



# Economic and Social Council

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## 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

## Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the year 2020

(Item 3 (a))

### Programme 23

#### Humanitarian assistance

1. At its 17th meeting, on 13 June 2019, the Committee considered programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed programme plan for 2020 and programme performance information for 2018 ([A/74/6 \(Sect. 27\)](#)). 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 ([E/AC.51/2019/CRP.1/Rev.2](#)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to queries raised its consideration by the Committee.

#### Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in coordinating and providing protection and life-saving assistance to the millions of people displaced by conflict, natural disasters and other causes. It was noted that the Office played an indispensable role in ensuring that humanitarian aid reached those most in need in a principled, timely, coherent and coordinated manner.

4. Delegations expressed broad support for the proposed programme plan, which was described by a delegation as “uncontroversial” and strongly grounded in the



mandate of the Office. Delegations underlined the importance of focusing on the most vulnerable, including women and children, as well as persons with disabilities.

5. A delegation expressed appreciation for the efforts outlined in the programme to implement the vision of the Secretary-General for reforming the United Nations and applauded the Office for its efforts to optimize its management structure to make it more transparent and accountable and to streamline its management processes and achieve greater operational efficiency by decentralizing decision-making and administrative services.

6. With regard to funding, a delegation noted that of the \$25 billion required for humanitarian assistance, only \$15 billion had been raised and, in view of that shortfall, enquired whether the Office could achieve its mandates and the objectives of its subprogrammes. In the light of the fact that humanitarian assistance to countries was not provided on a long-term basis, a delegation enquired about the Office's strategies with States and development partners to implement and bolster support in post-crisis situations. The delegation enquired how the Office intended to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, which in its view was critical in preventing post-crisis instability.

7. With regard to subprogramme 1, Policy and analysis, a delegation observed that the references to hunger and conflict were not part of the mandate of the Office and questioned why those elements had been highlighted as a main result in 2018. In that regard, the delegation suggested the removal of the section relating to armed conflict and food insecurity. Another delegation observed that it was expected that the subprogramme would have focused on policy and analysis; however, the information presented focused instead on humanitarian responses. The delegation also observed that there was no reference in the highlighted result in 2018 to the mandate of increased attention to conflict-induced food insecurity. In that regard, it sought clarification on the placement of that highlighted result under subprogramme 1. A delegation enquired about the extent of the Office's plans to engage with other development actors such as the World Bank, which was highlighted as a planned result for 2020, to contribute to making progress in bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance at the global level. Clarification was sought regarding the legislative body that considered the report of the Secretary-General, which detailed the response of the United Nations, humanitarian and development actors to famine in parts of Unity State, South Sudan, and to the risk of famine in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen in 2017 referenced in the highlighted result in 2018.

8. With regard to subprogramme 2, Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response, a delegation commented that the highlighted planned result for 2020 under the subprogramme focused on funding for early action, whereas the overall strategy of the programme focused on dealing with long-lasting crises. The delegation was of the view that in planning the highlighted result, it would have been better to have a focus on the larger problem of long-lasting crises rather than a focused challenge on early action, which covered only a small part of humanitarian needs. That approach, the delegation opined, illustrated the limitations of having one highlighted result that did not allow an overview of the programme as a whole.

9. Another delegation enquired about the introduction of a new approach in the use of funds from the Central Emergency Response Fund, the objective of which was to provide funding for life-saving assistance. It stressed that while it was in favour of anticipatory funding, it had concerns vis-a-vis the reference to formalizing the new approach, which had not yet been agreed upon by Member States. In that regard, the delegation questioned why the new approach had not been presented to the Economic

and Social Council for consideration. Another delegation expressed the view that the anticipatory approach in the Central Emergency Response Fund was part of the mandate of the Office.

10. With regard to subprogramme 3, Natural disaster risk reduction, a delegation was encouraged by the efforts of the programme in supporting countries in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, in particular target (e), which was related to increasing the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020. The delegation observed that in “Result and evidence” under the highlighted planned result for 2020, the number of countries expected to develop/improve national and local disaster risk reduction strategies would rise to 120, which was a huge leap from the 77 that were planned for 2019. In that regard, the delegation enquired about the Office’s strategy to reach that target. Another delegation sought clarification on how the Office would further leverage efforts in disaster risk reduction in cooperation with regional bodies and other stakeholders to prevent weather-related shocks from developing into humanitarian disasters.

11. Delegations expressed support for Sustainable Development Goal 3, Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. In expressing support for access to health care that promoted optimal health outcomes throughout the lifespan, a delegation, however, specified that his Government did not support the application of target 3.7 (ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes), as it related to abortion, comprehensive sex education and a diminished role of the family, and target 3.8 (achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all), as it related to any efforts to include abortion as an essential humanitarian assistance service. A number of delegations expressed support for all services towards the achievement of targets 3.7 and 3.8.

12. Several delegations expressed concerns in relation to the new format of the programme. A delegation was of the view that the previous format was more understandable, comprehensive and substantive. It noted that in the new format, a considerable amount of text was taken up by excerpts from the report of the Secretary-General as well as humanitarian bulletins of the Office and contained hardly any country-specific issues related to activities of the subprogrammes. The delegation expressed concerns about the use of terminology on which no agreement had been reached. In that regard, it emphasized that the wording of the proposed programme plan must be based on resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, specifically, Assembly resolutions [73/139](#), [72/218](#) and [72/131](#) and Council resolution [2018/11](#).

13. A delegation acknowledged the work by the Office in Zimbabwe and Malawi following the destruction resulting from Cyclone Idai. Regarding regional preparedness for early warning, the delegation enquired about the efforts of the Office to enhance the capacity of the region to respond better, noting that without funding, response mechanisms would be inoperable.