



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
28 June 2019

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination

Fifty-ninth session

3–28 June 2019

Agenda item 7

**Adoption of the report of the Committee on its
fifty-ninth session**

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Jun Yamada (Japan)

Addendum

Proposed programme budget for the year 2020

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 1

General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management

1. At its 6th meeting, on 6 June 2019, the Committee considered programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme plan for 2020 and programme performance for 2018 ([A/74/6 \(Sect. 2\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the Review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies contained in conference room paper [E/AC.51/2019/CRP.1/Rev.2](#).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management introduced the programme and, together with the Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the work of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in an effective and efficient manner, including the timely provision of quality documents so that Member States could carry out their work. The Department was commended for continuing to deliver on new mandates while resources declined steadily. It was stressed that the main priority of the programme remained unchanged, namely, the provision of high-quality



conference services and documentation in the six official languages. Emphasis was also made on the need to ensure the proper functioning of United Nations language services, and it was stressed that the quality of service should be maintained both at Headquarters and in offices away from Headquarters and that any changes to the language services must receive approval from the Assembly.

4. Several delegations stressed the importance of preserving, advancing and implementing multilingualism in the United Nations and emphasized the need for the timely provision of reports in the six official languages. Information was sought as to whether any joint approaches had been discussed in the context of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to achieve multilingualism in the entire system. A delegation added that not only documents but also the website of the Organization should be available in the six official languages. It expressed interest in obtaining information on the number of webpage visits in each working language and welcomed the fact that users could now gain access to the Spanish version of the website. A delegation remarked that it supported the publication of documents in the six official languages, when necessary, and encouraged the Department to perform an analysis of the number of documents available in the languages to make sure that resources were not being directed towards services that were not needed.

5. A number of delegations welcomed the undertaking of outreach and the signing of memoranda of understanding with linguistic universities to prepare translation personnel, as well as the continued practice of bringing temporary staff on board, including from other countries. A delegation questioned, however, whether the small number of memoranda of understanding signed to date really had improved conference services overall.

6. Several delegations welcomed the introduction of new technologies and innovative tools in conference servicing, including making documents available electronically. However, a delegation cautioned that there needed to be a detailed analysis of the impact of new tools and that the aim should be to ensure high quality rather than many tools. Concern was raised over the multilingual dimension of electronically available documents, as well as the need for the Secretariat to verify the quality of those documents.

7. Information was sought as to whether any surveys had been conducted to assess the effectiveness of the new tools, such as the e-deleGATE portal, and whether briefing and trainings had been made available to Member States. It was also noted that qualitative elements of such tools were equally important as quantitative elements. A delegation expressed its concern that e-deleGATE seemingly allowed only a limited number of connections at the same time. The same delegation also expressed its concern that documents on e-deleGATE were available in English only and sought information as to whether there was a large time lag between the issuance of documents in the various languages and their availability on e-deleGATE.

8. A delegation pointed out that the digital version of the *Journal of the United Nations* had been in existence for a while and enquired whether any assessment had been undertaken on that tool. Furthermore, a delegation expressed the view that it was sometimes difficult to find information in the digital *Journal*. The same delegation also enquired whether there was a backup mechanism in place in the event of a technological failure and as to the reliability of the technologies being used.

9. Written information was requested on the percentage of translation work performed by external contractors that was at present subject to verification by the Secretariat and whether there was any intention to eliminate the inequality of inspections at the different duty stations.

10. Regarding subprogramme 2, Planning and coordination of conference services, New York, notably the highlighted result in 2018, while the narrative on the one-stop-shop was deemed interesting, it was questioned whether it should be mentioned in a technical budget document. Another delegation commented that all information made available, including the reference to the one-stop-shop, was valuable and noted that such tools would improve the understanding of those delegates who might be participating for the first time.
 11. Questions were raised on consistency across different subprogrammes and duty stations in the presentation of results. For example, in the “Result and evidence” part of the highlighted planned result for 2020 of subprogramme 2, New York, the one-stop-shop was indicated as expected to contribute to the result, which was further enhancement of user experience and greater predictability. By contrast, in the “Result and evidence” part of the highlighted planned result for 2020 of subprogramme 2, Nairobi, the planned result was given as being an online platform for testing different event scenarios with an automated cost-estimating tool.
 12. Regarding subprogramme 2, Vienna, under the highlighted planned result for 2020, a delegation indicated that he was looking forward to working with the Secretariat during the fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in 2020 in Vienna, and requested other Member States’ participation at the political as well as working levels.
 13. Clarification was sought as to whether any guidelines and criteria existed for events to be held on United Nations premises and whether evaluations had been conducted on requests in instances when the criteria had not been met, and whether the Secretariat maintained a list of such instances to ensure that the same entity could not use the premise in the future.
 14. Clarification was also sought on the qualitative and quantitative contribution of Umoja to the work of the Department.
 15. In the context of the new presentation, a delegation reiterated its position that the Secretariat must correct the format of the document and bring it in line with resolution [72/266 A](#).
-