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Programme planning

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Yaron Wax (Israel)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September 2019, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-fourth session the item entitled “Programme planning” and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 2nd and 21st meetings, on 8 October and 27 December 2019. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee’s consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records.¹

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fifty-ninth session ([A/74/16](#));

(b) Reports of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget for 2020: plan outline, and programme plan for programmes and subprogrammes and programme performance information ([A/74/6 \(Plan outline\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 2\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 3\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 4\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 5\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 5\)/Corr.1](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 6\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 8\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 8\)/Corr.1](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 9\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 10\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 11\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 12\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 13\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 14\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 15\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 16\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 17\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 18\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 19\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 20\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 21\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 22\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 24\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 25\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 26\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 27\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 28\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 29\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 30\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 31\)](#), and [A/74/6 \(Sect. 34\)](#));

¹ [A/C.5/74/SR.2](#) and [A/C.5/74/SR.21](#).



(c) Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services 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);

(d) Letter dated 10 June 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/74/108).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.5/74/L.5

4. At the 21st meeting, on 27 December, the representative of the Russian Federation, also on behalf of Belarus, Burundi, China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Programme planning" (A/C.5/74/L.5).

5. Also at the 21st meeting, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic made a statement in support of the draft resolution.

6. At the same meeting, the representative of Switzerland (also on behalf of Liechtenstein) requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution.

7. Also at the same meeting, before the vote, the representatives of Finland (on behalf of the European Union and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine) and the United States of America made statements in explanation of vote.

8. Also at the 21st meeting, the Committee rejected the draft resolution by a recorded vote of 88 to 18, with 47 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Belarus, Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen.

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman,

Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam.

9. At the same meeting, after the vote, the representatives of Armenia and Kazakhstan made statements in explanation of vote.

B. Draft resolution [A/C.5/74/L.18](#)

10. At its 21st meeting, on 27 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled “Programme planning” ([A/C.5/74/L.18](#)), submitted by the Chair of the Committee on the basis of informal consultations coordinated by the representative of Australia.

11. Also at its 21st meeting, the representative of Qatar orally proposed an amendment to the draft resolution by which a new operative paragraph would be inserted after operative paragraph 17, reading:

“*Decides to approve the programme plan for programme 6, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2020, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General;*”

12. At the same meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation requested a recorded vote on the proposed amendment.

13. Also at the same meeting, statements were made before the vote by the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States of America.

14. Also at its 21st meeting, the Committee adopted the proposed amendment to draft resolution [A/C.5/74/L.18](#) by a recorded vote of 86 to 20, with 48 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen.

Against:

Belarus, Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Guinea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People’s

Democratic Republic, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam.

15. At the same meeting, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic made a statement on the draft resolution and requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution as a whole, as orally amended.

16. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.5/74/L.18](#) as a whole, as orally amended, by a recorded vote of 130 to 2, with 13 abstentions (see para. 18). The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon,² Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Sudan,³ Syrian Arab Republic.

Abstaining:

Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain,⁴ Belize, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba,⁵ Equatorial Guinea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, United Arab Emirates,⁶ Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).⁷

17. After the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole, as orally amended, the representatives of the Russian Federation and Myanmar made statements to the effect that they disassociated themselves from the draft resolution as it related to programme 6, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2020.

² The delegation of Gabon subsequently indicated that it had intended to abstain.

³ The delegation of the Sudan subsequently indicated that it had intended to vote in favour.

⁴ The delegation of Bahrain subsequently indicated that it had intended to vote in favour.

⁵ The delegation of Cuba subsequently indicated that it had intended not to participate.

⁶ The delegation of the United Arab Emirates subsequently indicated that it had intended to vote in favour.

⁷ The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela subsequently indicated that it had intended not to participate.

III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

18. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Programme planning

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [37/234](#) of 21 December 1982, [38/227 A](#) of 20 December 1983, [41/213](#) of 19 December 1986, [55/234](#) of 23 December 2000, [56/253](#) of 24 December 2001, [57/282](#) of 20 December 2002, [58/268](#) and [58/269](#) of 23 December 2003, [59/275](#) of 23 December 2004, [60/257](#) of 8 May 2006, [61/235](#) of 22 December 2006, [62/224](#) of 22 December 2007, [63/247](#) of 24 December 2008, [64/229](#) of 22 December 2009, [65/244](#) of 24 December 2010, [66/8](#) of 11 November 2011, [67/236](#) of 24 December 2012, [68/20](#) of 4 December 2013, [69/17](#) of 18 November 2014, [70/8](#) of 13 November 2015, [71/6](#) of 27 October 2016, [72/9](#) of 17 November 2017, [72/266 A](#) of 24 December 2017, [72/266 B](#) of 5 July 2018, section III of its resolution [72/262 C](#) of 5 July 2018 and its resolution [73/269](#) of 22 December 2018,

Recalling also the terms of reference of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as outlined in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX) of 14 May 1976,

Recalling further the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation,¹ by which the relevant programmes and subprogrammes of the proposed strategic framework shall be reviewed by the relevant sectoral, functional and regional intergovernmental bodies, if possible during the regular cycle of their meetings,

Having considered the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-ninth session² and the reports of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget for 2020: part I, plan outline,³ and part II, programme plan for programmes and subprogrammes and programme performance information,⁴

Having also considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives,⁵

1. *Reaffirms* the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programming and coordination;

2. *Also reaffirms* the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in verifying that the programmes of activities of the Organization are implemented in

¹ [ST/SGB/2018/3](#).

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/74/16)*.

³ [A/74/6 \(Plan outline\)](#).

⁴ [A/74/6 \(Sect. 2\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 3\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 4\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 5\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 5\)/Corr.1](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 6\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 8\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 8\)/Corr.1](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 9\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 10\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 11\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 12\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 13\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 14\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 15\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 16\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 17\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 18\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 19\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 20\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 21\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 22\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 24\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 25\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 26\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 27\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 28\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 29\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 30\)](#), [A/74/6 \(Sect. 31\)](#) and [A/74/6 \(Sect. 34\)](#).

⁵ [A/74/67](#) and [A/74/67/Corr.1](#).

line with the legislative mandates and that the full implementation of regulations and rules is ensured;

3. *Re-emphasizes* the role of the plenary and the Main Committees of the General Assembly in reviewing and taking action on the appropriate recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination relevant to their work, in accordance with regulation 4.10 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;¹

4. *Stresses* that setting the priorities of the United Nations is the prerogative of the Member States, as reflected in legislative mandates;

5. *Reiterates* the need for Member States to participate fully in the budget preparation process, from its early stages and throughout the process;

6. *Recalls* its resolution 72/266 A, in which it approved the change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis, beginning with the programme budget for 2020;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to present a report as early as practicable, for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, on the impact of the changes to the budgetary cycle on the established budgetary procedures and practices as they pertain to the agreed sequential nature of the review processes of the proposed programme budget, and in this regard to present possible options to ensure the preservation of this sequence, including the possibility of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions preparing its conclusions and recommendations on the basis of a programme plan approved by the General Assembly in 2021;

8. *Recalls* paragraph 13 of its resolution 72/266 A, and reaffirms that no changes to the budget methodology, established budgetary procedures and practices or the financial regulations may be implemented without prior review and approval by the General Assembly in accordance with established budgetary procedures;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to clearly identify those provisions and rules that are proposed to be formally suspended or no longer applied during the trial period;

10. *Expresses its support* for the efforts of the Secretariat to better engage and support programme managers with the aim of making the Organization more effective, and welcomes the commitment and ongoing efforts of the Secretariat to improve the programmatic aspects of the programme budget;

11. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to ensure that objectives, results and performance measures that are put forward for consideration are strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 70/8 and 72/9 are fully respected, with the exception of regulations and rules that have been directly impacted by the decisions taken by the Assembly in its resolution 72/266 A;

13. *Notes* the repeated reference “in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the purposes stipulated in Article 1 of the Charter are embodied by the Sustainable Development Goals” across the programmes, underscores the primacy of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirms that the

Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that results and, where possible, performance measures actually reflect achievements in the implementation of the programmes of the Organization and not those of individual Member States;

15. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, while still considering further areas of improvement, to apply the following guidelines when preparing the next proposed programme plan and programme performance documents for the remainder of the approved trial period, namely, for 2021 and 2022:

(a) Adhering to a programme plan that contains the required level of detail and information, in particular keeping the objectives, results and corresponding performance measures at the subprogramme level, in line with the results-based budgeting framework;

(b) Including a detailed list of deliverables in the proposed programme budget and ensuring that resources are justified in terms of the requirements to implement deliverables as contributions to the planned results;

(c) Including clear, comprehensive explanations of the approved methodologies to be applied in the context of the programme budget proposals to be submitted in respect of the 2021 and 2022 budget periods, with reference to the applicable provisions of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions [47/212 A](#) of 23 December 1992 and [72/266 A](#);

(d) Enhancing the link between the preceding programme plans and the proposed future plans, with a view to ensuring consistency and continuity;

(e) Incorporating more general information on programmes and subprogrammes by showing not only examples of actual and planned results, but also an overview of activities and general strategy that encompasses a comprehensive overall account of the actual and planned results;

(f) Presenting performance information on a comprehensive set of results, which would allow for enhanced oversight, transparency and accountability in the implementation of all activities in the programme plan as approved by the General Assembly;

(g) Providing, in the context of performance measures, at least three prior years of actual performance information to facilitate a better understanding and assessment of progress made at the programme and subprogramme levels;

(h) Including a strategy at both the programme and subprogramme levels;

(i) Incorporating the list of legislative mandates into the published official document and not into the supplementary document provided informally;

(j) Replacing the proposed section on alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals with concrete information regarding contributions to the implementation of the Goals by relevant programmes and subprogrammes in accordance with their specific related intergovernmental mandates;

(k) Using simplified and identifiable numbering to improve the readability and referencing of the proposed programme plan;

(l) Reducing the use of accompanying photographs in the foreword to each proposed programme plan;

(m) Ensuring that the use of anecdotal narratives in subprogrammes is only to provide examples of actual and planned results as referenced in (e) above;

(n) Ensuring that the terms and expressions referenced in the proposed programme plan have been intergovernmentally agreed;

16. *Approves*, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent, for programmes 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 22, 27 and 28 of the proposed programme budget for 2020, the programme narrative that is composed solely of the “Mandates and background”, “Recent developments”, “Strategy and external factors for 2020” and “Evaluation activities” sections at the programme level and by objective at the subprogramme level;

17. *Also approves*, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent, for programmes 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25 and 26 of the proposed programme budget for 2020, a programme narrative that is composed solely of the list of mandates at the programme level and the objectives approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/6 and the deliverables for 2020 at the subprogramme level;

17 bis. *Further approves* the programme plan for programme 6, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2020, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General;⁶

18. *Approves*, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent, in the case of the programmes mentioned in paragraph 17 above, where new mandates imply changes to the objectives at the subprogramme level as approved in their agreed formulation under its resolution 71/6, the relevant objectives as updated in the proposed programme budget for 2020;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the programme plan covers all activities, both substantive and servicing, including those to be financed partially or fully from extrabudgetary and other assessed resources;

20. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on evaluation⁷ contained in its report on the work of its fifty-ninth session, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure the timely implementation of the recommendations;

21. *Also endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2018,⁸ contained in its report on the work of its fifty-ninth session, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure the timely implementation of the recommendations.

⁶ A/74/6 (Sect. 8) and A/74/6 (Sect. 8)/Corr.1.

⁷ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/74/16)*, chap. II, sect. B.

⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. III, sect. A.