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Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2026

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 7

Economic and social affairs

1. At its 4th meeting, on 13 May 2025, the Committee considered programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2026 and programme performance in 2024 ([A/80/6](#) ([Sect. 9](#))).

Discussion

2. Some delegations expressed appreciation for the proposed programme plan for 2026 and the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs towards the implementation of its development programmes, as well as support towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. It was highlighted that the Department was at the heart of the United Nations programme for sustainable development to eradicate poverty and advance inclusive economic growth. It was stressed that support for development must not be weakened within the United Nations system and that the balance among the pillars of the work of the United Nations must be sustained, with development at its centre.

4. Other delegations expressed concerns with elements of the programme, stating that the work of the Department appeared to overlap with other programmes at United Nations Headquarters, such as the work conducted by the programme on Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and that these activities should be streamlined to eliminate



duplication. The Department was encouraged to focus on areas where there was a unique need to lead, as opposed to areas where there might be overlap and potential duplication, and to look for opportunities for streamlining.

5. There was a concern raised on the growing number of references in the programmes to certain vague “crises”, for which replacement with “global development challenges” was proposed.

6. A delegation stated that the interpretation of sustainable development was seen to be ever expanding, ignoring each country’s national responsibility for its own development and each country’s national sovereignty to chart that course, to try to set voluntary aspirational goals into a mandate to finance other countries’ development. As a result, there was no consensus on reaffirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The delegation also stated that diversity, equity and inclusion programmes violated its country’s laws by replacing hard work, merit and equality with a preferential hierarchy.

7. Turning to subprogramme 2, Inclusive social development, the discussion included expressing support for the work of the subprogramme, including the Commission for Social Development. Paragraph 9.41, which states that the subprogramme will support the Second World Summit for Social Development and its preparatory process by developing analytical outputs, facilitating intergovernmental negotiations and coordinating inter-agency collaboration, was highlighted.

8. In the discussion on subprogramme 3, Sustainable development, a query was raised on table 9.15 regarding specific achievements since 2023, when the United Nations Water Conference was held, noting that there were more than 700 commitments to promote changes in the world whereby water was deemed a fundamental right. In addition, the mandate of 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”, had not been implemented, and the United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation contained contradictory approaches that had not been agreed upon by Member States.

9. Questions were raised regarding subprogramme 6, Economic analysis and policy, including with regard to progress relating to paragraph 9.85 (j) on advancing the formulation of a specific response plan with respect to middle-income countries.

10. Regarding subprogramme 7, Public institutions and digital government, a positive assessment was given to the Department for its work, as well as for activities of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and the Internet Governance Forum. With regard to figure 9.IX, entitled “Performance measure: number of civil servants supporting the preparation of action plans and road maps on innovation and digital government (annual)”, a question was posed on the large difference between the planned and actual results for 2024 and on the lower results in 2025 and 2026.

11. It was recalled that, at the Summit of the Future, the Declaration on Future Generations was approved by consensus; therefore, the Declaration was proposed to be added to paragraphs 9.98 and 9.99.

12. The importance of subprogramme 8, Sustainable forest management, was raised, with delegations referring to it as a key partner in combating the effects of climate change, desertification and diversity loss, as well as addressing sand and dust storms and promoting reforestation. It was noted that, in 2025, the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would be held, and Member States were encouraged to give this subprogramme more attention.

13. The Department was asked about the capacity-building support stated in paragraph 9.132 in the context of a United Nations framework convention on international tax cooperation, under subprogramme 9, Financing for sustainable development. Clarity was also sought on the performance measure in figure 9.XI, number of developing countries engaging in shaping international tax norms (cumulative), as the number of developing countries engaged in shaping international tax norms seemed outdated.

14. Concerns were raised about the impact of the UN80 Initiative (possible structural changes and downsizing of staff) on the area of development, including on forests, and the ability to continue to support progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.
