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FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda item 101

PROGRAMME PLANNING

Algeria, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Romania, United Republic of
Cameroon and Yugoslavia: revised draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 concerning the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system,

Recalling also its resolutions 34/224 and 34/225 of 20 December 1979 concerning medium-term planning in the United Nations and identification of activities that have been completed or are obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective,

Recalling further its resolution 34/164 of 17 December 1979, and in particular paragraphs 2, 3 and 6 thereof, approving the "Glossary of Evaluation Terms" and the "guidelines for internal evaluation systems of the United Nations organizations" and urging the Joint Inspection Unit to continue its efforts in the area of evaluation, both internal and external,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX) of 14 May 1976 requesting the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) to recommend an order of priorities among United Nations programmes as defined in the medium-term plan,

Recalling furthermore its resolution 35/9 of 3 November 1980, in which it requested the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination to determine new criteria and methods to be employed in setting programme priorities,

Having considered in detail the reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of its twenty-first session, 1/ and those of the

1/ A/36/38.

Secretary-General 2/ and the Joint Inspection Unit 3/ on the setting of priorities, identification of obsolete activities and evaluation, 4/

Noting decision 1981/180 of the Economic and Social Council approving the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination,

Considering that determination of priorities between programmes, identification of obsolete activities and evaluation should be fully integrated in the general process of planning, programming and management,

I

OVER-ALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Notes with satisfaction the conclusions and recommendations contained in the above-mentioned reports of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Secretary-General;

2. Endorses the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination concerning an order of priorities among programmes and, in particular:

(a) Requests the Secretary-General to present to it at its thirty-seventh session, through the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination at its twenty-second session, proposals enabling it to adopt the official rules and regulations governing programme planning, the programming aspects of the budget, the monitoring of implementation and the methods of evaluation. These proposals should take into account all decisions so far taken with respect to planning, programming and evaluation;

(b) Urges that the monitoring of the implementation of programme commitments should be entrusted to a central unit within the Secretariat. As the work of this unit should include determination of actual programme delivery and a role in the making of decisions which involves their possible modification, it should be defined in the context of the above-mentioned official rules and regulations, bearing in mind the comments and suggestions made in the reports of CPC and the Joint Inspection Unit 5/ and by delegations in the Fifth Committee;

2/ A/C.5/36/1.

3/ A/36/171 and Add.1.

4/ A/36/181, A/36/182.

5/ A/36/38, para. 466; A/36/171, paras. 86 to 89.

(c) Decides that the length of the sessions of CPC should depend on its programme of work and on problems of scheduling, and emphasizes in this connexion the need to grant the Committee for its 1982 session sufficient time to enable it to make a complete and detailed examination of the draft medium-term plan for 1984-1989;

(d) Reaffirms the need for close co-ordination between CPC and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). For this purpose it requests ACABQ to study the statements submitted by the Secretary-General on the financial and administrative implications of the decisions taken by CPC, as adopted by the Economic and Social Council, and to include its recommendations, which the Assembly will examine together with the decisions themselves, in a separate chapter of or an addendum to its report;

3. Recommends that the different organizations concerned should increase the effectiveness of their evaluation system and take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/36/181 and 182), and in particular those concerning self-evaluation and the integration of evaluation in the planning and management process;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to improve the evaluation services of the United Nations in accordance with the recommendations made in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit.

II

SETTING PRIORITIES BETWEEN PROGRAMMES

Decides to adopt the measures and guidelines set out below for the determination of an order of priority among programmes:

(a) The principal purpose of establishing priorities among programmes which form an integral part of the general planning and management process is to rationalize and order the activities and serve as a guide for the preparation of the programme budget;

(b) The order of priority should be established:

- At the highest level by as precise an indication as possible of the problems and of the over-all orientation and trends deriving from the authoritative instruments such as the Charter, the International Development Strategy and the resolutions on the new international economic order. The introduction to the medium-term programme should, accordingly, analyse the trends which reflect the over-all priorities;

- At the subprogramme level in the proposed medium-term programme or the proposed programme budget by a decision of the General Assembly to accept, curtail, reformulate or reject subprogrammes on the basis of the implementation of the budget and of programmes, the detailed evaluation reports and the recommendations of the competent intergovernmental bodies, it being understood that the priorities

established at the subprogramme level should contribute to the achievement of the over-all priorities determined at the highest level;

(c) Without prejudice to arrangements and procedures now in force and to the specific character of the common services, the establishment of an order of priority should apply to all the substantive activities of the Organization and to the common services and serve as a guide for the allocation of all its budgetary and extrabudgetary resources. For that purpose the decisions on priorities should be brought to the attention of Member States and the governing boards of the voluntary funds;

(d) The establishment of an order of priority should be based principally on the importance of the objective to Member States, the Organization's capacity to achieve it, and the real effectiveness and usefulness of the results;

(e) The time-table and the procedures for the introduction of the new system for setting priorities extend over a period of two and a half years as is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/36/1, para. 58, table 7);

(f) A report on the operation of this new system for setting priorities should be submitted to the General Assembly during its thirty-ninth session, through CPC. This critical report should reveal the difficulties encountered, make suggestions for dealing with them and say whether further changes must be made in structures and procedures including, inter alia, those proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/36/171) and by delegations during the debate on priorities in the Fifth Committee at the thirty-sixth session;

III

ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR ARE OBSOLETE, OR OF MARGINAL USEFULNESS OR INEFFECTIVE

1. Reaffirms the need to integrate the identification of activities that are completed, obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective in the general process or planning, programming, budgeting evaluation and management;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the General Assembly, in the context of the preparation of the programme budget and through CPC, with a list of the activities considered obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective, in order to facilitate decision making;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to achieve a better application of resolutions 3534 (XXX), 31/93, 32/204, 33/284, 35/209 and 34/225 concerning activities that are completed, obsolete, of marginal usefulness or ineffective and for this purpose requests him to continue to refine further, if necessary, the criteria for the determination of these activities.
