



## Economic and Social Council

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### Committee for Programme and Coordination

#### Forty-seventh session

11 June-6 July 2007

Agenda item 9

#### Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-seventh session

### Draft report

*Rapporteur:* Mr. Rodrigo Yáñez Pilgrim (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

#### Addendum

### Improving the working methods and procedures of the Committee for Programme and Coordination within the framework of its mandate

(Item 7)

1. At its 10th meeting, on 21 June 2007, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered agenda item 7, “Improving the working methods and procedures of the Committee for Programme and Coordination within the framework of its mandate”.
2. The Committee had before it a compendium of its conclusions and recommendations on the item from the thirty-eighth to forty-fourth sessions. The Committee held seven informal consultations and a number of “informal informal” consultations to consider those proposals.

#### Discussion

3. The view was expressed that the Committee was an important intergovernmental body and the only United Nations body charged with programme and coordination. It was noted that the Committee was irreplaceable and should be strengthened. The view was expressed that improvement of the working methods should focus on areas where there was room for improvement and that did not undermine the unique status of the Committee. The Committee’s mandate from the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly was emphasized.



4. It was noted that the item had been on the agenda of the Committee since its thirty-eighth session, which was an indication of the failure of the Committee to reach agreement; the item should not be on the agenda indefinitely. It was also noted that, despite the difficulty of the item, the Committee had come very close to reaching a consensus on it at its forty-sixth session.

5. The view was expressed that any improvements to the working methods of the Committee should be in the overall context of United Nations reform. The purpose of improving the working methods and procedures of the Committee should be to enhance its effectiveness, and all efforts should be directed towards that end. Problems should first be identified and then concrete proposals put forward so that the Committee could progress. Frank and open “informal informals” should be held so that a better understanding could be reached of the different approaches to improving the working methods. Suggestions for improving working methods included shorter sessions, high-level representation from the Secretariat and compliance with the six-week rule for documentation. It was noted that the simplification of working methods did not mean the same thing as the improvement of working methods.

6. It was observed that, given the entrenched positions that had developed, new proposals could be useful in moving discussion on the item forward rather than focusing on existing language and paragraphs. It was also observed that the work already undertaken by the Committee on the item should not be rejected since many useful suggestions had emerged from previous sessions. It was important that the Committee build on what had already been achieved and not ignore what had gone before.

7. The view was expressed that the Committee should not duplicate the work of other bodies. There should be a clear division of labour and a different emphasis between the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Committee. The importance of the Committee’s cooperation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination was stressed. The view was also expressed that one concrete area for improvement should be the early submission of documents.

8. The view was expressed that “informal informal” negotiations should be held on the item, within an atmosphere of flexibility and compromise, so as to ensure that there would be an outcome at the forty-seventh session of the Committee.

9. The Committee engaged in an open process of informal consultations as well as “informal informal” discussions, including several brainstorming sessions of which delegations shared ideas and suggestions on concrete proposals for improving the working methods of the Committee.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

10. **The Committee reaffirmed its role as the main subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for planning, programming and coordination, and resolved to undertake, consistent with its**

mandate,<sup>1</sup> its terms of reference,<sup>2</sup> and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation,<sup>3</sup> improvements in its working methods to enhance the effectiveness of its work.

11. The Committee decided to implement the measures set out below for strengthening its role, further enhancing its effectiveness and efficiency, and improving its working methods and procedures.

12. The Committee decided to devote the first day of its session to briefings for member and observer delegations on the mandate of the Committee and relevant resolutions, programme of work, documentation and other issues to be addressed by the Committee. The briefing should consist of issues of relevance to the agenda of the session.

13. The Committee recalled the importance of paragraph 9, section III, of General Assembly resolution 59/265, in which the Assembly had decided that the issuance of documents on planning, budgetary and administrative matters requiring urgent consideration by the General Assembly should be accorded priority status.

14. The Committee stressed the need to continue to improve the responsiveness and accountability of processes within the Secretariat and to ensure the timely issuance of all relevant documents in accordance with the six-week rule in order to guarantee proper consideration by the Committee in the discharge of its mandate. The Committee also reiterated that the Secretariat must ensure the quality of translation into, and equal treatment of, all six official languages.

15. The Committee decided that, in preparing its report, the inputs for the conclusions and recommendations part should, to the extent possible, be submitted by a deadline decided by the Committee. The deadline should be reasonable and allow for members to reflect on the responses received from the Secretariat. The draft reports should be circulated at least 24 hours before the informal consultations.

16. The Committee decided to devote one or two meetings of its session to a discussion, with high-level participation, of a specific issue in its programme of work related to coordination.

17. The Committee recognized the need to enhance its dialogue on coordination issues with the Joint Inspection Unit and the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

18. The Committee decided to discuss related programmes in a sequential manner, as far as possible, in order to increase coherence and gain an overall perspective of the programmes of the United Nations Secretariat.

19. The Committee reiterated the importance of the Secretariat implementing its recommendations, as approved by the General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> See Economic and Social Council resolution 920 (XXXIV), 1171 (XLI) and 2008 (LX), General Assembly resolutions 31/93 and 58/269 and General Assembly decision 42/450.

<sup>2</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX), annex.

<sup>3</sup> ST/SGB/2000/8 of 19 April 2000.

20. While emphasizing the importance of formal meetings, the Committee decided to devote more time to informal consultations and encouraged the presence of senior-level members of the Secretariat at such informal meetings with a view to greater emphasis on dialogue with, and clarifications from, the Secretariat. It also emphasized the value added of “informal informal” consultations as a tool to reach consensus.

21. The Committee decided that it would consider in-depth and thematic evaluation reports, as well as the report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives, in budget years, without prejudice to its consideration of evaluation reports in off-budget years, upon its request or that of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, taking into account rule 107.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

22. The Committee called for each organizational session to be scheduled in a timely manner no later than six weeks before the beginning of each substantive session, during which a Bureau for the forthcoming session should be elected. The Committee encouraged member States to provide timely nominations to the Bureau so as to facilitate its early constitution.

23. The Committee decided that, at its organizational session, it would prepare the draft programme of work for its annual session, taking into account the annotated agenda and the state of preparation of documentation. The programme of work should also identify the specific issue selected for discussion with high-level participation (see para. 16 above).

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