



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee for Programme and Coordination

### Sixtieth session

8 June–3 July 2020

Agenda item 7

### Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixtieth session

## Draft report

*Rapporteur:* Mr. Felix-Fils **Eboa Ebongue** (Cameroon)

### Addendum

## Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2021

(Item 3 (a))

### Programme 19

### Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 22\)](#)). 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.51/2020/10](#)).

2. The Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the Commission and sought clarification on the efforts made by ESCWA to avoid duplication between its activities and those carried out by other entities of the United Nations system. For example, it was recalled that the Commission had carried out extensive research and data analysis for policymaking in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as had the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. Accordingly, clarification was sought on how the Commission assessed the added value of its support to its member States compared with that of other United Nations entities, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Furthermore, another delegation highlighted that the programme should, as should all other programmes, continually assess how its mandates both deconflicted and complemented the mandates of other United Nations bodies.

4. A delegation sought additional information on the internal reform being implemented by ESCWA (para. 22.4) and on the reconfiguration of the subprogrammes, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes needed to mitigate its impact on the support provided by the Commission to its member States.

5. The use of the terminology “gender justice” in the title and the narrative of subprogramme 2, Gender justice, population and inclusive development, was noted. A delegation recalled protracted discussions held during the fifty-ninth session of the Committee on the use of that terminology, which was not a concept universally accepted by the broader membership of the Organization, that had resulted in a suggestion to reference the resolutions and decisions pertaining to ESCWA in which the concept had been defined. The delegation also recalled that the Committee was cautious with regard to the use of concepts that did not have a universally accepted definition and expressed the view that, despite fully supporting the mandates given to ESCWA by its member States, it was important to avoid giving the impression that the concept of “gender justice” was universally accepted beyond the context of resolutions and decisions pertaining directly to the Commission.

6. On subprogramme 4, Statistics, the information society and technology, clarification was sought on the rationale for the creation of an integrated and smart information hub from scratch (para. 22.52), considering that such a system was already in place. Clarification was also sought on whether the creation of the hub was supported by a legislative mandate.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

7. **The Committee commended ESCWA for its efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region, in accordance with its mandate.**

8. **The Committee noted with appreciation the new structure of the Commission, with reconfigured subprogrammes that were expected to optimize its service to Member States.**

9. **The Committee reiterated the need for ESCWA to continue to support its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue, within its mandate, its collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional and subregional levels, including the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams in the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, as well as with the international financial institutions and regional development banks.**

10. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.**