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Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 9

United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – strategic partnership for progress towards implementation

Commitment to the subsequent implementation plans of Agenda 2063

1. At its 14th meeting, on 22 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 9, United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – strategic partnership for progress towards implementation, commitment to the subsequent implementation plans of Agenda 2063, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 ([A/79/6 \(Sect. 11\)](#)).

Discussion

2. Delegations expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the committed work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Global Communications in preparing the proposed programme plan for 2025, which was recognized as comprehensive, responsive, coordinated and more strategic and coherent. The consistent focus of the programme on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 was welcomed.

3. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts of the United Nations to further advance its work in Africa to realize its potential for sustainable socioeconomic development, durable peace and lasting prosperity, in support of Agenda 2063. Delegations expressed the view that strong collaboration between African States and



the African Union on one hand, and the United Nations on the other hand, would advance the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the achievement of tangible results. In recognition of the important role envisaged by the United Nations in supporting Agenda 2063, delegations called upon the main stakeholders to join their efforts towards facilitating a greater contribution of the United Nations in assisting African States in implementing Agenda 2063 and achieving social and economic development. It was further stressed that the programme played a critical role in advancing the support between the United Nations and the African Union for reinforcing frameworks such as the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and strategic collaboration on various critical issues. The importance of that partnership and support could not be overemphasized.

4. Based on the second continental report on the implementation of Agenda 2063, published by the African Union Development Agency, it was emphasized that significant disparities existed in the implementation of the goals of Agenda 2063 across African countries. It was pointed out that at the end of the first year of the 10-year implementation plan 2014–2023, only 10 countries had been able to implement at least 50 per cent of the goals, while 11 countries had an implementation rate of 30 per cent or less. That indicated that the continent's debt burden continued to significantly affect the implementation of the goals and sustainable development. Delegations expressed concern that the continent's debt was at its highest level in over a decade, with over 20 low-income African countries either at risk of distress or already in distress. In that context, the proposal to address the root causes of debt unsustainability, as part of the strategy for 2025, was welcomed (para. 11.2).

5. A delegation commended the continent's commitment to accelerating the establishment of its own financial institutions to address the existing challenges of the current global financial architecture, which did not favour the continent's transformation and development needs. Another delegation stated that once issues related to mobilization of domestic resources, access to energy and digitalization of services for revenue generation were improved, Africa would not only be equipped to generate more domestic resources that could contribute to substantial financial support for its development agenda, but would also be able to achieve sustainable development that would ensure good governance and deliver peace. It was observed that targeting some of the key areas identified in consultation with African States and stakeholders, as indicated in paragraph 11.5 of the strategy for 2025, was essential for achieving Agenda 2063.

6. A delegation emphasized its support for the programme and the promotion of concepts that would strengthen the continent's role as a key global player and its development, such as mobilizing domestic resources, ensuring access to energy sources and digitalization. Noting that it was essential to include the views of African countries when adopting intergovernmental documents and decisions, the delegation indicated that it had developed close partnerships with African States. The African Union and the regional economic communities were key partners for achieving the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. Taking into account the leading role played by Africa in consolidating and accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the delegation noted the efforts made to bolster and expand open, honest and constructive partnerships with African countries. To mark the anniversary of the founding of the African Union and to ease the debt burden of African States, at the end of 2023, the delegation had forgiven debts amounting to \$23 billion. The delegation expressed its continued commitment to contributing in a tangible manner to solving such issues as energy security and misinformation and disinformation in Africa.

7. Appreciation was expressed for the shared strategic vision of the programme in driving the development of Africa with the support of the international system, with a view to becoming a continent of hope, opportunity and prosperity. In addition, the delegation stressed its support for mobilizing the United Nations system, African States, the international community and the private sector at the global and regional levels around the African Union's transformative vision. The delegation also expressed its appreciation at the fact that the key findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the first ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 had been recognized by the Executive Council of the African Union and that the formulation of the second ten-year plan had begun. The delegation stressed the need to take quick actions and to focus on implementation, which was the key to its success. The delegation, which was the world's largest developing country, emphasized its friendship and cooperation with Africa and its commitment to work with African countries to champion peace, development and cooperation.

8. Another delegation said that the proposed programme aspirations, including strengthened coordination, coherence and alignment of the United Nations presence in Africa and support for the African Union, would help to ensure a more cohesive and efficient approach to policy delivery across the continent. The significant efforts of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to strengthen the operationalization of its data function and its capacity to use data to underpin its advisory advocacy communications and monitoring functions were applauded. The delegation asked about the principal challenges hindering the implementation of commitments related to the continent's development and reiterated its steadfast commitment to getting the Sustainable Development Goals back on track in Africa.

9. It was noted that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had affected the implementation of the mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and that much work was needed to get back on track towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. A delegation emphasized that the Goals could not be achieved without the support of the entire multilateral and international system within and beyond the United Nations, and without innovative and inclusive partnerships. In addition, the participation of regional and local actors, including civil society, the private sector, academia and community leaders, would be required. The delegation called for increased participation of African youth in policymaking. Given the impact of the pandemic on programme implementation, a delegation wondered whether it was realistic to expect that the proposed programme plan would be implemented in 2025 and asked about measures to compensate for setbacks.

10. With respect to the recommendations contained in the triennial review of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), several delegations commended the conclusions of the review, as it allowed the Committee to better understand the ambitions and goals of Agenda 2063 while highlighting the continent's full engagement in achieving its destiny. According to the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa, all OIOS recommendations had been implemented. In that context, delegations asked about the improvements in programme delivery as a result of the reform of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and requested additional details on the main outcomes. In selecting the focus of the results of the three subprogrammes, delegations appreciated the relevance of that achievement and the increased integration among the subprogrammes. A delegation, noting that one of the indicators that the OIOS review had included to assess programme integration had been the establishment of reporting lines that facilitated the delivery of the programme strategy, sought clarification regarding whether the level of accountability had been reached by the Special Adviser on Africa over the programme of work and resources for the whole programme. Regarding the two mandates provided in General Assembly resolution [78/263](#), a delegation asked how those

mandates had been interpreted in relation to the proposed plan and the functions of staff, and requested additional information on the initiatives of the programme. The delegation recalled that a recommendation had been made the previous year on the establishment of structured and regular meetings with the Group of African States in New York in order to improve the coordination of the United Nations contribution to the implementation of Agenda 2063. Clarification was sought on what steps had been taken to address that recommendation and the role played by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in respect to the establishment of the two new strategic coordination mechanisms with the African Union.

11. Clarification was sought regarding the strategy for 2025 (para. 11.4), which was intended to promote a new narrative through coordinated and complementary action, and discussion in various areas, including science and technology, innovation, industrialization and trade. Specifically, information was requested on the operational modalities for consultation between the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Group of African States in New York. While the proposed establishment of a fellowship for young African scholars was welcomed (para. 11.14 (h)), a delegation asked whether that could be dealt with in a separate subprogramme, to enable the Office to better supervise the involvement of young Africans in various United Nations programmes. Additional information on the fellowship programme and details of the new activities were also requested. A delegation asked whether the African ambassadors in New York had been involved in the consultations and substantive activities in 2023. The same delegation reiterated its call for regular structured meetings with African ambassadors in New York in order to ensure the coordination of United Nations activities in support of Agenda 2063 and asked how many meetings had been held with the ambassadors in 2023, as well as what was planned for 2025. Delegations expressed concern that document [A/79/6 \(Sect. 11\)](#) was incomplete as part B of the proposed programme plan for 2025 relating to resources was missing, and said that it was important for the Committee to have the tools necessary to appreciate the efficiency of each programme.

12. Regarding subprogramme 1, Data and knowledge management for evidence-based policies and advocacy in support of Agenda 2063, a delegation expressed support for the intention to establish a fellowship programme for young African scholars and to engage in new initiatives with partners to strengthen institutional capacities and policy analysis, design and monitoring. Information was sought regarding the strategy of the Office and the new initiatives mentioned in paragraph 11.14 (h). The delegation also requested an update on the status of implementation of the recommendations adopted by the General Assembly to advance domestic resource mobilization and unlock financing for accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as mentioned in table 11.4 under result 3. Without the reform of the global financial architecture, as reflected in paragraph 11.22, the full implementation of Agenda 2063 would remain a mirage. To that end, the recognition of the hindrances to the achievement of Agenda 2063 was welcomed.

13. In relation to subprogramme 2, Regional coordination of United Nations support for the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, a delegation commended the focus on long-term strategies for debt management in the context of high and rapidly growing debt-to-GDP ratios (para. 11.35, result 3). In reference to a lesson learned regarding short-term focused fiscal policies without sufficient consideration for debt sustainability in the medium or long term, a delegation welcomed the insight into the programme's proposed choice of instruments to address that challenge, notably actions relating to policy advice and technical assistance through dialogue and workshops. Recognizing the existing capacity of local African macro policy expertise and local African leadership, as well as the short-term pressures from immediate economic priorities in African

countries, a delegation asked whether the Office had considered a model focused on catalysing systemic incentives and institutions to help drive a shift towards more strategic policymaking through changes in institutional capacity and through stimuli rather than focusing solely on advice and technical assistance. In addition, recognizing the limits to the influence of the programme in a complex environment and the many factors beyond the programme's control, in reference to figure 11.IV under result 3, clarification was sought regarding whether the Office might consider adding reduction in debt-to-GDP ratio as an important indicator of progress, in addition to the number of States that developed longer-term strategies to manage debt in an integrated manner, as currently proposed. The importance of sharing information on the African perspective and understanding of sustainable development with global audiences was emphasized.

14. With respect to subprogramme 3, Public information and awareness activities in support of Agenda 2063, clarification was sought regarding paragraph 11.44, under result 1, and the effect of climate change on African countries, given that Africa was home to the second largest forested area on the planet. In reference to paragraph 11.46, under result 2, a delegation pointed out that the results obtained in 2023 regarding increased public awareness of peace and security issues in Africa were not very good. With respect to figure 11.VII, clarification was sought regarding why the number of plays of Africa Renewal audio stories had increased from about 400 in 2023 to 7,000 in 2024, yet were expected to decline to 2,000 in 2025. Clarification was also sought regarding the plan of the Office to improve the situation in 2025. A delegation also asked about the number of Africans working in the Department for Global Communications, under subprogramme 3.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. The Committee commended the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for its successful implementation of the new management model and realignment in achieving programmatic objectives and noted the positive impact evidenced by the OIOS triennial review and the enhanced data capacities and evidence-based policy advice.

16. The Committee took note of the efforts made by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to United Nations support to Africa and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to improve coherence and synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, particularly through a consistent partnership based on the strategic objectives of the second ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063.

17. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to encourage the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to continue implementing its strategic agenda focused on six cluster areas: shifting the paradigm on financing for development; achieving sustainable development to deliver durable peace; governance, resilience and human capital; science, technology and innovation; industrialization, the demographic dividend and trade, with a focus on the African Continental Free Trade Area; and a balanced energy mix and climate adaptation.

18. The Committee appreciated that special attention would be given to promoting youth-focused policies and proposals under each cluster area, considering the crucial role that young people played in the continent's development.

19. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that the architecture of the Office of the Special

Adviser on Africa was fit for purpose and able to achieve the objectives assigned to programme 9 following the widening of the scope of cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations indicated by the change of name of the programme, as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its sixty-first session and approved by the Assembly.

20. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to request the Office of the Special Adviser and other concerned Departments and United Nations entities to work towards the acceleration of the implementation of Agenda 2063 by establishing key performance indicators and developing activities that reflected the support provided by the United Nations to Africa in areas of priority within the second ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 so that the plan reflected and strengthened the role of Africa as a key stakeholder and a vital player in the global arena.

21. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report, at its next session, on the structured and regular meetings held with the ambassadors of the Group of African States in New York in order to consolidate the coordination of United Nations activities in Africa and improve on the United Nations contribution to the implementation of Agenda 2063.

22. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the proposal submitted by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to cooperate with the African Peer Review Mechanism and further recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its eighty-second session, a review of its implementation, including recommendations on the way forward.

23. The Committee welcomed the fellowship programme for young African policymakers in the 2025 programme plan and recommended that the General Assembly approve it and request the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its eighty-second session a report on the first two years of implementation.

24. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 9, United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – strategic partnership for progress towards implementation, of the proposed programme budget for 2025.