



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 19

Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. At its 14th meeting, on 12 June 2019, the Committee considered programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme plan for 2020 and programme performance information for 2018 (A/74/6 (Sect. 22)). 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. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Appreciation and support were expressed for the programme and for the work carried out by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, especially in the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region.

4. A delegation underlined that the full ambition of the reform agenda of the Secretary-General should be implemented, especially regionally, including reducing duplication, providing full support to country teams and ensuring that the regional



architecture was streamlined to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Recalling that the Committee had earlier considered the programme plan for the Economic Commission for Africa, a delegation remarked on the similarity of the challenges facing the two regions and the approaches taken to tackle them. In that regard, the delegation sought clarification as to the level of cooperation between the two commissions and other regional organizations to exchange best practices and staff. Furthermore, in the context of regional cooperation, in particular the new resident coordinator system, a request was made for details and comments on expectations with regard to the impact of the reform of the United Nations development system and whether it would enhance the support provided to Member States.

6. A delegation noted the Commission's recognition that the scarcity of reliable and disaggregated data continued to impede the formulation and implementation of policy and in that regard welcomed the focus on building the capacities of national statistical offices.

7. Regarding subprogramme 1, Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development, a delegation asked whether the "collective expression of the commitment of Arab States to addressing climate change challenges" could really be considered a result as it was merely an expression of commitment. The delegation said that it had been unable to find tangible and concrete deliverables that were aimed at achieving the objectives of the subprogramme, as well as that of other subprogrammes, and sought more information on tangible deliverables.

8. Under subprogramme 2, Social development, appreciation was expressed for the focus placed on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. It was highlighted that the matter pertained to every region and at precisely that time the twelfth meeting of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was being held in the adjacent conference room. It was also pointed out that in his introductory remarks the representative of the Secretary-General had mentioned that the Commission would work on a more effective definition and identification of the concept of disability. In that connection, clarification was sought as to those planned efforts given that it was understood by the Committee that the concepts had been already clearly defined.

9. Concerning subprogramme 5, Statistics for evidence-based policymaking, specifically under the highlighted result in 2018, "Improved measurement of growing Islamic finance in the national accounts context", clarification was sought concerning the image of and associated reference to a Moroccan banknote in the context of Islamic finance. The view was expressed that Morocco was not part of Western Asia. It was further pointed out that there was quite a gap between the highlighted result and the result and evidence described in the report, namely the "increasing number of countries (from 16 to 18) that have adopted the 2008 System of National Accounts as an integrating framework for all their economic statistics".

10. Regarding subprogramme 6, Advancement of women, it was noted that a change to the previously approved objective had been proposed and that it would include the achievement of gender justice. In that connection, a delegation noted that the previous objective was broader, asking whether the change stemmed from a new mandate given to the Commission. The same delegation also wished to know why similar changes had been proposed to the objectives of other subprogrammes.