



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited  
12 June 2024

Original: English

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## Committee for Programme and Coordination

Sixty-fourth session

New York, 13 May–14 June 2024

### Draft report

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#### Addendum

### Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

#### Programme 19

#### Economic and social development in Western Asia

1. At its 9th meeting, on 17 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 ([A/79/6 \(Sect.22\)](#)). 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. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the programme and for the work carried out by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

3. The view was expressed that the Commission played a crucial role in promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region by supporting Member States in the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. A delegation expressed that its country valued all six subprogrammes of the programme and welcomed the programme's focus on ambition towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the Commission's important work for the region but also for the United Nations as a whole, and expressed that the Commission could count on its country's support. A different delegation noted that subprogrammes included in the proposed programme plan for 2025 fit the needs of Western Asia and the priorities of Member States of the Arab region.



4. The importance of measuring tangible programme results through the implementation of strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound indicators in the 2025 plan for ESCWA was reaffirmed. The same delegation expressed appreciation for the commitment of ESCWA to equitable and inclusive social development, with particular consideration of the needs of persons in vulnerable situations, such as women, young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities.
5. A delegation reiterated its country's commitment to Western Asia and expressed that it would continue to work collaboratively with the Organization and Member States to advance international cooperation towards economic, social and environmental development.
6. Appreciation was expressed for the fruitful cooperation efforts deployed by the Commission on the wide range of issues related to advancing social and economic development. The same delegation recalled that its country spared no effort for engaging in efficient active cooperation in favour of a solidarity-based multilateralism. The delegation noted that in 2023, its country cooperated with the Commission in several fields, including the fields of technology and innovation. In the same context, the delegation expressed that its country had been a pioneer on different levels, from cybersecurity and agricultural technology to green energy; it had also promoted green industrialization through small and medium-sized enterprises and the export sector. The same delegation expressed the view that the Commission remained a brilliant source of expertise and reliable data availed through the different policy simulation tools and knowledge products. The delegation reiterated its country's full support for the Commission and its planned activities and expressed that its country and ESCWA would continue to capitalize on their fruitful cooperation in a range of domains.
7. A delegation noted that the ESCWA team had to work in an extremely difficult environment, marked by political and military conflicts, severe economic crises, and deep social contrasts, and the need for collaboration with various kinds of local partners, which presented multiple challenges to the Commission; in this regard, the delegation congratulated ESCWA for the excellent work done.
8. A question was asked as to what were the opportunities that the Commission considered in the preparation of its programme of work for 2025.
9. A question was also raised as to whether the use of hybrid and virtual modalities in providing meetings was still relevant in fulfilling the mandated service delivery. Another delegation sought further information as to how important hybrid meetings were for the Commission's work with regard to inclusivity, in order to have the participation of as many Member States and programmatic actors as possible.
10. A delegation expressed that its country was ready to cooperate with the Commission on matters of common interest to ESCWA and the delegation's country. The same delegation recalled the expression of the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on the cooperation between ESCAP and ESCWA in addressing the problem of sand and dust storms in the region and sought further information as to how important the related activities, which were vital to the countries in the region, were for ESCWA.
11. In the context of sharing best practices with other regional commissions, a delegation expressed the view that it would be good if ESCWA developed some capacity for work as a think tank. In that connection, the delegation noted, for instance, that the economic and social development of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean had benefited a lot from that kind of work done by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and expressed that it would like to

see such benefits spread to Western Asia, through production of knowledge, serious policy analysis and recommendations.

12. Further information was sought on the Commission's cooperation and coordination with the resident coordinator system.

13. With regard to paragraph 22.20 under subprogramme 1, Climate change and natural resource sustainability, a delegation sought further update on the results of five Member States presenting their water and climate commitments to potential donors, multilateral development banks and climate funds, and whether funding had been identified or confirmed. The same delegation, in reference to paragraph 22.26, expressed that it welcomed the proposal to develop a methodology and tool for comprehensive assessments of food systems and their sustainability, with a focus on outputs and environmental impact, and sought further information as to how widely that might be applied and on what timescale.

14. In reference to paragraph 22.59 under subprogramme 4, Statistics, the information society and technology, a delegation congratulated those involved in the development and use of a harmonized consumer price index and sought further information as to whether the index might be useful more widely, including internationally.

15. With regard to subprogramme 6, Governance and conflict prevention, a delegation outlined the importance of the subprogramme and expressed the view that, taking into account the specifics of the region, governance should be a transversal issue common for all subprogrammes. In that connection, it was recommended that in the future all subprogrammes include elements related to governance which would increase the effectiveness and the impact of all activities.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

16. **The Committee commended ESCWA for its efforts in promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region, in accordance with its mandate.**

17. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme budget for 2025.**