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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 2 Political affairs

1. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)). 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 representative of the Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, together with the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

### Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the programme and the work of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on sustaining peace and preventing conflict.

4. Appreciation was also expressed for the comprehensive presentation of the work of the programme, and it was noted that special political missions played a vital role in the execution of the programme. A delegation requested more information on the efforts of the Department to enhance its work with other entities, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, in support of development for



peace. Another delegation expressed its appreciation for the division of labour between the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, noting that the structural reforms had helped to clarify the division of labour.

5. Several delegations noted the importance of using intergovernmentally agreed language. A delegation expressed concern about the use of terminology such as “conflict triggers” in subprogramme 1, Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts (para. 3.25), which it opined was better represented by “root causes of conflict”. With regard to another expression of concern, “violent conflict”, which appeared in subprogramme 1 (para. 3.19) and subprogramme 7, Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States (several mentions), it was asked whether there was a grading of conflicts. On the latter point, the delegation stated that it was understood that all conflicts were intrinsically violent. The delegation cited a third example, the use of the term “fragile countries” in subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office (para. 3.87), and urged programme managers to use agreed terminology, such as “countries lapsing or relapsing into conflict”. Another delegation noted that the programme tried to comply with the use of intergovernmentally agreed terminology for the most part, but emphasized that the need to communicate effectively with other stakeholders should not mean that the programme should include concepts, terms or approaches that were not agreed upon by Member States, such as “non-mission settings” (para. 3.89).

6. A delegation questioned the new approach used to present deliverables, in which some categories of deliverables were not quantified. The delegation provided the example that, while the deliverable on good offices under cross-cutting deliverables for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (table 3.1) was not quantified, a quantification was provided for the number of good offices efforts in paragraph 3.18. The delegation also noted that this concern was not specific to the programme, and reiterated that it applied to other programmes as well, suggesting that that point be presented in a cross-cutting context. Appreciation was expressed for the inclusion of legislative mandates in the programme plan, in line with the guidance of the General Assembly, and it was stressed that legislative mandates did not belong in an annex, as was the case for the 2020 budget.

7. A delegation enquired why the programmatic assumptions for all special political missions were not included under this programme and continued to be presented separately for the consideration only of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. It was stressed that, if special political missions, which were increasing in number each year, continued to be funded from the programme budget, their programme narratives should be considered in the context of the Committee for Programme and Coordination instead of being submitted directly to the Fifth Committee.

8. With regard to subprogramme 1, Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, a delegation expressed its appreciation that the new strategic plan of the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs put prevention, management and resolution of conflict at its centre, noting that that was critically aligned with the sustaining peace agenda of Member States. Another delegation expressed the view that the term “management of conflict” in the title of the subprogramme was not clear and could be controversial, since managing a conflict would not always mean resolving it, but rather keeping and leading it. In that regard, the delegation stated that the United Nations could help States in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as appropriate. The same delegation noted that, while improving coherence within the United Nations system was important, it was also necessary to respect the division of labour of United Nations bodies in accordance with their respective mandates to avoid duplication of efforts. The same delegation observed that, while it continued to

support the efforts of the subprogramme to improve the capacity of Member States to prevent conflict, the results of the subprogramme remained difficult to evaluate, and it noted that it was not possible to determine the impact of the role of the United Nations in a conflict situation.

9. With regard to strategy, it was noted that, while the strategy sections for most subprogrammes were very informative, more clarification was needed with regard to the work of subprogramme 1. It was observed that, while the subprogramme referred to tools of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the strategy section, it did not elaborate on how it used those tools and what activities it was performing. A delegation requested a greater focus on early warning systems to facilitate earlier United Nations support for Member States' prevention efforts, as well as further information on what could be done to enable this. The same delegation noted the extensive list of legislative mandates entrusted to the subprogramme and requested a considerable reduction of the schedule as part of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

10. With regard to the list of legislative mandates for the subprogramme, a delegation noted the importance of General Assembly resolution [57/5](#) on the elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion and Assembly resolution [70/185](#) on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, and requested further information about the work of the subprogramme to implement the mandates arising from those resolutions. The delegation expressed the view that unilateral coercive measures endangered multilateralism. On the issue of the legislative mandates, a delegation echoed the appreciation expressed earlier by another delegation on the retention of legislative mandates in the programme, and not in the annex, and observed that, for the resolutions pertaining to unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, the list did not contain the most recent mandate, namely Assembly resolution [74/200](#).

11. With regard to subprogramme 2, Electoral assistance, several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work of the subprogramme. A delegation welcomed the subprogramme's support for over 50 Member States and the expansion of the work of the subprogramme through its partnership with regional and intergovernmental organizations. Another delegation observed that United Nations election assistance was critical to supporting countries in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections and noted that States Members of the United Nations had agreed upon the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Goal 16, under which the importance of inclusive political processes and institutions was recognized for sustainable development. The delegation welcomed the improvements in United Nations performance in deploying timely electoral assistance, expressed its full support for the highlighted planned result for 2020 and encouraged the Secretariat to work closely with relevant entities of the United Nations country teams in the delivery of comprehensive election support programming. The same delegation encouraged close collaboration between United Nations election assistance missions and programmes of the United Nations Development Programme on elections in particular, and encouraged a greater focus of such collaboration in reporting. A delegation observed that, with regard to the section on programme performance in 2019 against the planned result (para. 3.30), while the subprogramme reported that the 2019 benchmarks had been achieved, no information was provided on results, and the delegation encouraged a more results-oriented approach in the future.

12. With regard to subprogramme 3, Security Council affairs, delegations noted with appreciation the work of the subprogramme. Increased support for new members and recent efforts to improve data collection and display, including data disaggregated

by gender, was welcomed. A delegation welcomed in particular the work that the subprogramme conducted with the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research on transitions in field missions (para. 3.47) and noted that it was a good example of cooperation between the Secretariat and academic institutions. A delegation observed that the objective of the subprogramme, to contribute to ensuring the effective discharge by the Council of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, was too strongly formulated, implying that the subprogramme contributed to ensuring that the Council performed its responsibilities, and was not formulated in the form of a contribution to end users. With reference to the performance measure for 2019, number of queries or research requests (figure 3.IV), a delegation acknowledged the greater complexity of the queries and research requests received by the subprogramme from Member States and requested information on the number of queries or research requests that were not fulfilled. The same delegation noted that the identification of experts for Council sanctions panels appeared to be a major challenge and recommended that the recruitment process should begin earlier. Another delegation noted the importance of the implementation of Council resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#) regarding the appointment of members of panels of experts with experience relating to sexual violence and gender, where relevant (para. 3.51).

13. With regard to subprogramme 4, Decolonization, a delegation expressed the view that there was no need to change the objective for the subprogramme from what was reflected in the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018–2019 ([A/71/6/Rev.1](#)), since there had not been a change in the mandate for the subprogramme. Another delegation requested clarification on the reason that, for deliverable A.4, Report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Puerto Rico (table 3.8), no reports were expected in 2020 and 2021.

14. With regard to subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office, a delegation welcomed the integration of the Office into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and strongly encouraged deeper collaboration with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The same delegation noted that the regionally integrated approach in the Sahel appeared to be showing encouraging results and recommended the application of lessons learned in the Central African Republic to other settings. A delegation recognized that nationally owned solutions were essential, noting that this was articulated clearly in the twin resolutions of 2016 on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (Security Council resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#) and General Assembly resolution [70/262](#)), and observed that the example of Burkina Faso cited in the report (paras. 3.89–3.93) was a best practice approach that could be replicated. The same delegation expressed the view that the Peacebuilding Commission would increase its partnership activity with the United Nations system, Member States and regional and international partners, especially international financial institutions, in line with the ‘Pathways for Peace’ report. It was also observed that the large increase in funding for the Peacebuilding Fund in recent years showed that donors were supporting peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It was noted that, in view of the likely implications of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the availability of global official development assistance, the United Nations should redouble its efforts to explore innovative financing opportunities. A delegation expressed the view that in future reporting it would welcome more detailed elaboration on: (a) steps made to further the partnerships between the United Nations and international financial institutions; (b) the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio reviews undertaken in 2019/20; and (c) the operationalization of the subprogramme’s “hinge” role in the United Nations system. The view was expressed that any revisiting of the budget should await review of the implementation of those reforms.

15. A delegation expressed the view that the objective of the subprogramme (para. 3.84) was formulated in terms of the work of the subprogramme, rather than the benefits from the end users' perspective, and noted that such a formulation would be expected to be reflected in the strategy section. A delegation requested an update on the ongoing review of the peacebuilding architecture, including how much progress had been made in the review process, whether the process had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and whether the report of the review would be ready by July 2020 as anticipated in the terms of reference.

16. With regard to subprogramme 7, Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, delegations welcomed the establishment of the United Nations liaison office at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo in June 2019 and expressed the view that it would be valuable for the United Nations to strengthen its cooperation with the League and that it would help to improve consultations and information-sharing between the two organizations. A delegation noted that more information and clarification was needed in the strategy section (para. 3.102) with regard to the work of the subprogramme. The same delegation observed that the performance measure for 2021 was the same for result 1 and result 2 in 2021 and expressed the view that it would be important to have different results and performance measures to demonstrate a better link between the work of the subprogramme and the expected results. A delegation noted that it was important that the subprogramme would deliver efficiently and would provide value for money as it moves to the implementation of its mandate, noting that the budget had increased significantly.

17. With regard to the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, delegations expressed appreciation for its important work in support of the achievement of a two-State solution and during a critical time for the Middle East peace process. A delegation welcomed the detail in the report on the tangible progress made towards achieving that objective by the programme during 2019, citing the example of the successful avoidance of full-scale escalation between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and the improvement in humanitarian conditions. The same delegation expressed its support for the strategy and assumptions set out in the report for 2021 and welcomed the focus included on integrating a gender perspective into peacebuilding efforts, including in support of the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). Another delegation requested further information on how the COVID-19 situation had affected the work of the Office and the fulfilment of its mandates.

18. With regard to the United Nations Office to the African Union, a delegation congratulated the Office on its very important work and welcomed the well-structured presentation of its work. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the work of the Office to strengthen the capacity of the African Union and its work with the African Union Commission. One delegation observed that the political commitment to the United Nations-African Union partnership remained strong on both sides and expressed its support for the Office's continued work with the African Union to translate that commitment into strengthened capacity of the African Union and specific, measurable outcomes. It was noted that the African Union could bring a strong comparative advantage to bear in conflict prevention and mediation, and a delegation expressed its support for the Office's work with the African Union Commission in that regard, including efforts to integrate the women and peace and security agenda into all aspects of peace and security work. The same delegation welcomed the Office's support for the African Union in connection with the African Union Mission in Somalia and noted that it was crucial that this remained a focus through the coming year as Somalia prepared for landmark elections in late 2020 and early 2021 and the transition of responsibility for security to the Somali security

forces in 2021. The delegation observed that the impact of COVID-19 on security, stability and development on the African continent might be severe, with both the primary and secondary effects exacerbating underlying stresses, vulnerabilities and shocks. It was noted that the programme might need to adapt to evolving African Union priorities as the pandemic progressed in Africa but that the Office should support the African Union to enable a conflict-sensitive COVID-19 response and recovery.

19. A delegation noted the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union in enhancing the transfer of knowledge and in that regard requested further information on how desk-to-desk meetings translated into results. Several delegations recognized the Office's work in Somalia, noting the role of the Office in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia. Clarification was sought about the Office's plans for cooperation and coordination with the African Union on the joint strategic review. A delegation noted with appreciation the coordination of the work of the Office with the Economic Commission for Africa and enquired whether similar coordination was being undertaken with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The delegation also requested more information on how the Office was coordinating with other United Nations offices that had mandates in Africa.

20. With regard to the Office of Counter-Terrorism, delegations expressed their appreciation for its continuing efforts in support of the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Security Council resolutions pertaining to counter-terrorism. Appreciation was expressed for the fairly balanced approach in the preparation of the programme, and it was emphasized that the activities of the Office should be firmly rooted in the Strategy and relevant Council resolutions, therefore predominantly representing the peace and security pillar of work of the Organization. With regard to the outline of thematic priorities, the same delegation expressed strong caution in referring to concepts that lacked universal recognition, citing in particular the notion of "violent extremism". The delegation noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions on the review of the Strategy, the Office was tasked with preventing and countering violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, but it was noted that at least five paragraphs of the programme of work of the Office contained formulations that failed to recognize that link between violent extremism and terrorism. A question was raised as to why the planned results for the Office in 2021 were only illustrated in the context of one project dedicated to the detection and countering of terrorists' travel, while all other streams of programmatic activities, including those launched in 2020, were disregarded. A delegation alluded to the ongoing external evaluation of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre Five-Year Programme (paras. 3.229 and 3.230) and in that regard noted that the process of evaluation would still be under way at the time of discussion. Therefore the findings of the evaluation could not be taken into account for the programme plan of the Office for 2021. The same delegation drew the attention of the members of the Committee to the insufficient funding of the Office from the United Nations programme budget. It was noted that extrabudgetary resources represented 96.9 per cent of the total funding for the Office, while the overall resources proposed for 2021 in the regular budget reflected no changes compared with the appropriation for 2020. The delegation expressed doubts that the overall resources proposed for 2021 provided for the full, efficient and effective implementation of the Office's mandates, taking into account the fact that extrabudgetary resources represent 96.9 per cent of the total budget of the Office and that there was a serious risk of a reduction in voluntary contributions after the COVID-19 pandemic.

21. A delegation expressed support for the work of the Office in coordinating counter-terrorism efforts across the United Nations system and encouraged the Office

to ensure the balanced and effective implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The same delegation opined that, under planned results for 2021, with respect to result 1: keeping terrorists from the skies (result carried over from 2020), a better title would have been “Preventing terrorist travel”, as travel occurs by land and by sea as well as by air, and in that regard the delegation encouraged the Office to undertake stronger efforts to extend the programme to more Member States.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**22. The Committee noted with appreciation the work undertaken by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in support of the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.**

**23. The Committee commended the United Nations Office to the African Union on its work and encouraged greater collaboration with the African Union to integrate the women and peace and security agenda into all aspects of the Office’s peace and security work.**

**24. The Committee welcomed the support of the United Nations Office to the African Union for the African Union Mission in Somalia, which would be crucial in the forthcoming national elections and the transition of responsibility for security to the Somali security forces in 2021.**

**25. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to increase coherence, synergy and coordination in the work of the Organization in fields such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and development, in accordance with the respective mandates of United Nations entities.**

**26. The Committee noted with appreciation the work of the United Nations under the subprogramme for electoral assistance in supporting requesting countries in the conduct of free, fair, inclusive, transparent and peaceful elections in conjunction with the efforts of those countries to realize the 2030 Agenda.**

**27. The Committee welcomed the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office on the promotion of nationally owned solutions and requested the General Assembly to encourage the Office to increase its partnership activity with the United Nations system, regional and subregional entities and international partners, including integrating a gender perspective into peacebuilding efforts, including in support of the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).**

**28. The Committee took note of the work done on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and welcomed the opening in June 2019 of an office in Cairo.**

**29. The Committee noted with appreciation the work done by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in support of the achievement of a two-State solution, during a critical time for the Middle East peace process.**

**30. The Committee welcomed the work undertaken by the Security Council Affairs Division to support the workings of the Council.**

**31. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:**

**Subprogramme 1  
Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts**

**Programme performance in 2019: peaceful referendum process in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea**

*Paragraph 3.19*

Delete “violent”.

**Planned results for 2021**

**Result 2: enhanced peace and security cooperation (new result)**

*Paragraph 3.25*

Replace “conflict triggers and situations” with “root causes of conflicts”.

**Subprogramme 4  
Decolonization**

**Objective**

*Paragraph 3.56*

Replace “to advance” with “to promote”.

*Paragraph 3.56*

After “the decolonization process”, add “in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly”.

**Programme performance in 2019: increased participation by representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and Member States at the regional seminar**

*Paragraph 3.61*

Replace “the advancement” with “the promotion”.

After “the decolonization process”, add “in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly”.

**Planned results for 2021**

**Result 2: increased number of specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations providing information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories (new result)**

*Paragraph 3.64*

Delete “peoples in the”.

*Paragraph 3.66*

Add “as appropriate” at the end of the last sentence.



**Deliverables****Table 3.8****Subprogramme 4: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory****A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies****Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)****4. Report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Puerto Rico****Column for 2020 planned**

Replace “–” with “1”.

**Column for 2021 planned**

Replace “–” with “1”.

**Subprogramme 6****Peacebuilding Support Office****Strategy*****Paragraph 3.87***

Replace “fragile” with “countries at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict”.

**Programme performance in 2019: Burkina Faso – an integrated approach to reduce conflict risk*****Paragraph 3.89***

Replace “non-mission setting” with “post-conflict situation”.

**Planned results for 2021****Result 1: more coherent and inclusive engagement to build and sustain peace (result carried over from 2020)*****Paragraph 3.94***

Replace “complex settings” with “conflict-affected situations”.

**Subprogramme 7****Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States****Planned results for 2021****Result 1: opening of the liaison office and enhancing engagement activities (result carried over from 2020)****Table 3.18, performance measures****Column for 2020**

Delete “violent”.

**Column for 2021**

Delete “violent”.

**Section VI.  
Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Programme of work  
Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Strategy**

***Paragraph 3.223***

**In the second sentence, after “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.**

**In the fourth sentence, after “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.**

**After “the Counter-Terrorism Centre”, add “(UNCCT)”.**

***Paragraph 3.224***

**After “preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.**

**External factors for 2021**

***Paragraph 3.225 (a)***

**After “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.**

***Paragraph 3.226***

**After “gender policy and a gender programme on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.**

**Replace “measures for preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism” with “measures undertaken in these areas”.**

***Paragraph 3.228***

**After “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.**

**Evaluation activities**

***Paragraph 3.230***

**Replace “The findings of the evaluations referenced above have been taken into account for the programme plan for 2021” with “The findings of the aforementioned self-evaluation have been taken into account for the programme plan for 2021, whereas the outcomes of the ongoing external evaluation are expected to have an impact on the preparation of a new United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre multi-year strategic programme framework”.**

***Paragraph 3.231 (b)***

**After “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.**