



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

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the year 2020

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 10 Trade and development

1. At its 12th meeting, on 11 June 2019, the Committee considered programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme plan for 2020 and programme performance information for 2018, [A/74/6 \(Sect. 12\)](#) and [A/74/6 \(Sect. 13\)](#). 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 Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the programme. Delegations commended UNCTAD on its efforts in support of developing countries, least developed countries and countries in transition, particularly in improving productive capacities and addressing the digital and technological divides, as well as ensuring judicious macroeconomic governance and boosting funding for development. A delegation said that the existence of “pockets of excellence”, such as UNCTAD, within the Secretariat was positive and voiced support for the International



Trade Centre as a technical body. The importance of evaluation in improving the work of the programme was also highlighted.

4. Support was expressed for the African Continental Free Trade Area and clarification was requested of how UNCTAD would continue its coordinating role in that regard. Questions were raised in respect of illicit financial flows and the volume of illicit cross-border trade that had an impact on tax revenues, as well as the analytical focus of UNCTAD in that area.

5. Questions were raised by a number of delegations on whether there had been a change to the mandate that had led to the changes to the objective and other modifications to the programme plan, such as the omission in the objective under subprogramme 1, Globalization, interdependence and development, of references to decent work for all and the eradication of poverty in least developed countries; to middle income countries from the overall orientation; and references to North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

6. Under subprogramme 3, International trade and commodities, it was noted that the objective omitted a reference to the participation of all countries in international trade. In respect of the highlighted planned result for 2020, clarification was requested in respect of cross-border trade, where a pilot training programme had been undertaken in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia and was expected to be replicated in other areas. A delegation, while noting that that highlighted result was relevant, asked why the section contained no references to the planned activity in the sphere of commodities. The same delegation pointed out that the proposed resource requirements for the subprogramme were higher than for any other. In that regard, and bearing in mind the informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on commodity markets held on 15 May 2019, clarification was requested of how UNCTAD planned to address the subject of commodity diversification.

7. A delegation expressed its support for the work of UNCTAD on e-trade and the digital economy under subprogramme 4, Technology and logistics, and highlighted the importance of promoting and improving regulations concerning e-commerce, including through the work of the World Trade Organization on trade-related aspects of e-commerce.

8. A delegation suggested that the international trade system was in crisis and that the World Trade Organization, as its main regulator, was in need of reform to increase its effectiveness in combating protectionism, which had an especially damaging effect on least developed countries. It was noted that UNCTAD support was particularly relevant at a time when increased unilateral restrictive sanctions pressure was being exerted by some countries on a number of States in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which was unacceptable as it could lead, in the long term, to a degradation of mutual trust among economic actors and a breakdown in international efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Another delegation said that the Committee was not the appropriate forum to discuss sanctions regimes.