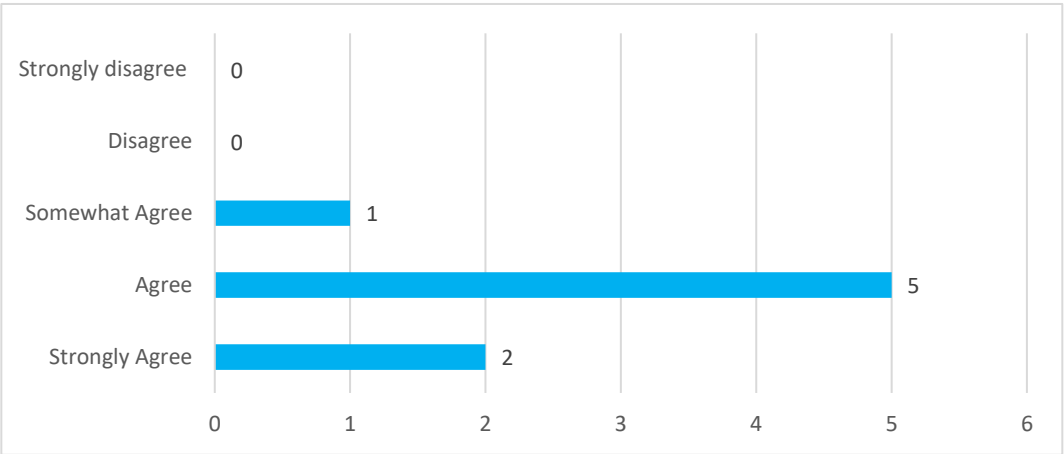
Comments/feedback on the preparation if any.

- i. Too many consultations are not effective. Draft decisions could be better formulated and prepared, taking into account the positions of Executive Board members.
- ii. A few issues that demanded more time due to diverging views. Good to have constraint on time and pressure the Member State to solutions.
- iii. The chairing of sessions for negotiating decisions was not at all efficient. Furthermore, it is not appropriate to order Members States that are at war with each other to settle disagreements on wording among themselves “outside the room”. Negotiations should be supported and led.

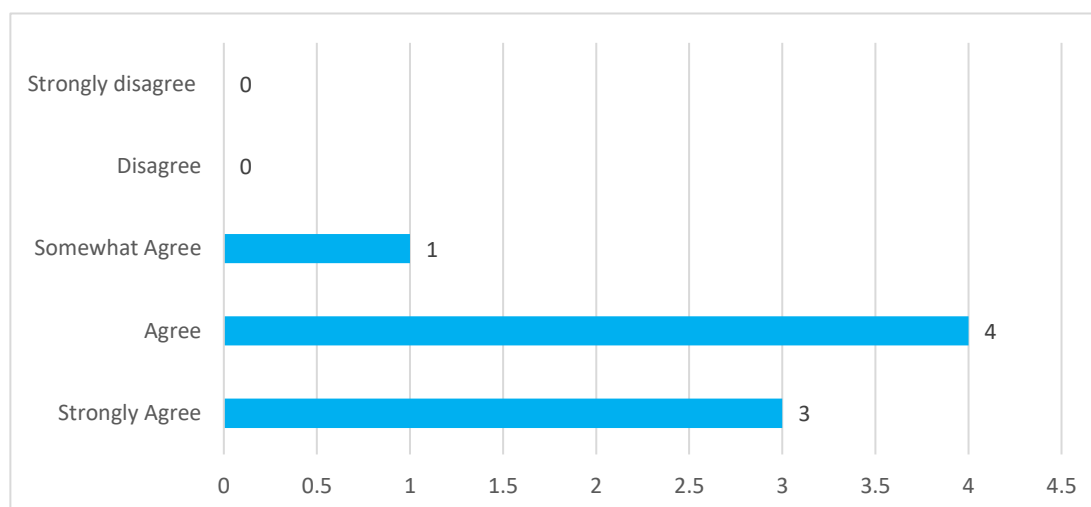
Question 16: How efficient was the management of time allocated for statements during the first session of the Executive Board for the year 2023, including Group and National Statements?

Responses:

Time available to the delegates to discuss and debate on important issues was adequate.



Time available to the speakers during the session was adequate.



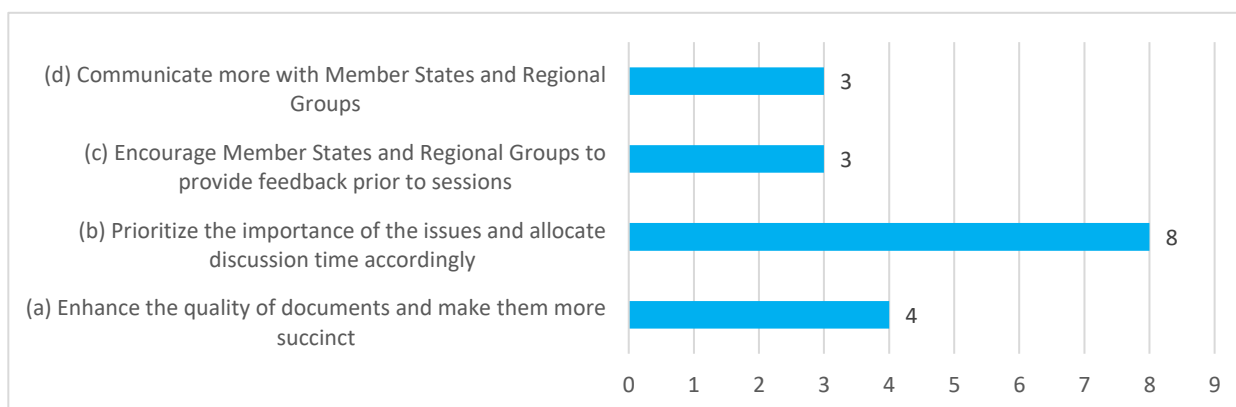
Question 17: Please suggest on how time management of Executive Board sessions can be improved?

Responses:

- i. The Chair should have power to guide the room.
- ii. Respecting timelines set in advance and focusing on efficiency in leading sessions.
- iii. Ensure that delegations stick to an (approximate) time limit per agenda item when they intervene multiple times. One delegation intervened twice on one agenda item, obtaining roughly double the time limit agreed at the beginning of the meeting.
- iv. The Chair should declare some "house rules" at the start of the session.

Question 18: Based on your views of the 2023 first session of the Board, give suggestions on how the Executive Director and Secretariat could better support Member States to ensure their active and substantive engagement during the sessions of the Executive Board.

Responses:



F: Other questions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Executive Board.

Question 19: What measures can the Executive Board consider to improve its effectiveness?

Responses:

- i. Use Executive Director's briefings more for initial feedback on key issues.
- ii. Share documents and briefings as early as possible to Member States to prepare interventions accordingly.
- iii. It could be helpful to reduce allocated time to briefings about events that are not a direct responsibility of this body.

Question 20: What other comments would you like to make about the Executive Board?

Responses:

- i. Power point presentations are very helpful and feeds into possible questions by Member States.