



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee for Programme and Coordination

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### Draft report

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#### Addendum

### Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2023

(Item 3 (a))

#### Programme 2 Political affairs

1. At its 16th meeting, on 9 June 2022, the Committee considered programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2023 and programme performance information for 2021 ([A/77/6 \(Sect. 3\)](#)).
2. The representatives of the Secretary-General for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and for the Office of Counter-Terrorism introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

#### Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the programme and the efforts made by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in relation to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at the global level. It was recognized that the Department played the central role in the Secretariat in matters related to those efforts and that it was the lead entity of the United Nations for good offices, political analysis, mediation, electoral assistance, peacebuilding support and political guidance, which were related to the Organization's efforts to strengthen, inter alia, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It was observed that the Department and its mandate of advancing peace processes and conflict prevention were of particular importance. A delegation requested the Department to continue to step up its efforts to promote the political settlement process, increase its good offices and mediation, and better fulfil its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter of



the United Nations, and in that regard, the delegation reiterated the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes, the non-use of force and State consent. It said that underdevelopment was a root cause of many problems, especially in the countries and regions in conflict, and that increasing investment in the field of development to strengthen economic and social weak links was a fundamental way to eliminate risk factors, lay a solid foundation for peace and achieve long-term stability. The view was expressed that, while the political affairs programme contained many high-priority activities, it was also one of the longest programmes, and the delegation urged the Secretariat to consider streamlining the report.

4. A delegation observed that the external factors reflected in paragraph 3.10, particularly subparagraphs (a) and (c), were far removed from what it considered to be achievable on the ground, and it questioned whether they should be more realistic.

5. A delegation observed that the Department played a key role in inter-agency coordination with the relevant United Nations bodies and entities, including United Nations country teams in situations of complex conflict. The delegation asked about the potential for strengthening the procedures for and efficiency of coordination between the Department and United Nations entities to ensure the coherence of action on conflict-sensitive issues.

6. A delegation observed that the Department of Peace Operations had presented a very broad proposed programme plan, with references to peacekeeping missions that were not financed from the regular budget, such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With regard to the proposed programme plan for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the delegation noted that paragraph 3.140 of the report contained a reference to 38 special political missions for 2023. In that regard, the delegation asked whether the budgets of special political missions, contained in the addenda to the programme document, also included proposed programme plans and whether such plans would be reviewed by the Committee. The delegation also made reference to resolution [72/199](#) on restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar, recalling that in paragraph 3 of that resolution, the General Assembly had stressed the need for ensuring accountability and transparency. In that regard, the delegation asked whether not presenting the proposed programme plans of special political missions to the Committee for its review was compatible with resolution [72/199](#).

7. With regard to subprogramme 1, Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, a delegation expressed continued support for the efforts to improve the capacity and capability of Member States and regional organizations to identify, prevent and address conflict situations. The delegation noted that the results of the subprogramme remained difficult to evaluate, as it was not possible to determine whether the role of the United Nations in a conflict area improved the situation directly. Another delegation welcomed the adaptation of the subprogramme in the face of the pandemic. The same delegation welcomed the continued focus in the subprogramme on enhancing political and operational linkages with subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office, and urged the Department to take concrete steps to strengthen the internal and external coherence of its work more broadly in the context of the new strategic plan for the period 2023–2026. The delegation noted the renewed efforts to strengthen cooperation with the Development Coordination Office and the United Nations development system, including in the development and delivery of regional strategies. A delegation said that the Department's role in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts was of paramount importance and noted that the provision of timely and accurate information, analysis and policy recommendations by the Department could play an important part in assisting the Organization in discharging its functions aimed at achieving and maintaining peace at the global level. The delegation welcomed the coordination of issues related to hate

speech and the incitement of violence with the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (reported under result 3: improved responses for countering hate speech and incitement to violence) and reiterated its support for the Office, underscoring the importance of its independent capacities. A delegation asked whether there was redundancy with regard to the work of the Department of Global Communications in relation to result 3.

8. With regard to subprogramme 2, Electoral assistance, support and appreciation were expressed for the work of the subprogramme and its contribution to strengthening electoral processes and democratic institutions. A delegation noted that United Nations electoral assistance was critical to supporting countries in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections, and it welcomed the adaptations to the subprogramme in response to the pandemic. The delegation asked whether there were changes in the Department's operating methods that it would like to continue. A delegation requested further information on the efforts made by the Department with regard to coordination with regional and subregional organizations. The delegation also asked about the lessons learned during the pandemic in relation to overcoming the digital gap and about the nature of requests received in relation to technology. With regard to the strategy section, clarification was requested regarding the reference to other underrepresented groups and those who were marginalized, as reflected in paragraph 3.35 (d). Another delegation noted that, while the report indicated that the Department had achieved its electoral assistance benchmarks for the period 2019–2021 in a number of assistance missions, no information had been provided on the results of those missions. The delegation recalled its past observations in that respect and encouraged a more rigorous results-oriented assessment of the benchmark, rather than simply providing the number of assistance missions.

9. With regard to subprogramme 3, Security Council Affairs, a delegation expressed great appreciation to the subprogramme for its continued assistance to support the functioning of the Security Council during another year of the pandemic. It was noted that the subprogramme had also served to provide substantial support for the work of the Council in its sanctions activities, including the establishment of expert panels. The same delegation expressed its appreciation for the work under the subprogramme to update and maintain a list of experts and its accomplishment in submitting all expert panel proposals to the sanctions committees by the planned target dates. With regard to planned result 1, Council members receive timely information on the implementation of sanctions measures, a delegation asked why the planned target had not been met (para. 3.51).

10. With regard to subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office, a delegation noted that the pandemic had affected the planned activities of the Peacebuilding Commission, and it commended the Commission for its work in quickly adjusting its programmes. The delegation strongly encouraged even closer collaboration across United Nations offices and agencies and welcomed efforts to broaden the scope of countries that engaged with the Commission, especially those beyond African countries. Another delegation welcomed the additional focus of the Peacebuilding Fund on transition contexts and urged the subprogramme to continue to strengthen impact-level reporting on programmes of the Fund. While the difficulty of quantifying political results was acknowledged, it was observed that some performance measures did not provide information on actual results. The examples cited were the increased investments by the Fund (programme performance in 2021) and increased support by the Fund for women and youth in peacebuilding (result 3). In that regard, it was observed that, while the numbers provided were notable, it would have been more important to provide information on what had been accomplished through such investments. The delegation said that such quantitative figures represented "objective-based management" and could not be considered "results-based

management”. It was emphasized that it was important to present expected results or the impact of the work in the proposed programme plans. A question was asked regarding the current methods of and efforts in mobilizing peacebuilding resources, and in that regard, further information was requested regarding the financing of the Fund and the related activities that the Department planned to carry out.

11. With regard to the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, a delegation expressed continued commitment to working towards a more peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the people of the Middle East, both Israelis and Palestinians. The delegation also highlighted the need for the Office to focus its efforts on advancing freedom, security and prosperity in tangible ways in the immediate term, as that would be the best means of advancing towards a negotiated two-State solution in which Israel would live in peace and security alongside a viable and democratic Palestinian State.

12. With regard to the United Nations Office to the African Union, a question was raised regarding the milestones and success markers identified within the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

13. With regard to the Office of Counter-Terrorism, a delegation expressed support for the work of the Office to coordinate counter-terrorism efforts across the United Nations system and ensure a balanced and more effective implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The delegation encouraged the Office to continue to focus on the priorities identified in the review of the Strategy and emphasized the importance of repatriating, prosecuting, rehabilitating and reintegrating foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying families; addressing evolving threats of racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism; and ensuring that counter-terrorism measures were based on the promotion of the rule of law and whole-of-society approaches. The delegation acknowledged the Office for holding a recent high-level conference on human rights, civil society and counter-terrorism and urged the Office to meaningfully and systematically incorporate civil society into all appropriate aspects of its mandate.

14. A delegation expressed appreciation to the Office of Counter-Terrorism for preparing the draft programme of work for 2023 and indicated its continued support with a view to providing the Office with all possible assistance in carrying out its core activities. While one delegation said that all activities of the Office should be funded from the programme budget, another noted its general support for the Office and its coordination function and asked why the Office would need additional staff instead of using existing capacities and avoiding duplication in parallel structures. The same delegation observed that, while counter-terrorism policies were important, they could also infringe upon human rights. In that regard, the delegation said that the Office would need to exercise oversight and mainstream human rights, and it requested further information on how the Office planned to strengthen those areas.

15. A delegation noted that it would submit recommendations, which were largely editorial, to the Committee for its consideration. With regard to paragraph 3.240 (b), the delegation asked why the reference to requests from Member States for technical assistance had not been included, as had been the case in the programme plan for 2022. With regard to the expected result in paragraph 3.242 (d), “In requesting Member States, integration of human rights norms and standards in relevant measures taken in the context of preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism”, the delegation said that the Office did not have a mandate in that regard, underlining that the Office could only raise awareness and provide assistance. It was noted that the role of ensuring that human rights norms were taken into account in accordance with international law laid with States and not with the Office.

16. With regard to cooperation with other entities at the global, regional, national and local levels (para. 3.244), it was observed that, unlike the programme plan for 2022, there were no references to international organizations such as the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Anti-Terrorism Centre of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The view was expressed that reference to those organizations must be reinstated. Several delegations requested further clarifications as to the independent meta-synthesis of evaluations referred to in paragraph 3.248. A delegation requested further clarification about the newly proposed Human Rights and Gender Section and about which programme and subprogramme it would support. The delegation observed that the Office had four pillars under the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, including one for human rights, and asked whether there would be redundancy with regard to the current organizational chart.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

17. **The Committee commended the work undertaken by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to support the prevention, management and resolution of conflict by peaceful means.**

18. **The Committee welcomed all efforts to peacefully resolve differences and disputes through dialogue and consultation and emphasized the need for and importance of cooperation in that regard.**

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

20. **The Committee welcomed the work undertaken by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to strengthen the effective role of the Peacebuilding Commission in bringing attention to peacebuilding needs, convening key actors and proposing peacebuilding strategies.**

21. **The Committee reiterated the importance of promoting political settlement processes, increasing good offices and mediation and implementing the Secretary-General's global ceasefire appeal.**

22. **The Committee emphasized that efforts needed to be taken to address both the symptoms and the root causes of terrorism and to integrate political, economic, judicial, social and other measures in striving to eradicate the root causes of and conditions conducive to terrorism and extremism.**

23. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2023, subject to the following modifications:**

#### **I. Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs**

##### **Overall orientation**

##### **Strategy and external factors for 2023**

##### ***Paragraph 3.6***

**Replace “violent conflict” with “conflict”.**

**Subprogramme 1**

**Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts**

*Paragraph 3.21 (c) (xii)*

Replace “and young people” with “as well as the full, equal and meaningful participation and constructive engagement of young people”.

*Paragraph 3.30*

Replace the second and third sentences with “In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will continue to develop guidance and tools in the context of conflict and post-conflict settings and build the capacity of United Nations personnel in agencies, funds and programmes on monitoring hate speech, identifying trends and critical challenges and designing effective counter-strategies. This will enable United Nations personnel to engage with Member States, leading to improved responses of Member States for combating hate speech and incitement to violence in conflict and post-conflict settings”.

**Subprogramme 2**

**Electoral assistance**

*Paragraph 3.35 (d)*

Replace “other underrepresented groups and those who are marginalized (General Assembly resolution 76/176)” with “those underrepresented and/or marginalized, including people in rural areas lacking infrastructure”.

**Subprogramme 6**

**Peacebuilding Support Office**

*Paragraph 3.95*

Replace “Secretary-General’s report to the General Assembly on assessed contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund” with “Secretary-General’s report to the General Assembly on investing in prevention and peacebuilding”.

**VI. Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Overall orientation**

**Strategy and external factors for 2023**

*Paragraph 3.240 (b)*

After “Directorate”, add “and to requests from various Member States”.

*Paragraph 3.244*

Replace “and international and regional organizations” with “specialized international organizations and regional organizations such as the African Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Center, the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.”.