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Rapporteur: Mr. Noel M. Novicio (Philippines)

Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 15

Economic and social development in Africa

1. At its 15th meeting, on 23 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 ([A/79/6 \(Sect. 18\)](#)). 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.51/2024/6](#)).

Discussion

2. Several delegations commended the work of the Economic Commission for Africa and the proposed programme plan for 2025. A delegation noted that the Commission promoted conditions that ensured a place of dignity for Africa in the system of global economic relations by encouraging internal regional integration and promoting international cooperation for development. Another delegation referenced its own membership of the European Union to underscore the importance of regional cooperation and the important work of the Commission. A delegation pointed to the critical role played by the Commission in promoting economic and social development by supporting its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Another delegation commended the Commission for building the capacity of member States in various areas within its mandate for inclusive, sustainable and transformative economic and social development. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the Commission's hard work in preparing the proposed programme plan and said that it highly valued the committed work of the Commission in multiple areas. Another delegation described the programme plan as solid and consistent.



3. A delegation described itself and Africa as long-term sincere friends that together had achieved fruitful cooperative results in the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The same delegation expressed support for the Commission's work and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening communication and coordination with the Commission to realize Agenda 2063 and African integration, development and prosperity.

4. A delegation said that the Commission had played a major role in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and had promoted international cooperation for the development and prosperity of Africa. The same delegation recalled that in January 2020, the Subregional Office for North Africa had held a workshop on developing regional value chains in e-mobility in Rabat, as part of a project aimed at fostering the emergence of African electric mobility by enhancing the technical know-how required in that important domain.

5. A delegation welcomed the initiatives carried out by the Commission in Cameroon. The delegation explained that the Commission had supported Cameroon in 2023 in disseminating economic statistics and in validating its economic development plan, including environmental accountability. The delegation also noted the announcement by the Commission of the provision of technical assistance to member States in 2025 to promote special economic zones.

6. A delegation commended the comprehensive nature of the programme plan and enquired about the importance of the resident coordinators and virtual meetings to the work of the Commission.

7. A delegation reaffirmed its commitment to help put the Sustainable Development Goals back on track, to ensure that the United Nations development system was better able to deliver, in line with the priorities of the global South. Accordingly, the delegation welcomed the programme's focus on ambition towards achieving the Goals. The same delegation reiterated its commitment to Africa and pledged to continue to work collaboratively with the Commission and member States to advance international cooperation towards economic, social and environmental development in Africa.

8. A delegation emphasized that achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 were of mutual interest. The delegation expressed support for the policies of the Commission and the United Nations to move the two large-scale agendas closer together in a balanced way. The same delegation noted that the 2025 programme plan reflected the Commission's resolutions, as well as the new priorities of the continent.

9. A delegation said that the situation in many parts of Africa remained unstable and that social and economic crises persisted, which related to the heavy burden of the colonial era and the divide and rule policy pursued by Western Powers in Africa. The delegation expressed its support for African States in their search for independent ways to resolve the conflicts and problems of the continent. The delegation said that it was important to abide by the principle of African solutions for African problems. The delegation added that the partners involved should be able to agree on how to move forward, and that none of the external players should try to impose solutions.

10. Underscoring the importance of an unbroken supply of food to ensure food security and socioeconomic development in Africa, a delegation said that the Russian Federation had increased deliveries of agricultural products to Africa, despite the imposition of illegal unilateral coercive measures on its exports. The delegation said that those measures had made it difficult for the Russian Federation to supply food, arrange transport logistics and make insurance and bank payments.

11. A delegation said that the BRICS group (Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa) was open to broad cooperation with African countries as part of Agenda 2063. The same delegation said that one of the priorities of the Russian Federation during its chairmanship of BRICS in 2024 was mobilization to counter the fragmentation of multilateral international trade, protectionism and illicit trade restrictions.
12. A delegation said that the Commission played a critical role in helping countries in Africa to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and urged it to continue to focus on areas of comparative advantage and to abstain from expanding its mandate. The same delegation further encouraged the Commission to continue its efforts to facilitate knowledge exchange and experience-sharing among the regional commissions.
13. A delegation noted that the Commission showed great appreciation for human capital. That had benefited Africa in the field of health, particularly in the production of medicines and vaccines.
14. With regard to the use of online and virtual modalities for service delivery, a delegation asked whether those were still relevant and effective in fulfilling mandated service delivery for the Commission.
15. A delegation took note of General Assembly resolution [78/262](#), which promoted agriculture development in Africa as a means to improve food security and self-sufficiency and address the root causes of poverty. While the delegation supported agriculture development for food sovereignty in Africa, it felt that it was equally important to mention other areas that needed to be addressed urgently.
16. A delegation said that, while it attached importance to climate adaptation and gender equality, it did not believe that climate change and gender inequality were the main causes of poverty in Africa, and that addressing those issues would not, therefore, solve the continent's debt management, poverty and sustainable development challenges. The delegation said that the root causes of poverty would be addressed through strengthening good governance, finding solutions to political instability and digitizing the African revenue generation institutions to mobilize domestic resources.
17. A delegation, noting that Africa had the potential to produce sufficient food, said that in many parts of the continent, agricultural produce perished because of the inaccessibility of farm-to-market road networks. In that connection, the delegation proposed infrastructure development, in particular rural connectivity and improved industrial technology, which the delegation believed was paramount to achieving sustainable development in Africa.
18. A delegation said that prioritizing digital technology in Africa would help to improve good governance, reduce systemic corruption, encourage public trust in the governance system, promote economic inclusion, improve service delivery, and sustain peace and security.
19. A delegation noted that most of the strategies listed in paragraph 18.3 would address the major development issues in Africa if implemented. The delegation proposed the simultaneous implementation of agricultural development and infrastructure construction, as food sovereignty could not be realized without the necessary infrastructure.
20. A delegation referred to the communiqué of the forty-fourth ordinary session of the Executive Council of the African Union and the thirty-seventh African Union Summit, which outlined many of the priorities to implement Agenda 2063, including an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. According to assessment reports

submitted by 30 African countries, progress made towards achieving “a prosperous Africa” was 37 per cent, while progress made towards achieving “an Africa of good governance that would lead to a peaceful and secure Africa” was 43 per cent, the two lowest scores of the assessment reports. The delegation concluded that more needed to be done to achieve good governance and agricultural infrastructure development in Africa to achieve Agenda 2063.

21. A delegation supported the view expressed in paragraph 18.128 that the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area, a key pillar of African integration that had created a single market for goods and services in Africa, would only be fully realized once all African countries had ratified the agreement. Currently, only 46 countries had ratified the agreement. The delegation encouraged the Commission to continue supporting those countries that had not yet ratified the agreement in order to ensure that full implementation could advance.

22. A delegation noted that the Commission had assisted Kenya in organizing a review of its implementation strategy for the African Continental Free Trade Area. The Commission had also conducted capacity-building exercises and carried out awareness-raising for the private sector on unlocking the full potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and Kenya looked forward to continued collaboration. Another delegation emphasized the importance of ensuring the functioning of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

23. On subprogramme 1, Macroeconomic policy, finance and governance, paragraph 18.18, a delegation requested details on what specifically the Commission had done to support innovative financing in national markets. The delegation also asked whether there was a correlation between the discontinuation of subprogramme 3, Private sector development and finance, and the reduction in the number of projects foreseen for 2025, as outlined in table 18.4. While noting the current difficult economic situation, as described by the Commission, the delegation was concerned that from 2023 to 2025, the number of private sector-related projects would fall from six to two, when the expectation was an increase in projects. The delegation asked how equitable support for the various subregions of the continent would be guaranteed if there were only two projects, as it seemed a choice would have to be made to select a couple of subregions, leaving other subregions behind. The delegation asked about the initiatives and specific projects that the Commission had undertaken to combat illicit financial flows and strengthen good practices for the appropriate management of assets to favour sustainable development.

24. Referring to result 1, strengthened debt management for resilient recovery, of subprogramme 1, and paragraph 18.18, and in view of the series of shocks and stark data on increased debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratios, a delegation requested further insight into the proposed instruments to address that challenge. The same delegation, while recognizing the value of the assistance proposed as it related to policy advice, technical assistance, publications and platforms for dialogue, questioned the existing capacity of local African macro policy expertise and leadership. The delegation recognized the short-term pressures on member States resulting from their immediate economic priorities as well as the financial constraints of the programme and asked whether the proposed interventions alone were likely to address the root of the problem or shift the dial on high debt-to-GDP ratios. The delegation asked whether the Commission 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 stimuli, rather than focusing solely on advice and technical assistance.

25. A delegation highlighted the limited influence of the programme in a highly complex and difficult environment and in view of the numerous factors beyond the

programme's control, and asked whether the Commission might consider targeting a reduction in debt-to-GDP ratio as the most important indicator of progress. The delegation said that the number of member States that developed long-term strategies to manage debt in an integrated manner did not necessarily readily capture the effectiveness or impact of those strategies.

26. A delegation noted that the issue of debt in Africa was critical and that the gap in domestic resource mobilization in many countries needed to be bridged. The delegation further noted that most capital markets in Africa remained underdeveloped, with few listed securities and financial products. The delegation expressed its keen interest in hearing about the outcome of the implementation of the lessons learned, as mentioned in paragraph 18.27, to realize the potential that was foreseen in subprogramme 1.

27. A delegation noted that regional integration in Africa played a vital role in driving economic growth, promoting peace and stability, facilitating trade and fostering collaboration. The delegation felt that it was a key strategy for harnessing the continent's potential and achieving sustainable development for the benefit of all African nations. Another delegation noted that Kenya was grateful to have benefited already from some of the strategies proposed in subprogramme 2, Regional integration and trade.

28. A delegation noted that the 2025 programme strategy on supporting deeper regional integration and socioeconomic development was of particular importance. The delegation said that it had always championed co-development in Africa and, in that regard, referenced its country's partnership with the Royal Atlantic Initiative to promote access to the Atlantic Ocean for the Sahel States, in addition to several other important initiatives that fostered regional integration and development in Africa.

29. A delegation requested more information on risk management in the context of the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa.

30. On subprogramme 5, Technology, climate change and natural resources management, a delegation welcomed the Commission's leadership in producing the first regional carbon registry for the Congo Basin Climate Commission, but wondered whether the new subprogramme 5, Climate, food security and natural resources, green and blue economy, was actually less ambitious than the previous one. Referencing table 18.10, rows B.6, B.7, B.17 and B.19, the same delegation expressed concern that projects to strengthen national capacities in negotiations on carbon credits, the green economy and the climate fund would either stagnate or be reduced. That was extremely concerning as the climate crisis required that strong measures be taken.

31. A delegation expressed support for the Commission's efforts to finalize and adopt a protocol on climate change and to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing regional trade while mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The delegation also emphasized its support for the Commission's focus on the sustainable use of natural resources, including through technical assistance for food systems transformation and for value addition of minerals critical to the energy transition.

32. The same delegation was interested in hearing more about the Commission's efforts to overcome limited financing for women by highlighting investment needs to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, and asked whether that was being done on a country-by-country basis through the Commission or whether there was a regional approach.

33. On subprogramme 6, Gender equality and women's empowerment, a delegation requested justification for the decrease in the number of workshops for knowledge dissemination.

34. With regard to subprogramme 7, Subregional activities for development, a delegation enquired about the extent to which the subregional activities correlated with the substance of other subprogrammes, how consistency and coherence was guaranteed, and how risks of duplication were avoided.

Conclusions and recommendations

35. **The Committee commended the Economic Commission for Africa for its efforts in promoting the economic and social development of Africa and supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, and underlined the importance of the Commission’s role in fostering regional integration and promoting international cooperation for the development of Africa.**

36. **The Committee commended the Commission’s advisory role to member States in promoting intra-African trade, industrialization and integration, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that the Commission’s activities continued in line with the priorities of the African Union’s second ten-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063.**

37. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to encourage the mobilization of resources promised by the international community within the fight against climate change in support of the implementation of technical cooperation projects on the continent.**

38. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to support the Commission in its efforts to combat over-indebtedness in member States, through greater involvement of the private sector in the search for innovative financing on national markets.**

39. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa, of the proposed programme budget for 2025, subject to the following modifications:**

Subprogramme 5

Climate, food security and natural resources, green and blue economy

Title

After “Climate” add “change”.

After “natural resources” delete “, green and blue economy”.