



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee for Programme and Coordination

Sixty-fifth session

New York, 12 May–13 June 2025

### Draft report

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### Addendum

### Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2026

(Item 3 (a))

#### Programme 8

#### Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

1. At its 4th meeting, on 13 May 2025, the Committee considered programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme plan for 2026 and programme performance in 2024 ([A/80/6 \(Sect. 10\)](#)).

#### Discussion

2. Delegations widely acknowledged the necessity of and expressed ongoing commitment to providing support for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Several delegations conveyed their gratitude to the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for the crucial work it undertook and for the proposed programme budget, which aimed to address the unique challenges faced by those nations, in line with the Office's legislative mandates. That support was consistently framed as being of vital importance for fostering socioeconomic progress within those countries and for enabling them to effectively pursue the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. A theme that had emerged during the discussions was the need to ensure robust programme efficiency and coordination, and to avoid any unnecessary or redundant duplication of efforts within the broader framework of the United Nations system.



4. A delegation raised its deep concerns about the duplication of efforts between programme 7, Economic and social affairs, and programme 8, remarking that the duplication appeared to be explicit and extensive. Another delegation emphasized the importance of removing duplication between programmes. On the same theme, within the context of efficiency, a delegation enquired about the coordination and collaboration within the United Nations resident coordinator system, which was actively working on the ground in those vulnerable countries. That point was echoed by another delegation, which noted that other United Nations entities led activities related to small island developing States, and welcomed hearing more about the approach the Office took to ensure effective coordination and efficiency in delivering the small island developing States agenda in particular. A delegation stated its deep concern regarding the perceived duplication of efforts between programme 8 and programme 7, highlighting the apparent overlap in the mandated work concerning the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Consequently, the delegation strongly advocated for a review to be conducted with the aim of eliminating duplication and emphasizing the fundamental importance of the streamlined and efficient utilization of available resources.

5. Significant concerns were expressed by a delegation, which commented that the Office had interpreted what were intended to be voluntary global goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into legally binding financial obligations on Member States to finance other nations' development agendas, which undermined national sovereignty and responsibility. Consequently, the delegation announced that its Government no longer endorsed the 2030 Agenda. Another delegation contrasted that statement and enquired with the Office regarding the fundamental role that the 2030 Agenda specifically played within the Office's operational framework and overall work, and what the impact would be on the Office's work without the role of the 2030 Agenda to guide delivery.

6. A delegation expressed pleasure in seeing a strong sense of purpose and ambition in the programme plan, but noted that some of the plan's deliverables seemed to be about the activities of the Office, rather than the outcomes for the vulnerable countries. The delegation emphasized the importance of conducting meaningful assessments of the programme's delivery and impact on the ground, noting that the Office should not only measure process and activities, but ensure that ongoing focus was applied to measuring tangible programme outputs and outcomes.

7. On subprogramme 1, Least developed countries, a delegation welcomed the Office's emphasis on the plans in support of the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and noted the benefit that would be provided through the preparation of an up-to-date analysis of the socioeconomic circumstances of the least developed countries with recommendations incorporated.

8. With regard to paragraphs 10.10–10.13, the Office was recognized for its specific priority areas, including vulnerable groups, women, young people and persons with disabilities. The delegation enquired about examples of how that commitment had been translated into concrete actions across the subprogrammes, to avoid duplication of mandates, particularly under the efficiency-oriented approach to initiatives.

9. With regard to paragraph 10.20 (d), a delegation requested more information on the thematic scope of the operational guidelines for the United Nations system's support to least developed countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. With regard to paragraph 10.22, on the Office's work with the resident coordinator system, a delegation noted that 33 of the least developed countries were in Africa and enquired about the criteria the Office used to determine the selection of those countries.

10. Several delegations expressed interest in the food stockholding mechanism for the least developed countries, mentioned in table 10.3. A delegation sought clarification regarding how the new food stockholding mechanism would operate and requested further information on which partnerships the Office would form to improve food resilience following the Summit +4 Stocktake. Another delegation requested an update on the structure and processes that were proposed for the approval and establishment of the stockholding mechanism. The same delegation requested that consideration be given to including representatives from national scientific organizations in the activities of the proposed online university. A further delegation had welcomed the efforts of the Office on the establishment of the online university and enquired as to whether the consultation process prior to the establishment of the university had taken account of the digital access limitations that had an impact on a number of the least developed countries, and how it had been incorporated into the development of the university.

11. On subprogramme 2, Landlocked developing countries, several delegations noted their firm commitment to the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034, commending the Office's efforts to integrate the Programme of Action into national development strategies and relevant global frameworks. A delegation noted the improved quality of the Programme of Action and requested specific details on initiatives mentioned in the deliverables table and a clear and well-defined road map for their practical realization.

12. With regard to paragraph 10.35, a delegation expressed its appreciation for the subprogramme's efforts to enhance trade and connectivity, which were vital for landlocked developing countries to overcome structural constraints linked to their geography. The delegation commended the Office for its increased advocacy for the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement and its collaboration with WTO during the Global Review on Aid for Trade, noting tangible progress made by a number of landlocked developing countries in implementing trade facilitation measures in 2024. The delegation underscored the urgency of investing in resilient infrastructure, diversified trade routes and digital connectivity, which protected landlocked developing countries from future shocks, and called for targeted international support for initiatives that built resilience, promoted sustainable transport corridors and facilitated green economic transformation to enable such countries to make meaningful progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. With regard to paragraph 10.42, another delegation suggested that the subprogramme consider focusing assistance on trade, transport corridors and regional economic integration, and noted opportunities for cooperation with regional organizations.

13. The newly proposed subprogramme 4, Advocacy, outreach and analysis, was widely welcomed by delegations, which noted that the centralization of advocacy, outreach and analysis efforts in a specific subprogramme would directly benefit the countries and allow for more coordinated implementation of the programme actions through the streamlining and restructuring of existing resources in the Office. A delegation emphasized that the new subprogramme would strengthen follow-up and review mechanisms, coming at a critical moment as landlocked developing countries continued to face multifaceted challenges that required tailored and well-coordinated global responses.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

14. **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 8, Least developed**

**countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme budget for 2026 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the eightieth session of the Assembly.**

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