



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))

Plan outline

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 3 June 2019, the Committee considered the plan outline (A/74/6 (Plan outline)). 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 Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination introduced the plan outline and responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Several delegations expressed appreciation and support for the presentation of the plan outline, which reflected the eight priorities previously approved by the General Assembly, as well as the reform agenda of the Secretary-General across the three pillars of development, management, and peace and security. It was emphasized that the plan outline and related programme plans were key strategic instructions that would lay the foundation for the work of the Organization.
4. A delegation said that the presentation of the long-term objectives of the Organization and the eight priorities was very clear and in line with what had previously been approved. Another delegation stressed that the principle for defining priorities must be that they were universal and approved by Member States, which unfortunately was not always the case because the plan outline contained references



to approaches and concepts that had not been agreed upon intergovernmentally. While acknowledging that the transformative agendas listed in the plan outline were not exhaustive, a delegation suggested that additional references to human rights programmes and agendas could have been included.

5. Clarification was sought regarding paragraph 43 of the plan outline relating to the eight priorities of the Organization. In particular, the view was expressed that the introductory statement by the Assistant Secretary-General had been more explicit than the content of the plan outline, given that he had proposed maintaining the existing eight priorities, whereas it was stated in the plan outline that the General Assembly might wish to consider reaffirming or amending them. The view expressed was that, where there were differences between the plan outline and the introductory statement, the plan outline would prevail. A delegation suggested that the upcoming seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations should not only be celebrated but also be used as an opportunity to focus on content and setting future priorities.

6. A number of delegations voiced strong support for the reform agenda and the three pillars and expressed the hope that the reforms would lead to a more effective and efficient implementation of mandates. Recognizing that the plan outline touched upon management reform and provided an overview of achievements, a delegation asked why the management and effective functioning of the Organization had not been included in the list of the priorities and whether effective management was possibly reflected in each of the priorities.

7. A delegation asked why no reference had been made to the reform of the Security Council, emphasizing that, notwithstanding its full support for the reforms being undertaken by the Secretary-General, the plan outline pertained to the long-term objectives of the Organization, not those of the Secretary-General, and that a clear mandate existed for reform of the Council, including in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in particular in paragraph 153 of General Assembly resolution 60/1, in which reform of the Council had been highlighted as an essential element of Member States' overall effort to reform the United Nations. A delegation suggested that it was precisely the reform being undertaken by the Secretary-General across the three pillars that should be reflected in the plan outline.

8. Several delegations commented on the new format and presentation of the plan outline and recognized the significant work and effort that had gone into it, leading to an important change in the way of working. Some delegations expressed serious concern at the new format and presentation, noting that the General Assembly, in approving the transition to an annual budget period on a trial basis, had reaffirmed, in paragraph 13 of its resolution 72/266 A, that no changes to the budget methodology, established budgetary procedures and practices or the financial regulations could be implemented without prior review and approval by the Assembly in accordance with established budgetary procedures. It was also recalled that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in paragraph 60 of its related report (A/72/7/Add.24), had indicated that it trusted that, in the context of the ongoing management reform, any further proposals to revise the format and information contained in the budget presentation, as required, would be submitted to the Assembly for its consideration. It was also recalled that the recommendation had been endorsed by the Assembly in the same resolution. In that regard, clarification was sought on the mandate through which the format had been changed. It was said that, should no such mandate exist, it would be necessary to return to the previous format. In that connection, a request was made for written information to be provided on the specific mandates that led to the changes.

9. A delegation noted the non-inclusion of information previously available to Member States, such as expected accomplishments, indicators of achievements,

outputs, information on the implementation of recommendations of oversight bodies and the list of mandates. It was stressed that such information was an important element of the results-based budgeting methodology, which had not been changed by the General Assembly. Concern was also expressed that highlighting only one result under each subprogramme did not provide comprehensive information on work being undertaken by each subprogramme.

10. A delegation expressed concern that important information had been removed from the plan outline and was being presented only in the supplementary information, a situation that would have a significant impact on the work of the Committee. For example, it was pointed out that deliverables were included in the supplementary information and therefore no longer negotiated.

11. A delegation spoke of inconsistencies between highlighted results, with some appearing closer to objectives and others closer to deliverables, and emphasized the need for consistency between programmes and subprogrammes. The delegation also noted that the strategy had previously been presented under each subprogramme whereas, in the new presentation, it was at the programme level.

12. Several delegations expressed support for the presentation of the logical framework in the new format and its increased focus on results. The view was expressed that the Committee was dealing with many “firsts”, including the first annual budget and the first consideration of the new format, and it was suggested that the General Assembly would look to the Committee to see how those firsts had been reviewed and understood. The hope was expressed that, as the Committee considered each programme, it would be able to identify cross-cutting issues to provide guidance.

13. While welcoming the fact that a clear link had been made between the work of the Organization and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a delegation said that the seemingly mandatory linking of subprogrammes to specific Sustainable Development Goals had resulted in some controversial associations, in particular in the case of linking Goal 16, on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, to peace and security. While acknowledging the general link between development and peace and security, the delegation stressed that the 2030 Agenda had involved a major effort, that many debates had been held on Goal 16 during negotiations and that the Goal had been crafted very deliberately to avoid specific terms, such as conflict, so as to ensure that the Goals were not about peace and security but were focused on themselves.

14. A delegation said that there were clear links between sustainable development and the maintenance of peace and security, notably that the two were complementary and could not be decoupled, given that peace and security was a prerequisite for development. It was stressed that there was an overall, high-level link between peace and security and many of the Goals, including a very clear link between Goal 6, on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and geopolitical issues.

15. It was recalled that, in the report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives ([A/74/67](#) and [A/74/67/Corr.1](#)), which had also been considered by the Committee on 3 June, it had been stated that, in terms of the use of evaluation in support of the Goals, about half of the sampled evaluation reports included an explicit reference to them, Goal 16 being the most cited, given that many entities contributed to peace, non-violence and justice, followed by Goal 5, on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and Goal 8, on economic growth and employment.

16. A delegation welcomed the new approach, indicating that it helped to reduce silos and improve collaboration within the Secretariat across pillars, and requested more and specific examples of how that had already been accomplished.

17. Several delegations stressed the need to adhere to intergovernmentally accepted terms and concepts. For example, it was stated that ensuring that no country or person was left behind, as stated in paragraph 6 of the plan outline, was not in accordance with the terminology agreed upon in the context of the 2030 Agenda, in which Member States had pledged that no one would be left behind. Similarly, it was pointed out that the references to climate change in paragraph 7 lacked a reference to common but differentiated responsibilities, a core element of the mandate. Furthermore, it was noted that in paragraph 10 a link had been made between population and migration, which were not associated in their underlying mandates. A delegation, noting that more emphasis was given to the promotion of justice in lieu of international law, said that the report ignored national platforms and that cooperation between the Organization and the International Criminal Court should be limited to the context of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.

18. Clarifications were sought on paragraph 40 on strengthening the United Nations procurement system. Noting that reference had been made to regulation 5.12 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the view was expressed that the resolution approving them should have been cited instead, because it was the resolution that provided the mandate, not the regulation. It was also pointed out that in many procurement resolutions the United Nations had been specifically encouraged to have more procurement from developing countries, a concept that was not reflected in the plan outline. In that regard, the question was raised as to how the Secretariat identified and prioritized the elements that had been included in the plan outline.

19. Regarding budgetary matters contained in the plan outline, information was sought on what figures would be used to define the baseline and whether generally accepted methodologies were used. Clarification was also sought as to whether the presentation of an annual budget would solve the problem of recosting. A delegation said that budgetary matters fell within the remit of the Fifth Committee.
