



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee for Programme and Coordination

Fifty-ninth session

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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 3 Office for Disarmament Affairs

1. At its 9th meeting, on 7 June 2019, the Committee considered programme 3, Disarmament, of the proposed programme plan for 2020 and programme performance information for 2018 (A/74/6 (Sect. 4)). 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 during its consideration by the Committee.

#### Discussion

3. Delegations expressed broad support for the work undertaken by the Office for Disarmament Affairs in supporting multilateral efforts aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. A delegation advised that, just that morning, it had deposited its instrument of ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty, making it the 103rd State party to the Treaty.
4. Delegations welcomed the programme presented and expressed the view that it contained useful information. A delegation was of the view that it could benefit from the inclusion of information on transparency, given that transparency vis-a-vis



Member States was one of the main criteria guiding the work of the Office. Further on the matter of transparency, a delegation highlighted the role of the relevant mechanisms, including the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, in tracking and identifying accumulations of weapons in the interest of ensuring stability and international security.

5. A delegation welcomed that the Office had integrated a gender perspective into its operational activities, deliverables and results and sought further details on the specific linkages between disarmament and targets under the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 5, as referred to in paragraph 4.8 of the programme. Appreciation was expressed for the work undertaken by the Office in improving its ability to effectively fulfil the mandates provided by the General Assembly and the Security Council, as referred to in paragraph 4.6, and information was sought on the change management efforts undertaken and how they related to the broader United Nations reform agenda.

6. On subprogramme 1, Multilateral negotiations and deliberations on disarmament and arms limitation, a delegation welcomed the forward-thinking nature of the highlighted planned result for 2020, namely, progress in the discussions on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. A delegation expressed the view that the language used in the challenge and response section was unbalanced, given that it did not cover all the results of the report by the Geneva experts. The same delegation also objected to the statement that there was broad agreement on the need to improve a shared understanding on the various unique characteristics of lethal autonomous weapons systems, such as those related to self-learning and self-evolution, human-machine interaction and human control, given that that implied condoning their use. Rather, there ought to be a treaty that prohibited those weapons. In response, another delegation emphasized that it did not believe in the need for such a treaty and that the existing humanitarian law was sufficient.

7. Under the same highlighted result, regarding the information that the subprogramme planned to scale up its activities to address needs by increasing its engagement with partners, a delegation sought clarification as to why no reference had been made to General Assembly resolution [73/32](#) on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament. Furthermore, the delegation queried why the Office intended to scale up its activities while in resolution [73/32](#), the Assembly had merely requested an updated report on recent developments in that area. The same delegation, referring to the first paragraph under “Result and evidence”, in which it was stated that the planned deliverables were expected to contribute to a greater convergence on how to ensure that human control was maintained in the various phases of a weapon system’s life cycle, pointed out that negotiations were still ongoing under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Echoing the ongoing work undertaken with regard to the Convention, another delegation enquired whether the Office had any plans to support the process, including by increasing its staff in Geneva.

8. Information was sought with regard to the deliverables of subprogramme 1 for the period 2018–2020, in particular documentation services for meetings. Noting the planned output (thousands of words) for 2018 (160) and the actual output (3,495), clarification was sought regarding the cause for the significant difference between what had been planned and what in effect had been done. Clarification was also sought on the information provided in paragraph 4.23 that the variance in parliamentary documentation was driven by expected additional documentation of the Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, given that the review would take place only in 2021, not 2020.

9. On subprogramme 2, Weapons of mass destruction, the view was expressed that, among the mandates set out in paragraph 4.29, the treaties establishing the nuclear-weapon-free zones ought to be included. That was echoed by another delegation that expressed support for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world and emphasized that the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East remained a priority.

10. With regard to the explanations provided for the variances between the planned deliverables for 2020 and 2019 in paragraphs 4.31 and 4.35, in particular that the variance in substantive meetings and documentation was attributed to fewer meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, information was sought on why the Office was of the view that there would be fewer meetings, given that there was a clear mandate with regard to the number and frequency of meetings.

11. With respect to subprogramme 3, Conventional arms, in particular the highlighted result in 2018, a delegation expressed concern at the result highlighted under “Result and evidence”, (c) small arms control efforts to draw synergies with other instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, noting that it was an erroneous and selective interpretation of the respective mandates. Regarding the highlighted planned result for 2020 and the related performance measure for 2020 on the recognition by States, regional organizations and civil society organizations that the database helped in monitoring the achievement of the goals of the instruments in question, a delegation expressed the view that the measure had lost the relationship to the main objective of the subprogramme.

12. On subprogramme 5, Regional disarmament, a delegation welcomed that the Office had paid attention to the situation in the Sahel region and encouraged further efforts in that regard. A delegation emphasized the importance of developing and improving the cooperation of the Office with regional and subregional mechanisms, on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, including with organizations such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose profile was steadily increasing.

13. A delegation expressed the view that the new format of the document created doubts and brought about inconsistencies. As an example, the delegation sought an explanation for the change in the objective of subprogramme 5 from “To enhance global disarmament and international peace and security through regional disarmament efforts and initiatives” under the previous format to “to advance regional disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts and initiatives”. The delegation also expressed the view that the document was inconsistent within itself, as evidenced in the inclusion of “a political environment supportive of disarmament efforts” under the planning assumptions in paragraph 4.7 (a), which was in contrast to information provided under “Highlighted result in 2018” under subprogramme 2 that the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty had been “held in an environment of growing tensions between nuclear-armed States, deepening divisions among States parties over how to achieve and maintain the Treaty’s objectives and ongoing nuclear proliferation challenges”. In response, a delegation expressed the view that the examples provided were not necessarily related to the format of the budget but rather to the content and that the revised format strongly helped the assessment of the work of the programme.

14. With regard to the alignment of the programme with the Charter of the United Nations, the Sustainable Development Goals and other transformative agenda, a delegation welcomed that the objectives of the subprogrammes were aligned with the women and peace and security agenda pursuant to Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and the youth and peace and security agenda pursuant to Council resolution

2419 (2018). However, other linkages were questioned, especially as they related to the selection of Sustainable Development Goals, and the view was expressed that the information provided was unbalanced. Questions were raised with regard to the alignment of subprogramme 1 to Goals 3 and 5 and of subprogramme 2 to Goal 5 and the overall dominance of Goal 16. A delegation recalled that those who had negotiated the Goals knew that there had always been an emphasis that they were a “whole” and indivisible, whereas the budget document picked only a few and in particular Goal 16. Another delegation remarked that there indeed was a very clear link between the activities of the Office and Goal 16 and drew attention to *UN Chronicle*, vol. LV, No. 2, 2018, in which the Under-Secretary-General had written an article on advancing disarmament within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

15. Reference was made to paragraph 4.71, in which it was stated that, in 2020, the Office would continue to reduce its carbon footprint by significantly reducing its use of photocopy paper and the printing of documentation and by reducing travel and instead optimizing participation in meetings through videoconferencing. Delegations welcomed the efforts of the Office in trying to integrate sustainability into its work, and information was sought on how replacing travel with videoconferencing would take shape in tangible form, including through the full roll-out of Umoja extension 2. While one delegation suggested that the Office should adopt a paperless approach in the Conference on Disarmament, another delegation cautioned that the reduction of physical documents might have a negative impact given that not everyone had access to the Internet, in particular in areas prone to conflict. In that context, the delegation suggested that the Office, for its outreach activities, consider the use of different media, including radio and television, which could be accessed by many people, including in Central Africa.

16. Reference was made to figure 4.II, which detailed estimated resource requirements in 2020 under the regular budget and extrabudgetary contributions; the view was expressed that the \$9.5 million allocated to finance 62 posts would result in staggering monthly salaries and clarifications were sought in that regard. In response, several delegations stressed that the discussion in the Committee for Programme and Coordination ought to focus on programmatic aspects and that questions related to resources should be left to the Advisory Committee on Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

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