



# Economic and Social Council

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Agenda item 15

**Regional cooperation**

## Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Addendum\*

### Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council: Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

#### *Summary*

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains information on the resolutions and decisions adopted or endorsed by the Economic Commission for Africa at its fifty-sixth session, held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, (hybrid) on 4 and 5 March 2024, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its eightieth session, held in Bangkok from 22 to 26 April 2024, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its thirty-first session, held in Cairo from 16 to 18 December 2023. The full texts of the resolutions and decisions are available at [www.un.org/regionalcommissionsnyoffice/content/un-regional-commissions-summaries-work-resolutions-and-decisions](http://www.un.org/regionalcommissionsnyoffice/content/un-regional-commissions-summaries-work-resolutions-and-decisions).

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## **Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council**

### **A. Economic Commission for Africa**

1. At its fifty-sixth session, held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, (hybrid) on 4 and 5 March 2024, the Economic Commission for Africa adopted a ministerial statement, approved four resolutions relating to its programme of work and a decision, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

#### **Summary of the ministerial statement**

2. The Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development deliberated on the theme, “Financing the transition to inclusive green economies in Africa: imperatives, opportunities and policy options”.

3. In the ministerial statement, the Conference of Ministers commended the Economic Commission for Africa for successfully implementing its work programme for 2023, and requested the Commission to continue to work closely with other entities of the United Nations system and with the African Union Commission to accelerate the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 and the review of and reporting on that implementation, in particular with regard to the second 10-year implementation plan (2024–2033) of Agenda 2063.

4. The Conference of Ministers called upon members of the Commission to accelerate the use of green, blue and sustainability bonds by addressing persistent barriers to their issuance and hindrances to market development, and encouraged members of the Commission to facilitate the issuance of regional blue bonds through regional special purpose vehicles for securing the necessary funding for the Great Blue Wall initiative.

5. The Conference of Ministers called upon the Commission and its partners to systematically support the sustainable debt coalition in contributing to efforts to tackle the foreign debt challenges faced by Africa and the reform of the global financial architecture, and called upon the Africa high-level working group on the reform of the global financial architecture to intensify its work. The Conference requested the Commission to implement the conclusions of the declaration made at the high-level ministerial meeting held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 12 October 2023, on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, in which African ministers called for an equitable global financial architecture.

6. The Conference of Ministers called upon members of the Commission, in collaboration with the African Union, to redouble their efforts towards unleashing the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area to foster cross-border trade and investment, develop regional value chains and accelerate green industrialization. The Conference requested the Commission and its development partners to extend targeted and country-specific capacity-development support to African countries to enable them to scale up the mobilization of development and climate finance.

7. The Conference of Ministers also called upon multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions to scale up funding, ensure easy access to such funding and mobilize climate finance from various sources, and encouraged them to define a new vision for the purpose of adequately addressing the global climate emergency. The Conference invited the Commission and its development

partners to enhance their support for African countries in developing their capacity in the operations of the carbon market, coordinating the development of a high-quality and trustworthy African carbon credit market and leveraging their vast renewable energy resources, tropical forests, peatlands and marine ecosystems to develop their economies, and requested the Commission to accelerate its work to operationalize the carbon market and enhance understanding among policymakers on how the market operates.

8. The Conference of Ministers also called upon all members of the Commission to support the work of the intergovernmental committee established by the General Assembly to formulate an international framework convention on international tax cooperation.

### **Resolution 2024/1**

#### **Strengthening tax cooperation for enhanced domestic resource mobilization**

9. The Conference of Ministers welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 78/230, in which the Assembly emphasized the need to develop a United Nations framework convention on international tax cooperation, in order to strengthen international tax cooperation and make it fully inclusive and more effective.

10. The Conference of Ministers requested the Economic Commission for Africa, in partnership with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other development partners to build the capacity of African countries, in particular in the areas of tax policy and administration, international tax cooperation, governance of tax expenditure, debt analysis and management, and countering all forms of illicit financial flows. It also requested the Commission, in partnership with its members, the African Union Commission and regional development partners, to organize regional consultations to identify the main development priorities for Africa in preparation for a fourth international conference on financing for development.

11. The Conference of Ministers also called upon all members of the Commission to support the efforts of the intergovernmental committee created pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/230 and to work constructively with all States Members of the United Nations towards agreeing on the terms of reference for the negotiation of a framework convention on international tax cooperation. The Conference called upon the international community to take appropriate action at the national, regional and global levels to ensure that illicit financial flows are treated as a system-wide challenge at the global level.

### **Resolution 2024/2**

#### **2025 programme plan and budget**

12. The Conference of Ministers adopted the 2025 programme plan and budget of the Commission, in which the proposed reorganizational changes, as well as the objectives and the most important expected results and deliverables for all subprogrammes, were highlighted. The 2025 programme plan and budget included the new subprogramme 3, on technology, innovation, connectivity and infrastructure development, the new subprogramme 5, on climate, food security and natural resources, green and blue economy, and the renamed subprogramme 1, on macroeconomic policy, finance and governance.

### **Resolution 2024/3**

#### **Reorganization of the work of the Economic Commission for Africa**

13. The Conference of Ministers authorized the Commission to reorganize its programmes by combining the current Technology and Innovation Section with the

Energy, Infrastructure and Services Section, thereby creating the new Technology, Innovation, Connectivity and Infrastructure Development Division, comprising the Emerging and Frontier Technologies, Innovation and Digital Transformation Section and the Connectivity and Infrastructure Development Section. It also approved the redistribution of the sections that make up the current Private Sector Development and Finance Division and the integration of their work as a cross-cutting priority and responsibility for all the programmes of the Commission.

14. The Conference of Ministers also authorized the realignment of the work of the Energy, Infrastructure and Services Section within the Private Sector Development and Finance Division, and decided that the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division would be reconstituted to become the Climate, Food Security and Natural Resources, and Green and Blue Economy Division.

15. The Conference of Ministers further authorized the undertaking of the work of the Innovative Finance and Capital Markets Section within the Macroeconomic and Governance Division, which would henceforth be renamed the Macroeconomic Policy, Finance and Governance Division, and the integration of the work of the Agriculture and Business Enabling Environment Section into the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division as reconstituted above.

16. The Conference of Ministers noted that the proposed reorganization would result in a net zero increase in the number of staff members, sections and divisions, while enabling the Commission to improve its value proposition and deliver on the prospect of an African transition to sustainable socioeconomic development.

#### **Resolution 2024/4**

##### **Optimizing African tax regimes concerning information and communications technology for economic growth and job creation**

17. The Conference of Ministers invited members of the Commission to strengthen their data-collection efforts in order to facilitate the formulation of evidence-based policies and the assessment of the impact of those policies.

18. The Conference of Ministers urged the secretariat and its partners to continue their support for members of the Commission in creating a conducive environment for the growth of the information and communications technology sector in Africa, to conduct additional analytical policy studies to support the formulation of evidence-based recommendations on the optimization of taxation frameworks for information and communications technology, and to provide technical assistance, capacity-building and policy guidance, with a view to establishing conducive regulatory environments, promoting innovation, enhancing digital skills, facilitating access to finance for information and communications technology ventures and strengthening institutional capacity for effective governance and policymaking in relation to information and communications technology.

#### **Decision 2024/100**

##### **Date, venue and theme of the fifty-seventh session**

19. The Conference of Ministers decided to hold the fifty-seventh session of the Commission at Commission headquarters in Addis Ababa in March 2025, under the theme “Advancing the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area: proposing transformative strategic actions”, also covering the issues of digitalization, technology, food security and energy transformation.

## **B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

20. At its eightieth session, held in Bangkok from 22 to 26 April 2024, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted four resolutions relating to its programme of work, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

### **Resolution 80/1**

#### **Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific**

21. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific encouraged all its members and associate members to strengthen regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation and to work together closely for the promotion of research and development in digital technologies and the fostering of human development and a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

22. The Commission encouraged members and associate members to work towards closing digital divides and to promote digital inclusion by addressing the challenges associated with secure access, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills and by ensuring that the benefits of new technologies are available to all. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate regional cooperation with a view to fostering digital innovation for sustainable development and promoting inclusive digital economies and societies by making full use of the potential of United Nations agencies and other organizations, and to strengthen support to members and associate members to identify, develop and implement enabling policy and regulatory environments for promoting scalable and integrated digital solutions that accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the Action Plan for Implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Initiative, 2022–2026.

23. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to issue a biennial publication for policymakers on trends, challenges and opportunities related to promoting digital innovations for sustainable development, and to report to the Commission at its eighty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

### **Resolution 80/2**

#### **Sustainable development in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States**

24. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to strengthen support to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Asia and the Pacific in their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the provision of analytical products and capacity-building initiatives, to increase capacity-building programmes on developing models and tools for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and to follow up on and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level.

25. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to align support to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Asia and the Pacific with the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, and to report to the Commission at its eighty-third session on progress made in implementing the resolution.

**Resolution 80/3****Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific**

26. The Commission endorsed the Ministerial Declaration on Building a Secure, Sustainable and Interconnected Energy Future for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/APEF(3)/6/Add.1) adopted at the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, held in Bangkok and online on 19 and 20 October 2023.

**Resolution 80/4****Clarifying the reports on meetings held under the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

27. The Commission requested the secretariat, in order to facilitate discussions among members and associate members, to circulate to all members and associate members, in a timely manner, any draft texts for consideration at the session, along with any relevant supporting background information, in accordance with rule 2 and without prejudice to rules 31 and 32 of the rules of procedure of the Commission. It also decided to review the working methods of the committees and other bodies subsidiary to the Commission, as appropriate and as necessary, in the context of the midpoint review of the conference structure of the Commission, to be conducted at its eighty-first session.

**C. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

28. At its thirty-first session, held in Cairo from 16 to 18 December 2023, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia adopted six resolutions relating to its programme of work, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

**Resolution 342 (XXXI)****Adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

29. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia considered and adopted the reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions held in the period between the thirtieth and thirty-first sessions of the Commission, which were not presented to the Executive Committee, and called upon the secretariat of the Commission to follow up on the implementation of recommendations.

**Resolution 343 (XXXI)****Programme plan of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia for 2025**

30. The Commission adopted the proposed programme plan for 2025 set forth in document [E/ESCWA/31/15](#) and called upon the Executive Secretary to take the measures necessary to ensure the full implementation of the programme and the periodic reporting thereon.

**Resolution 344 (XXXI)****Frequency of the sessions of the Committee on Social Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

31. The Commission reviewed the report of the Committee on Social Development on its fourteenth session ([E/ESCWA/C.2/2023/7/Report](#)), especially recommendation (j) made to the secretariat of the Commission to work towards holding annual meetings of

the Committee on Social Development and decided that the Committee on Social Development would hold its sessions annually rather than biennially, taking effect in 2025.

**Resolution 345 (XXXI)**

**War on Gaza and support for the Palestinian people**

32. The Commission called upon member States to provide support to the Commission Resource Platform to Support the Palestinian People to implement activities that contribute to strengthening Palestinian capacity to confront and overcome the economic and social impact of the occupation, and requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the resolution and to report on progress to the Commission at its thirty-second session.

**Resolution 346 (XXXI)**

**Effective economic governance and modernization of public administration**

33. The Commission called for adequate attention to be given to enhancing the resilience of national institutions in times of crises, wars, conflicts and occupation, and during periods of recovery from them, and in the least developed countries. It also called for investment in capacity-building and training programmes to enhance the skills of stakeholders involved in the mining sector, including Governments and regulatory bodies, so as to support the implementation of sustainable and responsible governance practices.

34. The Commission called for strengthening bilateral and regional collaboration between organizations concerned with competition and consumer protection in member States, and harmonizing competition and consumer protection laws and policies. It encouraged continued capacity-building, benefiting from technical support, and enhancing knowledge exchange and learning from peers and best practices in the field of economic governance, including competition, consumer protection and the legislative and regulatory structure for investments.

35. The Commission also requested the secretariat to, among others, support the modernization of public administration, provide technical support to member States in developing economic governance institutions, continue organizing the Arab Competition Forum annually to build knowledge and capacity, and exchange experiences, and requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the resolution and to report on progress to the Commission at its thirty-second session.

**Resolution 347 (XXXI)**

**Arab Vision 2045**

36. The Commission welcomed the “Arab Vision 2045: striving to fulfil aspirations through deliberation, determination and action” as an ambitious development vision that supports Arab countries in their national development paths and in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, after taking into account the comments received from member States within the previous three months and updating it with a view to adopting it.