



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
13 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 7 Economic and social affairs

1. At its 4th meeting, on 14 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 (A/79/6 (Sect.9)). 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. Appreciation for the development of the programme plan for 2025 and the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals was expressed by all delegations that spoke during the meeting. A delegation confirmed trust in the Assistant Secretary-General of the Department, and his team, and recognized that the Department was the key actor driving forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the main entity for economic and social affairs. Another delegation applauded the initiatives implemented by the Department to support those in need and help the global community overcome challenges, such as the pandemic, high cost of living, climate change and other factors affecting quality of life; as well as for the Department's continued commitment to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, gender equality and women's empowerment. The Department's attention to the impact of emerging and ongoing trends, policies and programmes on the poor and most vulnerable communities, especially on women and girls, was also praised, as was the



work done to attract sustainable investment to the poorest countries. Another delegation hoped that the Department would continue to provide strong support to the United Nations in the area of development on the basis of its abilities and functions. The Department was further encouraged to continue to advance its efforts based on the agreed mandates and priorities of the Member States.

3. The discussion then turned to challenges. Delegates were reminded of the 2015 adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that the halfway mark to 2030 was last year in 2023. The discussion quickly highlighted that while progress had been made, there were still challenges in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, which were particularly steep for developing countries, many of which were highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Another delegation pointed out that development progress that had been achieved in the field of hunger poverty and inequality had been undone by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the consequences of the conflicts and wars around the world.

4. While these challenges were huge and concerned the whole world, countries in the global South were particularly affected. It was admitted that additional efforts were urgently needed to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. A commitment was made to getting the Sustainable Development Goals back on track, ensuring the United Nations development system was better able to deliver in line with the priorities of the global South through a cohesive, coherent and transparent approach that reflected global South priorities. In that regard, a review of the effective coordination between the Department, the regional economic commissions, and other United Nations system entities, such as the regular programme of technical cooperation and the United Nations Development Account was suggested by a delegation, to ensure greater efficiency and value-add between new and existing initiatives.

5. A delegation appreciated the efforts at the national level to invest in data availability and inclusivity and welcomed the initiative to expand the data indicator base for the Sustainable Development Goals as an asset for more effective analysis and ultimately more effective policy delivery. Monitoring and evaluation was also raised, with a delegate maintaining that the implementation of internal oversight and the strengthening of accountability not only served as self-imposed pressure for continuous work improvement, but also as a way to efficiently utilize valuable resources provided by Member States.

6. The programme plan for 2025 then became the focus of the discussion, with a delegation drawing attention to the inclusion of unclear terminology with regards to vulnerable portions of the population and proposed avoidance of its use in the programme. The same delegation requested that General Assembly resolution [78/162](#), entitled “Development cooperation with middle-income countries”, and General Assembly resolution [78/135](#), entitled “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, be included in the section on legislative mandate under subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support and coordination for sustainable development. A reference was also made to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution [78/165](#), entitled “Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The delegation maintained a cautious approach to the excessive use of the word “crises” and proposed that it be replaced by “challenges” or “risks” in paragraphs 9.20, 9.21, 9.26, 9.59, 9.85, 9.86; in planned result 2 in subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support and coordination for sustainable development; and tables 9.2 and 9.3, citing that the language, which while appropriate for political declarations, could create an artificial focus concerning the practical work of the Department, and referred to the more balanced language in table 9.23 and in the planned result for 2024, where the term “challenges” was used. It was suggested the Department adhere to the existing rules

and procedures concerning the involvement of non-governmental participants in intergovernmental negotiations, referencing table 9.22.

7. The United Nations strategy on water and sanitation, mandated by General Assembly resolution [77/334](#), entitled “Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028”, following the 2023 conference on the matter, was raised by a delegation with an expectation that the important mandate would be addressed under subprogramme 3, Sustainable development, and referenced under other programmes per its cross-sector relevance to all member of the UN-Water and the United Nations development system at all levels.

8. Increased visibility for the private sector at the Sustainable Development Forum was proposed. In that context, the delegation requested additional information regarding paragraph 9.46 under subprogramme 3, Sustainable development, on the holding of the Sustainable Development Goals business forum and inquired as to how the initiative would relate to the Sustainable Development Goals Investment Fair being organized for the sidelines of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

9. A delegation asked about a reference, in the programme of work under subprogramme 6, Economic analysis and policy, to resolution [78/162](#), entitled “Development cooperation with middle-income countries”, which mandated the development of a response plan for the needs of middle-income countries, as the delegation was ready to propose relevant language under that subprogramme.

10. A delegation commended the work under subprogramme 7, Public institutions and digital government, as well as the work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and the Internet Governance Forum. The same delegation questioned the focus of the work on enhancing capacity, specifically for one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, namely combating climate change, which was evident in paragraphs 9.102 and 9.103 and in table 9.23, and inquired if the Department received requests from Member States to improve the quality of their State institutions’ work. The delegation offered the example of combating poverty or ensuring dignified work for their citizens. In the same vein, the 2022 performance measure under result 3: national implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to enhance trust in public institutions in table 9.24, the same delegation requested that the reference to “public officials providing long terms needs of future generations” be replaced with language agreed by Committee for Programme and Coordination, such as “long term sustainable development objectives”.

11. The topic of forests under subprogramme 8, Sustainable forest management, was raised by a delegation with reference to the midterm evaluation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the international arrangement on forests, the recent nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the declaration of the high-level segment of the session. The delegation stated concerns that the nineteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests indicated that the United Nations was “off track” to reach the global forest goals and forest related targets of the 2030 Agenda, reiterated their cruciality for addressing many global challenges, and proposed including the strategic plan for forests in the programme plan for 2025, perhaps under paragraph 9.8 (d) by inserting “The United Nations strategic plan on Forests” after the words “climate action, financing for sustainable development”.

12. The delegate expressed that the United Nations strategic plan for Forests, adopted by the General Assembly, was unique and addressed the whole United Nations system and other international organizations urging for more coherence concerning international forest related activities on conservation, restoration and the

sustainable management of forests, referenced in paragraph 9.9 as the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The delegation further suggested that international coordination within the Department, given its cross-cutting role on all the Sustainable Development Goals, not only Sustainable Development Goal 15, could get the plan back on track and upscale coherent and global action on forests.

13. The importance of the Department's work on forests was reiterated by another delegate, who noted the assessment of the contribution of forests to counter climate change cited in paragraph 9.112.

14. The Department was asked how the proposed work of subprogramme 9, Financing for sustainable development, could bring more focus to that issue, given that there was a commonly known vast and growing financing gap in developing countries.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. **The Committee commended the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for its work supporting the development pillar of the United Nations and welcomed its efforts in coordinating actions for eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities within and among countries, accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and promoting opportunities and progress towards sustainable development for all, leaving no one behind.**

16. **The Committee emphasized the role a programmatic and results-based approach to budgeting played in ensuring accountability for delivering results and noted the need for improvements in the Department's programme plan to ensure planned results and performance indicators were more specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.**

17. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Department to continue to use technology in its work.**

18. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Department to ensure that the follow-up and review of progress in the implementation of the sustainable development commitments was coherent and consistent with the existing mandate of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.**

19. **The Committee reiterated the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the operational activities, outputs and outcomes of the Department in line with the relevant mandates.**

20. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2025, subject to the following modifications:**

Overall orientation

Paragraph 9.3

After "in addition to longer-term threats and challenges, such as", insert "extreme poverty, hunger,".

Paragraph 9.7

After "countries in Africa," insert "as well as middle-income countries,".

Paragraph 9.8 (c)

Replace “intersectional” with “comprehensive”.

Paragraph 9.8 (d)

After “climate action, financing for sustainable development,”, insert “the United Nations strategic plan for forests, ” .

Paragraph 9.8 (e)

Replace “with a focus on countries in Africa and countries in special situations” with “with a focus on countries in Africa and countries in special situations, as well as middle-income countries”.

Paragraph 9.13

Replace “the Department promotes inclusive social and economic development for all” with “the Department promotes inclusive development for all, in all its three dimensions”.

Legislative mandates**Subprogramme 6****Economic analysis and policy***General Assembly resolutions***Insert:**

78/135 Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries

78/162 Development cooperation with middle-income countries

Subprogramme 1**Intergovernmental support and coordination for sustainable development***Paragraph 9.20 (f)*

Replace “crises” with “shocks, crises and challenges”.

Paragraph 9.21 (c)

Replace “crises” with “shocks, crises and challenges”.

Subprogramme 6**Economic analysis and policy***Paragraph 9.85 (f)*

Replace “shocks and crises” with “shocks, crises and challenges”.

Insert new paragraph 9.85 (k), reading:

Advance the elaboration of a specific response plan, aimed at better addressing the multidimensional nature of sustainable development and facilitating sustainable development cooperation and coordinated and inclusive support to middle-income countries based on their specific challenges and diverse needs.

Paragraph 9.86 (b)

Replace “shocks and crises” with “shocks, crises and challenges”.

Subprogramme 7

Public institutions and digital government

Table 9.24

Column “2022 (actual)”

Replace “that balance the short-term needs of people today with the longer-term needs of future generations” with “that seek to implement long-term sustainable development”.
