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Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2026

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 15

Economic and social development in Africa

1. At its 13th meeting, on 20 May 2025, the Committee considered programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa, of the proposed programme plan for 2026 and programme performance in 2024 (A/80/6 (Sect. 18)).

Discussion

2. Delegations commended the work of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). A delegation said that the Commission's programme facilitated the establishment of conditions that ensured that the African continent played a role in the system of global socioeconomic relations and encouraged intraregional integration for the development of Africa.

3. The importance of exchanging knowledge, experiences, lessons learned and best practices among all of the regional commissions was emphasized, and ECA was strongly encouraged to continue its focus on areas of economic prosperity. The same delegation discouraged the Commission from expanding its mandates or duplicating the work of other United Nations or multilateral bodies.

4. A delegation applauded the structure of the programme plan because it emphasized areas such as debt sustainability, innovation in development financing, data collection and compilation, human capacity development and challenges faced by middle-income countries.



5. A delegation observed the critical role played by the Commission in providing innovative solutions, together with demand-driven and tailor-made policy and technical advice, that strengthened the social and regional economic resilience of States members of ECA. The delegation supported the strong collaboration between the Commission and the African Union Commission and regional economic communities, to promote intra-African and interregional trade, which it believed would increase the number and momentum of African countries graduating to middle-income status.

6. The Commission was commended for its increased investment in climate action for enhanced national resilience, promotion of the circular economy, and harnessing of the green and blue economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction.

7. A delegation expressed the view that grants should be provided to give young researchers the opportunity to shore up their skills, to conduct research and to assist with raising awareness.

8. A delegation observed that there was a wave of resistance to neocolonialism in trade, economic and financial practices, which prevented African countries from fully benefiting from their wealth of natural resources. The delegation further observed that the establishment of mechanisms that removed obstacles to expeditious development, industrialization and job creation in Africa with African resources was now fully under way. In that regard, the delegation welcomed the successful launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area and objected to measures that led to greater fragmentation in global trade, greater protectionism and unfair trade. The delegation stated that those measures ran counter to the rules of the World Trade Organization, and they politicized international economic relations.

9. A delegation noted that it valued its trade with African States, in particular in agricultural products, food and fertilizers, despite the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, and indicated that it looked forward to continued cooperation to boost agricultural production in Africa.

10. Attention was drawn to the ongoing efforts to define the treaty and legal framework that governed a number of trade-related areas, and to deepening cooperation in areas such as science, technology and innovation. Industrial cooperation in mining, transport, logistics-related infrastructure, digitization and technology transfer was also highlighted.

11. A delegation advocated for increased efforts to consolidate approaches to international nature conservation and climate issues through specialized United Nations platforms by ensuring the right of every State to determine its optimal tools and mechanisms for rational use of the environment, taking into account specific national features. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to stepping up efforts at the global level to combat desertification, land erosion and drought, enhancing population resilience to ecosystem changes and ensuring access to water in order to foster socioeconomic development and eradicate poverty.

12. A delegation described itself as a true friend of Africa with a long-term commitment to cooperation with the continent within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The delegation reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening engagement and coordination with the African Union Commission in support of the implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, thereby contributing to the integration, development and prosperity of Africa.

13. A delegation welcomed the views expressed at the first African Union Conference on Debt, while another noted the challenges faced by African middle-income countries and expressed appreciation for the initiative of the Commission regarding debt access and concessional financing.
14. Another delegation commended the Commission for the adoption of the shared position of the African Union and ECA on debt in Africa that had preceded the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. The delegation also expressed appreciation for the Commission's efforts to support the drafting of national strategies for the successful implementation of a free trade zone in Central Africa.
15. A delegation expressed the view that the Commission needed to raise its ambitions, given that there were 54 members of ECA, and referred to figure 18.II of subprogramme one, Macroeconomic policy, finance and governance, which indicated that only a small number of members were applying macroeconomic analysis tools. Further, the delegation highlighted that the number of members of ECA that were expected to adopt measures to de-risk investments in regional value chains and establish standardized national reporting platforms on the Sustainable Development Goals was also low, as demonstrated in figures 18.VI and 18.VII.
16. A delegation referenced subprogramme 2, Regional integration and trade, and stated that, from the perspective of a State member of the European Union, all countries could benefit from regional integration. The delegation enquired about the main challenges facing the Commission in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and how Member States could provide support in that regard. The same delegation also enquired how the use of hybrid meetings helped the work of the Commission.
17. With regard to subprogramme 3, Technology, innovation, connectivity and infrastructure development, a delegation referred to table 18.9 and called for streamlining, and possibly reducing the number of, workshops, for the benefit of specific projects in areas such as digital transformation, connectivity-related initiatives, Internet coverage and digital technology centres.
18. A delegation commended the focus on gender inclusion, youth and persons with disabilities, as mentioned in paragraphs 18.4, 18.9 and 18.10. However, another delegation referred to subprogramme 4, Data and statistics, and requested that terms such as gender issues, gendered statistics and gender equality be replaced with terms and expressions that were more consensus-based.
19. On component 3, Subregional activities in Central Africa, of subprogramme 7, Subregional activities for development, a delegation applauded the Commission's participation in the third joint session of the intergovernmental committees of senior officials and experts for Central and for East Africa, as well as its establishment of special economic zones, as described in table 18.23. The delegation expressed the hope that similar special economic zones would be established in Central Africa.
20. Referencing paragraph 18.177, under subprogramme 9, Poverty, inequality and social policy, a delegation noted that three members of ECA had initiated the assessment of social protection systems, which did not meet the planned target, and enquired about what was preventing the Commission from successfully assessing the social protection systems and what strategies, if any, had been implemented in 2025 to facilitate those assessments.

Conclusions and recommendations

21. The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution [79/247](#), consider the programme plan for programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa, of the proposed programme budget for 2026 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the eightieth session of the Assembly.
