



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited  
3 June 2024

Original: English

---

## Committee for Programme and Coordination

Sixty-fourth session

New York, 13 May–14 June 2024

### Draft report

*Rapporteur:* Mr. Noel M. Novicio (Philippines)

#### Addendum

### Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

#### Programme 8

#### Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

1. At its 4th meeting, on 14 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 ([A/79/6 \(Sect.10\)](#)).

#### Discussion

2. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and welcomed the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance information in 2023.

3. The fundamental role of the Office to support the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States given the capacity constraints many of them face was emphasized. A delegation noted the importance of the support of the Office to countries in special situations to advance their legitimate development aspirations in all the processes that take place in the organization. The significant milestones in the period 2022–2024, including the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, were highlighted.



4. A delegation recognized efforts to improve coordination across the United Nations system to ensure that the United Nations had the ability to respond effectively to the needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. It was noted that sharing lessons learned and best practices among the three groups of countries was an essential step to further improve coordination and to ensure efficient results that could help further mitigate the needs of the most vulnerable countries. Another delegation welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with the United Nations and Member States to ensure timely graduation for countries categorised as least developed countries. Additional information on the role of the Office to coordinate with United Nations development system entities, including the United Nations Resident Coordinator, was requested.

5. With respect to resource mobilization, the efforts of the Office to strengthen partnerships across the United Nations system and to mobilize private sector resources were commended and recognition of resource mobilization efforts to enable the participation of representatives of countries in special situations in conferences and meetings was expressed. A delegation remarked that the focus on mobilizing public and private finance demonstrated progress delivered through ambitious collaboration. Another delegation highlighted that its country was the third largest donor of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States and its country would support the work and programmatic activities of the Office in the future.

6. It was emphasized that the effective work of the Office was one of the significant factors for the increased efforts of the United Nations system to support the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that tangible progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in countries in special situations could lead to substantial progress towards sustainable development on a global scale. The view was expressed that the Office was a central actor to assist the most vulnerable countries, which was one of the main tasks of the United Nations. A delegation expressed its commitment to accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by ensuring the United Nations development system was better able to deliver in line with the priorities of the global South. Another delegation expressed the hope that the proposed programme plan for 2025 would help the least developed countries to achieve sustainable development, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. A delegation welcomed the work of the Office and recognized its paramount importance to ensure tailored support for countries in special situations. The same delegation also welcomed the focus of the Office on analytical work, as mentioned paragraphs 10.19 (b) and 10.32 (b), to ensure that critical data illustrate the realities of countries in special situations. Another delegation requested additional information on how the Office would achieve the planned results and its plans to work with other United Nations system entities. Gratitude was expressed for the logistical and substantive support received for organizing the Latin American regional review meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, which was held in 2023 in Asunción.

8. A delegation remarked that the Office was their country's main international partner to implement the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action and to address the challenges and structural constraints of being landlocked. The leading role of the Office in the consolidation of international efforts for supporting the landlocked developing countries was recognized. The same delegation highlighted its support for strengthened financial and human capacities of the Office, in order to enable proper deliberation of its mandate to coordinate the United Nations system's response to the needs of countries in special situations. In that regard, the delegation highlighted its countries regular voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund in support of activities by

the Office with a view of strengthening its capacities. The same delegation, as a member of the Bureau of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, committed to work with all interested parties to raise awareness of the systemic vulnerabilities of landlocked developing countries and to find joint solutions for their needs. For example, to enhance the global partnership for the better connectivity, the Office and the country jointly organized a ministerial meeting of landlocked developing countries in Yerevan on 14 and 15 December 2023, on the theme “Enhancing equitable, affordable and inclusive transport connectivity as a driver for more sustainable and resilient economies in landlocked developing countries”. The view was expressed that for landlocked developing countries in particular, the Office was important for supporting their development priorities, especially in terms of financing for development, improving connectivity and infrastructure, reducing the costs of commercial transactions, and increasing international cooperation, among other efforts aimed at achieving structural transformation. Another delegation urged Member States and the Secretariat to ensure that there were adequate resources, both for the execution of its programmes and in terms of officials, to continue to provide, and even increase, support that it provides to landlocked developing countries and other groups of countries in special situations.

9. On the matter of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, several delegations expressed their support and noted the postponement of the conference. The importance of reaching an agreement on new dates for the conference and an intergovernmental agreement on a programme of action for the next 10 years was emphasized. Clarification was sought on how the Office would implement activities and support landlocked developing countries in view of potential delays to the adoption of a new programme of action for landlocked developing countries. Another delegation noted the financial support provided by its country for organizing the conference.

10. With regards to the strategy and external factors for 2025, a delegation, speaking on behalf of a group of delegations, requested information on the approach for a renewed global partnership to strengthen structural transformation and resource mobilization to strengthen engagement in vulnerable countries, as cited in the report (paras. 10.3–10.6). With regard to paragraph 10.3, a delegation welcomed the proposal by the Office to place a sharper focus on the effective implementation in support of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022–2031. It was emphasised that the efforts to focus on the commensurate mobilization of resources for the Doha Programme of Action and for landlocked developing countries should improve access to private investment, a stated priority of the country’s Foreign Secretary and the campaign to “promote international development and address critical global challenges”. Satisfaction was expressed for meetings of the groups of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States contained in table 10.1. The importance to having the voices of countries in special situations heard in global deliberations to deepen understanding of the realities on the ground and to ensure stronger alignment of subsequent intergovernmental activity was also emphasized. The same delegation reiterated their commitment to ensure the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States had their voices heard.

11. A delegation expressed its support for subprogramme 1, Least developed countries, and indicated that it reflects a full range of measures to implement the Doha Programme of Action, including promoting economic growth, development of a modern agricultural sector and industrialization. Another delegation referred to paragraph 10.19 (a) and requested clarification on new proposals as they related to current interventions, including an online university to support graduate and post-graduate education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, an

investment support centre, a resilience-building mechanism, a Sustainable Graduation Support Facility, and a system of food stockholding for the least developed countries; and how synergies between new activities and current interventions could be evaluated and improved. A delegation asked whether the Office had considered synergies for other countries in special circumstances, such as fragile and conflict-affected States. Another delegation noted the variety of initiatives cited in subprogramme 1, least developed countries (paras. 10.21 and 10.25) to address the digital divide and requested further information about how the establishment of an online university aimed to reduce the digital divide. The same delegation queried the variance in the number of seminars on partnerships for the least developed countries to strengthen the engagement of stakeholders delivered in 2023 and planned for 2025. In particular, more information was sought on the reason the number of seminars delivered in 2023 was 15 days, which was 13 days higher than the 2023 plan of two days, and why only four days were planned for 2025.

12. On subprogramme 2, Landlocked developing countries, a delegation noted that the planned results did not correspond to the main priorities defined by the Vienna Program of Action and the main structural vulnerabilities of landlocked developing countries including expanded trade volumes, infrastructure projects in a wide range of industries, and deepened regional integration. It was noted that one of the planned results related to climate action was not mentioned in the Vienna Programme of Action and that the issues of climate and energy transition were insufficiently balanced, and that attention should be paid to all environmentally friendly energy sources, including natural gas. A delegation welcomed the lessons learned and planned change reflected in result 3 in subprogramme 2 and emphasized the importance of financing for development initiatives to enhance and develop countries' economic resilience.

13. With reference to subprogramme 3, Small island developing States, a delegation expressed that it could include additional emphasis on disaster risk reduction. A different delegation noted the importance of data driven decisions to address structural vulnerabilities and resilience of small island developing States and requested an update on the establishment of the centre of excellence that would include a small island developing States global data hub. Concern was expressed regarding some of the language contained in subprogramme 3, in particular in paragraphs 10.53 to 10.55, including table 10.14 and suggested that the language seemed to indicate that the establishment of a global data hub would provide analyses and data for use by Member States to inform decision making and development priorities related to access to finance. A delegation expressed that the language as drafted seemed to prejudge the outcome of the intergovernmental process on small island developing States, particularly ongoing discussions on a multidimensional vulnerability index and the use of such information for decision making concerning resource allocation.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**14. The Committee commended the continuous efforts of the Office in advocating strongly on behalf of the most vulnerable Member States, in supporting least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and in continuing to forge broad and durable partnerships, including within and outside the United Nations system.**

**15. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to support, consistent with its mandate, the prioritization of the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action through mainstreaming its provisions into national strategic plans and mobilizing requisite resources, as**

well as the inter-agency task force on least developed countries graduation and to further develop its cooperation with resident coordinators.

16. The Committee also recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to continue to facilitate the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action as well as decisions of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries and increase participation of landlocked developing countries in global trade and to support landlocked developing countries in improving transit transport connectivity and facilitating trade.

17. The Committee welcomed the efforts by the Office to advocate for the special case of small island developing States in achieving sustainable development and to support the preparations for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

18. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to assist small island developing States in implementing the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for small island developing States and also through the networks of national focal points and with due regard to multidimensional vulnerability, including the potential of a multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States.

19. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme budget for 2025, subject to the following modifications:

*Paragraph 10.54*

Replace the first sentence with the following:

The lesson for the subprogramme was that evidence to support the policymaking processes, in particular for sustainable development and climate change, was often reconstructed and consolidated from wider data sets, including broader developing country categories and/or geographical groupings. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will work towards assisting small island developing States in strengthening their statistical offices and to enhance support in developing national capacities for improved data collection and statistical analysis including high-quality and disaggregated data.

*Table 10.14*

Replace the text of the 2025 planned performance measure with the following:

The small island developing States global data hub provides analytics and data that Member States may use to inform decision-making process related to sustainable development and climate change, among others based on their development priorities