



United Nations

Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

**Sixtieth session
(8 June–3 July 2020)**

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Chapter I

Organization of the session

1. The Committee for Programme and Coordination held its organizational session on 8 June 2020 and its substantive session from 8 June to 3 July 2020. It met online owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.
2. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the precautionary measures implemented at United Nations Headquarters following a decision of the President of the General Assembly to suspend in-person meetings, the Committee for Programme and Coordination held three preparatory online meetings on 1, 13 and 22 May 2020, which were presided over by Collen Vixen Kelapile, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations and Chair of the Committee at its fifty-ninth session. During those meetings, members discussed the agenda of the Committee's sixtieth session as well as meeting modalities, including the use of an online meeting platform accessible to all members, the dates of the session and the daily meeting hours that would best accommodate the participation of members of the Committee located in different time zones.

A. Agenda

3. The agenda for the sixtieth session, adopted by the Committee at its organizational session, was as follows:
 1. Election of officers.
 2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
 3. Programme questions:
 - (a) Proposed programme budget for 2021;
 - (b) Evaluation.
 4. Coordination questions:
 - (a) Report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;
 - (b) New Partnership for Africa's Development.
 5. Report(s) of the Joint Inspection Unit.
 6. Provisional agenda for the sixty-first session.
 7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixtieth session.

Selection of reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

4. At its organizational meeting, on 8 June, the attention of the Committee was drawn to the note by the Secretariat (E/AC.51/2020/L.2), submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX), stating that there were no relevant reports of the Joint Inspection Unit available for consideration at its sixtieth session.
5. At the same meeting, taking into consideration the time constraints associated with submitting the present report in time for consideration by the Economic and Social Council before the end of its session on 22 July 2020, as well as the added

challenge of conducting negotiations online and without interpretation, the Committee adopted, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, an approach by which it would focus on time-sensitive items only. Accordingly, the Committee agreed that the reports under agenda items 3 (b), 4 (a) and 5 would not be considered at the sixtieth session.

Programme of work

6. Also at the same meeting, the attention of the Committee was drawn to the annotated provisional agenda (E/AC.51/2020/1) and the note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation (E/AC.51/2020/L.1) listing the documents for consideration by the Committee. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to the revised note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation (E/AC.51/2020/L.1/Rev.1) listing the documents for consideration by the Committee, and the note by Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

7. Also at its organizational meeting, the Committee approved its programme of work with the understanding that adjustments would be made by the Bureau, as necessary, during the course of the session to take into account the pace of discussions. As meetings would be taking place online with participants based in different time zones, the Committee decided to adjust the schedule of meetings so that they occurred from 8.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time).

8. Following the organizational meeting, informal briefings were given by the Acting Secretary of the Committee, on organizational matters; the Under-Secretary-General, Office of Internal Oversight Services, on evaluation issues; and the Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, on the proposed programme budget for 2021.

B. Election of officers

9. At its organizational meeting, on 8 June, the Committee elected, by acclamation, Giorgi Velikov Panayotov (Bulgaria) as Chair for the sixtieth session.

10. At the same meeting, the Committee elected, by acclamation, Cristina Carrión (Uruguay) and Paolo Campanini (Italy) as Vice-Chairs and Felix-Fils Eboa Ebongue (Cameroon) as Rapporteur for the sixtieth session.

11. Accordingly, the members of the Bureau for the sixtieth session of the Committee were:

Chair:

Giorgi Velikov Panayotov (Bulgaria)

*Vice-Chairs:*¹

Cristina Carrión (Uruguay)

Paolo Campanini (Italy)

Rapporteur:

Felix-Fils Eboa Ebongue (Cameroon)

¹ In the absence of any nomination for the position of Vice-Chair from the Asia-Pacific Group, the seat remained vacant at the sixtieth session of the Committee.

C. Attendance

12. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented on the Committee:

Angola	India
Argentina	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Belarus	Italy
Botswana	Japan
Brazil	Liberia
Bulgaria	Mauritania
Burkina Faso	Pakistan
Cameroon	Paraguay
Chad	Portugal
Chile	Republic of Korea
China	Republic of Moldova
Comoros	Russian Federation
Cuba	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Ethiopia	United States of America
France	Uruguay
Germany	

13. The following States Members of the United Nations and intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers:

Australia	Myanmar
Kazakhstan	Syrian Arab Republic
Kenya	European Union
Morocco	

14. Also present at the session were the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme; Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa; Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe; Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa; Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism; Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management; Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications; Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services; Under-

Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel; Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance; Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support; Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security; Acting Assistant Secretary-General/Chief Information Technology Officer; Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services; Assistant Secretary-General for Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Department of Peace Operations; Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs; Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme; Assistant Secretary-General, Head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar; Assistant Secretary-General, Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011; Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; Executive Director ad interim of the International Trade Centre; Inspector and Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit; Chair of the International Civil Service Commission; Secretary of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and Director of the secretariat of CEB; and other senior officials of the Secretariat.

D. Documentation

15. The list of documents before the Committee at its sixtieth session is set out in the annex to the present report.

E. Programme questions: (b) Evaluation

16. **The Committee decided, on an exceptional basis, in the context of the implementation of the annual budget on a trial period, to address the consideration of currently available evaluation reports for 2021 as set out below:**

(a) **The Committee selected the following evaluations for consideration at its sixty-first session, in 2021: (i) the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Development States; (ii) United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development; (iii) the Department for Economic and Social Affairs; (iv) inspection of the evaluation function of UN-Women; (v) the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and (vi) the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs;**

(b) **The Committee also selected the following evaluations for consideration by the relevant intergovernmental body: (i) evaluation of the prevention, response and victim support efforts against sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations Secretariat staff and related personnel; (ii) evaluation of organizational culture in peacekeeping operations; and (iii) evaluation of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.**

17. **The Committee noted that the biennial report on strengthening the role of evaluation was already a mandated report to be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.**

F. Adoption of the report of the Committee

18. On 29 June, the Chair of the Committee submitted for consideration under a silence procedure, in accordance with General Assembly decisions 74/544 and 74/555, the draft report of the Committee (E/AC.51/2020/L.4 and addenda) and the draft provisional agenda for its sixty-first session (E/AC.51/2020/L.3).

19. On 3 July, the Committee considered adopted the draft report of the Committee (E/AC.51/2020/L.4 and addenda), in accordance with the process set out in decisions 74/544 and 74/555. It also considered adopted the draft provisional agenda for its sixty-first session (E/AC.51/2020/L.3) and decided that the agenda would be updated in the light of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its 2020 session and by the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

20. The delegation of the Russian Federation, supported also by Belarus, submitted a statement on explanation of position on the adoption of the report of the sixtieth session of the Committee and requested that it be made part of the record of the proceedings. Notably, the exceptional and extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were recognized and appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations to respond to it was expressed. Nevertheless, the delegation expressed the view that the COVID-19 pandemic had strongly affected the course of deliberations and the decision-making process of the sixtieth session of the Committee, which remained the main subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly for planning, programming and coordination. The view was further expressed that the negotiation process of the session had been aggravated by several non-transparent, partial and biased decisions proposed by the Bureau without prior consultations with the members of the Committee, and that several delegations had also rejected to resume negotiation on various programmes, undermining the core values of the United Nations. However, the delegations of the Russian Federation and Belarus had decided not to break the silence procedure, and expected that the situation the Committee faced would neither create a precedent nor reoccur in future, as well as that all unagreed programmes at future sessions should either be transferred to the relevant Main Committee of the General Assembly, or revert to the previous strategic frameworks as agreed by the Committee.

21. Also in the context of the closure of the session, the Chair circulated a concluding statement. Closing statements were also submitted by the representatives of the United States, Cuba, Portugal, Italy, China, the United Kingdom and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Chapter II

Programme questions

Proposed programme budget for the year 2021

Cross-cutting issues

22. At its sixtieth session, held from 8 June to 3 July 2020, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programmes 1 to 28 of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sects. 2–6, 8–22, 24–31 and 34)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

23. Comments by delegations on the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance for 2019 are reflected in the discussion of each programme. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on cross-cutting matters related to the proposed programme plan are set out below.

Conclusions and recommendations

24. **The Committee noted with appreciation the efforts of the Secretary-General in the application of the guidelines provided by the General Assembly with regard to the presentation of programme plans.**

25. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that the terms and expressions referenced in the proposed programme plan had been intergovernmentally agreed.**

26. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to continue to enhance the presentation of the proposed programme plans in line with the following guidelines:**

(a) **Improve the structure and consistency of subprogramme strategies in order to achieve greater clarity with regard to different categories of activities and related expected results;**

(b) **In the subprogramme strategies, replace the information on “past results” with “planned activities” in the next budgetary cycle;**

(c) **Enhance the information provided as a list of deliverables, including by quantifying substantive and enabling deliverables, whenever practical;**

(d) **Avoid duplication or unnecessary overlap of themes and contributing activities in the planned results, taking into account the features of the respective subprogramme.**

27. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue consultations with Member States on the presentation of the programme plan, in line with Assembly guidelines, during the annual budget trial period.**

28. **The Committee underlined the importance of self-evaluation and internal review by programme managers and recommended that the General Assembly encourage self-evaluation and regular internal reviews as appropriate.**

29. **The Committee noted with appreciation the current efforts of the United Nations system to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and acknowledged the potential impact of the pandemic on programme plans for**

2021. The Committee emphasized that the programme managers, in responding to the impact, should do so within the scope of their overall objectives, strategies and mandates, in accordance with relevant provisions of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. The Committee further stressed the importance of keeping Member States updated in a timely manner on the impact of COVID-19 on the programmes, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide information to the Assembly on possible adjustments during its consideration of the programme plans for 2021.

Programme 1 General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management

30. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 2)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the Review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

31. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

32. Several delegations expressed appreciation and support for the excellent work of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in general and commended the Department for its compliance with the simultaneous issuance of documents in the six official languages. It was the view of several delegations that multilingualism was a core value of the United Nations, pursued as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving the diversity of languages. Equal treatment of all official languages in each organ of the United Nations was advocated and satisfaction was expressed to see that principle fully respected by the Department.

33. A delegation expressed the view that it was vital that the requirements of the Department, with regard to both financial and human resources, be met in order to contribute to the efficient, transparent and successful implementation of its objectives. The importance of ensuring the proper functioning of the language sections and preserving the provision of high-quality conference services at all duty stations was stressed. Enquiry was made on the measures taken to ensure that translation services, in Geneva and Nairobi in particular, were comparable in performance to other comparable international services. Another delegation asked for information on the capacities of the locations outside New York, especially Nairobi, for holding meetings.

34. The Department was also commended for the work done on the equal representation of women among staff, as well as for the steps taken to improve disability access, including through its participation in the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. On gender parity, a delegation welcomed reflections on lessons learned that could be shared with other United Nations entities, which, it was hoped, could also achieve that important goal.

35. A delegation welcomed the progress made on modernization and, conscious of the impact resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasized the need for continual innovation to ensure readiness for future scenarios, including security around voting protocols and simultaneous interpretation for virtual meetings. Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, another delegation insisted on the need to ensure interpretation into the six official languages in all circumstances, including with the videoconferencing configuration, as was the case for the sessions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. A delegation expressed surprise regarding the conduct of remote meetings, considering that the practice was not used for every occasion at Headquarters, and congratulated the efforts made, for example in handling simultaneous meetings of the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination. An inquiry was made concerning the potential use of the positive experience acquired during that period, for example how the tools for remote meetings could be used in the future to enable the holding of meetings at various locations outside the United Nations.

36. Delegations expressed support for the Department's intention to apply an innovative approach to various areas of its work, through technological and other innovations, and stressed the need for such innovations to be introduced step by step and thoroughly analysed and assessed from both organizational and financial perspectives. The top priority should remain unchanged, namely, to ensure the simultaneous availability of all documents and provide conference services in the six official languages. A delegation noted the possibility of using machine-generated translation for documents that were not official United Nations documents, such as the Journal of the United Nations, so that human resources could then be allocated to processing official documents. The same delegation indicated that it valued the work already done with the e-deleGATE portal, noted the usability and usefulness of the platform and asked whether future improvements would be forthcoming, in particular in the development of mobile applications and integration with the Journal.

37. The move towards digital documentation, thereby reducing the environmental impact of United Nations meetings around the world, was welcomed. A question was raised by a delegation on why there was an emphasis on reducing the environmental footprint in Vienna, but very little discussion on the matter in other locations.

38. A delegation enquired about the impact of COVID-19 on the outreach programme with educational institutions across the globe in 2021, especially in developing countries, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the internship programme in New York. Another delegation expressed support for the Department's work in managing a network of universities that had signed United Nations memorandums of understanding, enabling universities around the world to prepare young and talented experts to work in language sections. In that regard, appreciation was expressed for the significant increase in the number of rostered candidates and applicants resulting from the use of the remote format for language competitive examinations.

39. A delegation underlined the importance of continued access to United Nations facilities for non-governmental organizations, human rights activists, religious minorities and others to peacefully assemble in accordance with existing security and access procedures. A delegation noted the work done to allow access to United Nations sites for various bodies, including civil society organizations, and expressed the view that that was important, under the principle of respect for peaceful assembly, and something it therefore looked forward to continuing to see, as long as it met the necessary security requirements. Another delegation stressed the importance of regulating the use of United Nations premises in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, on the basis of the instructions from United Nations Headquarters published in the administrative instruction on the use of space at Headquarters in New York for

meetings, conferences, events and exhibits ([ST/AI/2019/4](#)). A question was raised on what could be done to encourage other duty stations, in particular the United Nations Office at Geneva, to review their policies on managing and using United Nations premises and on managing the participation of non-governmental organizations in conferences. A request was made that the Department make available a list of both calendar and non-calendar meetings held at the United Nations, to provide greater transparency and more comprehensive information.

Conclusions and recommendations

40. **The Committee noted with appreciation the efforts of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in managing and supporting United Nations conferences, meetings and deliberations to enable the effective implementation of United Nations mandates, programmes and operations.**

41. **The Committee reaffirmed the importance of full compliance with the equal treatment of the six official languages of the United Nations and with the simultaneous issuance of documents in the six official languages of the United Nations.**

42. **The Committee noted with appreciation the progress made by the Department in reviewing its internal structure and processes to ensure greater effectiveness in the future.**

43. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.**

Programme 2 Political affairs

44. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2020/10](#)).

45. The representative of the Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, together with the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

46. Delegations expressed appreciation for the programme and the work of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on sustaining peace and preventing conflict.

47. Appreciation was also expressed for the comprehensive presentation of the work of the programme, and it was noted that special political missions played a vital role in the execution of the programme. A delegation requested more information on the efforts of the Department to enhance its work with other entities, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, in support of development for peace. Another delegation expressed its appreciation for the division of labour between the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of

Peace Operations, noting that the structural reforms had helped to clarify the division of labour.

48. Several delegations noted the importance of using intergovernmentally agreed language. A delegation expressed concern about the use of terminology such as “conflict triggers” in subprogramme 1, Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts (para. 3.25), which it opined was better represented by “root causes of conflict”. With regard to another expression of concern, “violent conflict”, which appeared in subprogramme 1 (para. 3.19) and subprogramme 7, Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States (several mentions), it was asked whether there was a grading of conflicts. On the latter point, the delegation stated that it was understood that all conflicts were intrinsically violent. The delegation cited a third example, the use of the term “fragile countries” in subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office (para. 3.87), and urged programme managers to use agreed terminology, such as “countries lapsing or relapsing into conflict”. Another delegation noted that the programme tried to comply with the use of intergovernmentally agreed terminology for the most part, but emphasized that the need to communicate effectively with other stakeholders should not mean that the programme should include concepts, terms or approaches that were not agreed upon by Member States, such as “non-mission settings” (para. 3.89).

49. A delegation questioned the new approach used to present deliverables, in which some categories of deliverables were not quantified. The delegation provided the example that, while the deliverable on good offices under cross-cutting deliverables for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (table 3.1) was not quantified, a quantification was provided for the number of good offices efforts in paragraph 3.18. The delegation also noted that this concern was not specific to the programme, and reiterated that it applied to other programmes as well, suggesting that that point be presented in a cross-cutting context. Appreciation was expressed for the inclusion of legislative mandates in the programme plan, in line with the guidance of the General Assembly, and it was stressed that legislative mandates did not belong in an annex, as was the case for the 2020 budget.

50. A delegation enquired why the programmatic assumptions for all special political missions were not included under this programme and continued to be presented separately for the consideration only of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. It was stressed that, if special political missions, which were increasing in number each year, continued to be funded from the programme budget, their programme narratives should be considered in the context of the Committee for Programme and Coordination instead of being submitted directly to the Fifth Committee.

51. With regard to subprogramme 1, Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, a delegation expressed its appreciation that the new strategic plan of the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs put prevention, management and resolution of conflict at its centre, noting that that was critically aligned with the sustaining peace agenda of Member States. Another delegation expressed the view that the term “management of conflict” in the title of the subprogramme was not clear and could be controversial, since managing a conflict would not always mean resolving it, but rather keeping and leading it. In that regard, the delegation stated that the United Nations could help States in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as appropriate. The same delegation noted that, while improving coherence within the United Nations system was important, it was also necessary to respect the division of labour of United Nations bodies in accordance with their respective mandates to avoid duplication of efforts. The same delegation observed that, while it continued to support the efforts of the subprogramme to improve the capacity of Member States to prevent conflict, the results of the subprogramme remained difficult to evaluate, and

it noted that it was not possible to determine the impact of the role of the United Nations in a conflict situation.

52. With regard to strategy, it was noted that, while the strategy sections for most subprogrammes were very informative, more clarification was needed with regard to the work of subprogramme 1. It was observed that, while the subprogramme referred to tools of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the strategy section, it did not elaborate on how it used those tools and what activities it was performing. A delegation requested a greater focus on early warning systems to facilitate earlier United Nations support for Member States' prevention efforts, as well as further information on what could be done to enable this. The same delegation noted the extensive list of legislative mandates entrusted to the subprogramme and requested a considerable reduction of the schedule as part of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

53. With regard to the list of legislative mandates for the subprogramme, a delegation noted the importance of General Assembly resolution [57/5](#) on the elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion and Assembly resolution [70/185](#) on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, and requested further information about the work of the subprogramme to implement the mandates arising from those resolutions. The delegation expressed the view that unilateral coercive measures endangered multilateralism. On the issue of the legislative mandates, a delegation echoed the appreciation expressed earlier by another delegation on the retention of legislative mandates in the programme, and not in the annex, and observed that, for the resolutions pertaining to unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, the list did not contain the most recent mandate, namely Assembly resolution [74/200](#).

54. With regard to subprogramme 2, Electoral assistance, several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work of the subprogramme. A delegation welcomed the subprogramme's support for over 50 Member States and the expansion of the work of the subprogramme through its partnership with regional and intergovernmental organizations. Another delegation observed that United Nations election assistance was critical to supporting countries in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections and noted that States Members of the United Nations had agreed upon the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Goal 16, under which the importance of inclusive political processes and institutions was recognized for sustainable development. The delegation welcomed the improvements in United Nations performance in deploying timely electoral assistance, expressed its full support for the highlighted planned result for 2020 and encouraged the Secretariat to work closely with relevant entities of the United Nations country teams in the delivery of comprehensive election support programming. The same delegation encouraged close collaboration between United Nations election assistance missions and programmes of the United Nations Development Programme on elections in particular, and encouraged a greater focus of such collaboration in reporting. A delegation observed that, with regard to the section on programme performance in 2019 against the planned result (para. 3.30), while the subprogramme reported that the 2019 benchmarks had been achieved, no information was provided on results, and the delegation encouraged a more results-oriented approach in the future.

55. With regard to subprogramme 3, Security Council affairs, delegations noted with appreciation the work of the subprogramme. Increased support for new members and recent efforts to improve data collection and display, including data disaggregated by gender, was welcomed. A delegation welcomed in particular the work that the subprogramme conducted with the United Nations University Centre for Policy

Research on transitions in field missions (para. 3.47) and noted that it was a good example of cooperation between the Secretariat and academic institutions. A delegation observed that the objective of the subprogramme, to contribute to ensuring the effective discharge by the Council of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, was too strongly formulated, implying that the subprogramme contributed to ensuring that the Council performed its responsibilities, and was not formulated in the form of a contribution to end users. With reference to the performance measure for 2019, number of queries or research requests (figure 3.IV), a delegation acknowledged the greater complexity of the queries and research requests received by the subprogramme from Member States and requested information on the number of queries or research requests that were not fulfilled. The same delegation noted that the identification of experts for Council sanctions panels appeared to be a major challenge and recommended that the recruitment process should begin earlier. Another delegation noted the importance of the implementation of Council resolution [2467 \(2019\)](#) regarding the appointment of members of panels of experts with experience relating to sexual violence and gender, where relevant (para. 3.51).

56. With regard to subprogramme 4, Decolonization, a delegation expressed the view that there was no need to change the objective for the subprogramme from what was reflected in the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018–2019 ([A/71/6/Rev.1](#)), since there had not been a change in the mandate for the subprogramme. Another delegation requested clarification on the reason that, for deliverable A.4, Report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Puerto Rico (table 3.8), no reports were expected in 2020 and 2021.

57. With regard to subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office, a delegation welcomed the integration of the Office into the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and strongly encouraged deeper collaboration with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The same delegation noted that the regionally integrated approach in the Sahel appeared to be showing encouraging results and recommended the application of lessons learned in the Central African Republic to other settings. A delegation recognized that nationally owned solutions were essential, noting that this was articulated clearly in the twin resolutions of 2016 on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (Security Council resolution [2282 \(2016\)](#) and General Assembly resolution [70/262](#)), and observed that the example of Burkina Faso cited in the report (paras. 3.89–3.93) was a best practice approach that could be replicated. The same delegation expressed the view that the Peacebuilding Commission would increase its partnership activity with the United Nations system, Member States and regional and international partners, especially international financial institutions, in line with the “Pathways for Peace” report. It was also observed that the large increase in funding for the Peacebuilding Fund in recent years showed that donors were supporting peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It was noted that, in view of the likely implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the availability of global official development assistance, the United Nations should redouble its efforts to explore innovative financing opportunities. A delegation expressed the view that in future reporting it would welcome more detailed elaboration on: (a) steps made to further the partnerships between the United Nations and international financial institutions; (b) the Peacebuilding Fund portfolio reviews undertaken in 2019/20; and (c) the operationalization of the subprogramme’s “hinge” role in the United Nations system. The view was expressed that any revisiting of the budget should await review of the implementation of those reforms.

58. A delegation expressed the view that the objective of the subprogramme (para. 3.84) was formulated in terms of the work of the subprogramme, rather than the benefits from the end users’ perspective, and noted that such a formulation would

be expected to be reflected in the strategy section. A delegation requested an update on the ongoing review of the peacebuilding architecture, including how much progress had been made in the review process, whether the process had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and whether the report of the review would be ready by July 2020 as anticipated in the terms of reference.

59. With regard to subprogramme 7, Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, delegations welcomed the establishment of the United Nations liaison office at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo in June 2019 and expressed the view that it would be valuable for the United Nations to strengthen its cooperation with the League and that it would help to improve consultations and information-sharing between the two organizations. A delegation noted that more information and clarification was needed in the strategy section (para. 3.102) with regard to the work of the subprogramme. The same delegation observed that the performance measure for 2021 was the same for result 1 and result 2 in 2021 and expressed the view that it would be important to have different results and performance measures to demonstrate a better link between the work of the subprogramme and the expected results. A delegation noted that it was important that the subprogramme would deliver efficiently and would provide value for money as it moves to the implementation of its mandate, noting that the budget had increased significantly.

60. With regard to the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, delegations expressed appreciation for its important work in support of the achievement of a two-State solution and during a critical time for the Middle East peace process. A delegation welcomed the detail in the report on the tangible progress made towards achieving that objective by the programme during 2019, citing the example of the successful avoidance of full-scale escalation between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and the improvement in humanitarian conditions. The same delegation expressed its support for the strategy and assumptions set out in the report for 2021 and welcomed the focus included on integrating a gender perspective into peacebuilding efforts, including in support of the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). Another delegation requested further information on how the COVID-19 situation had affected the work of the Office and the fulfilment of its mandates.

61. With regard to the United Nations Office to the African Union, a delegation congratulated the Office on its very important work and welcomed the well-structured presentation of its work. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the work of the Office to strengthen the capacity of the African Union and its work with the African Union Commission. One delegation observed that the political commitment to the United Nations-African Union partnership remained strong on both sides and expressed its support for the Office's continued work with the African Union to translate that commitment into strengthened capacity of the African Union and specific, measurable outcomes. It was noted that the African Union could bring a strong comparative advantage to bear in conflict prevention and mediation, and a delegation expressed its support for the Office's work with the African Union Commission in that regard, including efforts to integrate the women and peace and security agenda into all aspects of peace and security work. The same delegation welcomed the Office's support for the African Union in connection with the African Union Mission in Somalia and noted that it was crucial that this remained a focus through the coming year as Somalia prepared for landmark elections in late 2020 and early 2021 and the transition of responsibility for security to the Somali security forces in 2021. The delegation observed that the impact of COVID-19 on security, stability and development on the African continent might be severe, with both the primary and secondary effects exacerbating underlying stresses, vulnerabilities and

shocks. It was noted that the programme might need to adapt to evolving African Union priorities as the pandemic progressed in Africa but that the Office should support the African Union to enable a conflict-sensitive COVID-19 response and recovery.

62. A delegation noted the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union in enhancing the transfer of knowledge and in that regard requested further information on how desk-to-desk meetings translated into results. Several delegations recognized the Office's work in Somalia, noting the role of the Office in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia. Clarification was sought about the Office's plans for cooperation and coordination with the African Union on the joint strategic review. A delegation noted with appreciation the coordination of the work of the Office with the Economic Commission for Africa and enquired whether similar coordination was being undertaken with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The delegation also requested more information on how the Office was coordinating with other United Nations offices that had mandates in Africa.

63. With regard to the Office of Counter-Terrorism, delegations expressed their appreciation for its continuing efforts in support of the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Security Council resolutions pertaining to counter-terrorism. Appreciation was expressed for the fairly balanced approach in the preparation of the programme, and it was emphasized that the activities of the Office should be firmly rooted in the Strategy and relevant Council resolutions, therefore predominantly representing the peace and security pillar of work of the Organization. With regard to the outline of thematic priorities, the same delegation expressed strong caution in referring to concepts that lacked universal recognition, citing in particular the notion of "violent extremism". The delegation noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions on the review of the Strategy, the Office was tasked with preventing and countering violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, but it was noted that at least five paragraphs of the programme of work of the Office contained formulations that failed to recognize that link between violent extremism and terrorism. A question was raised as to why the planned results for the Office in 2021 were only illustrated in the context of one project dedicated to the detection and countering of terrorists' travel, while all other streams of programmatic activities, including those launched in 2020, were disregarded. A delegation alluded to the ongoing external evaluation of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre Five-Year Programme (paras. 3.229 and 3.230) and in that regard noted that the process of evaluation would still be under way at the time of discussion. Therefore the findings of the evaluation could not be taken into account for the programme plan of the Office for 2021. The same delegation drew the attention of the members of the Committee to the insufficient funding of the Office from the United Nations programme budget. It was noted that extrabudgetary resources represented 96.9 per cent of the total funding for the Office, while the overall resources proposed for 2021 in the regular budget reflected no changes compared with the appropriation for 2020. The delegation expressed doubts that the overall resources proposed for 2021 provided for the full, efficient and effective implementation of the Office's mandates, taking into account the fact that extrabudgetary resources represent 96.9 per cent of the total budget of the Office and that there was a serious risk of a reduction in voluntary contributions after the COVID-19 pandemic.

64. A delegation expressed support for the work of the Office in coordinating counter-terrorism efforts across the United Nations system and encouraged the Office to ensure the balanced and effective implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The same delegation opined that, under planned results for 2021, with respect to result 1: keeping terrorists from the skies

(result carried over from 2020), a better title would have been “Preventing terrorist travel”, as travel occurs by land and by sea as well as by air, and in that regard the delegation encouraged the Office to undertake stronger efforts to extend the programme to more Member States.

Conclusions and recommendations

65. **The Committee noted with appreciation the work undertaken by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in support of the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.**

66. **The Committee commended the United Nations Office to the African Union on its work and encouraged greater collaboration with the African Union to integrate the women and peace and security agenda into all aspects of the Office’s peace and security work.**

67. **The Committee welcomed the support of the United Nations Office to the African Union for the African Union Mission in Somalia, which would be crucial in the forthcoming national elections and the transition of responsibility for security to the Somali security forces in 2021.**

68. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to increase coherence, synergy and coordination in the work of the Organization in fields such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and development, in accordance with the respective mandates of United Nations entities.**

69. **The Committee noted with appreciation the work of the United Nations under the subprogramme for electoral assistance in supporting requesting countries in the conduct of free, fair, inclusive, transparent and peaceful elections in conjunction with the efforts of those countries to realize the 2030 Agenda.**

70. **The Committee welcomed the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office on the promotion of nationally owned solutions and requested the General Assembly to encourage the Office to increase its partnership activity with the United Nations system, regional and subregional entities and international partners, including integrating a gender perspective into peacebuilding efforts, including in support of the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).**

71. **The Committee took note of the work done on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and welcomed the opening in June 2019 of an office in Cairo.**

72. **The Committee noted with appreciation the work done by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in support of the achievement of a two-State solution, during a critical time for the Middle East peace process.**

73. **The Committee welcomed the work undertaken by the Security Council Affairs Division to support the workings of the Council.**

74. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:**

**Subprogramme 1
Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts**

Programme performance in 2019: peaceful referendum process in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea

Paragraph 3.19

Delete “violent”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 2: enhanced peace and security cooperation (new result)

Paragraph 3.25

Replace “conflict triggers and situations” with “root causes of conflicts”.

**Subprogramme 4
Decolonization**

Objective

Paragraph 3.56

Replace “to advance” with “to promote”.

Paragraph 3.56

After “the decolonization process”, add “in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly”.

Programme performance in 2019: increased participation by representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and Member States at the regional seminar

Paragraph 3.61

Replace “the advancement” with “the promotion”.

After “the decolonization process”, add “in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 2: increased number of specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations providing information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories (new result)

Paragraph 3.64

Delete “peoples in the”.

Paragraph 3.66

Add “as appropriate” at the end of the last sentence.

Deliverables**Table 3.8****Subprogramme 4: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory****A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies****Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)****4. Report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Puerto Rico***Column for 2020 planned*

Replace “–” with “1”.

Column for 2021 planned

Replace “–” with “1”.

Subprogramme 6**Peacebuilding Support Office****Strategy***Paragraph 3.87*

Replace “fragile” with “countries at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict”.

Programme performance in 2019: Burkina Faso – an integrated approach to reduce conflict risk*Paragraph 3.89*

Replace “non-mission setting” with “post-conflict situation”.

Planned results for 2021**Result 1: more coherent and inclusive engagement to build and sustain peace (result carried over from 2020)***Paragraph 3.94*

Replace “complex settings” with “conflict-affected situations”.

Subprogramme 7**Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States****Planned results for 2021****Result 1: opening of the liaison office and enhancing engagement activities (result carried over from 2020)****Table 3.18****Performance measure***Column for 2020*

Delete “violent”.

Column for 2021

Delete “violent”.

Section VI

Office of Counter-Terrorism

Programme of work

Office of Counter-Terrorism

Strategy

Paragraph 3.223

In the second sentence, after “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.

In the fourth sentence, after “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.

After “the Counter-Terrorism Centre”, add “(UNCCT)”.

Paragraph 3.224

After “preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.

External factors for 2021

Paragraph 3.225 (a)

After “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.

Paragraph 3.226

After “gender policy and a gender programme on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.

Replace “measures for preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism” with “measures undertaken in these areas”.

Paragraph 3.228

After “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.

Evaluation activities

Paragraph 3.230

Replace “The findings of the evaluations referenced above have been taken into account for the programme plan for 2021” with “The findings of the aforementioned self-evaluation have been taken into account for the programme plan for 2021, whereas the outcomes of the ongoing external evaluation are expected to have an impact on the preparation of a new United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre multi-year strategic programme framework”.

Paragraph 3.231 (b)

After “violent extremism”, add “conducive to terrorism”.

Programme 3 Disarmament

75. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 3, Disarmament, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 4)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

76. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

77. Delegations expressed support for the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs on multilateral efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, including its substantive engagement and unwavering support for the implementation of Security Council and General Assembly decisions and resolutions.

78. It was emphasized that the Office's performance was of the utmost importance and that its efforts should be tailored, focused and ergonomic and should explicitly respond to the needs of Member States as expressed in relevant mandates. It was highlighted that the programme, although practical in scope, had far-reaching political consequences.

79. A delegation noted that the list of legislative mandates warranted a closer look to ascertain that all relevant legislative mandates were properly reflected at the level of the programme or its subprogrammes. It was suggested that, for greater clarity, the full list of mandates for the whole programme, including its subprogrammes, be incorporated at the programme level as had been done for the 2018–2019 programme plan.

80. Some delegations reiterated the importance of the programme activities in contributing to the implementation of existing United Nations mandates and noted that in several instances the report did not meet that criterion. The question was raised with regard to the lack of relevant mandates to enable the Office for Disarmament Affairs to carry out an evaluation of the initiative of the Secretary-General, *Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament* (para. 4.12), and to conduct online training programmes on cyberdiplomacy (para. 4.69). It was highlighted that the term “agenda for disarmament” had not been formalized in any United Nations mandate. Similarly, the use of the term “cybersecurity” (subprogramme 4, planned result 1), which was a non-agreed term, should have been replaced by the consensual expression “security in the use of information and communications technology”.

81. Some delegations noted that changes had been made to the wording of the objectives for the subprogrammes compared with the approved objectives in the 2018–2019 programme plan, and raised concerns as to the reasons for those changes, notably under subprogramme 3, Conventional arms, which excluded the text “to advance mutual confidence and transparency among Member States in the field of conventional arms”.

82. Clarification was sought as to why the strategies for the individual subprogrammes reflected information on past activities and results and whether such information should not have been included in a separate performance section. For example, with respect to paragraph 4.25 and planned result 2 for 2021, clarification was sought on the inclusion of past activities in the result narratives, and whether

such activities would also be carried out in 2021. The proposal was made to have the planned activities of all programmes reflected in a separate section, thereby facilitating comparison to ensure that they had been carried out in accordance with legislative mandates.

83. Clarification was sought regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on implementation in 2020 of the programme and how that impact had been reflected in the proposed programme plan for 2021. The view was expressed that, given the number of meetings deferred to 2021 as a result of the pandemic, including the 2020 Review Conference (para. 4.36), the programme plan for 2021 would need to be modified to better reflect the deferrals.

84. A delegation supported the integration of gender mainstreaming in the programme (para. 4.3). Another delegation sought clarification on the mandate for the integration of agender perspective in the programme's strategy. With regard to paragraph 4.16, the view was expressed that gender was not the only element to be considered in the selection of participants to the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services Programme and that a more balanced geographical participation across and within regions was equally important.

85. On subprogramme 1, Multilateral negotiations and deliberations on disarmament and arms limitation, concern was voiced over the references to supporting the implementation of European Union Council decision 2019/97 in support of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. It was pointed out that the Secretary-General should approach all regional efforts equally and should not selectively pick and promote certain initiatives while leaving others behind. It was highlighted that while regional decisions and practices were vitally important, they were not United Nations mandates to be legitimately included in the programme.

86. With regard to paragraph 4.23, it was pointed out that even though Member States had endorsed 11 guiding principles in the context of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols, those principles only served as a stepping stone towards achieving an international legal instrument on the matter and were not an end in themselves.

87. With regard to subprogramme 2, Weapons of mass destruction, as well as across the narratives of the entire programme, it was observed that there was no mention of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, which was only mentioned in the deliverables. The view was expressed that since it was known that the Conference had been postponed to 2021, it should have been reflected more clearly in the proposed programme plan for 2021.

88. The use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, was condemned. A delegation disagreed with the approach reflected in paragraph 4.32, in which the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was tasked with identifying those who are found to have used chemical weapons or holding any Member State accountable. The delegation emphasized that OPCW was by mandate a technical organization and should remain so, and strongly rejected any politicization of the matter.

89. With regard to nuclear disarmament, a delegation affirmed that the priority was the total elimination of nuclear weapons and not the promotion of the elimination thereof, as reflected in paragraph 4.35. The delegation expressed the view that the continued health and success of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remained central to the goal of advancing the total elimination of nuclear

weapons as a cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and that the entry into force as soon as possible of the Treaty was critical.

90. With regard to subprogramme 3, clarification was sought on how the United Nations intended to modify paragraph 4.49 to address the postponement to 2021 of the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and whether that would have an impact on the Eighth Biennial Meeting of States already scheduled for 2022. Clarification was sought on whether a decision had been made as to whether the Eighth Biennial Meeting would be held in 2022, as nominally scheduled, or two years after the Seventh Biennial Meeting, namely, in 2023.

91. Reference was made to the report of the Secretary-General on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and collecting them ([A/74/187](#), paras. 7 and 18–21), and clarification was sought on how the Saving Lives Entity fund would complement and not compete with the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulations. Clarification was also sought on how the Office would work with the Peacebuilding Fund, including to avoid any duplication of effort. In respect of the programme performance in 2019 compared with planned results, it was noted that a few projects, including those implemented with the Saving Lives Entity fund, had made limited progress, resulting in the extension of the implementation period or a change of implementation modalities. Clarification was sought on the extent to which those cases were considered in reporting past results (para. 4.50) and the programme performance in 2019 against planned results, for example, the quality and timelines of services provided (para. 4.52). A delegation expressed the view that the approach reflected in paragraph 4.50 regarding the relationship of the programme with the Sustainable Development Goals was too detailed.

92. With regard to planned result 2 for 2021 on integrating small arms and light weapons consideration into the Security Council, under subprogramme 3, it was emphasized that the text would need to be reformulated, as the work of the Security Council on that subject could not go beyond the commitments made by the General Assembly or made in the context of the meetings of existing intergovernmental mechanisms, at which the full membership of the Organization has participated.

93. With regard to the 2021 performance measure reflected in table 4.11 under subprogramme 3, the view was expressed that the expression “which may include a resolution of the Council or a presidential statement on the issue of small arms and light weapons and which also recognizes the gendered impact of these weapons” seemed to prejudge the outcome of a document which did not yet exist.

94. Under the legislative mandates of the subprogramme (para. 4.64), a delegation recalled General Assembly resolution [74/60](#), in which the Assembly reaffirmed the acknowledgement, by the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in its outcome document ([A/CONF.192/2018/RC/3](#), annex), of the proposal on the establishment of a dedicated fellowship training programme on small arms and light weapons in order to strengthen technical knowledge and expertise in areas relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, in particular in developing countries. The delegation stressed that programmatic and budgetary provisions for the fellowship

training programme should have been included in the programme plan, as had been done in other mandated training programmes, such as the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services Programme.

95. Concern was expressed over the inclusion of issues related to international information security under subprogramme 4, Information and outreach, and the request was made that the topic be moved to a new dedicated subprogramme entitled “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security”. Imbalances were observed in the level of detail and focus provided for the two co-existing United Nations mechanisms on international information security, namely, the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/27, and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International, established pursuant to Assembly resolution 73/266. The Office for Disarmament Affairs was requested to provide additional information on the objectives, strategies and planned results in relation to the Open-ended Working Group. It was recalled that the Open-ended Working Group was a General Assembly subsidiary body and was the result of a historical process where, for the first time, all Members States had had the opportunity to participate in discussions on an equal footing. It was further highlighted that the Open-ended Working Group should not be considered as a dependent process of the Group of Governmental Experts. A delegation expressed the view that balanced geographical participation among and within regions was needed for the Group of Governmental Experts.

96. Regarding paragraph 4.69, it was emphasized that the proposed programme plan should be more specific with regard to the activity and prospects of the Open-ended Working Group, and that the corresponding performance measures for planned result 1 for 2021 should also be updated. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting limitations imposed at United Nations Headquarters, it was observed that the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group should be extended to 2021 and beyond as the work of the Group would culminate at that time, and that the support of the Secretariat would be crucial. It was therefore proposed that language under subprogramme 4 should include a strong focus on the activities of the Group in 2021, and that table 4.14 of the programme plan should clearly and thoroughly reflect the results achieved by the Open-ended Working Group, including its active engagement with businesses, non-governmental organizations and academia, which would be presented in a large-scale intersessional meeting in December 2020. A delegation pointed out that the Group of Governmental Experts had not carried out any similar activity in 2019 and that the programme plan should be adjusted accordingly.

97. On subprogramme 5, Regional disarmament, it was noted that much of the content for regional arms control focused on Africa, and a general assessment of progress on the continent was requested. Clarification was sought as to whether any work had been carried out in other regions. Clarification was also sought on the status of ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities on the continent, including on cooperation between the programme and other United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Children’s Fund, taking into account the number of children that were involved in belligerent activities.

98. The importance of the initiative, African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, was emphasized. A delegation noted that the initiative would not be fully implemented in 2020 as scheduled and sought clarification on the challenges to and plans for pursuing its implementation.

99. Additional information was sought on the United Nations strategy described in paragraph 4.92, namely, of building upon the assistance provided to six countries in

the Sahel region to cover 12 neighbouring States, and whether a decrease in requests for assistance had been observed, considering actions already taken, which warranted the proposed change.

Conclusions and recommendations

100. Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly, at its seventy-fifth session, review the programme plan of programme 3, Disarmament, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.

Programme 4 Peacekeeping operations

101. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 4, Peacekeeping operations, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 5)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

102. The Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

103. Delegations expressed appreciation and strong support for peacekeeping operations, as an important mechanism for the United Nations to maintain peace and security. A delegation also expressed support for the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization for its critical role in maintaining peace and security.

104. The view was expressed that the development and implementation of programmes related to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and terminology used in the programme, must be in compliance with proposals, recommendations and conclusions agreed by Member States in relevant specialized United Nations bodies, including the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

105. An example was the term “sustaining peace agenda” (para. 5.1), which, a delegation stressed, did not exist. The delegation expressed particular concerns at the references to the “so-called concept” of sustaining peace and expressed the view that in that instance, the Secretariat had broadened the scope of what had been approved by Member States.

106. A number of delegations noted that the strategy of the Department of Peace Operations was described as “to be guided” by the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and its shared commitments (para. 5.2). In that regard, it was stressed that, while many Member States had given their support to the initiative, it had not been incorporated into a legislative mandate that would give the Secretariat the capability to actually use the initiative as a guide on which to base all its work and evaluation thereof, including mission performance. It was stressed that the Secretariat was only bound by the legislative mandates that the legislative organs had approved; and it was noted that, in Security Council resolutions 2436 (2018) and 2518 (2020), the Council had only referred to the Action for Peacekeeping initiative in the context of welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to mobilize all partners and stakeholders, including through the initiative; they did not in any way welcome or

endorse the initiative. That did not mean that the Department of Peace Operations could not refer to the initiative, but rather that the reference should be limited to what Member States had approved in the corresponding legislative bodies, the only recent example being a very limited mention in the meetings of the Special Committee in March of 2020. It was further emphasized that expressing that an initiative was rooted in previous legislative mandates was not a prerogative for its being considered in and of itself a mandate.

107. With regard to the Special Committee, it was recalled that it had agreed that the initiative could be advanced strictly in accordance with views and recommendations of Member States, including those expressed during the high-level meeting on the Action for Peacekeeping initiative held in September 2018. It was emphasized that the same approach had to be applied to the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, about which there were reservations, as explained in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General (A/72/110-S/2018/815).

108. Other delegations expressed strong support for the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and welcomed the continued alignment of the initiative with the programme plan. It was highlighted that the initiative set the basis for ensuring that peacekeeping missions could and would fulfil their mandated work. It was also emphasized that all parties should follow through on their commitments in the context of the initiative and focus on delivering outcomes, including planning and improving the collection and use of data across the board, to support evidence-based decision-making and contribute to the analysis and recommendations provided to Member States.

109. Delegations expressed appreciation and strong support for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and highlighted the critical role of women in peace operations. The role of training, throughout the mission life cycle, was also highlighted as a tool to enhance efficiency.

110. A number of cross-cutting questions were raised with regard to the list of legislative mandates. Noting that the list had been curtailed, a delegation inquired if that was because the mandates had been disaggregated by subprogramme. Compliance with General Assembly resolution 74/251 in that regard was understood to have possibly prompted that approach, but the inconsistency of the approach in terms of other subprogrammes was also highlighted as was the notable reduction in the amount of legislative mandates that should guide the programme in general. It was noted that subprogrammes 1 and 2 did not include a list of legislative mandates, whereas subprogramme 3 did, and clarification on the inconsistent approach was sought. It was suggested that the full list of mandates for the whole programme, including its subprogrammes should be incorporated at the programme level as had been done in the 2018–2019 programme plan for greater clarity.

111. One delegation expressed the view that, even though the Department of Peace Operations had no evaluation activities planned for the following year, note should be made of that somewhere in its programme of work.

112. Regarding the objectives contained in the programme, a number of delegations noted with concern that several changes had been made that had resulted in a significant shift in focus even though the underlying mandates had not changed, and requested information on what had prompted those changes. It was recalled that the adequate preservation of objectives had been the focus of lengthy discussions during the fifty-ninth session of the Committee as well as at the meetings of the Fifth Committee during the main part of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

113. On the use of specific examples to illustrate the programme performance for 2019 and the planned results for 2021, the view was expressed that there had been a

misinterpretation of the mandate given in resolution 74/251. While recognizing that the use of specific examples helped to illustrate what had been done (performance) and what would be done (planned results), delegations stressed that making them the sole focus narrowed the scope of work of each subprogramme. For instance, it was concerning that the narrative for subprogramme 1, Operations, only included information specific to Haiti and the transition of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti. That was also the case for the planned results for 2021, which focused uniquely on the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, information was sought on the full extent of the work that was expected to be carried out in 2021.

114. Concern was expressed on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on peace operations for 2020 and 2021. Information was sought about the expected changes to the programme plan and on the legislative basis for any anticipated changes to operations and activities as a result of COVID-19. While recognizing that it was too early to assess the impact of the pandemic on the budgets of peacekeeping operations, a delegation stressed that the regular budget should reflect the impact of COVID-19 as much as possible, given its improved responsiveness to new developments owing to its annual cycle. Information was also sought on whether there was any special workplan for 2021 related to the security of peacekeepers in the light of COVID-19.

115. Under subprogramme 1. Operations, a delegation expressed the view that the strategy described in paragraph 5.11 was quite convoluted, presenting several actions and different expected results, and that it would have benefitted from having been structured differently, for instance, by separating the information into paragraphs or using lettered subparagraphs.

116. A delegation sought more information on the cooperation between the Department of Peace Operations and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), as referred to paragraph 5.13. With regard to the planned results for 2021, a delegation questioned the drastic reduction in reporting on violence against women and noted that, although the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo did very good work in the field, it had not achieved the same as far as violence against women was concerned.

117. The view was expressed that the performance measure reflected in table 5.3 on the number of confirmed human rights violations in conflict-affected areas should be expanded to include human rights violations related to rape and to sexual and gender-based violence, in particular in the light of the seriousness of sexual violence occurring in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

118. Clarification was sought on the reasons for the exclusion of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees under planned result 2, Completing elections and preserving the integrity of the peace process in the Central African Republic, as the role of the Office was recognized to be critical in delivering the result, as it related to refugees.

119. In reference to subprogramme 2. Military, delegations welcomed that the strategy included a reference to increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. It was noted, however, that the subprogramme did not clearly illustrate how the capacity of troop-contributing countries would be supported in terms of increasing the number of female peacekeepers, including police personnel. It was also noted that after several years, the projections had not changed and were general in nature. Clarification was sought on what the United Nations expected from troop-contributing countries in that regard and how Member States could help to ensure that women participated in the higher ranks of peacekeeping operations.

120. Delegations welcomed the new contexts addressed under planned result 2, including added safety for peacekeepers through improved management of weapons and ammunition. It was noted, however, that the only performance measure was “specialized training materials in use by peacekeeping operations and ammunition technical officers receive training on new standards”. In that regard, the view was expressed that it would be more effective to add, mission by mission, the evolution of the number of soldiers killed or wounded in operations for each year. Another delegation suggested that information on the number of deaths be disaggregated by malicious acts and hostile acts, noting that while the overall number of deaths was down, the trends between the two differed.

121. A delegation emphasized that Member States had developed and agreed on the general approach to and the scope of the policy referred to as “peacekeeping-intelligence/information gathering and analysis”, including its specific reference in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations at its 2018 substantive session (A/72/19). The delegation stressed that peacekeeping terminology, as agreed by the Special Committee, should be used, and the Secretariat should be guided by the framework agreed by Member States on that sensitive issue, including during development of relevant policies and guidelines, and relevant training programmes.

122. In respect of subprogramme 3. Rule of law and security institutions, a delegation expressed concern at the inclusion of the phrase “non-mission settings” in the objective as that introduced a perspective that had not been previously approved for the programme and could not be accepted. Similarly, the use of the term “fragile settings” was questioned.

123. It was recalled that conflict prevention was the primary responsibility of States and that the causes of forthcoming conflicts were not universal. Each case was unique, and international assistance related to the rule of law and security sector could be provided in accordance with relevant mandates of United Nations bodies or peacekeeping operations and special political missions and with full respect for national ownership and country-specific contexts.

124. The view was expressed that with regard to the performance measure reflected in table 5.12 about the awareness of Member States regarding services, it would be much more edifying to display the number of legislative texts and the number of reform plans actually adopted each year by the States concerned for police, justice or army reform.

125. With regard to subprogramme 4. Policy, evaluation and training, many delegations commented on the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System. Several delegations expressed appreciation and strong support for the System and sought clarification on how the Secretariat planned to strengthen its roll-out to other missions, given the positive feedback from missions where the System had been launched. Clarification was sought as to how the System could be used to measure outcomes and improve performance measures in the future. Clarification was also sought on the type of data that would be collected by the System and how that would be incorporated into future programme plans and performance reporting.

126. The view was expressed that further progress was required to ensure smooth and effective transitions from peacekeeping missions to a follow-on United Nations presence, including better and more widespread use of the integrated strategic framework and other joint instruments to address the performance of uniformed and civilian peacekeepers and missions overall, as well as enhance transparency and accountability. In that regard, the importance of a common approach across the United Nations system, donors and other stakeholders was emphasized.

127. Other delegations, however, voiced concerns about the widespread implementation of the System across missions before the pertinent legislative bodies had properly reviewed its pilot. Information was sought on initial results and lessons learned from the implementation of the pilot. The view was expressed that it was not clear if the System was implemented differently in every mission or whether there existed a unified policy or set of criteria or mechanisms. A delegation inquired whether, if they existed, they had been shared with and discussed by Member States.

128. With regard to performance assessment of the subprogramme, the view was expressed that rather than just counting the number of missions to which the System had been rolled out, information should be presented on the impact of the System on the mission.

129. With regard to the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, clarification was sought on the reasons for the decrease in the number of field tasks conducted with free and secure access to the notified areas to the extent permitted by the host countries, as referred to in paragraph 5.123. Clarification was also sought on the impact of restricted access and how the mission planned to address that challenge in the future. Highlighting the volatile situation, a delegation inquired how the challenges could be overcome, given the limited number of United Nations observers.

Conclusions and recommendations

130. The Committee welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to mobilize all stakeholders in support of more effective United Nations peacekeeping, including through his Action for Peacekeeping initiative, recalled follow-up initiatives and emphasized the importance of taking into account the views and recommendations of Member States in advancing the initiative, including those expressed during the high-level meeting on Action for Peacekeeping held in September 2018.

131. The Committee noted with appreciation the contribution of the Departments of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to the restoration of peace in regions of the world affected by long-term conflicts, as well as efforts made to ensure a smooth transition during the drawdown and closing of United Nations peacekeeping operations in several countries.

132. The Committee commended the Department of Peace Operations on its efforts to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers and mission personnel and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to fulfil the responsibilities under relevant resolutions to improve the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and mission personnel.

133. The Committee expressed interest in the lessons to be learned from the pilot phase of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System, noted the ongoing development of impact-based performance indicators as part of the System, as well as the expected information on how the indicators would measure the performance of mandated tasks, bearing in mind the objective of attaining full coverage of all peacekeeping missions in 2021.

134. The Committee recommended that General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to implement relevant Assembly resolutions regarding performance, accountability, risk management and internal control of peacekeeping operations.

135. The Committee stressed the need for the performance measures within subprogramme 1, Operations, to be more accurate and more directly related to

the objectives pursued by the missions. In particular, the Committee stressed the importance of being informed about key issues such as the number of instances of sexual gender-based violence; the number of casualties among peacekeepers; and the number of pieces of legislation adopted each year in conflict-affected or post-conflict countries for justice, police or army reform.

136. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 4, Peacekeeping operations, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:

I. Department of Peace Operations

Overall orientation

Mandates and background

Paragraph 5.1

Replace the third sentence with the following: “The objectives of the programme are also conceived taking into account Security Council mandates, in particular Council resolutions [1325 \(2000\)](#), [2250 \(2015\)](#), [2282 \(2016\)](#) and [2436 \(2018\)](#), as well as General Assembly resolutions [74/277](#), [60/180](#) and [70/262](#).”

Strategy and external factors for 2021

Paragraph 5.2

Replace the first sentence with the following: “The strategy of the Department of Peace Operations remains guided by all relevant Security Council mandates.”

Paragraph 5.2 (a)

After “the integrated approach of the” delete “new”.

Paragraph 5.2 (f)

Replace the existing text with the following: “(f) To improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, including by implementing the action plan to improve the security of peacekeepers, taking forward the training plan and the introduction and use of technologies, which should be implemented with transparency and in consultation with Member States, as appropriate.”

Paragraph 5.2 (g)

After “triangular partnership arrangements” add “and the light coordination mechanism”.

Paragraph 5.3

In the first sentence, replace “architecture” with “pillar”.

Paragraph 5.4 (b)

Replace “implementation of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations” with “advancement of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative”.

New paragraph 5.8

Insert new paragraph 5.8, reading:

The Department will continue to engage and interact with relevant troop- and police-contributing countries in accordance with given mandates.

Subprogramme 2**Military****Table 5.9**

Subprogramme 2: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

Replace “peacekeeping military intelligence” with “peacekeeping-intelligence/information gathering and analysis”.

Subprogramme 3**Rule of law and security institutions****Objective***Paragraph 5.40*

Replace the existing text with the following:

The objective, to which the subprogramme contributes, is to strengthen the rule of law and security sector governance to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in countries where peacekeeping operations and special political missions deploy and where otherwise authorized, or requested by the Member State, in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Strategy*Paragraph 5.41*

Replace the existing text with the following:

To contribute to strengthening the rule of law and security sector governance to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in countries where peacekeeping operations and special political missions deploy, and where otherwise authorized, or requested by the Member State, the subprogramme will continue to provide advisory and operational support to peacekeeping operations, special political missions, and where otherwise authorized, or requested by the Member State, including by: (a) assisting host States in the reform, restructuring and development of their police and other law enforcement institutions, providing operational support and, in rare circumstances, assuming interim policing functions in line with the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing; (b) supporting nationally-led efforts to ensure accountability for crimes that fuel conflict, strengthening prison security and management and re-establishing the host-State’s justice and corrections institutions and engaging in trust-building initiatives; (c) supporting the planning, design and evaluation of processes that remove weapons and individuals from armed groups, and reintegrate ex-combatants and elements associated with armed groups into society as civilians, identifying and formulating relevant lessons learned and guidance; (d) supporting the implementation of defence and security provisions in peace agreements, coordinating international assistance mandates and assisting the design of national strategies aligned with the normative United Nations framework on

security sector reform; (e) managing mine action programmes to mitigate explosive threats and training uniformed and civilian United Nations personnel in that regard; and (f) rapidly deploying specialist capacities in all the above-mentioned areas. This wide-ranging work is expected to result in more effective and accountable security and justice institutions in countries receiving assistance, as well as reduced threats posed by armed groups and explosive hazards, contributing to the prevention of conflict and sustained peace.

Paragraph 5.42

Replace “(g) the establishment of a repository of lessons learned worldwide, as well as planning backstopping for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in mission and non-mission settings, e.g. Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Mali and the Sudan;” with “(g) the establishment of a repository of lessons learned worldwide, as well as planning backstopping for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Mali and the Sudan;”

Programme performance in 2019: enhanced conflict prevention plan of Burkina Faso through rule of law and security institutions support

Paragraph 5.44

In the first sentence, replace “fragile countries” with “countries at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict”.

In the last sentence, delete the word “violent”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 1: comprehensive early warning and stronger conflict prevention capacities (result carried over from 2020)

Table 5.11

Performance measure

Column for 2019

Replace “fragile settings” with “countries at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict”.

Column for 2020

Replace “fragile settings” with “countries at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict”.

Result 2: increased awareness by Member States of specialized conflict prevention support provided by the subprogramme in non-mission settings (new result)

Delete “in non-mission settings”.

Paragraph 5.49

Replace the third sentence with the following:

In recognition of this need, the subprogramme, following the reform of the peace and security pillar, serves as “system-wide service provider for a range of political and operational activities within the United Nations system and, as appropriate, in support of Member States, regional and subregional

organizations and other entities”, thereby expanding the scope of its support beyond peacekeeping operations.

Paragraph 5.50

Replace the existing text with the following:

The challenge for the subprogramme was that, in order to serve Member States efficiently, it needed to develop a new engagement framework vis-à-vis Governments as well as relevant United Nations partners. In response, the subprogramme will develop and operationalize an engagement framework for non-mission settings, where authorized, or requested by a Member State, that lays out available expertise and services, modalities of delivery, complementarity and coordination with all relevant United Nations partners with a view to providing coherent and integrated United Nations support to Member States.

Paragraph 5.51

Replace exiting paragraph with the following:

This work is expected to contribute to strengthening the rule of law and security sector governance to support the maintenance of international peace and security where authorized, or requested by a Member State, which would be demonstrated by two Member States receiving specialized assistance from the subprogramme as a result of the increased understanding by Member States of available services and modalities of assistance delivered by the subprogramme in post-conflict situations and where otherwise authorized, or requested by the Member State, and the increased availability of such assistance.

Table 5.12

Performance measure

Column for 2020

After “Subprogramme’s engagement framework in” delete “non-mission countries”.

Column for 2021

Delete “in non-mission settings”.

Table 5.13

Subprogramme 3: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

B. Generation and transfer of knowledge

Field and technical cooperation projects (number of projects)

Delete “in non-mission settings”.

Technical materials (number of materials)

Replace “and non-mission settings” with “and where otherwise authorized or requested by the Member State.”.

**Subprogramme 4
Policy, evaluation and training**

Strategy

Paragraph 5.55

Replace the first two sentences with the following:

To contribute to the enhancement of the performance and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, the subprogramme will promote and facilitate policy development, evaluation, organizational learning and training on issues relating to peacekeeping, taking into consideration the views and recommendations provided by Member States on the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, launched by the Secretary-General in 2018.

Replace the fourth sentence with the following:

The subprogramme will continue developing through its Evaluations Unit the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System and will proceed to its rollout to all peacekeeping missions by 2020 (excluding the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, which is already in drawdown) once the results of the pilot study have been reviewed.

Planned results for 2021

Result 2

Internal challenge and response

Paragraph 5.66

Replace “in line with the shared commitment of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative to strengthen the protection provided by peacekeeping operations” with “taking into account the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the aim of strengthening the protection provided by peacekeeping operations.”

II. United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

Strategy

Paragraph 5.93

Replace the second sentence with the following:

The regional analysis and engagement is also congruent with and supportive of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, specifically advancing political solutions to conflict, enhancing the political impact of peacekeeping and improving peacekeeping partnerships, where the mission is enhancing and expanding regional engagement; engaging more with women, peace and security community networks; and reinforcing common positions and common messaging among regional United Nations actors to enhance coordination and collaboration.

**Programme 5
Peaceful uses of outer space**

137. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 5, Peaceful uses of outer space, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 6)). The Committee also had before

it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2020/10](#)).

138. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the report and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

139. Delegations expressed broad support for the programme as an important mechanism to strengthen international cooperation in space and the use of space science and technology. Delegations also expressed appreciation for the work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and its strategic role in assisting developing countries launch satellites to space. A delegation stressed the important work of the Office in its role as secretariat of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

140. Several delegations noted that the results presented were quite specific and sought clarification on how the other responsibilities of the Office had been measured. It was highlighted that, although there was a broad understanding of the work of the Office, and the strategy clearly reflected its main activities, details on the other activities that would be carried out in the 2021 cycle were not evident. The view was expressed that having that information would facilitate a better understanding of the requirements for performance assessment.

141. It was highlighted that the adoption of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was an important step forward. It was, however, underlined that the work carried out towards achieving such sustainability was ongoing and that the working group that had developed the Guidelines had been established to continue dialogue on the matter under a five-year workplan. The view was expressed that such work should have been reflected in the foreword and in paragraphs 6.5 and 6.16 of the programme plan.

142. A delegation expressed its reservations regarding the statement made in paragraph 6.16 that the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities would help to advance international cooperation and to increase awareness of the importance of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. It was highlighted that the Guidelines were voluntary and not legally binding under international law. It was recalled that the Guidelines had been prepared with the main objective of maintaining outer space in sustainable conditions so that future generations could also use it.

143. Delegations expressed concern regarding information presented in some parts of the programme plan, specifically in paragraphs 6.2, 6.5 (c) and 6.22, that were beyond the mandate of the Office. Clarification was also sought on why the responsibilities of the Office referenced in paragraph 6.3 were not included in the strategy as part of the broad generic set of activities for the Office.

144. Delegations also expressed concern about the use of such non-agreed terms as “global space governance”, included in paragraph 6.6, and were of the view that the term should be deleted. It was also highlighted that the programme plan included no reference to the role of the Office on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, as called for in General Assembly resolution [74/67](#). Delegations emphasized that the cooperation of the Office with other entities should be carried out strictly in accordance with its mandate. Further clarification was also sought on the work of the Office with regard to the civil satellite-based positioning, navigation, timing and valued-added services mentioned in paragraph 6.5 (d) and on whether the Office had had or could have any projects in that respect.

145. Noting that the workload of the Office had increased in recent years and that the programme plan for 2021 reflected an increase in some of its outreach activities, concerns were expressed about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the planned increased activities.

146. It was highlighted that, in respect of paragraph 6.11, the space capacity needs of Member States should be conducted upon the request of the interested Member State.

147. Reference was made to the information provided in results 1 and 2 of the programme plan for 2021, and clarification was sought on whether those planned results covered the overall responsibilities of the Office.

148. In respect of planned result 1, access to space for all, a question was raised about the contribution of the programme to individual countries on the performance of the launch in the years indicated. As regards paragraph 6.15 on programme performance in 2019, a delegation sought clarification on the workshops carried out across the different sectors, including for developing countries. In respect of paragraph 6.17, clarification was sought on whether the work described therein would trigger any budgetary implications. In that regard, it was recalled that budgetary matters fell outside of the remit of the Committee.

149. In relation to planned result 2, increasing access to space, clarification was sought on the reference to “specific activities” in paragraph 6.19. Clarification was also sought on the use of the term “best practices” in paragraph 6.20 and on who would identify them. A delegation recalled that, according to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, it was the obligation of the launching State to register the space objects it launched. In that regard, the view was expressed that all States should fulfil their obligations under the said Convention, and it was not the responsibility of the Office to decide who met or did not meet those “best practices”. Clarification was also sought on the reference to “new alliances” that the Office planned to forge.

150. The view was expressed that the performance measures referenced in figure 6.II, on the number of developing countries having launched satellites, and figure 6.III, on the number of Member States having gained access to outer space, were those of Member States. In that regard, clarification was sought on why this would be considered an achievement of the United Nations.

151. A delegation sought clarification on the development of a repository for information on space technologies, referenced in paragraph 6.27 (a) (ii), in particular the rationale for the proposal, who would provide information to the repository, who would have access to the information and how the information would be used. Another delegation inquired as to how the “online registration platform and dashboard” (para. 6.27 (a) (i)) would reduce current delays in the processing of space object registration filings by the Office.

Conclusions and recommendations

152. The Committee noted with appreciation the contribution of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to the promotion of international cooperation in space activities, and in particular its efforts to strengthen the capacity of a greater number of developing countries to use space science and technology.

153. The Committee recalled the importance of the Office continuing to focus on its core functions, in particular as the secretariat of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and in performing its duties as the register for space objects.

154. The Committee expressed great interest in the results of the envisaged self-evaluations of the activities of the Beijing Office of the Programme on the Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) and of the process for the registration of objects launched into outer space planned for 2021, and encouraged the Secretary-General to integrate the results in the proposed programme budget for 2022.

155. The Committee underlined the importance of effective monitoring and reporting and the clear linking of resources to results, and encouraged in particular additional quantifiable reporting on such activities as UN-SPIDER and the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

156. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 5, Peaceful uses of outer space, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:

A. Proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance for 2019

Overall orientation

Mandates and background

In paragraph 6.2, after “and 74/67, on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities”, insert “, as appropriate”.

Programme of work

Peaceful uses of outer space

Strategy

Paragraph 6.5

In the first sentence, after “(c) transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities”, add “, as appropriate”.

After “21 Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities”, insert “, as well as the establishment, under a five-year workplan, of a working group under the agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee. The Committee serves as the principal forum for continued institutionalized dialogue on issues related to the implementation and review of the guidelines”.

Paragraph 6.6

After “the Office will”, insert “, in line with its mandate:”

After “global space governance”, insert “as appropriate,”.

External factors for 2021

Paragraph 6.9

In the first sentence, after “the Office”, insert “, in accordance with its mandate,”.

Evaluation activities

Paragraph 6.11

In the third sentence, after “the space capacity needs of Member States”, insert “, upon request of the interested Member State,”.

Programme performance in 2019: increased commitment among Member States to strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Progress towards the attainment of the objective, and performance measure

Paragraph 6.16

Replace “the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities were adopted in 2019” with “the adoption in June 2019 of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, as well as the establishment, under a five-year workplan, of a working group under the agenda item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee. The Committee serves as the principal forum for continued institutionalized dialogue on issues related to the implementation and review of the guidelines. The long-term sustainability of outer space activities is defined as the ability to maintain the conduct of space activities indefinitely into the future in a manner that realizes the objectives of equitable access to the benefits of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, in order to meet the needs of the present generations while preserving the outer space environment for future generations”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 2: increasing access to space (new result)

Internal challenge and response

Paragraph 6.20

Delete “best practices and”.

After “new alliances”, insert “, in line with its mandate,”.

Legislative mandates

Paragraph 6.22

General Assembly resolutions

Delete “74/67 Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities”.

**Programme 6
Legal affairs**

157. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 6, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 8)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

158. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, the Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar and the Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

159. Delegations expressed support and appreciation for the work of the Office of Legal Affairs regarding the implementation of its mandates, the promotion of international law and the legal assistance provided to Member States. A delegation noted the important role played by the Office in United Nations reform as well as its role in tackling sexual exploitation and abuse. Delegations commended the work of the Office in ensuring that the Organization and Member States could adapt to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crises and encouraged the Office to continue implementing its mandates, as approved in the Charter of the United Nations and by the General Assembly, in a rapidly evolving international legal environment.

160. A delegation noted that, as a result of the new format, the volume of the report had increased by a factor of six compared with 2016. Questions were raised as to a new methodology for preparing the text of the programme, which included activities of Member States and organs of the United Nations that did not have direct bearing on the mandates given to the Office, including the promotion of treaties such as the United Nations Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration and the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation (Singapore Convention on Mediation), which had not yet entered into force, as well as the estimates regarding the effectiveness of treaties and outcomes of the work of the International Law Commission. The delegation expressed its view that that approach complicated the analyses of the activities of the Office. It was emphasized that the evaluation of the effectiveness of the treaties was the prerogative of Member States and not the Secretariat.

161. Regarding the strategy and external factors for 2021 set out in the report, the view was expressed that the support provided by the Office to Member States should have been more prominently reflected in the strategy, as it was acknowledged that the legal opinions provided by the Office to Member States were useful.

162. A delegation noted the use of unknown concepts, in particular the reference in paragraph 8.4 to “rules-based organization”, stressing that the United Nations was based on a well-known international treaty: the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the delegation expressed full support for the traditional parts of the programme based on clear mandates, such as the registration of treaties and the provision of assistance to the International Law Commission and the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. The reference in paragraph 8.4 to the intention of the Office to “promote and strengthen the further development of international justice and accountability” was noted and clarification was sought as to the reference to the source of such a broad and non-specific mandate. A question was raised regarding the mandate of the Office of Legal Affairs to further develop international justice and accountability. Clarification was also sought on what was meant by “reform initiated by the Secretary-General”, referred to in paragraph 8.4.

163. A delegation expressed support for the work of the Office and its focus on the review of sexual exploitation and abuse cases referenced in paragraph 8.5. A delegation stressed the importance of evaluation and the establishment of the Evaluation and Strategic Planning Unit, created in 2019. Regarding paragraph 8.11, some delegations expressed support for the focus on treaties, and commended the work of the Office of Legal Affairs on the promotion of international law and the legal publications related to the activities of the United Nations. In that regard, a delegation sought further information vis-à-vis the work of the Office related to the dissemination of international law publications. Delegations highlighted that the publications should be provided to Member States electronically or through other means.

164. A delegation highlighted that the integration of gender aspects in the context of the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law was discussed at the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. The delegation stressed that the task of the Programme was to assist those countries that requested it with the study of international law, and that the reference to gender could prevent the provision of such assistance to persons who needed it most. It was further highlighted that the Assembly, in its resolution 74/185, did not mandate the distribution of fellowships depending on gender nor the promotion of gender parity in the training programmes.

165. Regarding subprogramme 1, Provision of legal services to the United Nations system as a whole, some delegations sought clarification on the mandate for the new system of electronic submission of credentials by States, reflected in paragraph 8.30, and the relation to the traditional requirement of submission of the paper copy of credentials to the Secretariat. Clarification was also sought on how the new system would help the Credentials Committee and why there was no mention of a mandate to create such a system in the programme plan.

166. Regarding the strategy for subprogramme 1, a delegation expressed concerns about language used in paragraph 8.27 related to “non-judicial accountability mechanisms” which, in its view, contradicted the concepts of a rules-based organization and the rule of law.

167. Regarding the performance measures for 2019 reflected in table 8.3, it was noted that 149 host country agreements were planned to be signed in 2020, which would provide the legal framework necessary for the resident coordinators and their offices to function. In that regard, an update was sought on the number of agreements signed and the impact of COVID-19 on that activity. A delegation acknowledged the important role played by the Office in the implementation of the United Nations reform proposals and commended its dedication to finalizing host country agreements for the resident coordinator system. It was emphasized that the agreements should consider the local requirements of each host country, and not be subject to a “one size fits all” approach. It was further noted that the programme plan included references to a country, and the view was expressed by a delegation that the mention of an agreement signed with a specific country should be avoided.

168. Regarding subprogramme 2, General legal services provided to United Nations organs and programmes, and result 2: continued reduction of actual legal liability of the Organization, a delegation sought clarification on the potential liabilities of the Organization, as mentioned in paragraph 8.55, including those posed by the COVID-19 crises, and enquired about the systems in place to prevent such claims from arising, including through effective internal controls and the enforcement of the rules of the Organization.

169. Regarding subprogramme 3, Progressive development and codification of international law, a delegation indicated that the General Assembly had not reached a decision on the draft articles on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity mentioned in paragraph 8.64. The view was expressed that it was too premature to draw such conclusions and that the projects undertaken by the International Law Commission should be treated equally unless the Assembly decided to prioritize a particular area.

170. The view was expressed by a delegation that the information usually published in the *United Nations Juridical Yearbook* on the legal activities of the Organization, mentioned in paragraph 8.69, was not easily found on the Internet, and the delegation stressed the continued need for its publication. As to the publication of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* mentioned in paragraph 8.67, a delegation sought clarification on the reason for the lack of prominence and the absence of that

deliverable in 2021, in view of the fact that the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly had reiterated, in paragraph 17 of its resolution 74/190, that the completion and update of volume III of the publication was a priority.

171. With regard to subprogramme 4, Law of the sea and ocean affairs, the view was expressed by a delegation that the general statement with respect to the factors that contribute to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, reflected in paragraph 8.78, should be avoided, given its sensitive nature, as the crafting of language was undertaken carefully by Member States in relevant decisions. On another matter, a delegation questioned the lack of references to biodiversity in the programme plan, an activity which had previously been budgeted for, and requested an update on the status of the discussions.

172. The view was expressed by a delegation that the questionnaire approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators mentioned in paragraph 8.79 should have reflected more precisely the role of the Secretariat in the coordination of the distribution of the questionnaire, and not general statements regarding the role of the questionnaire for Member States. Regarding programme performance for 2019, the same delegation sought clarification on the stakeholders referred to in paragraphs 8.77 to 8.81, including the respective mandates for the Office vis-à-vis its increased interaction with different stakeholders.

173. Regarding table 8.11 on the performance measures for 2020 related to the publication of the second world ocean assessment and the approval of its summary by the General Assembly, the view was expressed that it was premature to highlight the Assembly's approval of the summary, as the consideration of the document was still ongoing. Regarding result 2: progress in making global fisheries sustainable, a delegation highlighted that the reference to the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations entitled *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals*, in paragraph 8.83, should be updated to reflect the most recent report published in 2020. A delegation expressed support for the resumed Review Conference mentioned in paragraph 8.84 and expressed the view that it was premature to foresee any possible outcomes of the Review Conference.

174. Regarding subprogramme 5, Progressive harmonization, modernization and unification of the law of international trade, some delegations expressed the view that the section of the programme devoted to the activities of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) focused too heavily on treaties that had not yet entered into force, in particular the Singapore Convention on Mediation, which was not within the Secretariat's mandate. It was highlighted that the Convention was developed and available for signature by Member States, with assistance provided by the Office. Clarification was sought on the inclusion of the Singapore Convention on Mediation in the section devoted to the work of the Treaty Section, which was tasked with assisting the drafting of final clauses and organizing the signing ceremony.

175. Regarding the activities of Working Group III of UNCITRAL, it was noted by a delegation that there was no consensus in the Commission on the reform of investor-State dispute settlement, but the respective sections of the programme report provided a different impression and would need to be adjusted.

176. Clarification was sought on the planned increase in the meetings of UNCITRAL subsidiary bodies in 2020/21 from 118 to 120 meetings, as set out in table 8.17, and the related mandate. Clarification was sought as to why the subprogramme referred exclusively to Working Group III, considering that the activities of the other Working Groups of the Commission were no less important, and questioned the source of the

mandate of the Secretariat to organize intercessional meetings, as mentioned in paragraph 8.103.

177. With regard to the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, a delegation questioned the less-than-prominent presentation of the Committee and its work in the programme. It was recalled by the same delegation that the General Assembly, in its resolution [74/195](#), referred to the use of section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement, which meant arbitration, and the delegation expressed the view that the activity would need support from the Office and should have been reflected in the programme.

178. On subprogramme 6, Custody, registration and publication of treaties, a delegation emphasized the importance of result 2: modern technology solutions available to Member States to enhance the transparency of the international treaty framework, and welcomed the positive work planned for 2021.

179. Several delegations expressed their disagreement with the inclusion of chapter II, “Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar”, and chapter III, “International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011”, in programme 6, Legal affairs. Questions were raised about the basis of inclusion of those topics in programme 6, which, as one delegation expressed its view, was devoted to the activities of the Office of Legal Affairs. Clarification was sought on the mandate and legality of the Mechanisms, on whether the Mechanisms were part of the Office of Legal Affairs and on whether the Office of Legal Affairs was the lead Office in the programme. It was emphasized that the Human Rights Council had no authority to establish such a mechanism as it was not a prosecutorial body. Concern was expressed regarding the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution [39/2](#) on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar, despite repeated opposition by a group of Member States. It was stressed that the resolution undermined the sovereignty of Member States as well as the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. Similarly, it was emphasized that the General Assembly, in its resolution [71/248](#), had established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 without the consent of the Syrian Arab Republic. For that reason, the delegations reiterated their position that they would not support the financing of both Mechanisms from the regular budget. The view was expressed by several delegations that the Mechanisms should be removed from programme 6.

180. Other delegations reiterated the legality of both Mechanisms, which had been approved by the General Assembly, and supported their inclusion under programme 6, and expressed the view that the discussions undertaken at the fifty-ninth session of the Committee should not be reopened, but rather efforts should be undertaken to advance the programme plans for both Mechanisms.

181. Several delegations expressed strong support for the mandate and the work undertaken by both Mechanisms and commended them for the progress made despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. A delegation sought clarification on the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the Mechanisms.

182. Regarding the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, some delegations expressed the view that the Mechanism served itself and not the interests of the Syrian people. Conversely, a delegation expressed full support for the investigative work carried out by the Mechanism within its framework and its role in

helping bring to justice those responsible for the crimes, and reiterated its confidence in the Mechanism. Several delegations stressed that the Mechanism had been established in accordance with the priorities of General Assembly resolution 71/248, the provisions of which were specified in the mandate of the Mechanism published in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution establishing the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (A/71/755 and A/71/755/Add.1). A delegation stressed the importance of the continued collection of evidence in accordance with the mandate and that investigations and prosecutions carried out at the national level, including the development and diversification of the collection of the evidence, be conducted and concluded.

Conclusions and recommendations

183. **Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly, at its seventy-fifth session, review the programme plan of programme 6, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.**

Programme 7 Economic and social affairs

184. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 9)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

185. The Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to queries raised during the Committee’s consideration of the programme.

Discussion

186. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the programme and for the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular in the areas of poverty eradication and capacity-building, and for the support provided to Member States in the follow-up and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One delegation observed that the work of the Department was an essential workstream of the United Nations, with poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge at the heart of its mandate. In that regard, the delegation expressed the view that a crucial feature of the Department’s work was the support it provided to the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee of the General Assembly in reaching consensus among Member States. One delegation reiterated the need to ensure secure, stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

187. One delegation commended the work done by the Department in integrating a gender perspective into its operational activities, deliverables and results, and welcomed the Department’s further thoughts on ways to further implement gender mainstreaming. The same delegation noted that reference was made to the Department providing thought leadership, noted that those efforts should not be regarded in isolation, and welcomed thoughts on how the Department was linking its efforts in

that area with those of international financial institutions that were also playing prominent roles in thought leadership.

188. One delegation stressed the importance of developing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound objectives and deliverables, and that that would assist the Committee in reviewing programmes. In that connection, further details were sought on how the programme had incorporated such objectives and deliverables into the programme.

189. The observation was made that the foreword to the proposed programme budget included the following statement: “illicit financial flows and forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades”. It was pointed out that that was a partial quotation from the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution 74/4 of 15 October 2019). The opinion was expressed that if a quotation should be taken from that declaration, it should be quoted in full so as to avoid a misrepresentation.

190. One delegation commented that no specific references had been made in the proposed programme plan for 2021 to poverty alleviation and, in that connection, sought clarification about the work being done in that area, including plans to be carried out in the future.

191. With regard to the support provided by the Department to Member States, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/299 on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level, clarification was sought as to the work carried out and the future plans of the Department in the areas of internal capacity-building in the context of the management reforms initiated by the Secretary-General. Further clarification was sought in connection with the work carried out to enhance partnerships, including but not limited to the public and private sectors.

192. In the area of support provided by the Department to Member States through major global conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, including on follow-up to the second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, clarification was sought regarding the mandate applicable to increase support to that Conference.

193. In the overall orientation of the programme, in paragraph 9.16 of the programme plan, on cooperation between the Department and other entities, some delegations observed that the Department had established an internal coordination capacity to support the reinvigorated resident coordinator system. In that connection, further information was sought concerning what actions it was currently taking to ensure complementarity and synergies between the Department and the resident coordinator system.

194. One delegation enquired whether the Department had a dedicated programmatic structure that provided substantive support to vulnerable countries, particularly those recognized under programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, specifically under subprogramme 1, Least developed countries and subprogramme 2, Landlocked developing countries.

195. In connection with deliverables, the observation was made that the Department had not presented cross-cutting deliverables in its proposed programme plan for 2021 and clarification was sought as to why none were included in the programme.

196. In reference to the proposed programme budget, section B, Proposed post and non-post resource requirements for 2021, table 9.29, Evolution of post resources by component and subprogramme, heading 2, Extrabudgetary, one delegation enquired

how the total of 529 staff had been reached. In relation to paragraph 9.183, the same delegation noted a request for an increase of about \$350,000 owing to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and reform of the Department, and sought clarification regarding that request. It was also noted that the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters was actually more expensive than other committees and clarification was requested on the reason for that. With regard to table 9.33, Compliance rate (also under section B, Proposed post and non-post resource requirements for 2021, in the subsection on executive direction and management), the same delegation enquired about the steps taken to ensure compliance with booking air travel. In reaction to the aforementioned comments, another delegation recalled previous discussions in the Committee, emphasized that questions related to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee and called on the Committee to focus the discussion on part A of the programme.

197. Concern was expressed about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the programme, given that the programme plan had been drafted prior to it. One delegation enquired about the extent of the impact on the programme and subprogrammes, and about the ways in which the Department intended to adapt its work to the COVID-19 situation. The Department's quick response to the pandemic was welcomed, including efforts undertaken to set up an internal task force on the socioeconomic impact of the crisis. One delegation noted that a series of policy briefs had been issued on the impact of the pandemic, but that no policy brief had been included on the effects of unilateral coercive measures imposed on developing countries with regard to their ability to counter the outbreak and its repercussions, and sought further information on that omission. The delegation recalled that the mandate for that work had been given by the General Assembly in several resolutions, most recently resolution [74/200](#), in which the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to monitor the imposition of unilateral coercive measures as a means of political and economic coercion and to study the impact of such measures on the affected countries.

198. Concerning subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support and coordination for sustainable development, one delegation noted that the term "major groups" was being used in the same sense as in Agenda 21 and the programme for its further implementation. Thus, the delegation was of the view that Secretariat should not interpret the term at will. Another delegation highlighted the backlog of applications by non-governmental organizations seeking to obtain consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The same delegation enquired whether, for the purposes of the subprogramme, it would be possible to use as a performance measure the number of non-governmental organizations that had submitted an application instead of the number that had acquired consultative status, which, in the view of the delegation, was problematic.

199. Regarding the planned results for 2021 under subprogramme 2, Inclusive social development, one delegation expressed the view that the focus of result 1, sustainable peace through national youth policies (result carried over from 2020), lay outside the mandate of the subprogramme, which was focused on social inclusive development. In that connection, the delegation sought further clarification from the Department.

200. With regard to subprogramme 3, Sustainable development, one delegation enquired why the objective no longer included a reference to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. According to the delegation it appeared that, together with changes in the format, changes in the objectives had also been introduced. The delegation therefore requested clarification concerning the changes to the objectives. Another delegation sought clarification as to whether the Department would be involved in the

preparation of the world food systems summit to be held in 2021. It noted that the summit was not mentioned among other major programme events, even though the issue of hunger was mentioned throughout the subprogramme, including the reference to a dedicated multi-stakeholder coalition in one of the planned results for 2021. Further information on that mechanism was therefore requested, in particular with regard to whether the planned activities would involve partnerships with United Nations system agencies based in Rome. In that context, the delegation proposed that the Department reconsider making references in the subprogramme to the recommendations of the *Global Sustainable Development Report* as its relevance in the context of the pandemic had yet to be reviewed. With regard to paragraph 9.65 of the programme plan, on progress towards the attainment of the objective, and performance measure, one delegation welcomed the inclusion of more recent actions in addition to the information about actions that had taken place between 2008 and 2014.

201. With regard to subprogramme 4, Statistics, one delegation noted that the strategy discussed in paragraph 9.74 of the programme plan clearly showed the difference in understanding underlying the expected results presented and past results. Another delegation welcomed the role of the Department in the compilation and dissemination of statistics and analytical data in support of sound decision-making, as well as the support provided to the related subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council. The same delegation stated that official data provided by Governments must be the primary source of relevant United Nations publications and analyses; those should be prepared in consultation with and validated by the Member State concerned. The delegation further observed that positive feedback from Governments should be a performance indicator of those workstreams that were also expected to take due account of diverse national policies and priorities. In that context, the delegation stated that it would recommend the addition of language to paragraphs 9.76, 9.97, 9.102, 9.103 and 9.106 of the proposed programme plan for 2021. The delegation also sought information on the role of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network in the Data for Now initiative and its influence on the work under the subprogramme, as the methodology used by that non-governmental organization for its own publications had raised concerns.

202. With regard to subprogramme 5, Population, planned result 1, improved accessibility of policy-relevant data and analysis, through streamlined reports and multimodal dissemination (result carried over from 2020), table 9.13, Performance measure, one delegation pointed to the performance measure for 2021, i.e., the impact of the megatrends report being visible in references to the report on websites and in articles, and expressed the view that the impact could be assessed better in more concrete ways.

203. As concerns subprogramme 6, Economic analysis and policy, clarification was sought regarding the key issue of the negative role that inequality plays in addressing climate action, international migration and conflict prevention, while other factors, such as poverty, were neglected by comparison. Similarly, the delegation noted the lack of reliable and universally recognized scientific evidence on the interaction between climate change and displacement. Another delegation questioned the reasons for which the objective of the subprogramme had changed. Clarification was also sought on how the subprogramme coordinated its macroeconomic analysis with that of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and all other actors that had global and local analytical capacity, both at the global and country levels. In addition, clarification was sought on how planned result 1 for 2021, integrated policy approach towards the Sustainable Development Goals (result carried over from 2020), would be measured and how that partnership dimension would be integrated into its engagement with the Bretton Woods institutions and other major actors. Furthermore,

the delegation sought clarification on how, in practice, the subprogramme would articulate its engagement with the regional commissions, the economists within the new resident coordinator system and with economists of the United Nations Development Programme.

204. With regard to subprogramme 7, Public institutions and digital government, one delegation commended the work of the subprogramme, including its activities in support of the Internet Governance Forum. However, the delegation expressed concern about the issue of cybersecurity having been included in the narrative of the subprogramme and expressed the view that cybersecurity was being positioned within the mandates of other United Nations programmes. In that regard, the delegation indicated that it would be requesting either the deletion of the reference in question from the subprogramme or its replacement with a term that was more in line with the responsibilities of the Department. It was further observed that the effectiveness of public institutions and equal access to digital health services by women and men in the face of the pandemic was a priority. In that regard, the delegation requested that the subprogramme avoid a selective, gender-focused approach to public servants, as indicated in paragraphs 9.131, 9.140, 9.142 and 9.143; statistics showed that more men than women were dying in the pandemic and would therefore rely on digitized health services in equal measure. With regard to result 2, digital government and digital transformation (new result), of the planned results for 2021, clarification was sought as to what actions the Department intended to take in order to increase the delivery of online services to vulnerable groups and women by 10 per cent.

205. Concerning subprogramme 8, Sustainable forest management, clarification was sought as to what special activities were covered under planned result 1, development of comprehensive monitoring frameworks towards sustainable forest management (result carried over from 2020). One delegation pointed out that, aside from appropriate financing, political will on the part of Member States, as well as effective and efficient work of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests was essential to ensure the delivery of all forest-related mandates. The delegation noted that the current pandemic had already affected the work of the Forum, such that a new quadrennial programme of work for the period 2021–2024 had not yet been adopted. The delegation added that the preliminary plan was to adopt the programme of work for the sixteenth session of the Forum and to decide on the programme of work for the period 2022–2024 in 2021, with consequent adjustments made to the proposed programme plan of the subprogramme. One delegation announced that it had just presented its voluntary national contribution towards the achievement of the global forest goals and targets. In connection with the deliverables under the subprogramme, clarification was sought concerning the 20 substantive services for meetings planned for 2021 and whether that number would change as a result of the pandemic.

206. One delegation observed that the performance indicators appeared vague. As an example, the delegation cited subprogramme 8, for which the performance indicator was given as increased reporting on progress towards achievement of the global forest goals and forest-related Sustainable Development Goals. The delegation expressed the view that performance indicators should be much more specific, precise, measurable and, above all, strategic.

207. As regards subprogramme 9, Financing for sustainable development, planned results for 2021, it was observed that results 1 and 2 included the same item, i.e., the development of toolkits to help Member States to integrate financial frameworks for the mobilization of resources, although results 1 and 2 approached the same issue from different perspectives, using different performance measures. The delegation enquired why those two results were not combined into one. In a similar vein, another delegation expressed the view that the performance measure for the subprogramme was insufficiently documented. The delegation enquired whether the organization of

a fair or the number of participants in a forum would be considered satisfactory results in their own right. The delegation further enquired whether results 1 and 2, both of which related to integrated national financing frameworks, adequately covered all the highlights of the programme activity. One delegation noted the cooperation between Department and the High Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda, through which the independent secretariat was hosted by the Financing for Sustainable Development Office of the Department. In that regard, the delegation opined that the new and promising initiative on financing for sustainable development in the subprogramme would contribute to making it more comprehensive and transparent.

Conclusions and recommendations

208. **Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly, at its seventy-fifth session, review the programme plan of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.**

Programme 8 Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

209. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 10\)](#)).

210. The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States introduced the programme and, together with another representative of the Secretary-General, responded to queries raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

211. Delegations expressed their support and appreciation for the work undertaken by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the support it provided to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, including with respect to the participation of those countries in, and their contributions to, sustainable development, and for its advocacy of the provision of integrated and coherent policy advice, normative support and technical capacity by the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to those groups of countries. A delegation noted the importance of the Office achieving its mandate of coordination, monitoring, mobilization and advocacy with regard to the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The broad agenda and ambitious objectives of the Office, namely, to assist the 91 most vulnerable countries in the world and to actively protect the interests of the more than 1.1 billion people living in those 91 countries, were noted. One delegation noted in particular that 33 of the 48 least developed countries, 16 of 32 landlocked developing countries and 7 of the 38 small island developing States were in Africa and that there were more than 20 transit countries in Africa who also benefited from the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. One

delegation was pleased to note that the planned results indicated in the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 had been achieved for all three categories of most vulnerable countries. Another delegation expressed support for activities aimed at developing cooperation and coordination between the Office and the United Nations country teams and a strengthened resident coordinator system.

212. Delegations noted that the proposed programme budget for 2021 had been prepared before the outbreak of COVID-19 and enquired about the impact of the outbreak on the work of the Office, the lessons learned to date and the assistance provided to the 91 most vulnerable countries. Delegations enquired as to how the COVID-19 pandemic would be factored into programmes and subprogrammes. Another delegation recommended that the programme be updated in a general way to reflect the important work that the Office would undertake in 2021. A delegation expressed deep appreciation for the support provided to Member States, highlighting in particular the initiative of the High Representative, who, at the start of the pandemic, reached out to vulnerable countries to see how solutions could be found to the challenges they faced. One such example, highlighted by the delegation, involved efforts to reach out to transit countries to allow the transit of goods through those countries.

213. With regard to subprogramme 1, Least developed countries, delegations enquired about how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting the preparatory process of the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and how the postponement of the Conference, from March 2021 to December 2021 or January 2022, and the later start of its preparatory process, would be reflected in the planned results of the subprogramme. One delegation sought clarification on how the challenges of the “new reality” were being taken into account in the development of a new programme of action for the least developed countries for the decade 2021–2030, which was to be adopted at that Conference.

214. In reference to the Istanbul Programme of Action and Sustainable Development Goal 7 (to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy), a delegation enquired how progress made towards achieving a greener economy and ambitious energy transition strategies would be reflected in the planned results. The delegation further enquired how the Office would leverage its relationship with the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth in addressing the challenge, mentioned in paragraph 10.25 of the programme plan, to devise effective and sustainable approaches, within its mandate, to more fully and effectively engage a variety of other stakeholders, including youth.

215. With regard to subprogramme 2, Landlocked developing countries, a delegation commended the efforts made by the Office, including its broad analytical work related to the Vienna Programme of Action and the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization, its policy recommendations, its various capacity-building programmes and its advocacy of enhanced international support to the landlocked developing countries. Another delegation expressed its full support for the results related to rapid communication between landlocked developing countries and other countries and to enhancing transit traffic to help to increase the trade potential of landlocked developing countries. In that regard, the delegation was of the view that, in order to overcome the consequences of a pandemic, the development of transit traffic and transport corridors and the facilitation of trade procedures were especially important. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the work of the subprogramme in strengthening policies and capacities to improve the connectivity of landlocked developing countries, reduce their trade transaction costs, increase regional cooperation and improve regional and global trade so as to enhance structural transformation in those countries for sustainable development. It was noted with great appreciation that the Office would undertake major work to ensure synergy and

coherence in the implementation and monitoring of the Vienna Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels, and that that important work was now included in the programme budget. With respect to paragraph 10.32 of the programme plan, a delegation enquired as to what consideration had been given to specifying the name of an individual company for one initiative and not for others.

216. With regard to subprogramme 3, Small island developing States, a delegation emphasized the importance of ensuring that the development of small island developing States was in line with the Samoa Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the mandates stemming from documents on issues pertaining to small island developing States were fulfilled as planned. It also stated that strengthening resilience to climate change, addressing financial challenges, improving connectivity and promoting good health and social development were vital. In that regard, in expressing support for the subprogramme, the same delegation stressed that Member States, the United Nations development system and other relevant stakeholders should deliver on existing frameworks and provide appropriate support. Clarification was sought on what specifically was meant by deliverable 13 of table 10.11, on international support provided to small island developing States for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Samoa Pathway (print and electronic), and what the two units were that the subprogramme planned to achieve in 2021 under that deliverable.

217. On concessional financing for small island developing States, a delegation, stressing that pre-disaster investments and the principle of building back better should also be prioritized, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, sought clarification on whether those concepts were included in the scope of concessional financing discussed under programme performance in 2019 (paras. 10.46–10.49).

Conclusions and recommendations

218. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to enhance cooperation with the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth to foster the involvement, participation and input of youth in intergovernmental negotiations and official United Nations processes.

219. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to focus its activities in support of those groups of countries on enabling them to overcome the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and to make substantial progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, by building a sustainable economic and social recovery that leaves no one behind.

220. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the planned results and activities for 2021, among them accelerating the connectivity of the landlocked developing countries (result carried over from 2020) and enhanced transit to facilitate greater trade potential for landlocked developing countries (new result).

221. As part of planned results and activities for 2021, the Committee further recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to incorporate in programme 8, within its planned activities, lessons learned from past and present epidemics and pandemics and options for improving future preparedness for epidemics and pandemics, including maintaining trade of essential goods.

222. The Committee further recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to ensure that, in order to achieve its objectives of assisting Member States in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, the programme continue to ensure that the capacities of its subprogrammes are strengthened in accordance with their mandates and aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, in line with established procedures.

223. The Committee welcomed, where appropriate, the engagement of commercial entities with the United Nations system, but noted that it was inappropriate to single out the contribution of individual commercial entities or their nationalities in programme plans.

224. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme budget for the year 2021, subject to the following modifications:

Overall orientation

Strategy and external factors for 2021

Insert new paragraph 10.4, reading:

The unfolding impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and their expected consequences throughout 2021, are likely to amplify the sustainable development challenges that these group of countries already face. Their capacities will be further limited, severely hindering their ability to implement and follow up on their specific programmes of action, along with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and its aspirations, and efforts to eradicate extreme poverty, promote environmental sustainability and achieve high and sustained economic growth.

Insert new paragraph 10.7, reading:

These groups of countries will therefore need renewed support from the entire international community to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and in parallel to continue to implement and follow up on their specific programmes of action and the outcomes of the midterm reviews of these programmes of action, along with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and other global frameworks.

In paragraph 10.7 (b), replace “Continued” with “Renewed”.

Insert new paragraph 10.7 (c), reading:

The COVID-19 pandemic risks exacerbating the structural vulnerabilities and challenges faced by these groups of countries in special situations, threatening a reversal of many developmental gains. The United Nations system and the international community need to consider increased support and specific attention to these groups of countries, so as to support them in their implementation of their dedicated programmes of action in synergy with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Subprogramme 2 Landlocked developing countries

Strategy

Paragraph 10.30

After “to improve the connectivity of landlocked developing countries”, insert “with the aim of supporting sustainable development”.

Replace “and increase their regional and global trade” with “increase their regional, subregional and global trade and strengthen institutions and social and environmental protections”.

After “group meetings”, replace “and by organizing” with “, in line with the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the Paris Agreement. This will be conducted through the organization of”.

In the first sentence, replace “such as” with “including but not limited to”.

At end of the first sentence, insert “, in line with the priorities of landlocked developing countries”.

In paragraph 10.32, replace “with the help of the Sinosteel company of China” with “with the help of a major Chinese steel company”.

In paragraph 10.47, between “access to” and “concessional resources”, insert “existing and new”.

In paragraph 10.49, after the last sentence, add “as well as with regard to disaster risk reduction and building back better”.

Programme 9 United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development

225. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 9, United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6](#) (Sect. 11)).

226. The Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Africa introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

227. Appreciation was expressed for the work carried out by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The idea that United Nations and other international efforts in Africa should be consistently aligned with the priorities of African Member States was welcomed (see para. 11.2). The role of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa was considered to be critical and instrumental in connecting United Nations goals with African goals, including in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Clarification was sought on whether efforts by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes had resulted in adequate engagement and efficient coordination with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) planning agency, and whether the establishment of the African Union Development Agency would have a positive impact on or create an opportunity to redouble efforts to improve the linkages between United Nations and African Union development efforts. Additional information was

sought on cooperation efforts between the Office of the Special Adviser and other United Nations entities, including the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. A delegation observed that Agenda 2063 was integral to supporting Governments with regard to justice and the rule of law and welcomed the efforts made in those areas, including in partnership with the African Union Commission. While a delegation commended the efforts by the Office to align the objectives of the United Nations with those of the African Union, for example by organizing a side event on the African Union theme of the year, based on the results of the Africa Dialogue Series 2019, during the seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which had contributed to more streamlined and efficient coordination, another delegation observed that the work of the Office should remain guided by its mandate.

228. A delegation welcomed the resolve of the Office, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Global Communications to implement the programme through close collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD and the African regional economic communities. The importance of communication to ensure that the vision for the continent was widely available to the whole of Africa was highlighted, and additional information was sought on what more could be done to ensure that, within existing resources, the communications agenda could become even more ambitious.

229. Some delegations reiterated concerns that had been raised during the fifty-ninth session of the Committee regarding the emphasis placed by the programme on the interlinkages between peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and humanitarian assistance (see foreword and para. 11.1), as opposed to focusing the programme on concrete actions in support of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD and aimed at facilitating tangible results for the socioeconomic development of Africa, and on mobilizing donor funding for infrastructure projects, promoting investment and sharing technology. It was observed that the change in focus had not been mandated by Member States and was not justified. In reference to the concept set out in the foreword that “the vision of ‘the Africa we want’ introduced a new perspective that highlighted the links between peace, security, economic and social development, human rights and humanitarian assistance”, clarification was sought on where in Agenda 2063 that new perspective was introduced, and on the reasons why the emphasis of the programme had been put on aspiration 3, An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, and part of aspiration 4, A peaceful and secure Africa, of the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063.

230. Clarification was sought on how the work related to the interlinkages among Africa’s sustainable development, human rights and peace and security agenda in the context of the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 initiative would continue, as indicated in subprogramme 1, Coordination of global advocacy of and support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (see para. 11.28), and on the reasons why other flagship programmes of the African Union, such as the integrated high-speed train network, a pan-African virtual and e-university, a commodities strategy and the Grand Inga Dam project had not been included in the programme. It was also noted that while subprogramme 2, Regional coordination of and support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, should have been devoted to the regional coordination of and support for NEPAD and had in the past showed results related to the promotion of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and the African Continental Free Trade Area, its current focus was on the interlinkages among the development, peace and security and human rights pillars referred to as the “triple nexus”.

Moreover, it was observed that subprogramme 2 intended to mainstream the non-agreed “triple nexus” concept through road maps into policies and strategies of African Union organs and at the national level. In reference to the performance measures to mainstream the triple nexus in 2020 (see table 11.6), a delegation recalled that in 2019, no consensus had been reached, as neither the Committee nor the General Assembly had approved the narrative for the programme. Regarding the “adoption of a road map to mainstream the interlinkages among the three pillars into the 2030 Agenda” (see table 11.6), it was observed that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a framework of the sustainable development pillar, and that implementing the triple nexus within that framework was a concern.

231. One delegation indicated that it did not underestimate the importance of support for human rights or promoting peace and security, and it did not ignore the benefits of synergies between Africa’s economic and social development programmes and its peace and security agenda; those efforts should be led by specialized United Nations bodies and should not sideline the core development dimension of NEPAD, the support to which was the main mandate of the Office. While the General Assembly, in its resolution [57/300](#) entitled “Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change”, called for a coherent approach to United Nations support to Africa, the observation was made that focus should not be limited to the interlinkages referenced in the programme, nor should the three pillars of work of the United Nations be merged. In that regard, the wording in paragraph 11.1 was considered misleading. It was observed that the annual Assembly resolution on NEPAD was missing from the overall legislative mandates of the programme, even though it was reflected in the subprogrammes. A delegation questioned the added value of the changes in the methods of work resulting from the concept of a “nexus”, while some delegations highlighted the fact that the concept of a triple nexus was not defined in any intergovernmental mandate and was therefore not understood by all. A delegation was of the opinion that the programme as drafted could not be supported.

232. Regarding the overall orientation of the programme, the description of the strategy and external factors for 2021 was considered too general and weakened the proposal (see para. 11.3). In addition, the view was expressed that the monitoring of commitments and activities undertaken by African Governments and their international partners as outlined in the programme did not correlate with the mandates outlined in General Assembly resolution [66/293](#) (see para. 11.5). On the cross-cutting deliverables for the period 2019–2021, clarification was sought as to the reasons why substantive servicing of the meetings of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Committee were considered deliverable outputs (see table 11.1). A delegation enquired whether there was support from the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in the areas of development, good governance, human rights and humanitarian assistance, and what could be done to ensure that the communication agenda was more prominent.

233. It was noted that, while efforts to avoid non-consensual terminology in certain parts of the programme were noticeable, some corrections still needed to be made, including in paragraphs 11.4 and 11.10. In particular, clarification was sought on the meaning of the phrase “preserve humanitarian space” (see para. 11.25).

234. Additional information was sought on the outcome of the internal review of the Office and its consequences on the work of the Office, and on the future workplan for global partnerships for poverty alleviation and economic development in Africa. A delegation observed that the interdepartmental task force on African affairs would foster tangible United Nations efforts in support of the sustainable development of the African continent.

235. Clarification was sought on how the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD would adjust its role on infectious disease prevention, surveillance and response, considering the establishment of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. The view was expressed that the capacity-building of African professionals and eventual financial and technical self-reliance should continue to be the focus of ongoing efforts.

236. With regard to subprogramme 1, Coordination of global advocacy of and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, clarification was sought on whether the increased participation of African Member States in United Nations bodies and the strong alignment of intergovernmental discussions with African countries' priorities would lead to more meetings in African countries. Clarification was also sought on the reference to research on challenges affecting Africa's development, in particular the role of the Office in bringing together major actors to implement Agenda 2063 (see para. 11.21), and on how that research would be translated into action. Support was expressed for the engagement of the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa in high-profile public events, including the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (see para. 11.22). Clarification was sought on whether the Office had identified priorities in conducting the self-evaluation of its role as the co-organizer of the Conference. Clarification was also sought on efforts to support the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and its Beijing Action Plan (2019–2021) (see para. 11.22). Mention was made of the 170 activities in support of Africa's development carried out by both the United Nations system and the international community, and the lack of information on what activities, and where and when and with whom they had been carried out, was highlighted (see para. 11.23).

237. Support was expressed for the commitment to multilingualism of the Department of Global Communications as outlined in subprogramme 3, Public information and awareness activities in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Conclusions and recommendations

238. The Committee commended efforts by the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa to facilitate coherence and coordination of the United Nations system's work in Africa, to ensure they are consistently aligned with African priorities.

239. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request that the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa develop a more cooperative approach with the resident coordinator system with a view to ensuring the United Nations "delivering as one" approach, which brings together all United Nations specialized agencies in a coordinated dynamic for the development of Africa.

240. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the resident coordinator system to consider how to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the alignment of achievements and results with Africa's aspirations, cascaded in the implementation plans of the African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and draw lessons from best practices to scale-up performances in this regard.

241. The Committee further recommended that the General Assembly encourage the translation of select *Africa Renewal* magazine articles into other African and non-African languages through partnerships with universities and other institutions in Africa and beyond.

242. The Committee also recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to hold regular meetings with the African Group of Ambassadors and the Permanent Representatives of African countries to the United Nations in the

spirit of the 2019 internal review consultations, with a view to exploring new ways to strengthen United Nations support for NEPAD.

243. The Committee further recommended to the General Assembly that it encourage the Office of the Special Adviser to make available the conclusions of internal reviews of the Office to the African Group of Ambassadors and the Permanent Representatives of African countries to the United Nations, as part of their permanent consultations with African Union member States.

244. The Committee emphasized the importance of supporting Africa in building capacity for disease prevention and control in its achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, and in this regard recommended that the General Assembly re-emphasize the need for the international community to urgently accelerate its support in working in solidarity and collaboration with Africa by sharing best practices and providing more material, technical, financial and humanitarian support to help African countries overcome the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and achieve independent and sustainable development.

245. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that the activities under subprogramme 2 remained pertinent to the mandate of the Economic Commission for Africa and the objective of supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

246. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 9, United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:

A. Proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance for 2019

Overall orientation

Mandates and background

Paragraph 11.1

In the first sentence, replace “coordinating, integrating and aligning United Nations action on the interlinkages among peace, security, human rights and development in Africa, enhancing international support for Africa’s development and security and facilitating” with “ensuring coherence and an integrated approach for United Nations support to Africa, coordinating global advocacy and the preparation of Africa-related reports and inputs, in particular, on the support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development by the United Nations system and the international community. It also facilitates”.

Strategy and external factors for 2021

Paragraph 11.4

Replace “interlinkages among” with “linkages between”, delete “pillars” and replace “gender” with “a gender perspective”.

Paragraph 11.9

Add “(e) Activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa as well as those of African Union Development Agency-NEPAD are not hampered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.”.

Paragraph 11.10

In the second sentence, replace “women’s rights” with “the realization of human rights for women”.

In the third sentence, replace “gender and women’s empowerment issues” with “gender equality and women’s empowerment”.

In the fourth sentence, replace “gender concerns are integrated” with “a gender perspective is mainstreamed” and replace “gender-disaggregated” with “sex-disaggregated”.

Legislative mandates*Paragraph 11.13**General Assembly resolutions***Add:**

73/335 New Partnership for Africa’s Development: progress in implementation and international support

Subprogramme 1

Coordination of global advocacy of and support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development

Strategy*Paragraph 11.21*

In the first sentence, replace “interlinkages” with “linkages”.

Paragraph 11.22

In the third sentence, before “triggered”, insert “that”, and reverse the order of “the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation” and “the Tokyo International Conference on African Development”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 1: delivering coherently and effectively for Africa’s peace and development (result carried over from 2020)

Paragraph 11.28

In the first sentence, after “The subprogramme will continue the work related to”, insert “coordinating and guiding the preparation of Africa-related reports, inputs and advocacy as well as ensuring coherence and an integrated approach in support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development by the United Nations system and the international community” and replace “interlinkages” with “linkages”.

Subprogramme 2

Regional coordination of and support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development

Strategy*Paragraph 11.37*

In the second sentence, replace “mainstreaming the” with “promoting coherence between” and replace “pillars” with “where appropriate”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 1: implementation of joint workplans: working together to deliver for Africa (result carried over from 2020)

Paragraph 11.43

In the first sentence, replace “promote mainstreaming of the triple nexus (the interlinkages among the development, peace and security, and human rights pillars) into the integrated implementation of the three frameworks in the context” with “continue to promote an integrated approach in the implementation”, replace “for mainstreaming the triple nexus into” with “to foster such an integrated approach in” and delete “integrated” in the phrase “for the integrated implementation of the two Agendas”.

Result 2: mainstreaming the development, peace and security, and human rights pillars into strategies and policies for the integrated implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (new result)

Replace the existing text with the following:

“Result 2: ensure coherent and integrated support in the United Nations support to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda”.

Paragraph 11.44

In the fifth sentence, replace “linkages among” with “linkages between” and delete “pillars”.

Paragraph 11.45

In the first sentence, replace “mainstreaming with regard to the integrated” with “coherence and coordination in the” and delete “in the context of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda”.

In the second sentence, replace “mainstreaming the development, peace and security, and human rights pillars into policies and strategies of African Union organs and agencies for the integrated implementation of the two Agendas” with “enhancing support to an integrated approach in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda”.

Internal challenge and response

Paragraph 11.46

In the first sentence, delete “, mainly with regard to the interlinkages among the three pillars”.

In the third sentence, replace “mainstreams the interlinkages among the three pillars into” with “enhances support to”.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective, and performance measure

Paragraph 11.47

Delete “at the development, peace and security, and human rights pillars” and replace “to mainstream the three pillars into” with “that promotes an integrated approach for the implementation of”.

Deliverables**Table 11.6****Performance measure****Column for 2020**

Replace “mainstream the triple nexus into” with “enhance integrated” and delete “integrated”.

Column for 2021

Replace “mainstream the interlinkages among the three pillars into” with “enhance integrated approaches in the implementation of”.

Legislative mandates**Paragraph 11.48****General Assembly resolutions****Add:**

73/335 New Partnership for Africa’s Development: progress in implementation and international support

Deliverables**Table 11.7**

In deliverable 9 under category B. Generation and transfer of knowledge, delete “pillars”.

Programme 10

Trade and development

247. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 12) and A/75/6 (Sect. 13)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

248. The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the acting interim Executive Director of the International Trade Centre introduced the programme and responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

249. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the programme and the update provided on the COVID-19 pandemic. Several delegations expressed support for the proposed programme plans of UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre. A delegation expressed strong support for the work of UNCTAD, noted the setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on international trade and development and reiterated its commitment to support the programme’s work in the future. A delegation welcomed efforts by UNCTAD to develop an inclusive global economy with priority given to the needs and interests of developing countries that were most vulnerable to a pandemic, and noted with satisfaction that the programme performance indicators planned for 2019 had been achieved.

250. As had been stated during the discussions of the fifty-ninth session of the Committee, it was noted that the international trading system was in deep crisis and that the COVID-19 pandemic was a new global challenge for all humanity. It was also noted that the spread of COVID-19 had resulted in disruptions to international and national supplies, a break in global value chains and an imbalance in supply and demand. Referring to the UNCTAD estimate of a 27 per cent decline in the volume of international trade from the first quarter of 2020 to the second quarter, a delegation further noted that the estimates of expected recovery were uncertain. The delegation emphasized that, owing to accumulated trade contradictions and the introduction of various restrictive measures, the uncertainty in the functioning of the global economy as an integrated system had increased. In that regard, it was suggested that, to overcome the crisis, collective efforts be made to ensure an open, transparent and inclusive trade architecture, and the importance of rejecting the practice of unilateral restrictive measures was emphasized. Clarification was sought regarding the implementation of preparations for the fifteenth quadrennial session of UNCTAD, which was scheduled to be held in Barbados in 2020 but had been postponed to 2021 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

251. Clarification was sought as to how the programme plans would be adapted for 2021 for countries in special circumstances and whether the programme planned to adjust its work for 2021, in particular its e-trade or e-commerce plans and projects, to the needs of its main beneficiaries (i.e., least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States) that, due to the pandemic, would need more traditional means of support than those platforms.

252. Noting that reference to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was absent from the document because the programme plans were compiled earlier in 2020, a delegation requested that the programme plans be updated to reflect the adjustments that the COVID-19 pandemic would impose on the work of UNCTAD in 2021. Another delegation aligned with this view and referred to the postponement of the fifteenth UNCTAD quadrennial session to 2021 as an example of changes that would need to be reflected in the programme plans. The same delegation noted that the Secretariat had already announced it planned to consult Member States on adjustments to proposed programme plans related to the COVID-19 pandemic and to report thereon in the context of the performance report. It further noted that many changes related to COVID-19 had taken place already in 2020 and some were likely to become firmer by the time the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly opened the main session, and sought further clarification as to whether the Secretariat planned to propose those adjustments in advance for approval by the Assembly at its main session. It was also noted that much of the budget was tied to the number of meetings, and clarification was sought as to what steps had been taken to deal with the budgetary implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

253. Noting the relevance of the five subprogrammes contained in the UNCTAD workplan, namely globalization, interdependence and development; investment and enterprise; international trade and commodities; technology and logistics; and Africa, least developed countries and special programmes, a delegation sought clarification as to what work was being done to adjust the subprogrammes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

254. Referring to the engagement by UNCTAD with the United Nations development system reform referenced in paragraph 12.9, clarification was sought as to what differences and benefits the resident coordinator system brought to the work of UNCTAD. The same delegation enquired as to how UNCTAD planned to leverage its collaboration with the resident coordinator system to advance its work in 2021. Another delegation sought clarification regarding the efforts taken to ensure the complementarity of the programme's mandate to the wider mandate of other United

Nations bodies, in particular the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and to prevent the duplication of activities and tasks.

255. Noting the Secretary-General's call for gender mainstreaming, a delegation sought further clarification regarding the efforts being undertaken to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the programme's activities. Another delegation aligned with that view and stressed the importance of the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

256. Clarification was sought regarding the relevance of climate to the activities of programme 10. With regard to the format of the proposed programme plan, a delegation expressed thanks to UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre for the efforts they had taken to present broad coverage of their activities in the strategy. The same delegation noted, however, that there were still differences between the current format and what had been previously discussed that highlighted the issue of providing a few specific results to give Member States a broad overarching view of the activities. The delegation expressed concern that the highlighted results in the current format sometimes provided a limited perspective of the activities planned for 2021. The same delegation noted the removal of the words "technological" and "industrialization" from the objective of subprogramme 2, Investment and enterprise, and the word "science" from the objective of subprogramme 4, Technology and logistics, compared with the approved programme plan for the biennium 2018–2019, and sought clarification as to why those words had been omitted. The delegation further noted other changes observed in the language and other aspects of the programme, stressed that the negotiation of the terms was a sensitive process and reiterated that it was important for Member States to clearly understand the reasons for such changes before any further consideration.

257. Regarding subprogramme 1, Globalization, interdependence and development, a delegation noted the inclusion of debt issues and expressed appreciation for the focus on providing technical assistance on debt issues and finding a durable solution to that problem for developing countries.

258. Regarding subprogramme 3, International trade and commodities, a delegation noted that result 2 referenced "supporting small island developing States and coastal developing countries in realizing economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources" through the provision of research, information and data on fisheries, fish prices and subsidies to support the formulation and further adaptation of national policies and strategies. The delegation noted ongoing World Trade Organization negotiations on fish subsidies and emphasized the relevance of that aspect of the subprogramme, and further emphasized that access to international data on subsidies was important for Member States to have, so that they could use such information during the negotiations. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the work carried out by UNCTAD in support of the transition of women engaged in informal cross-border trading to formal trade settings in Africa. The same delegation, in the context of addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasized that the expansion of the programme into more countries in Africa, in addition to Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, would be welcome.

259. Under subprogramme 6, Operational aspects of trade promotion and export development, a delegation sought information about the development finance institutions and private investors that the International Trade Centre has worked with to implement its programme for South-South trade and investment in East Africa. Another delegation noted the reference to General Assembly resolution [74/201](#) and suggested the word "countries" be replaced with "developing countries" to better reflect the resolution. The delegation also highlighted the importance of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and noted that the SheTrades chapter in Argentina was

launched in December 2017. A different delegation expressed support for International Trade Centre action in support of small and medium-sized enterprises, which was oriented towards supporting the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the Centre's work directed towards least developed countries, especially in Africa.

Conclusions and recommendations

260. The Committee acknowledged the efforts of UNCTAD to promote a more development-centred globalization and to pursue a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable global economic environment.

261. The Committee noted the efforts of the International Trade Centre to increase the international competitiveness of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, especially least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, for inclusive and sustainable growth and development through trade.

262. The Committee also noted the ongoing efforts of programme evaluations and self-evaluations with regard to UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre and recommended that the General Assembly recommend the continuance of such evaluation activities to ensure an effective and efficient implementation of their mandates, as well as evaluations to ensure that UNCTAD successfully continued to implement agreed management and reform initiatives.

263. The Committee underlined the importance of UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre continuing their efforts to fully integrate the concerns of equal opportunities for women and girls into their research and analysis products.

264. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.

Programme 11 Environment

265. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 14\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2020/10](#)).

266. The Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretariat, responded to queries raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

267. Delegations expressed support for the proposed programme plan and for the UNEP programme of work. A delegation emphasized that the plan had been well prepared and contained important areas of action. Another delegation expressed its continued support for the critical role UNEP had played in facing global environmental challenges.

268. Several delegations expressed concern about the use of terms and expressions that had not been intergovernmentally agreed. One delegation suggested that some

paragraphs would require slight edits to reflect intergovernmentally agreed and universally understood terminology, namely paragraphs 14.18 (low-carbon technologies), 14.21 (low-carbon energy supply and low-carbon practices), 14.22 (low-carbon energy systems), 14.66 (vulnerable groups), 14.72 (low-carbon transport solutions) and 14.97 (gender-disaggregated data). The delegation further suggested that the terms “low-carbon”, “vulnerable groups” and “gender-disaggregated data” be replaced with “low-emission”, “people or persons or those in vulnerable situations” and “data disaggregated by sex” or “sex-disaggregated data”, respectively.

269. A number of delegations expressed reservations about the proliferation of the word “green” throughout the report. A delegation noted that use of the term “green economy” was not intergovernmentally agreed. It was recalled that, in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Member States had agreed that the term “green economy” could not be used in isolation but instead as “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”. The delegation further noted the use of the term “inclusive green economy”, in paragraph 14.6 and suggested that the term be replaced with agreed terminology. The same delegation expressed its concern about the proliferation of the use of the term “green” in various contexts, including “green investments”, “green jobs”, “green job models”, “green policies”, “green meetings” and “green market shares”, as constituting an expansion of the term that had not been agreed by Member States. Another delegation noted that, although the concept of a “green economy” had been introduced in the context of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and, since then, had appeared in several legislative documents of the United Nations, it remained a concept that lacked clarity and definition for many Member States. Additional questions were raised as to why there was an overwhelming use of the word “green” as a qualifier for many things in the programme narrative that could have otherwise been described by using such terms as sustainable, ecologic or resilient, which had been agreed upon and were more grounded in practical terms for Member States. The same delegation expressed concern over the use of the term “green development” and stated that the term had been unheard of before in the context of programme 11, Environment. It was stressed that the term “green development” could not be a substitute for the agreed concept of sustainable development.

270. A delegation noted that table 14.1, on cross-cutting deliverables, included information on conferences and publications but did not make reference to projects that had been included in the subprogrammes. The delegation expressed the view that the projects covered all the subprogrammes across the board and suggested that project-related deliverables be presented in table 14.1.

271. A delegation expressed concern that most of the indicators presented in the report were generic and did not capture the essence of the work carried out by UNEP in the field. It was suggested that performance measures be broken down into quantifiable subindicators to better monitor the Programme’s progress and accomplishments against its programme plan, as seen, for example, with the subindicators used in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

272. Concerns were expressed by one delegation regarding the insufficient coverage of water by the Programme, especially in anticipation of the one-day high-level meeting on water scheduled to be held in New York in 2021.

273. A delegation noted that, during the high-level week of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, a world coalition against climate change had been mobilized by the Secretary-General and the mobilization of resources needed to achieve an ecological transition had been promised. The delegation sought the Programme’s assessment of that initiative, which had been launched one year earlier.

274. A question was raised about collaboration between UNEP and specialized regional and subregional organizations dealing with the protection of the environment, especially the Programme for the Conservation and Rational Use of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa. Another delegation sought further information on efforts by UNEP to enhance collaboration with its partners, from both the private and the public sectors, in carrying out the important work of addressing climate change.

275. A delegation emphasized the importance of United Nations oversight bodies and noted with satisfaction that UNEP had taken the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services into consideration. The delegation sought clarification on the percentage of oversight recommendations taken on board and enquired as to how UNEP had dealt with the audit of its recruitment process.

276. A delegation noted that the COVID-19 pandemic threatened severe economic recessions and serious social problems in many countries and expressed the view that it was increasingly necessary to support programmes and initiatives that sought to achieve sustainable development. The delegation further noted that it was essential for countries to implement recovery strategies based on scientific evidence that promoted clean and renewable energies, the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of oceans. The delegation also emphasized the importance of making every effort to ensure that the policies and strategies taken to resolve the COVID-19 crisis were not to the detriment of sustainable development. It was stressed that the Latin American and Caribbean region had special environmental needs that were different from those of other regions and developing countries, and a question was raised as to whether there was a special strategy to address the needs of those countries that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, had become even more susceptible to the consequences of climate change. Another delegation noted the positive effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had had on the environment and enquired as to how UNEP planned to capitalize on those positive consequences. The same delegation noted the experiences from previous such events and sought clarification on how UNEP would ensure that the immediate aftermath would not be worse for the environment than the situation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

277. Regarding paragraph 14.18, under subprogramme 1, Climate change, a delegation noted the discussion of collaboration with the private sector, which was expected to “help to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote access to energy and enhance productive energy use” and asked whether UNEP considered that to be a contribution to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7, on affordable and clean energy, in addition to Goal 13, on climate action, and Goal 17, on partnerships for the Goals. Another delegation, referring to figure 14.II, on the performance measure reflecting the number of countries having adopted or implemented low-emission development plans, enquired why nationally determined contributions were not mentioned. Another delegation noted that the transport sector was one of the focus areas for subprogramme 1 and suggested that General Assembly resolution [74/225](#), on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, be added as one of its legislative mandates. The same delegation further emphasized that the resolution contained specific operative references to the transport sector in its paragraphs 8, 10 and 28 and could therefore be useful in assisting with lower-emission development. A delegation enquired about UNEP efforts and future plans to encourage Member States to continuously implement the Paris Agreement. The delegation sought further information on the work that UNEP had already done, and would do in the future, to encourage developed countries to implement their commitment to support developing countries in addressing climate issues.

278. Regarding subprogramme 2, Resilience to disasters and conflicts, a delegation enquired as to how the resident coordinator system enhanced the delivery of UNEP

support services and whether there were particular regions or areas of work where improvement was more apparent. Information was also sought on whether such improvement was measurable and could thus be used as a performance measure. Another delegation, referring to the number of countries indicated in figure 14.IV as having developed state-of-environment reports, enquired as to whether the 2021 target of four countries was ambitious enough. On paragraph 14.32, another delegation noted that, unlike disasters, strengthening the ability of countries to rapidly respond to conflicts was not a UNEP mandate and suggested that the phrase “and conflicts” be deleted.

279. A delegation noted that subprogramme 3, Healthy and productive ecosystems, was focused on ecosystems, including terrestrial ecosystems, and suggested that the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 (Economic and Social Council resolution 2017/4, annex I, and General Assembly resolution 71/285), which had been developed under the United Nations Forum on Forests, could be added as one of the legislative mandates for the subprogramme. Another delegation expressed concern regarding the use of the term “nature-based solutions” in table 14.6 and suggested that the term be replaced with “ecosystem-based approach”. Noting a reference to 63 Governments having made commitments to reduce plastic usage in paragraph 14.46, the same delegation sought clarification on why figure 14.VII, under the same subprogramme, contained a reference to 50 Governments having made commitments to reduce marine litter as at 2019. The delegation also sought clarification about the basis used for the numbers reported under the planned results and performance measures for previous years.

280. Regarding paragraph 14.59 of subprogramme 4, Environmental governance, a delegation referred to the statement that the subprogramme would “continue to invest in the development and dissemination of knowledge tools and the delivery of training and technical assistance” through “innovative tools and initiatives” such as the Global Pact for the Environment process. The delegation noted that it was no longer necessary to refer to that process in subprogramme 4, as the original mandate of General Assembly resolution 72/277 had been fulfilled. The same delegation stressed that all related work was supposed to have been financed through voluntary contributions, therefore UNEP regular budget resources were not to be utilized for that process.

281. A delegation noted that table 14.7, under subprogramme 4, provided performance measures from 2015 to 2019 and sought clarification as to why measures for 2020 and 2021 were not included. On paragraph 14.66, another delegation made note of the phrase “related climate concerns for poverty eradication” and sought clarification as to which concerns were being referred to specifically.

282. A question was raised about the reason for the change in the objective of subprogramme 6, Resource efficiency, compared with what had been agreed in the context of the biennial programme plan for 2018–2019, following difficult negotiations. The same delegation expressed concern about the use of the term “green development” and stressed that it would have been more appropriate to use “sustainable development”, which encompassed the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

283. Regarding subprogramme 7, Environment under review, and the preparation of the 2021 *Emissions Gap Report*, a delegation sought clarification on how UNEP planned to ensure closer and more regular consultations with Member States so that they would be able to confirm the content of that report, including with regard to data and policy descriptions. Another delegation noted that, in paragraph 14.107, it was stated that countries and experts would have “put forward the following potential aspects, among others, to look at in-depth in the forthcoming Emissions Gap Reports”

including “taxes and carbon pricing in the context of the so-called ‘Global Green New Deal’”. The delegation sought additional information about the status, history and content of what was referred to as the “Global Green New Deal”. Another delegation pointed out that the Global Pact for the Environment was not mentioned, although it had been mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/277](#).

Conclusions and recommendations

284. **The Committee stressed the need for further action by the Secretary-General on combating sand and dust storms, within the current mandate.**

285. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly acknowledge the role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority for setting the global environmental agenda, promoting the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serving as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.**

286. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage UNEP to continue to carry out constant and consistent self-evaluation activities, in addition to implementing the recommendations of oversight bodies.**

287. **The Committee also recommended that the General Assembly encourage UNEP to pay closer attention to exploring ways for providing better support to countries in developing policies and standards to transform their markets, promote investment in clean energy, improve the global rate of energy efficiency and protect landscapes.**

288. **The Committee also recommended that the General Assembly encourage UNEP to continue to increase its cooperation with the private sector in order to increase investment in renewable energy.**

289. **The Committee commended UNEP for its work in the fields of climate change; resilience to disasters and conflicts; healthy and productive ecosystems; environmental governance; chemicals, waste and air quality; resource efficiency; and environment under review, in accordance with its mandates.**

290. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:**

A. Proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance for 2019

Overall orientation

Strategy and external factors for 2021

In paragraph 14.3, between “regions” and “and countries”, insert “, subregions”.

In paragraph 14.5, after “operational activities, deliverables and results”, insert “, as appropriate”.

In paragraph 14.8, between “regional” and “and country levels”, insert “, subregional”.

**Subprogramme 1
Climate change**

Strategy

Paragraph 14.18

Before “low-carbon”, insert “low-emission and”.

Replace “under Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 17” with “under the Sustainable Development Goals”.

Programme performance in 2019: district energy: a secret weapon for climate action and human health

In paragraph 14.21, in both instances, before “low-carbon”, insert “low-emission,”.

In paragraph 14.22, in both instances, after “low-carbon”, insert “low-emission,”.

Legislative mandates

Paragraph 14.29

General Assembly resolutions

Add “74/225 Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”.

**Subprogramme 2
Resilience to disasters and conflicts**

Strategy

In paragraph 14.32, after “rapidly respond to these”, insert “environmental impacts of”.

**Subprogramme 3
Healthy and productive ecosystems**

Table 14.6

Subprogramme 3: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

B. Generation and transfer of knowledge

Deliverable 5

Before “nature-based solutions”, insert “ecosystem-based approach and”.

D. Communication deliverables

Before “nature-based solutions”, insert “ecosystem-based approach and”.

**Subprogramme 4
Environmental governance**

Strategy

In paragraph 14.59, delete “, the Global Pact for the Environment process”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 2: leaving no one behind: more countries engage in financial shifts to deliver on the poverty-environment nexus (new result)

In paragraph 14.66, replace “vulnerable groups” with “those in vulnerable situations”.

Subprogramme 6 Resource efficiency

Objective

In paragraph 14.84, replace “inclusive green economic policies” with “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”.

Strategy

In paragraph 14.86, insert “in the context of sustainable consumption and production” after “circular economy”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 1: countries on a pathway to green development (result carried over from 2020)

Replace “green development” with “sustainable development”.

Subprogramme 7 Environment under review

Strategy

In paragraph 14.97, replace “gender-disaggregated” with “sex-disaggregated”.

Planned results for 2021

Result 2: towards more ambitious climate action through science-based decision making (new result)

Paragraph 14.106

After “consultation and the production of the report (one year)”, add “, as was seen in some concerns raised with regards to data used”. Immediately after that sentence, add “More efforts will be made for future reports to be fair and accountable.”.

After “particularly through the country data vetting process.”, add “to ensure that Member States are given the opportunity to confirm the relevant content of the report in advance including descriptions of respective national policies for enhanced accountability of the report.”.

In paragraph 14.107, delete “taxes and carbon pricing in the context of the so-called “Global Green New Deal”;”.

Programme 12 Human settlements

291. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 12, Human settlements, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance

information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 15)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

292. The Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to queries raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

293. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the programme in sustainable urban development and observed that UN-Habitat was an important partner for advancing and achieving sustainable urbanization. The point was made that urban issues were critical to achieving sustainable development, and the determination of the United Nations system in addressing those matters was welcomed.

294. UN-Habitat was applauded for advancing significant governance reform to ensure financial sustainability and increased Member State oversight. The proposed programme was considered a significant improvement compared to previous years, as UN-Habitat had moved away from a siloed approach to urban development, and presented a more comprehensive understanding of how to best leverage the Organization's expertise and knowledge to achieve outcomes that would benefit Member States.

295. The proposed orientation of the programme was welcomed. On the strategy of the programme (paras. 15.5–15.8), a delegation enquired as to concrete improvements in the work of UN-Habitat following the change in the programme structure. Another delegation sought additional information on the linkages between the programme plan and ongoing United Nations reforms.

296. Clarification was sought on the extent to which UN-Habitat prioritized its projects, including the decisions and factors that influenced the prioritization, timelines and operationalization of projects. For example, reference was made to paragraph 15.2, where more information on the mobilization of funds for the project could have been provided.

297. A delegation observed that no mention had been made in the proposed programme plan of the global partnership Cities Alliance. The delegation expressed the view that it was a one of the key global organizations that focused on cities and that it should be more directly connected to the strategic plan and budget of UN-Habitat.

298. A delegation expressed the view that some paragraphs would require amendments to reflect previously agreed terminology, namely. paragraphs 15.3 (marginalized groups), 15.42 (marginalized and vulnerable urban populations), 15.49 (low-carbon city development), 15.63 and 15.65 (vulnerable groups). In particular, the delegation observed that terms such as “marginalized or vulnerable groups or populations” should be replaced with “people or persons or those in vulnerable situations” and the expression “low-carbon” should be replaced with “low-emission”, to reflect the terminology that had been agreed in intergovernmental bodies and that was employed in the New Urban Agenda. In paragraph 15.30, the use of the expression “land governance tenure security” as opposed to “land tenure security” as used in the New Urban Agenda gave rise to a question on what the expression implied and what its source was. It was stressed that the New Urban Agenda was the key guiding document for cities and human settlements and that it had received limited attention in United Nations discussions and could be further highlighted.

299. Information provided to the Committee on challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic was welcomed. It was observed that urban populations had been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A delegation sought clarification on the support services and technical cooperation provided by UN-Habitat to Member States in 2020 and on the expected adjustments to the proposed programme if those services were to be carried over to 2021. Another delegation welcomed the early work and planning that had been undertaken to address the pandemic and expressed interest in how programmes would be changing and adapting to address challenges in such areas as homelessness, poverty, the lack of productive employment and access to infrastructure, as well as other longstanding social issues.

300. A delegation expressed its disagreement with the inclusion of General Assembly resolutions [63/281](#), on climate change and its possible security implications, and [72/277](#), entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment” as legislative mandates for subprogramme 3, as it considered that their content was not relevant to the delivery of the proposed results and that the mandates contained therein had already been fulfilled. Another delegation expressed the view that General Assembly resolution [63/281](#) was relevant and should be maintained, considering that climate change was a cause for conflict. Another delegation expressed the view that General Assembly resolution [73/170](#), on the promotion of peace as a vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all, was of a general nature and requested clarification on what criteria had been applied in selecting and including that resolution and which mandates contained in the resolution had been considered to be directly linked to the implementation of the programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

301. The Committee commended UN-Habitat for the significant work carried out in the advancement of its governance reform.

302. The Committee noted with appreciation that the programme plan for 2021 continued to support and drive the delivery of sustainable urbanization, to streamline social inclusion and to promote a transformative change to positively transform lives in cities and communities around the world.

303. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 12, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:

A. Proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance for 2019

Overall orientation

Strategy and external factors for 2021

In paragraph 15.3, replace “marginalized groups” with “persons in vulnerable situations”.

Legislative mandates

Paragraph 15.21

General Assembly resolutions

Delete “73/170 Promotion of peace as a vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all”.

Subprogramme 1
Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum

Planned results for 2021

Result 1: strengthened land rights for men and women in the Arab world result carried over from 2020)

In paragraph 15.30, after “The subprogramme will continue the work related to land governance”, insert “and”.

Subprogramme 2
Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions

Planned results for 2021

Result 2: strengthened capacities of cities to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by linking evidence-based policies to investments (new result)

In paragraph 15.42, replace “marginalized and vulnerable urban populations” with “marginalized communities”.

Subprogramme 3
Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment

Strategy

In paragraph 15.49, replace “low-carbon” with “low-emission and low-carbon”.

Legislative mandates

Paragraph 15.56

General Assembly resolutions

Delete “63/281 Climate change and its possible security implications” and “72/277 Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”.

Subprogramme 4
Effective urban crisis prevention and response

Planned results for 2021

Result 2: inclusive cities: enhancing the positive impacts of urban migration (new result)

In paragraph 15.63, replace “vulnerable groups” with “marginalized segments of the population”.

Internal challenge and response

In paragraph 15.65, replace “vulnerable groups of the host population” with “others who are most vulnerable among the host population” and replace “special focus on vulnerable groups” with “special focus on those who are most vulnerable”.

Programme 13

International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice

304. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 13, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 16) and A/75/6 (Sect. 16)/Corr.1). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

305. The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

306. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on areas such as corruption; money-laundering; human, drugs and wildlife trafficking; terrorism; organized crime and cybercrime; strengthening criminal justice; research; technical assistance; and facilitating international cooperation. The role of the Office as the primary international body with drug control and anti-crime expertise was highlighted, and the view was expressed that the Office should focus its work on its core mandate of assisting Member States in those areas. The observation was made that progress in some areas over the previous year had been slow.

307. Note was taken of the assistance provided by the Office in reforming the United Nations development system and its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, considering its unique mandate, which was not directly related to development matters, the view was expressed that the Office should not systematically engage in such activities, but rather fully comply with its statutory functions. It was further stressed that all the projects that the Office intended to implement in the context of development issues should be submitted for approval by decision-making bodies, and that the Office should continue to provide regular briefings to Member States on its role in reforming the architecture of United Nations development mechanisms. The view was expressed that while the coordination with the United Nations development system was important, it was also an internal Secretariat issue, and more emphasis should be placed on the cooperation of the Office with relevant Member States and key stakeholders (see para. 16.7). In addition, clarification was sought on how legislative mandates had been included in the subprogrammes, as the lists were not considered to be exhaustive.

308. Clarification was sought regarding the innovative ideas and strengthened international cooperation that would be implemented in the coming year to combat illicit financial transfers and money-laundering, which continued to impede the development of the African continent.

309. The observation was made that young people in developing countries were increasingly consuming pharmacy medication as illicit drugs, which was considered very harmful to health, and a clarification was sought on the role of the Office in addressing the situation, in coordination with subregional organizations and United Nations country teams.

310. A delegation emphasized that, in its resolution 74/247, the General Assembly had decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc intergovernmental committee of experts, representative of all regions, to elaborate a comprehensive international

convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes. It was mentioned that the ad hoc committee had started its organizational work in 2020 and would continue in 2021. It was proposed that the role of UNODC in the preparatory work of that ad hoc committee be reflected in the programme.

311. Clarification was sought on the extent to which the Office cooperated with the Financial Action Task Force, which was described as the most comprehensive anti-money-laundering framework, and with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, in its efforts to fight corruption.

312. Regarding the strategy and external factors for 2021, the observation was made that evaluation and accountability should be an internal function of the Secretariat (see para. 16.8). Clarification was sought on additional efforts that could be undertaken by the Office to address the links between drug use, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime (see para. 16.10). Efforts to mainstream gender into the operational work of the Office and its Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women were welcomed, and a clarification was sought on what efforts could be undertaken to support gender parity and a gender focal point network (see para. 16.12). The observation was made that the Office had established strong projects with other international entities, and clarification was sought on how the Office could further promote efficiency and coherence across the multilateral system and reduce the risk of duplication (see para. 16.15). Evaluation was considered essential to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and credibility, and additional information in that regard was sought (see para. 16.22).

313. While it was felt that the programme for the Office included most comments and suggestions made by interested Member States when it had been discussed in Vienna in December 2019, a delegation highlighted that in component 1 of subprogramme 9, new proposals to finance meetings of the intergovernmental expert group on the international challenge posed by the non-medical use of opioids from the regular budget had been included. Clarification was sought on the establishment of the group, as it did not have a mandate from the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and the observation was made that because the non-medical use of opioids was considered a regional issue rather than a global one, meetings on such issues should not be financed from the regular budget. Additional information was sought on the efforts of the Office to advance the implementation of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto (see para. 16.24).

314. Clarification was sought on whether a new date had been confirmed following the postponement of the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, while the suggestion was made to adjust the programme to reflect the rescheduling of the Congress to 2021 (see para. 16.173).

315. Regarding subprogramme 4, Terrorism prevention, the work of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate was welcomed, including as it pertained to the development of technical assistance materials and training, which included issues on human rights and gender as part of a complete counter-terrorism capacity-building initiative.

316. Regarding subprogramme 5, Justice, result 2: communities are more resilient to crime and violence, a delegation sought clarification on the performance measure pertaining to the cumulative number of States that develop and implement gender-sensitive crime prevention policies and programmes with the support of UNODC (see

figure 16.IV), in particular on the reason why the timeline did not go beyond 2019 to include information up to 2021.²

317. A delegation highlighted an inconsistency between the narrative of subprogramme 9, Evolution of financial and post resources, which was divided into two components (component 1: provision of secretariat services and substantive support to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice; and component 2: provision of secretariat services and substantive support to the International Narcotics Control Board) and the human resources and budgetary parts of the subprogramme, which did not show a separation of the two components. The International Narcotics Control Board secretariat serves an independent treaty body, which operates independently from UNODC. It was emphasized that the need to highlight its projected resources to the General Assembly separately and within existing budgetary processes was affirmed in resolution 62/8 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In addition, a greater diversification of programme support costs among the various departments of the Office was called for.

318. A delegation referred to table 16.26 on the deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory, under component 1 of subprogramme 9, which contained a proposal to fund the meetings of an intergovernmental expert group on the international challenge posed by the non-medical use of opioids (item 9 in table 16.26). Questions were raised as to the reasons why that specific type of ad hoc meeting was highlighted, where the mandate for that intergovernmental mechanism stemmed from and what the proposed source of funding was.

Conclusions and recommendations

319. **Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly review, at its seventy-fifth session, the programme plan of programme 13, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.**

Programme 14 Gender equality and the empowerment of women

320. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 17\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2020/10](#)).

321. The Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

322. Delegations expressed appreciation and strong support for the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and noted the importance of the programme in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Appreciation was also expressed

² A corrigendum ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 16\)/Corr.1](#)) was issued which addressed the delegation’s concerns.

for the efforts to strengthen standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, to protect women and girls from violence, including in conflict-based contexts, and to end discrimination. Appreciation was further expressed for the work of women in the field of peace and security and for the efforts of UN-Women in the fight against genital mutilation, which still exists on the African continent, as well as in the fight against household duties that keep girls out of school. Emphasis was put on the importance of ensuring equal access for women and girls to economic opportunities, education and health care, including sexual reproductive health.

323. Clarification was sought as to how UN-Women would implement its mandate considering the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

324. Regarding the programme implementation in 2020, a question was raised on how the activities cancelled owing to the pandemic would be addressed, noting that, even though UN-Women was able to collect the national reports on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in most of the regions, the spaces for discussion and reflection had been suspended. It was also asked whether those activities had been incorporated into the programme plan for 2021, and the urgency of implementing them to allow for discussions of the new context in which there could be a setback on gender equality was stressed.

325. A delegation expressed the view that, for the programmes that would be implemented in 2021, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the multilateral gender agenda should be emphasized. It also highlighted that more women were exposed to the virus than men, as women constitute 70 per cent of the personnel of health services, and that they were more affected by the economic consequences of the pandemic, such as unemployment, as they worked mainly in service sectors and unpaid domestic work.

326. The work being carried out on climate lessons and previous pandemics, which showed that women were disproportionately affected, was highlighted. In that connection, information was requested on a proactive strategy in relation to the effects of COVID-19. Delegations were invited to provide reflections on potential language to capture such efforts.

327. A concern was expressed about the increase in the number of reports on domestic or gender violence owing to COVID-19-related forced confinement with the aggressor. In that connection, a question was raised as to whether UN-Women was developing any proposals on what could be done in future pandemics, for example in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme or the World Health Organization. As part of the lessons learned on the issues of epidemics and pandemics, it was suggested that such partnerships be considered.

328. A delegation expressed the view that some provisions, including established terminology in the programme plan, deviated from the strategic plan of UN-Women for 2018–2021. In that connection, the delegation highlighted paragraphs 17.9, 17.10, 17.15, 17.16, 17.24 and 17.42–17.44, result 2, deliverable 5 and C. Substantive deliverables, of subprogramme 2, Policy and programme activities, and requested that they be corrected in order to align the programme plan with the strategic plan. The view was also expressed that women's human rights were encompassed by the concept of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as also reflected in the strategic plan. A request was made to correct related wording in paragraphs 17.7 (c), 17.15, 17.16, 17.30, 17.31, 17.33, 17.34 and 17.49 of the proposed programme plan for 2021. Another delegation expressed the view that the programme was in line with the expectations.

329. It was commented that, in some paragraphs, the role of UN-Women in providing technical support to Members States upon request was overstated (paras. 17.5, 17.7 (b)

and 17.19). It was therefore requested that those paragraphs be redrafted in order to reflect the mandate of UN-Women. It was further underlined that any activity by UN-Women at the country level, including supporting civil society, should be conducted following a request of the host country (paras. 17.17, 17.33 and 17.40–17.42).

330. With regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, the view was expressed that UN-Women had the role of leading on Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and that, for other goals, the entity was called upon to contribute to the efforts of those that had an impact on the advancement of women.

331. A delegation welcomed the programme of UN-Women in strengthening standards and gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including in the fields of peace and security, protection from violence and elimination of discrimination.

332. A delegation expressed a strong commitment to the women and peace and security agenda, including at the national level.

333. A view was expressed that that the programme was overloaded with general yet detailed provisions about numerous efforts of UN-Women that were not directly related to practical financial issues and were not relevant in the context of programming for 2021. The section entitled “Programme performance in 2019: ‘I Know Gender’ approaches full coverage in the United Nations system” (paras. 17.22 and 17.23) was highlighted as an example, and a delegation expressed the view that there was no need to overload the programme document with such details.

334. Regarding subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships, a concern was expressed in relation to the expected result in 2020, “Robust monitoring on gender-related results by at least half of all United Nations system entities” (table 17.2). In that connection, and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, a delegation asked how the monitoring was proceeding.

335. In relation to programme performance in 2019, a question was asked as to whether the e-learning training course “I Know Gender” launched in 2014 in four languages had been translated into the other United Nations official languages.

336. Concerning planned results for 2021, a question was raised as to why climate change was chosen as a topic for result 2 (“Climate action becomes gender-responsive”), in particular in the context of the pandemic, the economic crisis, deepening poverty and the lack of access to socioeconomic services. It was highlighted that climate change and other challenges could be addressed in a broader context in many other intergovernmental processes. In addition, it was commented that the related activities were not part of the UN-Women mandate or strategic plan, and it was noted that the Paris Agreement, as well as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, was an international treaty served by its own secretariat. In that connection, it was also questioned why UN-Women deemed participation in the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to be a priority. Based on those views, the delegation requested the deletion of paragraphs 17.24 to 17.28. In response to the comments on climate, another delegation expressed the view that it welcomed the language in the report dealing with climate change and noted that it had been agreed as part of the strategic plan of UN-Women for 2018–2021.

337. Concerning subprogramme 2, Policy and programme activities, a question was asked in relation to the change of its objective, including narrowing its scope instead of referring to the broad mandate of the entity.

338. With regard to deliverables, delegations requested clarification of the increase in the number of deliverables (table 17.4), specifically “Projects on Safe Cities Free of Violence Against Women and Girls and Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces

initiative” under “Field and technical cooperation projects” and “Seminars, workshops and training events” in 2021 compared with 2019. A question was also asked about the added value and expected output of that increase.

339. The increase in the number of entities reporting positive results under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was welcomed. However, regret was expressed that many entities had not met the requirements for the Action Plan, and it was asked how UN-Women would encourage the entities in order to improve compliance.

340. A delegation remarked that the planned results were measurable, realistic and demonstrable, but questioned whether they were strategic. It also expressed the view that the results did not show to what extent the situation of women and girls was or was not improving from year to year. It further wished to see developments on statistics of violence against women in the programme.

341. With regard to United Nations peacekeeping missions, a delegation expressed concern that the deep disequilibrium between women and men in peacekeeping missions had not been curbed, noting that one year remained of the strategic plan for 2018–2021. It also enquired about any new strategy that could be implemented by UN-Women in that regard. Concerns were expressed in relation to gender-based violence in peacekeeping missions, and it was asked whether any strategy was being planned by UN-Women, together with peacekeeping missions and other United Nations entities, to mitigate the issue.

342. The role of women’s rights organizations was highlighted, in particular Southern organizations, and how they played a valuable role in the lessons learned on policy development. Thoughts were requested on how the ability of women’s rights organizations could be strengthened to play a proactive role in this area.

343. A delegation requested information regarding expenses related to travel of representatives and staff, bearing in mind that State borders were closed owing to COVID-19. Furthermore, the delegation asked how the resources allocated for the participation of national experts in the work of intergovernmental bodies were being utilized when such financial support was not requested by the Member State.

344. A question was raised regarding the post resources of subprogramme 1, noting that figure 17.VIII did not correspond to the organizational structure set out in annex I to [A/75/6 \(Sect. 17\)](#). The delegation requested that the numbers be double-checked.

345. In relation to the comments made about resources, a delegation reminded the Committee to refrain from budgetary discussions.

Conclusions and recommendations

346. **Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly review, at its seventy-fifth session, the programme plan of programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.**

Programme 15 Economic and social development in Africa

347. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 18\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the Review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2020/10](#)).

348. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

349. Delegations expressed strong support for the programme and appreciation for the work carried out by the Commission. Appreciation was also expressed for the Commission's cooperation with the New Partnership for Africa's Development and for the efforts made in the areas of poverty eradication, promoting food security and nutrition, addressing the issue of illicit financial flows, enhancing competitiveness and trade facilitation, promoting enhanced public finance management and governance and strengthening effective development planning. Delegations also expressed appreciation for the in-depth analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa carried out by the Commission and for its plans to continue to work with African countries in evaluating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on Africa and in developing an immediate fiscal stimulus package that would help with the recovery of most countries.

350. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the quality and comprehensiveness of the proposed programme plan for 2021. In that connection, a delegation expressed the hope of seeing the Commission able to implement the 2021 programme as planned and that the deliverables could, once again, embrace the global development objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Another delegation observed that some elements were not ideally placed and pointed out, as an example, the concept of delivering together expressed in paragraph 18.3, in the section on the strategy and external factors for 2021. Another delegation expressed the view that the programme plan was not sufficiently aggressive.

351. Concerning knowledge products, the wealth in knowledge that ECA had produced over time, and the benefit that that must provide to the resident coordinator system in effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda, was acknowledged. However, a concern was raised regarding the effectiveness of the platform for delivery or knowledge-sharing throughout the African continent for 2021, and clarification was requested in that regard.

352. With regard to the restructuring of ECA in line with the "New strategic directions of the Economic Commission for Africa: putting ideas into action for an empowered and transformed Africa", clarification was sought on the operational capacities of the Commission, and a question was raised as to whether the structure had matured sufficiently to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Commission. In that connection, examples were sought on concrete outcomes from the divisions with regard to dealing with the private sector.

353. Several delegations raised questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on programme implementation in 2020. It was noted, in that connection, that ECA had taken a leading role in evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on African countries, and clarification was sought as to any negative impact on the work of the Commission. In addition, a question was raised on how the pandemic had affected the convening function of the Commission.

354. In addition, questions were raised regarding the impact of the pandemic on Commission plans should the COVID-19 pandemic prevail. In relation to that, a delegation specifically asked if any options had been outlined to meet the targets for 2021, including for advancing the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

355. With regard to mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, delegations enquired as to the Commission's planned efforts to support African countries in responding to that impact on their economies. A view was expressed that the long-standing agenda of reducing debt vulnerability, combined with the current economic challenges multiplied by the COVID-19 pandemic, required robust measures. In relation to that, a question was raised regarding any support the Commission would provide to member States in their negotiations and on planned efforts to address the debt vulnerability problem, in particular in relation to the prevailing situation. A delegation highlighted that an extraordinary China-Africa summit on solidarity against COVID-19 was planned to be held by videoconference.

356. Regarding cooperation with the United Nations system and other entities, the role of ECA as convener, think tank and provider of technical assistance was emphasized, requiring important and effective cooperation with other United Nations organizations, the African Union and regional offices. In that connection, a number of questions were raised as to what further steps were needed to improve coordination in order to ensure that ECA differentiated its workplan as compared with other organizations and that mandates were implemented as effectively as possible.

357. In relation to cooperation, the proposal for 2021 for self-evaluation on cooperation with other regional commissions was also noted. Clarification was sought on the cooperation between ECA and other regional commissions, especially with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, bearing in mind the close and specialized nature of their duties and those of ECA. A view was also expressed that the resident coordinator system strengthened coordination and cooperation between regional commissions, and further clarification was sought, in that connection, on coordination between the Commission and the resident coordinator system.

358. Concerns were raised regarding the use of terminology that was not intergovernmentally agreed. A delegation referred to such terminology in the context of "gender equality and women's empowerment" and "climate change" and requested the Secretariat to follow the intergovernmentally agreed formulations, stating that amendments would be proposed. In contrast, another delegation expressed support for the use of language and vocabulary in reports that would provide a better understanding of local and regional conditions and developments. The delegation expressed the strong view that, in a rapidly changing environment, it was important to convey and explain the driving factors clearly and without unnecessarily limiting the language used.

359. Concern was also expressed regarding the phrase "nexus between peace and security, human rights and development". The comment was made that that concept appeared vague and was non-consensual, without an intergovernmentally agreed definition. In that connection, a delegation expressed the view that, in its resolution [671 A \(XXV\)](#), the Economic and Social Council had been clear about the Commission's mandate, which was to facilitate concerted action for the economic development of Africa, including its social aspects, and to disseminate related statistical data and information on technology. Furthermore, it was observed that the General Assembly, in its resolution [70/153](#), on the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights, requested very little action that would fall under the direct responsibility of the Commission, and it was noted in that connection that the resolution had been included in the overall legislative mandates of the programme. It was acknowledged, however, that a siloed approach to implementing mandates was not optimal and an understanding of different areas, as well as coherence among and coordination of actions, was needed. In that respect, delegations encouraged the Commission to continue to focus on its priorities with regard to the development of African countries.

360. Regarding the Commission's mandates, a concern was also raised in relation to the view that the Commission was stepping too far outside its mandates and that the fact that the Commission had been successfully doing so might interfere in the distribution of responsibilities within the United Nations system, ultimately affecting its effectiveness and efficiency. A concern was also raised that its doing so would potentially affect the technical and non-politicized nature of its workstream and thus should be avoided.

361. With regard to subprogramme 1, Macroeconomic policy and governance, in particular planned result 2 for 2021, on curbing illicit financial flows to enhance domestic resource mobilization, a delegation noted that the pilot project carried out in Nigeria had provided information for the development of a draft set of guidelines on measuring illicit financial flows. In that connection, a question was raised as to when the draft guidelines would be finalized. Furthermore, in relation to the planned result, a delegation commented that, to date, the Financial Action Task Force, together with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), provided the most complete anti-money-laundering framework. It was stated that, to date on the African continent, only South Africa was a member of the Task Force, while acknowledging that there were relevant African subregional organizations, although with limited geographical and operational scope. In that connection a question was raised as to the collaboration between the Commission and international actors with expertise and standards on those important technical issues, in particular the Task Force and OECD. Furthermore, a question was asked as to how ECA intended to encourage African States to participate in such programmes.

362. With regard to subprogramme 2, Regional integration and trade, specifically in relation to the planned result for 2019, on taking full advantage of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area: ratification and strategies, a delegation noted the performance measure indicated for 2019, namely the ratification by 27 countries, entry into force of the Agreement and development of nine national strategies on the African Continental Free Trade Area. In that connection, a question was raised on actions taken by the Commission to encourage African States to rationalize the architecture of regional integration across the continent, noting that there were nearly 30 regional integration organizations with "tangled" competencies and geographies.

363. Concerning subprogramme 3, Private sector development and finance, the importance of the continental transport policy, especially the African Road Safety Action Plan, was highlighted, and it was expressed that this was closely related to the saving of lives. Clarification was sought in that connection as to why the deliverables for the period 2019–2021 on the Road Safety Action Plan (table 18.8) were not included more extensively in the programme plan. In relation to planned result 2 for 2021, on enhancing investment in energy infrastructure through land policy reforms, a question was asked as to why the performance measure was limited to annual memberships. The view was expressed that using a cumulative number of countries that had implemented or prepared a land policy suited to investments in the energy sector would have provided a more significant representation of the achieved results.

364. On subprogramme 4, Data and statistics, specifically regarding programme performance in 2019, on the application of technology for the quality and timeliness of censuses, and the related performance measure, a delegation sought clarification on the extent to and themes on which the subprogramme cooperated with United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other entities such as the World Bank and the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa, and regional or national actors in the area of data and statistics. In that regard, a question was asked as to whether it was better for the Commission to build its own statistical tools or whether it should instead mobilize existing

statistical expertise. Regarding the planned results for 2021 on improving national data availability and increasing visibility through civil registration and good legal identity, a delegation expressed the view that the issue of identity (ID) cards was monumental and very important for the continent and emphasized the challenge involved in achieving the target of having 300 million people with digital ID cards by 2025. The delegation also noted that the relevant performance measure table showed only the number “1” and sought further clarification as to whether it was one country platform or one continental digital ID platform.

365. With regard to subprogramme 5, Climate change, environment and natural resources management, the continued focus on climate change as part of the programme was welcomed. A view was expressed that it was important for ECA to highlight the need to transfer to green technologies and to climate-proof agricultural sectors for food security and the work that needed to be done to overcome the challenges posed by climate change. With regard to the target, under planned result 1 for 2021, namely, climate resilience integrated into national sustainable development plans in Africa, of having at least three countries to update their post-2020 nationally determined contributions, a delegation called for more ambition in that area and asked for further steps to be taken to make it a more ambitious priority. A delegation highlighted that many actors, such as UNDP, the multilateral banks and the bilateral cooperation agencies, had also committed themselves to helping African countries to develop and revise their nationally determined contributions and to integrate the challenges related thereto into their development plans. In relation to that, it was asked how ECA collaborated with those actors and how the roles were distributed among them. It was further expressed that annual performance measures were not as informative as using a cumulative measure to show the total number of countries that had made significant progress in integrating nationally determined contributions into their development plans.

366. Concerning subprogramme 6, Gender equality and women’s empowerment, it was suggested that a stand-alone focus on the economic empowerment of women be added, in addition to gender mainstreaming. It was also noted that no acknowledgment of the effects that violence against women had on economic growth and trade were to be found in the proposed programme plan. It was asked whether there were opportunities to build prevention and a mitigation response into economic policies and the implementation thereof. It was suggested that that could help accelerate economic growth, in particular as it related to the economic impacts of violence against women and to limitations on the economic participation of women. Regarding the work on gender mainstreaming, it was asked what more could be done to ensure that a gender perspective was mainstreamed correctly.

367. Regarding subprogramme 7, Subregional activities for development, in particular table 18.27, on deliverables for the period 2019–2021 under component 4, Subregional activities in East Africa, the mention of the issue of transboundary resources and the sustainable management thereof was noted in the section on consultation, advice and advocacy. A delegation sought clarification as to whether the programme had considered the interregional use of those resources, especially in the context of the East Africa subregion. In reference to the deliverable “validation meeting on the strategic policy framework for sustainable management of transboundary water resources in Eastern Africa”, it was observed that the issue had a cross-regional dimension. In that connection, a delegation expressed the view that the planned activities should be shared and that stakeholders should be encouraged to promote sustainability across regions where resources were shared.

368. With regard to subprogramme 9, Poverty, inequality and social policy, the deliverables for the period 2019–2021 “Project on peace and security in Africa to build the capacity of national policymakers” and “High-level policy dialogue on the

nexus between security and development”, mentioned in table 18.33, were highlighted, and, referring to the discussion on terminology and mandate, a view was expressed that the two deliverables did not seem to emanate from either the subprogramme narrative or its legislative mandates and therefore raised questions as to whether they fell under the direct responsibility of the Commission. In relation to that, it was requested that those items be corrected in the programme plan, including with regard to the use of the term “nexus”.

Conclusions and recommendations

369. The Committee commended ECA for its efforts to promote the economic and social development of Africa and to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and underlined the importance of its role in fostering regional integration and promoting international cooperation for Africa’s development.

370. The Committee reiterated the need for ECA to continue to support its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue, within its mandate, its collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional and subregional levels, including the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams in the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, as well as with the international financial institutions and regional development banks.

371. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage ECA to strengthen cooperation with the five subregions of Africa and with resident coordinators.

372. The Committee emphasized the importance of supporting Africa in building capacity for disease prevention and control in its achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, and in this regard recommended that the General Assembly re-emphasize the need for the international community to urgently accelerate its support for working in solidarity and collaboration with Africa, by sharing best practices, and to consider providing more material, technical, financial and humanitarian support to help African countries to overcome the impact of COVID-19 and to achieve independent and sustainable development.

373. Underlining the mitigated results that the current mechanisms for the fight against illicit international financial flows have yielded, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request ECA to continue to support the increased implementation of existing obligations, in conjunction with financial institutions and other specialized agencies, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in enhancing cooperation for the recovery of lost assets.

374. The Committee welcomed the Commission’s continued support for the African Continental Free Trade Area.

375. The Committee noted with appreciation the key role played by ECA in the launching of the African Continental Free Trade Area and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue its support for the Free Trade Area, including in minimizing any potential adverse effects such as the risks of import surges, dumping, and customs revenue loss.

376. The Committee observed that the effective functioning of the African Continental Free Trade Area would also depend on the connectivity of the continent and thus recommended that the General Assembly request ECA to continue its engagement in mobilizing necessary capacities and resources for the

development of road and railway networks and to enhance telecommunications between African subregions.

377. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:

Overall orientation

Strategy and external factors for 2021

In paragraph 18.3, replace “plan and deliver” with “are planned and delivered”.

In paragraph 18.3 (d), replace “a focus on peace, security and social inclusion” with “a focus on social inclusion and taking into account synergy between Africa’s economic and social development programmes and its peace and security agenda”.

In paragraph 18.6, replace “nexus” with “linkages”.

Paragraph 18.7 (d)

Replace “complement” with “fulfil”.

Replace “emanating from” with “taking into account the relevant provisions of”.

Delete “, including those relating to human rights”.

Paragraph 18.8

In the second sentence, delete “gender-related” and, after “commitments”, insert “related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.

In the third sentence, replace “the gender dimension” with “a gender perspective”.

In the fourth sentence, after “to mainstream”, replace “gender” with “a gender perspective” and, after “including in gender”, insert “equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.

In the fifth sentence, after “hands-on training, in gender”, insert “equality, the empowerment of women and girls”; replace “gender-responsive” with “gender-sensitive”; and, after “public finance and the integration of”, replace “gender” with “a gender perspective”.

Paragraph 18.10

At the end of the second sentence, add “, within the mandate of ECA”.

In the third sentence, replace “nexus” with “linkages”.

Deliverables

Table 18.1

Cross-cutting deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

C. Substantive deliverables

Delete “advancing the peace, security and development nexus;”.

Evaluation activities

In paragraph 18.16 (c), replace “dimension” with “perspective”.

Subprogramme 3

Private sector development and finance

In paragraph 18.50, replace “gender-responsive” with “gender-sensitive”.

Table 18.8

Subprogramme 3: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

B. Generation and transfer of knowledge

Field and technical cooperation projects

In deliverable 11, replace “nexus” with “linkages”.

Subprogramme 5

Climate change, environment and natural resources management

Strategy

In paragraph 18.75, replace “green and low-carbon” with “low-emission and low-carbon”.

In paragraph 18.76, in the fourth sentence, replace “environmental, social and gender considerations” with “consideration of environmental, social and gender issues”.

Paragraph 18.79

Delete “climate risks”.

Delete “and to manage climate-induced human insecurity”.

Replace “climate-resilient low carbon economies” with “low-emission and low-carbon climate-resilient economies”.

Subprogramme 6

Gender equality and women’s empowerment

Strategy

Paragraph 18.92

Replace “gender-related commitments” with “commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.

Replace the second sentence with the following: “The subprogramme will also strengthen the capacity of member States, through the provision of tailored technical support, advisory services and hands-on training, in gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and economic policy management, women’s entrepreneurship, gender-sensitive public finance and the integration of a gender perspective and demographic dividend dimensions into national policies and programmes.”.

In the fourth sentence, replace “issues” with “equality and women’s empowerment”.

Paragraph 18.93

In the third sentence, replace “gender and women’s issues” with “gender equality and women’s empowerment”.

Programme performance in 2019 against planned result

In paragraph 18.95, in the first sentence, replace “gender” with “a gender perspective”.

Programme performance in 2019: strengthened capacity of 40 member States to monitor their progress in gender equality and women’s empowerment

In paragraph 18.96, delete “gender-related”.

In paragraph 18.97, replace “gender dimensions” with “a gender perspective”.

In paragraph 18.98, replace “gender-related commitments” with “commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.

Planned results for 2021**Result 1: harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa with gender equality (result carried over from 2020)**

In paragraph 18.99, replace “gender dimensions” with “a gender perspective”.

Figure 18.IX

Performance measure: cumulative number of countries adopting sector-specific policies that mainstream gender in their sectoral policies

Replace “gender” with “a gender perspective”.

Result 2: assessing the cost of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 in five selected countries (new result)***Paragraph 18.103***

Replace “gender-related commitments” with “commitments related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.

Replace “gender-responsive” with “gender-sensitive”.

Table 18.16

Subprogramme 6: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

B. Generation and transfer of knowledge**Field and technical cooperation projects**

In deliverable 4, replace “mainstreaming gender into” with “gender mainstreaming in”.

In deliverable 6, replace “dimension” with “perspective”.

Publications

In deliverable 15, before “into sectoral policies”, replace “gender” with “a gender perspective”.

In deliverable 16, replace “nexus” with “link”.

Technical materials

In deliverable 18, replace “gender” with “a gender perspective”.

Replace deliverable 23 with the following:

Policy research on gender issues and climate change in Africa for effective policy intervention

D. Communication deliverables

Digital platforms and multimedia content

Replace “women’s empowerment and women’s socioeconomic, political and human rights” with “and women’s empowerment”.

Subprogramme 7

Subregional activities for development

Component 2

Subregional activities in West Africa

Strategy

In paragraph 18.121, replace “gender and youth empowerment” with “gender issues, youth empowerment”.

In paragraph 18.122, replace “cross-border actions to uphold the nexus of peace, security and development” with “taking into account synergy between the economic and social development programmes of Africa and its peace and security agenda”.

Subprogramme 9

Poverty, inequality and social policy

Table 18.33

Subprogramme 9: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory

B. Generation and transfer of knowledge

Field and technical cooperation projects

Replace deliverable 6 with the following:

Project to build the capacity of national policymakers in the context of synergy between the economic and social development programmes of Africa and its peace and security agenda

Seminars, workshops and training events

In deliverable 10, replace “nexus between security and development” with “synergy between the economic and social development programmes of Africa and its peace and security agenda”.

Programme 16

Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

378. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 19)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

379. The Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

380. Delegations expressed thanks to the Executive Secretary for the introduction of the programme and expressed appreciation and support for the work of ESCAP. A delegation emphasized the importance of the support provided by ESCAP to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, which it considered to be key to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was emphasized that the Asia-Pacific region was a very active and dynamic region, as it held more than 60 per cent of the world's population and more than 60 per cent of the world's youth population. As a result, it was observed that any initiatives taken forward by ESCAP would benefit other regional commissions, if its knowledge and experiences were shared. Appreciation was also expressed for the work that ESCAP had done to ensure that that dynamism would benefit not only the Asia-Pacific region, but also more broadly.

381. Regarding one of the planning assumptions for ESCAP, namely that restrictions in the movement of people, goods and services due to the COVID-19 pandemic were sufficiently alleviated, information was sought on what was being done by ESCAP to assist countries in fighting the pandemic and alleviating its impact on the economic and social fronts. Appreciation was expressed for the work of ESCAP on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where online connectivity had proved to be vital.

382. With regard to the close inter-agency cooperation between ESCAP and other regional and subregional entities, as detailed in paragraph 19.13 of the programme plan, a delegation expressed its appreciation and requested more insight on such cooperation with other regional commissions. Another delegation sought more information on, and examples of, the synergies and efficiency gains achieved through coordination and cooperation with the resident coordinator system.

383. In welcoming the work done by ESCAP in other areas, such as transport, mobility and connectivity, the view was expressed that such work would benefit not only small island developing States, but also landlocked developing countries. The initiatives and innovative concepts introduced by ESCAP in paragraph 19.19 (a), such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, mobile learning and microlearning, were highlighted, and information was sought on what impact such tools had had on the population of the Asia-Pacific region and on whether such initiatives could be replicated in the rest of the world.

384. Citing references to the concept of "associate members" in the document, a delegation sought further information on what constituted such membership.

385. A delegation queried the reason for the decline in the number of substantive services for meetings, from 29 in 2019 to 23 in 2020, as indicated in table 19.1, on cross-cutting deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory,

even though the plan had been approved prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegation also sought clarification on the variance between the planned 1.5 days of seminars, workshops and training events, indicated in the same table, against the 6 days of such activities actually held in 2019.

386. With regard to performance measures, one delegation raised concerns that the measures were too broad and lacked specific details. Examples quoted from the 2021 performance measures included those in table 19.7, namely, the implementation of measures by member States to support impact enterprises and investors; table 19.10, namely, an increased number of freight trains and/or reduced border-crossing times along the Trans-Asian Railway routes; table 19.14, namely, an increase in the number of scenarios, policies, plans or programmes adopted by member States to implement environment- and climate action-related Sustainable Development Goals at different levels; and table 19.21, namely, that ESCAP member States use the new ESCAP tools and the regional modality to broaden national social protection coverage. It was added that specific and detailed measures would make it easier for Member States to understand how ESCAP would meet its planned results and performance measures.

387. Clarifications were sought on the steps that ESCAP had taken to drive the reform agenda of the Secretary-General forward and on which key United Nations issues ESCAP would strive to be the lead entity on in the region. Clarifications were also sought on the subject of issue-based coalitions and whether Member States would be given the opportunity to choose the topics or influence the direction that such coalitions would take.

388. With regard to subprogramme 1, Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development, an enquiry was made as to the rationale behind the creation of the section on countries in special situations, and detailed information was sought on the role of the section and what work it would carry out.

389. It was noted that, under subprogramme 2, Trade, investment and innovation, ESCAP was working very closely with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. A delegation requested more information on whether ESCAP also worked with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, which had also undertaken substantial research, analysis and capacity-building in that field.

390. With regard to subprogramme 4, Environment and development, a delegation expressed concern that the subprogramme did not appear to have any activities that were directly linked to climate change or to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, despite the importance of climate change to the Asia-Pacific region. With respect to the Paris Agreement and language related to climate change in the document, a delegation reaffirmed its intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement at the earliest opportunity and further affirmed its support for promoting economic growth and improving energy security, while also protecting the environment.

Conclusions and recommendations

391. The Committee commended ESCAP for its efforts to promote economic and social development of Asia and the Pacific, and underlined its leading role in coordinating regional United Nations development system entities in accordance with its mandate.

392. The Committee noted with appreciation the work of ESCAP in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its three core functions, namely, research and analysis, intergovernmental consensus-building and norm-setting and capacity development.

393. The Committee reiterated the need for ESCAP to continue to support its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue, within its mandate, its collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional and subregional levels, including the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams in the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, as well as with the international financial institutions and regional development banks.

394. The Committee recognized that more than half of the members and associate members of ESCAP were categorized as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries or small island developing States, and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to work with the Commission to continue to ensure cooperation on regional connectivity for sustainable development, poverty eradication, macroeconomic policy and financing for development.

395. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request ESCAP to continue its work to create conditions necessary for region-wide sustainable transport connectivity, logistics, trade and mobility, including with regard to the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway Network and dry ports.

396. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request ESCAP to continue its efforts to strengthen information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction, including but not limited to the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway and the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network, so as to enhance its capacity for e-resilience in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

397. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:

Component 3

Subregional activities for development in North and Central Asia

Objective Strategy

Paragraph 19.177

Replace the existing text with the following:

To contribute to strengthened regional cooperation and integration for sustainable development, in line with the subregional priorities of North and Central Asia, including social inclusion and resilience, the component will mainstream social and environmental dimensions and mainstream a gender perspective into its analytical work on the Sustainable Development Goals acceleration framework for North and Central Asia and will continue its support for the subregional implementation of the 2030 Agenda, through collaboration with other subprogrammes and United Nations entities. This work is expected to result in strengthened contributions of the above-mentioned priorities to the development of countries in North and Central Asia, contributing to related Sustainable Development Goals.

Programme performance in 2019 against planned result

Paragraph 19.179

Replace “A planned result” with “One of the planned results”.

Programme 17

Economic development in Europe

398. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 17, Economic development in Europe, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 20)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

399. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

400. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the work of ECE in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region and the alignment of the subprogrammes with the Goals. A delegation noted the importance of the regional commissions and looked forward to continued cooperation with ECE. Another delegation stressed the importance of the work in such areas as trade, the environment, transport and agriculture. Noting that the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions were all women, another delegation expressed appreciation therefor and the view that the regional commissions' programmes were being efficiently implemented.

401. With reference to the Commission's work on public-private partnerships for the financing of development, a delegation welcomed the emphasis on such partnerships and emphasized that they must be transparent and of the highest standards in terms of environmental impact, labour conditions and sustainability.

402. In the context of the planned efforts in such areas as trade, the environment, energy and agriculture, a delegation emphasized the need for ECE to respect the mandates of the other specialized and regional organizations, such as the World Trade Organization. Another delegation sought clarification on the efforts made to ensure that the work of the ECE did not conflict with the mandates of other organizations working in the same thematic areas.

403. A delegation appreciated the regional strategy to improve the situation for older persons in terms of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and expressed the view that the situation needed improvement with regard to reducing violence and abuse and increasing food security.

404. A delegation expressed appreciation for the support provided in the development of a national road map on mainstreaming ageing in national policy and in the context of the third cycle of Environmental Performance Reviews. A question was raised concerning how ECE would ensure the cost-effectiveness and improved quality of the regional population census for 2020.

405. Further information was sought by several delegations on the framework and actions to support Member States in their response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

406. A delegation welcomed the programme plan and underlined the importance of the non-politicized and development-oriented approach of ECE and encouraged the Commission to continue in that direction.

407. In the context of the ongoing reform of the United Nations development system, a delegation emphasized that the expertise and potential of the Commission should be preserved. The delegation also sought clarification on how the reform had influenced the work of the programme.

408. A delegation expressed appreciation for the second paragraph of the foreword and the clear information it provided on the environment of the work of the programme and expressed the view that ECE was a competent institution with specialized knowledge.

409. Clarification was sought on cooperation between ECE and the other regional commissions, in particular the Economic Commission for Africa.

Conclusions and recommendations

410. **The Committee commended ECE on its efforts in the fields of environment; transport; statistics; economic cooperation and integration; sustainable energy; trade; forests and forest industry; and housing, land management and population, in accordance with its mandates.**

411. **The Committee also welcomed the support that the Commission provides to national Governments and other stakeholders in advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

412. **The Committee reiterated the need for ECE to continue to support its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue its collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional and subregional levels, including the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams in the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, as well as with the international financial institutions and regional development banks.**

413. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of Programme 17, Economic development in Europe, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.**

Programme 18 Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean

414. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 18, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 21)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

415. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

416. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the programme and the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). A delegation commended the Commission on its systematic work during the past decade on the issue of equality in the development context of Latin America and the Caribbean, which had allowed the Commission to align its programme of work with the emerging needs and demands of member States to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. It was noted that the programme would continue to place the 2030 Agenda at the centre of its work and, in that connection, it was recognized that regional platforms were essential for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

417. The efforts of the Commission in preparing its programme of work for 2021, including proposed innovations and changes in the implementation strategies, were acknowledged by various delegations. Those efforts were welcomed in particular as they reflected compliance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation in relation to the consideration of programme plans by regional entities.

418. A delegation observed that the Latin American and Caribbean region was characterized by great disparities and inequality, and expressed the view that more commitment in narrowing the gaps and providing opportunities to the 190 million people still living in poverty was necessary. It was noted that the economy of the region had limited resilience to financial external shocks and that, in that context, information was sought on measures planned in the programme to increase the resilience of the region to external shocks.

419. Gratitude was also expressed for the support provided by the Commission in promoting the concept of development in transition and for considering gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue. Some delegations expressed appreciation for the Commission's three main functions, namely, as a leading think tank that provided policy advice to countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region; as an intergovernmental platform for follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda; and as a provider of technical cooperation and capacity development services. Noting that those same functions also fell within the core responsibilities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the views of the Commission were sought on how it assessed the added value of the support that it gave to Member States compared with the support provided by the Department in those same areas. Clarification was sought on how changes in the subprogrammes, as well as the reform process and the efforts to pursue synergies and avoid duplication with other entities, including the resident coordinator system, would enhance support for Member States. Furthermore, additional information was sought on the level of cooperation with the resident coordinator system and with other regional commissions, in particular with the Economic Commission for Africa.

420. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the Commission and its efforts to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on countries of the region. Regarding the adjustments made to the programme of work of the Commission to update the implementation strategies under two subprogrammes, as endorsed by members of the Commission in 2019, the views of ECLAC were sought on the long-term impact of those adjustments on its overall work, in particular taking into account the challenges faced by Member States in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. A delegation recognized that the changes made to the objectives of those subprogrammes in the context of the update were in line with the efforts of the Commission to improve the effectiveness of the work carried out in the region, and expectations were expressed regarding the continuation of similar improvements in the future. In that connection, updated information was sought on the changes introduced in those subprogrammes, as well as on how their implementation was proceeding, including comments on what could be expected in terms of enhancement of the support provided to States members of the Commission.

421. It was acknowledged that countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region faced complex challenges further exacerbated by the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that context, the development of the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean was noted, and clarifications were sought regarding the focus of the initiative, including whether it would be limited to the economic and social consequences of the pandemic or would also include technical cooperation aspects and specific policy advice for countries.

422. Concerning the format and presentation of the programme plan, it was noted that the strategy at the subprogramme level presented comprehensive information encompassing all the work planned by the subprogrammes, and that change was welcomed.

423. On performance measures, a delegation noted differences across subprogrammes and indicated that in some cases more specific and tangible information was provided, while in others the information presented was more general and broader. The same delegation expressed the opinion that, in the future, efforts should be made to enhance consistency and improve the links between the work carried out by the subprogrammes and the related results and performance measures achieved or planned to be achieved.

424. With regard to deliverables, a delegation noted that, in a few instances, for example under subprogramme 3, Macroeconomic policies and growth, and under subprogramme 7, Sustainable development and human settlements, specific information was provided, including the country intended to benefit from the consultation, advice and advocacy, while the quantity of such services had been omitted. The delegation sought clarification as to why in the deliverables there was a general reference to advice provided to Member States, without quantifying and specifying exactly the kind of support provided.

425. Furthermore, concerning subprogramme 5, Mainstreaming the gender perspective in regional development, a delegation commented that in the programme plan an opportunity was missed to present results in additional areas by selecting two planned results for 2021 in similar areas. Furthermore, in connection with the past result mentioned in the strategy of the subprogramme, namely, the launching by Brazil of a national plan on women and peace and security, the delegation observed that the mandates of the subprogramme were focused on sustainable development and not on peace and security and recalled that the clear link between the mandates of the subprogramme and that past result had not been established. In that context, the same delegation also recalled a seminar that was conducted with the support of the subprogramme, but expressed the view that the correlation between that seminar and the result achieved was weak.

426. With reference to subprogramme 13, Support for regional and subregional integration and cooperation processes and organizations, further information was requested on the strategies planned for strengthening the social perspective in the support provided by the programme to Member States for regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Conclusions and recommendations

427. The Committee commended ECLAC for its efforts to promote the economic and social development of the Latin American and Caribbean region and underlined the importance of the Commission's role in ensuring regional cooperation for sustainable development, in accordance with its mandate.

428. The Committee noted with appreciation the proposed adjustments to the programme of work of the Commission that would enable the Commission to be better positioned to deliver on its mandate in the fields of international trade, integration and infrastructure; production and innovation; and natural resources.

429. The Committee reiterated the need for ECLAC to continue to support Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and recommended that the General Assembly encourage ECLAC to continue, within its mandate, to collaborate with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional and subregional levels, including the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams in

the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, as well as with the international financial institutions and regional development banks.

430. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 18, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.

Programme 19

Economic and social development in Western Asia

431. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 22)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies (E/AC.51/2020/10).

432. The Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

433. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the Commission and sought clarification on the efforts made by ESCWA to avoid duplication between its activities and those carried out by other entities of the United Nations system. For example, it was recalled that the Commission had carried out extensive research and data analysis for policymaking in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as had the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. Accordingly, clarification was sought on how the Commission assessed the added value of its support to its member States compared with that of other United Nations entities, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Furthermore, another delegation highlighted that the programme should, as should all other programmes, continually assess how its mandates both deconflicted and complemented the mandates of other United Nations bodies.

434. A delegation sought additional information on the internal reform being implemented by ESCWA (para. 22.4) and on the reconfiguration of the subprogrammes, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes needed to mitigate its impact on the support provided by the Commission to its member States.

435. The use of the terminology “gender justice” in the title and the narrative of subprogramme 2, Gender justice, population and inclusive development, was noted. A delegation recalled protracted discussions held during the fifty-ninth session of the Committee on the use of that terminology, which was not a concept universally accepted by the broader membership of the Organization, that had resulted in a suggestion to reference the resolutions and decisions pertaining to ESCWA in which the concept had been defined. The delegation also recalled that the Committee was cautious with regard to the use of concepts that did not have a universally accepted definition and expressed the view that, despite fully supporting the mandates given to ESCWA by its member States, it was important to avoid giving the impression that the concept of “gender justice” was universally accepted beyond the context of resolutions and decisions pertaining directly to the Commission.

436. On subprogramme 4, Statistics, the information society and technology, clarification was sought on the rationale for the creation of an integrated and smart information hub from scratch (para. 22.52), considering that such a system was

already in place. Clarification was also sought on whether the creation of the hub was supported by a legislative mandate.

Conclusions and recommendations

437. **The Committee commended ESCWA for its efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region, in accordance with its mandate.**

438. **The Committee noted with appreciation the new structure of the Commission, with reconfigured subprogrammes that were expected to optimize its service to Member States.**

439. **The Committee reiterated the need for ESCWA to continue to support its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue, within its mandate, its collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional and subregional levels, including the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams in the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, as well as with the international financial institutions and regional development banks.**

440. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.**

Programme 20 Human rights

441. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 20, Human rights, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 24\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2020/10](#)).

442. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

443. Delegations expressed their appreciation and support for the programme and for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and emphasized its important role in the promotion and protection of all human rights. Delegations recognized the Office as the leading United Nations entity on human rights. A delegation commended the efforts of the Office towards the goal of full realization of human rights for all.

444. A delegation shared the view that human rights were fundamentally about “living a happy life”, and, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the right to life and the right to health were of greatest importance. The delegation commented that the programme should be implemented with a people-centred approach, with the aim of improving the rights of all people in a coordinated manner.

445. A delegation stated that human rights were recognized as one of the fundamental objectives of the Organization. The mainstreaming of human rights in the United Nations system was welcomed. Delegations also welcomed the focus of the programme on persons with disabilities. Appreciation was expressed for the emphasis placed on the areas of combating poverty, countering discrimination on all

internationally recognized grounds, such as race, sex, language and religion, and advancing the rights of children and women. A delegation welcomed the commitment and work carried out by the Office in the areas of research, production of standards and action in the field, considering the often difficult conditions in which the Office operated. A delegation expressed support for the Secretary-General's priority of prevention, noting that human rights were the best prevention tool.

446. The view was expressed that the Office should adopt a more balanced approach in the geographic representation of its staff, in particular senior officers, to enhance transparency of the management and decision-making process. Another delegation echoed similar views, stating that the number of experts at the top level was not representative of the Organization.

447. Support for the independence of OHCHR and all the human rights mechanisms was expressed. Noting that the Office received significantly more requests for technical assistance than it could resource, a delegation observed that that was a testimony to the high regard in which the Office was held and the value that it could bring. The delegation also pointed out that that was a testament to the urgent work to which the Office needed to respond. Several delegations made remarks on the budget level, being zero-growth or reduced, in particular at a time when demand was growing owing to competing human rights crises, including ones caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and in that connection expressed concerns about how the pandemic would have an impact on the implementation of the subprogrammes. The view was expressed that the pandemic highlighted existing inequalities and that, in that regard, addressing inequalities and discrimination became increasingly important. A delegation noted the reliance on extrabudgetary resources and expressed the view that that was not a sustainable funding modality in the long term, as it could have an impact on the ability of the Office to carry out its mandated activities.

448. Regarding the mandate of the Human Rights Council, it was recognized that it dealt with human rights issues and, in that connection, a delegation expressed the view that the United Nations system as a whole must improve in that area.

449. A delegation encouraged all Member States to implement their human rights obligations and commitments, regardless of their level of development, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The view was expressed that full realization of any right did not require resource transfers and debt forgiveness, and that a lack of development was not a legitimate reason for failure to implement well-defined and universally agreed human rights commitments and obligations.

450. A delegation welcomed the efforts of OHCHR to increase transparency in its work. The delegation found the practice of holding briefings in Geneva to be a useful approach in building confidence and cooperation between Member States and OHCHR and in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. However, the same delegation stressed that those meetings should not be limited to collecting opinions of Member States but should also provide an opportunity for more substantive discussions. It was observed that, unfortunately, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been no time for substantive discussion in 2020.

451. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the high quality of the report, including its clarity and comprehensive content, as well as its impactful and much improved presentation. A delegation welcomed the return to the "normal" format, stating that the experiment with the new format in 2019 had not been successful. Regarding the presentation, a delegation recognized that the improvements greatly facilitated the reading and understanding of the programme narrative.

452. With regard to the mandate and background of the programme, a delegation stressed the importance of making correct references to mandates and made a comment about the reference to the mandate being derived partly from articles 13 and 62 of the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation disagreed with that reference and stated that those articles were mandates of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, respectively. In that connection, the delegation stressed the importance of being precise and of not interfering in the mandates of other United Nations bodies.

453. In reference to the list of challenges in paragraph 24.4, under Mandates and background, a view was expressed that increasing conflict caused by racism and poverty were challenges missing from the list, and a more comprehensive list was therefore requested. Another view was expressed that there was not an established link between climate change and human rights violations. In that regard, and because it was felt that the list was not complete, a delegation suggested that such a link should be avoided. In contrast, another delegation voiced support for the language in paragraphs 24.4 and 24.5 and expressed appreciation for the emphasis in the programme on the importance of human rights and the focus on combating poverty and countering discrimination on all internationally recognized grounds, including race, sex, language or religion. The delegation recognized a link between climate change and human rights, specifically the impact on women, girls and vulnerable groups.

454. On the issue of terminology, a delegation stressed that only terminology agreed upon in intergovernmental bodies should be used. In that regard, the delegation was of the view that the terms “human rights-based approach” and “human rights-friendly policies” should be changed to “people-centred approach” and “people-centred policies”, respectively. The delegation further noted that “multiple languages” should be changed to “six official languages of the United Nations”.

455. Concerning the list of legislative mandates, a delegation commented that many resolutions had been approved by the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Commission on Human Rights, and requested that they be reflected in the list of the programme. The delegation specifically requested the inclusion of resolutions on “human rights and unilateral coercive measures”.

456. Furthermore, a delegation expressed disappointment that, while many relevant resolutions were listed, such as General Assembly resolution [72/195](#) on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons, the programme did not make any specific reference to the work done in that regard in the programme narrative. In addition, the delegation noted that those resolutions were consensual, while many of the country-specific resolutions were not, and, in its view, the country-specific resolutions were counterproductive. It was further stated that, in the context of limited resources, mandates that had been adopted consensually should be prioritized.

457. A question was raised as to why the number of resolutions included in the list of mandates in the overall section was smaller than the number listed under the individual subprogrammes.

458. Regarding cooperation and collaboration with other entities and the United Nations system, a delegation welcomed the engagement of the Office with a wide range of stakeholders, including peacekeeping missions, civil society working with Member States, and national human rights mechanisms.

459. It was observed that better integration with United Nations country teams and headquarters planning would increase the value, strategically, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically those related to “prevention of conflict and promotion of human rights”. In that connection, reflections were sought on how integration could be improved.

460. A delegation expressed the view that the mandate and scope of the cooperation between OHCHR, United Nations country teams and resident coordinators were concentrated on development activities. The delegation expressed the view that integrating human rights approaches into the work of the United Nations country teams was the mandate of neither the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights nor the United Nations country teams. A view was expressed that the work with other United Nations entities was to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and that it should not go beyond that mandate. In contrast, another delegation expressed support for a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and shared the view that the 2030 Agenda provided an opportunity and road map for advancing the realization of human rights, given the interdependent nature of its goals.

461. A delegation expressed the expectation that the programme would uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of States, conduct its business in an impartial, objective and fact-based manner and continue its dialogue and cooperation with Member States.

462. Regarding subprogramme 1.A, Human rights mainstreaming, a view was expressed that there was no intergovernmental decision on the exact list of United Nations areas into which human rights would be mainstreamed, and for that reason it would have been more appropriate not to have such a list. Support was expressed for strengthening the human rights perspective in the country teams, and the view was shared that human rights were essential for development and for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Under planned results for 2021, result 2: United Nations country teams integrate human rights approaches into their work (new result), a delegation referred to the mention in paragraph 24.25 of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams “co-leading the United Nations Sustainable Development Group task team on ‘Leaving no one behind’” and expressed the view that it went beyond the mandate of OHCHR.

463. With regard to subprogramme 1.B, Right to development, a delegation commented that the subprogramme was “on the right track” and encouraged its strengthened efforts in that area.

464. In relation to subprogramme 1.C, Research and analysis, under planned results for 2021, specifically result 1: persons with albinism: the challenge of leaving no one behind (result carried over from 2020), a delegation recognized the initiatives that were under way, but expressed doubt as to whether they would reap fruit, considering that albinism was not only connected to the person, but also to health and financial issues, and, in that regard, called for a holistic strategy.

465. With regard to subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights treaty bodies, a view was expressed that addressing racial discrimination should remain a top priority, noting the current protests against racism across the world. In that connection, a delegation expressed support for engagement with civil society and noted with appreciation the increased participation of people of African descent in the work of different human rights mechanisms, in particular those related to young people and cultural institutions. A view was also expressed that it was important to increase opportunities for engagement of the Chairs of the treaty bodies, and measures that would promote further cooperation were welcomed.

466. Furthermore, in relation to subprogramme 2, with regard to national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up, the work of the Office in assisting States, upon their request, in establishing such mechanisms was welcomed. A delegation noted the added value of creating such mechanisms in Geneva, as they had been able to deal with a backlog of reporting obligations and had improved internal communication on human rights.

467. The performance of treaty bodies was stressed, and the view was expressed that the assistance provided to States by OHCHR in the implementation and improvement of national mechanisms, for reporting and follow-up, was crucial for the implementation.

468. With regard to subprogramme 3, Advisory services, technical cooperation and field activities, a delegation expressed the view that the example provided under programme performance in 2019, “enhanced capacity to prevent harm to civilians in the context of military and counterterrorism operations”, was particularly useful in highlighting the importance of human rights integration into United Nations peacekeeping operations, citing the case of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and other missions, including the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel operations. Furthermore, in relation to the work of the Office with peacekeeping operations, a comment was made that it was an “original, operational approach, close to the realities on the ground”, and the view was expressed that such an approach of preventive engagement with the armed forces might constitute a risk for the Organization, but at the same time it seemed promising. The view was expressed that such work was at the centre of the security and development nexus and, without achievements in that area, the 2030 Agenda would remain a dead letter in many countries affected by war or chronic insecurity. Information was sought on the lessons learned by OHCHR and what could be applied in the future regarding work with peacekeeping operations.

469. Furthermore, with regard to subprogramme 3, specifically paragraph 24.75 of the strategy, a delegation noted the phrase “will ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the country-specific special procedures” and commented that the word “thematic”, which had previously been included in that context, had been omitted. In that connection, a question was raised as to the reason for the omission and whether it meant that OHCHR intended to ensure efficient functioning only of country-specific mandates. In addition, in relation to the same paragraph, another delegation expressed the view that country-specific issues and fact-finding missions should not be politicized.

470. With regard to the deliverables under subprogramme 3, the view was expressed that the Security Council was not the right organ to discuss human rights issues, and, in that connection, a request was made to reduce the number of reports that OHCHR was to submit to the Council, as detailed in table 24.8, Subprogramme 3: deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory.

471. Concerning subprogramme 4, Supporting the Human Rights Council, its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms, delegations expressed support for the mandate of the independent expert on persons with albinism, and a delegation advised that, together with other Member States, it would present a resolution during the forty-fourth session of the Council to renew the mandate of the independent expert.

472. With regard to gender-oriented human rights issues, the problem of women being excluded from land tenure and owning property was highlighted. A delegation raised the prevalent problem of sexual exploitation, including breast ironing and sexual mutilation in Africa, noting, however, that progress had been made in that area by OHCHR and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). A delegation called for more progress in the area of women and girls in school, and a suggestion was made that an improved collaborative strategy with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization would help in that regard.

473. A delegation drew attention to a sentence in paragraph 24.111, “Under subprogramme 4, extrabudgetary resources support the work of the special procedures mandate holders, including the preparation of their missions and reports thereon”, and expressed the view that it was inaccurate considering that funding for activities mandated by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council were funded from the United Nations regular budget and that, for that reason, extrabudgetary resources

were to be used for complementary activities. A request for clarification in that regard was made, to avoid the impression that special procedures existed only on the basis of voluntary contributions.

474. A delegation noted the proposed increase in temporary assistance positions in treaty bodies. In that connection, a detailed justification, taking into account existing and new mandates, available resources and workload statistics, was requested. The view was expressed that the request for resources was not aligned with the provisions of General Assembly resolution [68/268](#). The delegation further opined that a report of the Secretary-General could not be used as justification, as there was no agreement with its conclusions. The delegation pointed out that the treaty bodies had already received sufficient additional resources but had used them for non-mandated activities.

Conclusions and recommendations

475. Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly review, at its seventy-fifth session, the programme plan of programme 20, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.

Programme 21 International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees

476. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 21, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 25\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2020/10](#)).

477. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to queries raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

478. Delegations expressed support for the work carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including its work to provide protection, life-saving assistance and durable solutions to the millions of people displaced by conflict and persecution, including those who were stateless, and the comprehensive approach taken by the Office to structural reform, evaluation and its continued drive for improvement. A delegation also expressed broad support for the Office’s efforts to adapt its approach through new initiatives that would promote self-reliance and inclusion of persons of concern in national systems and the establishment of new or expanded modes of assistance and partnerships, such as those with private sector and development actors, to address the complexity of current humanitarian situations.

479. A delegation expressed support for the proposals contained in the programme plan, in particular the observations made on effectiveness, efficiency and changes to the Office, such as: (a) decentralization and regionalization; (b) results-based management; (c) people management and human resources; (d) data and digitalization; (e) United Nations reform; (f) business processes and systems; (g) risk management; and (h) implementation of the global compact on refugees (as reflected in para. 25.9). A delegation highlighted the importance of having adequate capacity

in Geneva that would allow for interaction; as with decentralization and regionalization, the opportunities for local government interactions with the central office were limited.

480. A question was raised concerning the mechanisms used to measure the outcome of the organizational reform in terms of effectiveness and efficiency achieved, and the contribution of the delegation of authority to improving the performance of the work of UNHCR.

481. One delegation was of the view that the reflection of the proposed programme plan in 26 pages was not commensurate with the monetary value of the budget (\$40 million from the regular budget and \$8.8 billion from extrabudgetary resources). The view was expressed that the programme plan should have been subdivided into subprogrammes such as protection, emergency, operations, resettlement, stateless persons and asylum seekers. Another delegation was of the view that the length or brevity of the report should not serve as a measure of the quality of the programme.

482. Delegations expressed support for the Office's commitment to building its programme activities on the basis of the global compact on refugees, the work on refugee education for 2030, the promotion of self-reliance and inclusion of persons of concern in national systems, and the partnerships with private sector and development actors to address the ongoing global migration and refugee crisis.

483. With regard to the global compact on refugees, a delegation noted that, given the legally non-binding nature of the global compact agreement, it would be important for UNHCR to align its activities with the national laws and policies of the affected States. A delegation expressed its appreciation to UNHCR for the successful outcome of the Global Refugee Forum, which was held at the end of 2019. It was highlighted that the Forum served as an important opportunity to secure new pledges and support, in terms of both funding and policy, and that it marked a significant stepping stone in the process of implementing and delivering on the promise of the compact. The view was expressed that greater private sector engagement was key, and some delegations welcomed progress made on that front at the Forum, including support for efforts to increase engagement. A delegation emphasized its support for the continued implementation of the compact and the principles that it represented, in particular longer-term self-reliance of refugees, and sought clarification on how support would be provided for those principles, in terms of opportunities, jobs and access to services, at a time when countries would be under greater economic pressure to rebuild after the COVID-19 pandemic.

484. It was noted that some of the activities and terms used in the programme plan were not based on agreed mandated terms. Some delegations stressed that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967 were the only legal foundation of the international refugee protection regime, and emphasized that they would not support expansion of the list of causes of the movement of refugees that related to, for example, climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters. It was highlighted that there was no universally recognized scientific evidence for the correlation between climate change and displacement, as well as the predominance of environmental factors in displacement, and that such a relation was not recognized in the global compact on refugees. A delegation expressed the view that the first part of paragraph 25.7 and the fifth paragraph of the "Foreword" section should be deleted, as the issues described on "the establishment of appropriate legal mechanisms and protection gaps that would arise as a result of population movements caused by climate change and disasters" were not part of the mandate of UNHCR. The view was also expressed that another option would be to revise the language on the basis of paragraph 58 of General Assembly resolution [74/130](#) to reflect the fact that "the challenges associated with climate change and environmental degradation continue to affect the operations of the Office of the High Commissioner and the

assistance it provides to vulnerable populations of concern across the globe, particularly in the least developed countries. In this regard, the Office will continue to address such challenges in its work, within its mandate, and in consultation with national authorities and in cooperation with competent agencies in its operations". A delegation expressed support for any language that would address the root cause of migration or displacement and highlighted that, if conflict was rooted in climate change, it would be logical to reflect that in the programme plan.

485. Some delegations expressed support for UNHCR assistance to communities generously hosting refugees and other persons of concern. A delegation remarked that developed countries should honour their commitments by increasing their assistance to UNHCR and refugee-hosting countries. It was also stated that the international community should focus on solving underlying problems such as conflict and poverty in order to create conditions for the return of refugees and help countries of origin to embark on the journey to achieve lasting peace, stability, development and prosperity. The delegation stressed that the problem of refugees should be guided by the principle of objectivity, neutrality and non-politicization in order to safeguard the credibility of the international refugee protection system.

486. Concerns were raised by other delegations regarding the lack of reference in the programme plan to the support that UNHCR provided to host countries. Delegations expressed the view that more attention should be given to a fair and balanced burden-sharing, taking into account the different capacities and resources of host countries. Clarification was sought on the partnership between UNHCR and the World Bank referred to in paragraph 25.30. A delegation expressed its reservation about the benefits of cash loans provided to refugees and sought clarification on the results achieved as a consequence of that initiative.

487. Under the section on mandates and background, clarification was sought by one delegation on the definition of the term "new ways of working" used in paragraph 25.8. Confirmation was sought on whether the programme narratives encompassed all funding sources. The importance of ensuring that the programme plan provided an overarching view of the activities of the Office, irrespective of the funding source, was stressed.

488. Under the section on objectives, the view was expressed that the objectives were not defined in terms of results but in terms of a means to achieve the result. A delegation emphasized the important work of the Office as the main international institution providing protection, life-saving assistance and durable solutions to refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons, while another delegation emphasized that the protection of refugees should be focused on their right to develop, and sought clarification on the reasons for the change in the objective of the Office, compared with the objective approved by the General Assembly in the context of the programme plan for 2020 (see [A/74/6 \(Sect. 25\)](#), para. 25.16).

489. Under the section on strategy, clarification was sought on the progress made on the ongoing efforts by some States to end the detention of refugees and asylum seekers or to pilot alternatives to detention, in line with the Beyond Detention strategy of UNHCR, which was referred to in paragraph 25.12. It was acknowledged that the issue affected both refugees and host countries. Clarification was also sought on the reference to the promotion and dissemination of refugee law and protection principles, in particular through the training of government officials and staff of non-governmental agencies, as reflected in the same paragraph. It was emphasized that the different preoccupations of affected countries should be taken into account in the content of the curriculum.

490. Under the section on external factors (referred to in para. 25.16), clarification was sought on the type of cooperation undertaken with other entities and the

engagement of a broad range of actors, including those beyond the traditional humanitarian sphere. A delegation stressed the importance of having measures in place to monitor and measure performance of those actors, as there were risks involved, and further clarification was sought on the measures put in place by the Office to monitor their performance.

491. Under the section on programme performance in 2019, a delegation commended UNHCR on its performance that year to protect, assist and seek solutions for refugees and other persons of concern. One delegation highlighted that the programme performance in 2019 was well presented compared with other programmes, as it provided information on refugees globally and was a broader reflection of the work of UNHCR compared with other cases in which the presentations were narrower and did not portray the work of the programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

492. **The Committee noted with appreciation the irreplaceable contribution of UNHCR to the protection of an estimated 79.4 million refugees and other persons of concern throughout the world and in pursuance of solutions to their plight.**

493. **The Committee took note of progress made in support of a comprehensive refugee response model thanks to the implementation of the global compact on refugees, as affirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 73/151 in December 2018.**

494. **The Committee expressed its expectation that, as an outcome of the first Global Refugee Forum, held in December 2019, UNHCR would actually build new partnerships to expand the inclusion of refugees.**

495. **The Committee concurred that resettlement was one of the lasting solutions to the problem and encouraged UNHCR to continue its efforts to increase the number of countries willing to accept refugee resettlement.**

496. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 21, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:**

A. Proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance for 2019

Overall orientation

Mandates and background

Paragraph 25.7

Replace the first and second sentences with the following:

“The challenges associated with climate change and environmental degradation continue to affect the operations of UNHCR and the assistance it provides to vulnerable populations of concern across the globe. In the coming period, the Office will continue, according to its mandate, to explore and seek to highlight the relevant legal frameworks and protection gaps that may result from displacement affected or aggravated by the adverse effect of disasters and climate change.”

Programme 22 Palestine refugees

497. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 22, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 26)).

498. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

499. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work done under the programme by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It was noted that the work of UNRWA was essential for stability in the region, and some delegations indicated that they had increased their contribution to the programme and their support to Palestinian refugees. One delegation underscored its support for the rights of the Palestinian people and a two-State solution.

500. It was noted that, because the programme had been drafted and compiled early in 2020, there was no mention of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the document. While appreciating the comments made by the representative of UNRWA regarding the work that the Agency had done and would do in relation to the matter, one delegation recommended that the programme be updated across the board to reflect the adjustments made because of the pandemic. One delegation enquired as to how the programmes would be implemented in 2021, given the Agency's struggles in recent years owing to insufficient funding. With regard to the prioritization of programmes, one delegation asked how UNRWA would deal with the new challenges, given that the planning assumptions were no longer applicable. The view was expressed that UNRWA had adapted quickly and well to the pandemic and the Agency's continued support and advocacy for a decent standard of living, in spite of the pandemic, were welcomed. The fundraising efforts by UNRWA to broaden its donor base further to achieve sustainable levels of funding were welcomed as well.

501. The view was expressed that the objectives of the programme were focused on large-scale social assistance and that the logic of sustainable and self-sufficient capacity-building for refugees (such as in the form of job-generating activities, vocational training and encouragement of productive investment) could be further demonstrated outside microfinance activities, the results of which could also be more detailed.

502. With regard to subprogramme 1, Palestine refugee rights under international law are protected and promoted, clarification was sought regarding the extent to which gender, noted as a strategic objective, could be more mainstreamed. A delegation underlined the importance of core services concerning education. Another delegation noted that there was little information on compliance audits regarding the distribution of funds, while there were frequent indications of corruption in Palestine, and that that could constitute a relevant indicator of the effectiveness of the management of the aid provided by UNRWA.

503. Information was sought with regard to paragraph 26.38 of the proposed programme budget for 2021 (A/75/6 (Sect. 26)), regarding subprogramme 2, Palestine refugee health is protected and the disease burden is reduced, in particular on how the programme would contribute to achieving the subprogramme's objective in the context of the pandemic.

504. Regarding subprogramme 3, School-aged children complete quality, equitable and inclusive basic education, result 1, learning side by side: inclusive education,

clarification was sought as to why the performance measure shown in figure 26.VIII, percentage of students identified as having a disability who receive support, was decreasing from 53 per cent in 2020 to 45 per cent in 2021. The view was expressed that that was not a very proactive goal.

505. The view was expressed that the planned results for subprogramme 4, Palestine refugee capabilities are strengthened for increased livelihood opportunities, and subprogramme 5, Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of food, shelter and environmental health, seemed redundant.

Conclusions and recommendations

506. **The Committee expressed its high appreciation for the essential work of UNRWA in alleviating the plight of the Palestine refugees, in particular women and children, pending a fair and long-overdue resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees, and commended the staff of the Agency for carrying out its work under exceptionally difficult political and financial conditions, and contributing to the stability of the region and to the viability of the two-State solution.**

507. **The Committee noted with strong appreciation the efforts to provide better and more inclusive education to school-aged children, including elementary and preparatory education, and recommended that the General Assembly encourage UNRWA to further focus on that important matter.**

508. **The Committee stressed the importance of continuing to mainstream protection and gender into its operations and to integrate a gender perspective into its operational activities, deliverables and results as appropriate.**

509. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 22, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.**

Programme 23 Humanitarian assistance

510. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 27\)](#) and [A/75/6 \(Sect. 27\)/Corr.1](#)).

511. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

512. Delegations expressed broad support for the work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, with a delegation highlighting in particular the focus on improving humanitarian policy, emergency response, humanitarian access, the humanitarian and peace nexus, the enhanced Global Humanitarian Overview, improved disaster risk reduction and anticipatory action and preparedness that would make the humanitarian response system more effective, faster, be of better value, save more lives and would pre-empt suffering by shifting from a reactive to a proactive approach.

513. A delegation acknowledged the efforts made by the Secretariat in improving the programme narrative, taking into account the comments provided at the fifty-ninth session of the Committee; however, it also noted that there remained a lack of consistency between the language used in the document and the agreed language of

relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions. In that regard, the delegation emphasized the need to ensure that the language included in the document represented agreed language approved in various resolutions. The examples provided by the delegation of “controversial connotations” included: (a) the use of the word “marginalized” in paragraph 27.3, which, it expressed the view, would be better represented by “most vulnerable”; and (b) the use of the terms “inclusivity”, “other diversity dimensions”, “specific population groups” and “enhanced approach” in paragraph 27.33, which the delegation considered to be controversial and not universally agreed terms.

514. Clarifications were sought regarding the mandates for some of the activities reflected in the programme. A delegation noted that some of the activities were not mandated and provided a number of examples, which included: (a) the use of the phrase “advocate the rights of people in need” in paragraph 27.7; (b) the reference to the work of the Office, which “supported the development of strategies to overcome access constraints in relevant operations”, in paragraph 27.22, and the example cited in the same paragraph on South Sudan; (c) the programme performance information reported in 2019 under subprogramme 2, Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response, which referred to its work on increased availability of resources combating sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian crises; (d) the reference made in paragraph 27.50 to the “development of joint recommendations on how displacement can be featured in national disaster risk reduction strategies and plans and the production of guidance on how to reduce disaster displacement risk and strengthen resilience”; and (e) the use of the word “major” in the sentence ending “and timely United Nations response to major and complex emergencies” in paragraph 27.102.

515. In reference to paragraph 27.5, delegations expressed concerns regarding the impact that the COVID-19 would have on the operations of the Office, especially in the field, and on the programme plans for 2020 and 2021. It was noted that humanitarian and health-care workers faced a new risk calculus, planning requirements and challenges to access, particularly amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Clarification was sought regarding the actions the Office was taking to address the unique access challenges amid the border, curfew and other access restrictions related to the pandemic and to overcome supply chain challenges, and the contingency plans the Office had developed, noting that the pandemic had had a negative impact on its partners and staffing.

516. A delegation sought clarification on the reference to “and facilitate sustainable solutions” in paragraph 27.7, and the term “human vulnerability” in paragraph 27.9. The view was expressed that some of the terms used were too broad and a number of examples were provided, which included the text in paragraph 27.7, where the delegation was of the view that the sentence

To fulfil its mandate, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will continue to support Member States in coordinating effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors, in order to alleviate human suffering in disasters and complex emergencies; advocate the rights of people in need; promote preparedness and prevention; and facilitate sustainable solutions.

should be revised as follows:

To fulfil its mandate, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would continue to support Member States in coordinating effective and principled humanitarian assistance in partnership with national and international humanitarian and other relevant actors, respecting the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, in order to alleviate human suffering in natural disasters and complex emergencies; promote preparedness and prevention.

517. Regarding paragraph 27.12, a delegation sought clarification on how the Office was working to establish functional and realistic coordination of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. Clarification was also sought on the lessons learned and value-added areas and tools, such as cross-sectoral co-planning, needs analyses and civil-military coordination, which could be used for further and more regular integration and collaboration. Similar references to collaboration were noted in paragraphs 27.20 and 27.101.

518. In paragraph 27.20, it was mentioned that the subprogramme would identify policy and programmatic solutions and best practice and innovative concepts that should be disseminated widely to inform and guide policy, operational decisions and crisis management. A delegation cautioned that, when discussing innovative concepts, it was not always known what those innovative concepts would be, so it was important to take into account the considerations of Member States before disseminating those innovative concepts widely to guide policy.

519. Another delegation urged the Office to maintain its leadership in the field of humanitarian access, which it highlighted was a core element of the mandate. The same delegation sought clarification on how the Office would ensure that the minimum package of services on access was responsive to the needs of its partners, as mentioned in paragraph 27.22. In that same paragraph, where it was mentioned that the Office supported the development of strategies to overcome access constraints in relevant operations, another delegation questioned what the mandate of the Office was for those activities, and sought further details on the example citing South Sudan and what had been done there. In reference to paragraph 27.23, clarification was sought on what the numerous contributing factors were that facilitated access to people in need.

520. With regard to result 2: how technology may shape the humanitarian operating environment, and paragraph 27.25, clarification was sought regarding the ways in which technology could shape the humanitarian environment, why technology was a priority for 2021 and how the specific gaps in humanitarian responses could effectively benefit from new technology approaches. Regarding the performance measures set out in table 27.2, the view was expressed that the phrase “increased use of strategic technologies by humanitarian actors in 2021” was too broad and general, and clarification was sought on the plan to measure increased use of technology by humanitarian actors. Concerns were expressed regarding the references to how technology could be used to make humanitarian action more effective and efficient (see para. 27.28) and the use of mobile phones and social media tools to enhance activities (see para. 27.29), especially for the most vulnerable populations, who do not have access to those technologies.

521. Regarding subprogramme 2, Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response, a delegation expressed its view that the reference to the Central Emergency Relief Fund in paragraph 27.35 should have read Central Emergency Response Fund. Regarding planned result 1: increased use of humanitarian funding for early action, and the activities mentioned in paragraph 27.42, a delegation expressed its view that, while innovative approaches to addressing needs early was encouraged, pooled funds should first and foremost remain available to respond to urgent needs stemming from sudden onset disasters and critical gaps in resources to address needs related to underfunded responses. Some delegations welcomed the new result 2: an enhanced Global Humanitarian Overview, and the focus on data transparency, joint needs analysis and response prioritization. Clarification was sought on how the Office planned to improve the engagement of other United Nations entities, which have their own specific mandates, appeals and response strategies. Clarification was also sought regarding the steps taken by the Office to help improve the collection and sharing of data across clusters in a crisis zone and the analysis of data that would enable the improved

prioritization and identification of groups or emergencies that would have the most urgent and unmet needs, as alluded to in paragraphs 27.44 and 27.87.

522. Under subprogramme 3, Natural disaster risk reduction, a delegation expressed the view that the strategy of the subprogramme, as set out in paragraph 27.50, contained too many broad results, which made it difficult to comprehend the work of the Office. Clarification was sought by a delegation on the work undertaken to promote the all-of-society approach referred to in paragraph 27.50. Clarification and examples were also sought on the “impactful disaster risk reduction policies and interventions to be developed” referred to in paragraph 27.52.

523. Regarding subprogramme 4, Emergency support services, a delegation expressed its doubts regarding the legality of the engagement between humanitarian and armed actors referred to in paragraph 27.66. The same delegation expressed its view that the term “sudden onset” used in relation to emergencies and crises referred to in paragraphs 27.73, 27.85 and 27.88 should be revised to “sudden and slow onset”.

524. Under subprogramme 5, Humanitarian emergency information and advocacy, a delegation sought clarification on the definition of the types of audiences referred to in paragraph 27.82. The delegation also sought clarification on the definition of “humanitarian users” in paragraph 27.88 and the phrase “use of shared facilitates when safe, practical and in line with the humanitarian principles” in paragraph 27.106. A delegation expressed its view that the term “disasters and ... emergencies” used in paragraphs 27.83, 27.85 and 27.99 should be revised to “natural disasters and complex emergencies”. Also in paragraph 27.99, the view was expressed that the word “rapid” should be replaced with “timely”.

525. It was noted that results 1 and 2 reported under subprogramme 5, Humanitarian emergency information and advocacy, were similar in nature. The view was expressed that, given the limited number of results in the format, it would be good to avoid overlap in presenting results and show different aspects of the work of the subprogrammes.

Conclusions and recommendations

526. **Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly review, at its seventy-fifth session, the programme plan of programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.**

Programme 24 Global communications

527. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 24, Global communications, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 28\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan, by sectoral, functional and regional bodies, contained in conference room paper [E/AC.51/2020/10](#).

528. The Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to queries raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

529. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the programme and the efforts made to raise awareness of the work of the United Nations and promote

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A delegation expressed strong support for the work of the United Nations information centres, including outreach at the local and regional levels in coordination with the resident coordinator system, which was key to global communication.

530. Some delegations emphasized the importance of multilingualism and encouraged the Department to continue to ensure equal treatment for all six official languages as a matter of principle and necessity, including through making tools and content available on different platforms (e.g., press releases on United Nations meetings) in those languages. A delegation reiterated a concern that it had expressed at the fifty-ninth session, namely that the statistics presented in the proposed programme plan for the results achieved over recent years (for example: the number of visits to United Nations websites, the increase in followers on social media or the cost sheets provided) provided limited information because the data was not disaggregated for each of the six official languages. The view was expressed that the data pertaining to the financing of United Nations news services should also be disaggregated by official language, to provide an objective assessment of how language parity was being observed.

531. Some delegations expressed their support for the initiative of the Secretary-General to strengthen the ability of the Department to deliver on its new global communications strategy, which was considered audience-centred and solutions-focused and tailored to improve communication, coordination and the production of new content. The point was made that the strategy would allow the Organization to reform and modernize its communications to better address new challenges. Clarification was sought on the legislative mandate for the new global communications strategy of the Secretary-General. It was emphasized that the strategy should also take into account regional and subregional requirements. Appreciation was expressed for the proposed increase in staffing resources to support the functioning of the webcast system to translate metadata into the six official languages of the United Nations, which had been a concern raised in prior years. It was observed that resuming the webcast in its traditional format would contribute to fostering language parity, which was one of the primary principles of United Nations information and communication activities.

532. A delegation sought clarification on the efforts undertaken by the Department to diversify funding streams, including through transparent public-private partnerships, as well as other initiatives that would help address programmatic and resource challenges.

533. It was noted that the proposed programme plan did not reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its long-term effects, owing to the issuance of the report in March 2020. Clarification was sought on how the programme would be updated to respond to the impact of and emerging challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including misinformation and the work of the Department for 2021. Clarification was also sought on the extent to which the proposed programme plan had taken into account the global economic recession that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and its long-term effects.

534. A delegation observed that the “Verified” initiative to combat misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, launched by the Secretary-General at the end of May 2020, did not feature in the proposed programme plan. It was recalled that, according to information provided during the informal briefing of the Committee on Information on 5 May, the “Verified” campaign was viewed as a priority media project for the immediate and near future, considering its topical nature and the far-reaching consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretary-General was requested to provide comprehensive data on the initiative. Clarification was sought on the financing of the campaign, whether its costs were defrayed by external entities and the details of the parties contracted for its implementation (including: the IKEA Foundation; Luminate; and Purpose). It was emphasized that decisions on any financial sponsorship

by external entities should be made in advance, in consultation with Member States. Clarification was sought as to whether the Department had allocated special funds to have the “Verified” campaign adapted to all United Nations official languages.

535. In the overall orientation of the programme, under Strategy and external factors for 2021, clarification was sought on the meaning of the new phrase “capturing people’s imaginations” (para. 28.4). Questions were raised as to the reasons why the Department had highlighted only its approach on the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (para. 28.11), and integrated only a gender perspective into its programme activities, deliverables and results, in addition to using gender equality as a guiding principle (para. 28.16), considering that there were other elements, such as equitable geographical distribution, that could guide the proposed programme plan, and as to how the Department tailored its work to its clients and audiences. A request was made that examples of how to implement equitable geographical distribution in future programme plans for the Department be shared.

536. It was observed that the same objective had been used for all three subprogrammes in the proposed programme plan, and clarification was sought on the reasons why the objective had not been reflected as a cross-cutting goal, and on whether detailed and specific objectives could be maintained for each of the subprogrammes to reflect their unique work. In addition, reference was made to the noticeable change in the objective and focus of the programme as compared with previous reports, including the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019,³ in which “The Department seeks to promote global awareness and enhanced understanding of the work and issues of the United Nations by providing accurate, impartial, comprehensive, balanced, coherent, timely and relevant information” had been included in the overall orientation section. It was noted that part of that text was reflected in the strategy for subprogramme 2, News services (para. 28.36). Clarification was sought as to the reasons why elements of the text considered to be important, such as “impartial”, “comprehensive” and “coherent”, had been removed.

537. A delegation expressed support for the strategy and activities of subprogramme 1, Strategic communications services, including the increase in the number of visits to United Nations web pages (para. 28.20), as well as the focus on the decade of action and climate change (programme performance in 2019: individual engagement in climate action), and recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. Clarification was sought on the Sustainable Development Goals Media Compact in 2021 (see also para. 28.20), on whether its full membership was available and where it could be found, and whether there was a standard agreement or terms of reference for the interactions between the Department and the members of the Compact, and for the authorized use of United Nations logos and identity materials.

538. Clarification was sought on the variance between the number of views (24 million) of web pages pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals (para. 28.20) and the performance measures for 2019 (16.8 million visitors) and 2020 (17.6 million visitors), reflected in table 28.2. Delegations welcomed the growth in the number of views of United Nations websites, from 14.1 million in 2015 to 21.4 million in 2019, as reflected in figure 28.III (performance measure: page views of United Nations websites). However, the view was expressed that there was still room for improvement, when compared with non-United Nations websites, such as Facebook (with 46 million views/visits per month).

539. With regard to subprogramme 2, News services, in particular result 2: multimedia content at a glimpse (new result), appreciation was expressed with regard to the initiative to develop a unified information technology platform that would

³ A/72/6 (Sect. 28), para. 28.3.

enable visitors to access materials from a single website and thus dramatically enhance user experience. It was noted that the initiative was in line with the views expressed by members of the Committee. Clarification was sought on how the unified platform would operate. In addition, clarification was sought on the term “new media” (para. 28.41), in the context of cooperation with Member States.

540. A delegation welcomed the strategy of subprogramme 3, Outreach and knowledge services, and expressed support for its implementation, including the advocacy efforts with a broad and international range of academic institutions, students and educators, the creative community and civil society (para. 28.50). The efforts undertaken to broaden the geographical and demographic diversity of partners (para. 28.51) were welcomed, and a suggestion was made that a performance assessment of the programme be carried out in that regard.

541. It was noted that new partnerships would be initiated to increase knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals and spark action with new audiences, including young people, in particular on climate change, education and gender equality (para. 28.55). Clarification was sought as to the reasons behind the choice of those three Goals in particular, while the equal importance of all the Sustainable Development Goals was recalled.

542. A clarification was sought on how planned result 1: leveraging partnerships with Tokyo 2020 and Expo 2020 Dubai for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (result carried over from 2020) could be reformulated or adjusted to highlight support for the implementation of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, considering that many other global events had been postponed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusions and recommendations

543. **The Committee expressed appreciation for the important work carried out by the Department of Global Communications to become more strategic and more integrated through the continued modernization of its working practices, improved planning and the development of the new global communication strategy for the United Nations.**

544. **The Committee welcomed, where appropriate, the engagement of commercial entities with the United Nations system but noted that it was inappropriate to single out the contribution of individual commercial entities or their nationalities in programme plans.**

545. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 24, Global Communications, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:**

Subprogramme 1

Strategic communications services

Strategy

Paragraph 28.20

In the first sentence, replace “the Sustainable Development Goals” with “development”.

Programme 25

Management and support services

546. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 25, Management and support services, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 29A\)](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 29B\)](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 29C\)](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 29E\)](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 29F\)](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 29G\)](#) and [A/75/6 \(Sect. 29G\)/Corr.1](#)).

547. The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, the Acting Assistant Secretary-General, Office of Information and Communications Technology, and other representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

548. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the important role of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, the Department of Operational Support and the Office of Information and Communications Technology in supporting the work of the Organization, including on delivering as one, and in ensuring business continuity for the Organization, adapting on short notice to overcome the numerous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing to deliver the services that were essential for the United Nations to operate. Given the expectation that the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management would be able to provide technical support for official meetings, a delegation expressed surprise that, owing to the lack of interpretation services, the Organization had been unable to continue the conduct of such meetings in an appropriate setting and requested insight into that matter.

549. Several delegations voiced their support for the vital role of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance in implementing the reform agenda of the Secretary-General throughout the Organization, including management reform, in particular with regard to the design, development and implementation of the new system of delegation of authority. A delegation also expressed its strong support of the Secretary-General's vision of a more agile, effective, transparent, accountable, decentralized and people-focused United Nations, and the crucial role of the Department in helping to realize that vision. The delegation sought to hear how management reform had helped the United Nations to deliver on its mandates and programmes, in particular how it had been dealing with the pandemic, and welcomed the focus for the following year on innovation and business transformation fostering a culture of continuous learning and accountability so as to make the United Nations a more results-oriented organization. The same delegation emphasized the importance of having the United Nations workforce represent the diversity of the people it served, highlighted the work the Department had done in streamlining and consolidating the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and expressed regret that the General Assembly had not yet endorsed the amendments thereto. A delegation expressed appreciation for the Secretariat-wide efforts on disability inclusion, including the United Nations Disabilities Inclusion Strategy, while another delegation questioned the added value of the General Assembly resolutions on disability inclusion.

550. With regard to the Department of Operational Support, a delegation welcomed the continued progress made in delivering on the Secretary-General's reform vision and the Department's commitment to operational excellence. Explanation was sought on how the implementation of management reform had helped the United Nations to deliver on its mandates and respond to the recent pandemic. Another delegation

voiced its support for the focus on the United Nations getting the right people to be at the right place at the right time and reducing recruitment and onboarding timelines and welcomed the focus on reducing the timeline for the reimbursement of troop- and police-contributing countries. Efforts to transform the Secretariat through the implementation of a flexible workplace were welcomed, and information was sought on the lessons learned over the past few months.

551. Delegations drew attention to the terminology related to the equitable geographical representation of Member States and geographical distribution across all departments and offices, as well as at all levels of the Secretariat. A delegation emphasized the importance of ensuring equitable geographical representation, expressed the view that the matter should be a guiding principle in human resources policies and work and indicated that it would like to see more efforts made in that regard. Several delegations questioned the inclusion of the concept of “geographical and regional diversity”, as reflected in several places, including in the foreword for the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. Information was sought on the legislative mandate for and the definition of the term. Information was also sought on the mandate for the establishment of benchmarks for augmenting regional diversity mentioned in the section on the strategy and external factors for 2021 (para. 29A.7), as well as clarification on why the Secretariat had carried out initiatives lacking in Member State support, while having a clear mandate to ensure the equitable geographical representation of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and equitable distribution within the Secretariat. Questions were also raised with regard to the use of the phrase “gender and diversity perspective” in the subsection on the strategy and external factors for 2021 and the term “geographical distribution” in the strategy subsection under component 1, Human resources support, of subprogramme 1, Support operations, for the Department of Operational Support, and information was again sought on the legislative mandate for the terms used. Another delegation welcomed the focus on the equitable geographical representation of Member States in the Secretariat, on the understanding that the terminology used with regard to diversity was in line with what had been intergovernmentally agreed. Another delegation commented that geographical representation should not be considered less important than other elements of human resource policies.

552. On deliverables, a delegation voiced the matter of the presentation of deliverables without numbers in some cases and the need for Member States to discuss the usefulness of and standards on the quantification of deliverables. The delegation highlighted the difficulties involved in seeing important programmes present a majority of their deliverables in a way that was not as comprehensive as in previous programme narratives or budgets.

553. A delegation expressed the view that the list of legislative mandates included for the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance warranted a closer look, so as to ascertain that all relevant mandates had been properly reflected, especially when compared with previous programme plans. In that regard, it was suggested that the full list of mandates for the entire programme, including its subprogrammes, be incorporated at the programme level for greater clarity.

554. A delegation asked for an explanation as to why the Department was planning to conduct only one self-evaluation exercise, considering the importance of the Department.

555. On component 1, Enterprise resource planning solution, of subprogramme 1, Enterprise resource planning solution, services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, management services, and management evaluation component of the administration of justice, for the same Department, a delegation indicated that it looked forward to the closing of the

Umoja project by 31 December 2020 and to receiving the final report, as decided by the Assembly in its resolution 74/263 (part XVII). Noting the post-deployment stabilization expected during 2021 and proposals for mainstreaming the project under the component, clarification was sought on the mandate to continue to implement the Umoja project. The delegation also expressed its expectation that future discussion would be focused solely on the modalities for and transfer of its maintenance to the Office of Information and Communications Technology, given that the Umoja project would be fully deployed and implemented by 31 December 2020. Another delegation sought clarification on how the Department planned to measure efficiency gains generated by the more efficient and transparent management of the Organization's financial, human and physical resources resulting from the deployment of Umoja Extension 2 (para. 29A.15). Another delegation asked how the lessons learned from the implementation of Umoja were being used in the implementation of Umoja Extension 2. Another delegation supported the proposed resources for the Umoja project, noting that enhanced decision-making and better use of data were crucial. Noting the technological solution, mentioned under the component, of having one standard tool to analyse the programme budget and the peacekeeping budgets, another delegation sought the view of the Secretariat with regard to the change that had been implemented of having a different framework for the budgets. The same delegation asked for information on the specific continuous improvements and enhancements indicated as a performance measure of the component in 2021. Noting that 19 of 133 Umoja Extension 2 processes were scheduled for completion in 2020, information was sought on the current status of the processes and whether it was in accordance with the original plan.

556. A delegation made reference to a number of new tools that would be introduced, such as the integrated platform that would assimilate financial data from different systems, online tools accessible to Member States to facilitate deliberations on budgetary matters, a new online policy portal on human resources policies and a single management data platform with data from multiple sources. Additional information was sought on the new tools and whether there were any duplications with existing tools such as Umoja.

557. Concern was raised about the changes made in the objectives of the components of subprogrammes. In particular, regarding component 2, Services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, of the same subprogramme, it was emphasized that it would be unfair to expect that the secretariat that serviced the Committees would be responsible in any way for effective and efficient deliberations and decision-making by Member States in those bodies. On the performance measure on videoconference usage by the Committees to demonstrate the work of the component in 2019 towards the attainment of its objective, questions were raised on the increase in the use of videoconferencing from 2018 to 2019.

558. On component 3, Secretariat of the Headquarters Committee on Contracts and the Headquarters Property Survey Board, and specifically with regard to the programme performance in 2019 on best value for money, questions were raised as to how all of the United Nations procurement principles were being respected, on the premise that achieving cost avoidance did not necessarily mean that the Department was upholding those principles on equal grounds. Clarification was also sought on the high amount of cost avoidance in 2018 compared with other years.

559. On component 1, Finance, of subprogramme 2, Programme planning, finance and budget, for the same Department, further explanation was sought on the new online Status of Contributions portal to be made available to Member States, highlighted as a planned result in 2021 under the component (para. 29A.83).

560. On component 2, Field operations finance, of the same subprogramme, a delegation asked about the impact on the work of the component of having two different frameworks for the budgets of peacekeeping missions and the budgets of special political missions.

561. On component 3, Programme planning and budgeting, a delegation indicated that the reference to extrabudgetary resources should be kept in the objective of the component. On the planned results for 2019, which were not fully achieved, as evidenced by the fact that 97.4 per cent of reports were submitted by the documentation deadline as compared with the target of 100 per cent, the same delegation also expressed appreciation for the presentation of what had worked and what needed to be improved. The delegation also expressed appreciation for the planned result for 2021 of having enhanced the accessibility of budgetary information in a structured and automated way.

562. On component 1, Global strategy and policy, of subprogramme 3, Human resources, a delegation commented on the need for more focus on equitable geographical representation under the strategy, as seen in the case of gender representation, beyond the work done through outreach, so that results could be seen.

563. On subprogramme 4, Business transformation and accountability, a delegation requested elaboration on the work of the subprogramme to support the achievement of mandated programmatic results by training all entities in results-based management (para. 29.A.159). Clarification was sought on whether “results-based” meant “performance-based”. On progress made with regard to strengthening accountability, an explanation was sought by another delegation on how the Secretariat measured efficiency gains stemming from the increased delegation of authority, which, in its view, would represent a better performance measure for the subprogramme than the number of direct delegations from the Secretary-General.

564. On accountability and internal management, a delegation emphasized the importance of effectiveness, efficiency and accountability in the United Nations system and that, in order to achieve those elements, budgetary performance measures and internal controls would need to be applied in the United Nations system. The delegation requested more information in that regard in the report of the Department.

565. On the Department of Operational Support, under component 1, Human resources support, of subprogramme 1, Support operations, and with regard to the single point of entry for questions on human resources issues and support, a delegation made reference to report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on human resources management that highlighted issues with regard to the career development of staff entering through the young professionals programme and sought an explanation on work done to make improvements in that area. While voicing support for the use of digital and online platforms for recruitment purposes, another delegation enquired as to whether there would be options in countries where digital technologies were not accessible. On innovative instruments to streamline recruitment procedures, a question was raised as to whether administrative decisions would be handled by artificial intelligence.

566. Under component 3, Health-care management and occupational safety and health, of the same subprogramme, clarifications were sought with regard to table 29B.7, on the performance measures for planned result 1 for 2021, improvement in survival of peacekeepers after injury, through integrated trauma care (result carried over from 2020). In particular, a delegation sought confirmation that the course held in Morocco in February 2020, as referenced for 2020, had been on that subject matter.

567. With regard to planned result 2 for 2021 under subprogramme 3, Special activities, describing arrangements with key partners for both offering and receiving

operational support assistance in the context of special situations, a delegation requested additional information on the nature of the arrangements being made.

568. The importance of procurement from developing countries and countries with economies in transition was emphasized by several delegations. The Department of Operational Support and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance were encouraged to continue to explore additional innovative ways to promote procurement from those countries, both at Headquarters and in field offices, and the recommendation was made that more information be provided in that regard in future reports. A delegation expressed full support for the outreach activities to local and small businesses specifically from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

569. In reference to paragraph 29C.10 of the report of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, it was noted that the management dashboards that would be developed by the Office would provide senior managers in the Secretariat with timely information on gender parity in their department or office, so as to enable them to make more informed decisions on staff recruitment. In this regard, a delegation sought information why the Office was unable to create similar management dashboards on the geographical representation of staff members in order to assist in addressing the geographical imbalance from the application stage.

570. Another delegation sought clarification as to whether the self-service analytics products mentioned in paragraph 29C.38 were intended to follow a guideline from Headquarters to ensure that they were compatible with the cross-cutting or overall information requirements of the Organization. It was pointed out that, even if the production of self-service analytics was appropriate for United Nations entities locally, guaranteeing more transparency through them could only be achieved if the information being produced or analysed was somehow compatible with what was required by the Office of Information and Communications Technology or other areas of the Secretariat. In reference to paragraph 29C.40, the same delegation questioned the roll-out of the different platforms, including SharePoint Online, Teams and OneDrive, and expressed concern regarding the production or use of those platforms for the proper development of intergovernmental meetings during the period, both in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the future, taking into account the fact that not all Member States could use the same platforms. Questions were raised as to what the Office was doing to ensure that all Member States could use the same platforms and as to the measures taken to overcome dependence on external platforms in favour of United Nations proprietary products.

571. Delegations welcomed the system-wide efforts aimed at preventing and responding to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and the focus on a victim-centred approach. Stressing that sexual exploitation and abuse had no place in the Organization, delegations welcomed the work done by the Office on applications to support the prevention thereof and reporting thereon. Deep concern was expressed about the growing level of cybersecurity threats and cyberattacks against the United Nations. The importance of strengthening cybersecurity was highlighted, as cybersecurity remained a top priority for management to ensure increased protection of United Nations resources and data.

572. A delegation sought an explanation on the use of an artificial intelligence-based support service for Secretariat staff and questioned what it really meant for the United Nations. The same delegation sought clarification regarding the vacant post of Chief Information Technology Officer and requested an update on the status of recruitment for the post, taking into consideration the importance of the position and the need for strong guidance.

573. With regard to Administration, Geneva, several delegations expressed their support for the proposed programme plan for 2021 and expressed the hope that the United Nations Office at Geneva would continue to deliver its services efficiently and effectively. A delegation enquired about the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and what steps had been put in place in relation to COVID-19 to continue to provide services. Information was sought on the efforts being made to find solutions to common problems across entities and whether there was a coherent approach to sharing best practices. Another delegation welcomed the work done to provide high-quality services and the continuous improvements and innovations in the provision of services.

574. With regard to planned result 2 for 2021, improving staff payroll, under subprogramme 1, Programme planning, finance and budget, a delegation requested that the Office take proactive action by developing tools that would limit payroll errors up front and focus on having more accurate input instead of applying corrective actions at the end of the payroll process. With regard to subprogramme 2, Human resources management, several delegations called for more steps and initiatives to be taken to improve geographical representation in the Organization. A delegation reiterated and emphasized the importance of ensuring equitable geographical representation, expressed the view that that should be a guiding principle in human resources policies and work and indicated that it would like to see more efforts made in that regard. Another delegation stated that the United Nations was an inclusive workplace, made up of people from different countries, where people felt welcomed and respected. The same delegation sought information on how that diverse nature would be reflected in the staffing in Geneva. With regard to subprogramme 3, Support services, another delegation commended the online booking tool and enquired about how it was connected to other global tools that were developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology. Another delegation recommended that, if the online booking tool was successful in Geneva, it should be consolidated with other travel tools used system-wide. Reference was made to the phasing out of single-use plastic at Headquarters in New York, and information was sought on what could be done to stop the use of single-use plastic elsewhere.

575. A delegation recalled General Assembly resolution [74/252](#), in which the Assembly had noted that [ST/AI/416](#) of 26 April 1996, which regulated the use of United Nations premises, had been updated and superseded at Headquarters in New York by [ST/AI/2019/4](#) of 23 September 2019, and had encouraged the Directors-General of other conference-servicing duty stations to review and update as necessary their information circulars governing the use of United Nations premises. In that regard, the delegation sought information what the United Nations Office at Geneva had done to review its practices, in particular as they related to the participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations events or to their holding events on United Nations premises.

576. A delegation sought information on the modalities for mitigating the negative impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the timeline for the implementation of the strategic heritage plan and for ensuring the timely delivery of the building. The delegation drew attention to the “e-services” mentioned in relation to the audiovisual capabilities being implemented as part of the renovations of the strategic heritage plan (para. 29E.6), which, according to the delegation, had never been mentioned, using that or any similar wording, in previous reports on the strategic heritage plan. The same delegation enquired as to whether it was part of the original scope of the project and whether it would be implemented in building H or in the existing building. Another delegation sought information on the use of temporary conference facilities during the implementation of the strategic heritage plan and on the steps taken to monitor costs carefully and to ensure the efficient use of those facilities. Another delegation sought information about the extent to which and lines of intervention

along which the strategic heritage plan guaranteed the sustainability and restoration of the architecture, decor and furnishings of the Palais des Nations, in particular with regard to the rules of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the preservation of the world heritage of humanity. The same delegation sought information on the arrangements in place to ensure that the agents who worked daily on those prestigious premises respect the layout of the building.

577. Regarding Administration, Vienna, several delegations reiterated that the concept of regional diversity had never been agreed on or accepted by the General Assembly and requested the United Nations Office at Vienna to stick to the existing mandates in terms of geographical representation when it came to recruitment. It was also reiterated that equitable geographic representation should be a guiding principle in human resources policies and work, and the hope was expressed that more efforts would be seen in that regard. Accordingly, concern was expressed with regard to planned result 2 for 2021, enhancing regional diversity, under subprogramme 2, Human resources management. A delegation referred to the objective for subprogramme 2 and suggested that the focus of the objective should be on the performance of staff in implementing mandates instead of on attracting, developing and retaining qualified staff. Another delegation sought information about the disability strategy. With regard to subprogramme 1, Programme planning, finance and budget, another delegation enquired as to whether voluntary contributions could be processed in Umoja and requested detailed information on the training provided and the cost of those training programmes. With regard to subprogramme 3, Support services, another delegation enquired as to whether mail and pouch services were outsourced in Vienna, and if so, why they were mentioned in the report. Information was also sought on the benefits of outsourcing those services compared with providing them in-house. On subprogramme 4, Information and communications technology operations, another delegation sought an explanation on the use of new technology such as artificial intelligence and enquired as to how the Office could share those new ideas with others.

578. With regard to Administration, Nairobi, a delegation welcomed the work done to provide high-quality services and continuous improvements and innovations. Another delegation commended the United Nations Office at Nairobi for making the high quality of conference management one of its top priorities, considering that it was the only United Nations headquarters in Africa and in the global South. Another delegation sought information on the measures taken to increase the occupancy rate of the various conference rooms of the Gigiri compound, which until recently had been characterized by a low volume of use. The same delegation enquired about the performance measure, shown in figure 29G.VI under subprogramme 3, Support services, of 216 tons of recycled waste per person per year, which seemed excessive. With regard to subprogramme 1, Programme planning, finance and budget, another delegation called for more transparency in the management of partnership agreements and cost recoveries by the Office.

Conclusions and recommendations

579. Owing to a shortage of time, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly review, at its seventy-fifth session, the programme plan of programme 25, Management and support services, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning”.

Programme 26

Internal oversight

580. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 26, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 30\)](#)).

581. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

582. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of OIOS and welcomed the strategy in implementing the reforms of the Secretary-General with a renewed focus on sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, fraud and corruption, procurement and supply chain management, as well as missions in drawdown or transition. It was noted that, while sexual harassment was an important matter, other issues regarding procurement, fraud and corruption should be given equal attention.

583. Support was expressed for a more balanced approach with regard to active investigations, as some delegations welcomed the focus on procurement and further updates on procurement reports, besides sexual harassment, fraud and corruption. A delegation inquired as to how OIOS planned to implement paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution [74/256](#), in which the Assembly recognized the high level of risk inherent in United Nations procurement activities, and requested the Secretary-General to entrust the Office with strengthening its focus on the monitoring of such activities, including on evaluating implementation and existing practice within the Organization regarding restrictions on employment after separation of staff involved in the procurement process and sanctions for violations, as well as with reporting thereon in conjunction with the related report of the Secretary-General on procurement. It was emphasized that there was a strong need to engage in cases related to procurement. Also on the topic of procurement, a delegation emphasized the importance of increased procurement opportunities for developing countries as mandated by the General Assembly. A question was raised as to how the increase in the number of vendors and value of procurement was implemented.

584. Appreciation was also expressed for the work of OIOS on sexual exploitation and abuse, without delays and with zero tolerance, as well as ensuring that investigations took a victim-centred approach, taking into account that that scandalous subject had been overlooked in the past. A question was raised on the number of cases reported by whistle-blowers and on arrangements made to ensure their protection. The absence of cross-cutting themes, such as human resources management in United Nations offices and peacekeeping missions, including geographical representation and mobility, was pointed out.

585. Information was sought regarding the deliverables in table 30.1: Cross-cutting deliverables for the period 2019–2021, by category and subcategory, where a significant reduction in servicing the meetings of the Committee as a result of a reduced number of reports planned for 2021 was pointed out. Clarification was sought regarding the proposal of OIOS and whether there was a change in consideration of the reports by the Committee.

586. Some delegations commended the Office for its support in ensuring the smooth transition of peacekeeping missions which were in the process of downsizing, converting or closing. Clarification was sought regarding the results that had been achieved by that course of activity.

587. Delegations expressed appreciation and gratitude for the work of the Office on the integration of a gender perspective into its operational activities (para. 30.11) and welcomed the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in support of sustainable development goals (para. 30.12). Some delegations expressed concern regarding the two documents entitled *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations and Guidance on Evaluating Institutional Gender Mainstreaming*, issued by the United Nations Evaluation Group, as referred to in paragraph 30.11 of the report. Questions were raised on the mandate of the Evaluation Group, as to whether OIOS had a mandate to use the above-mentioned documents in its activities and whether those documents had been considered by any intergovernmental body. Regarding the risk assessment process as mentioned in the same paragraph, a delegation sought clarification on how the assessment of any gender-related risks was carried out, in terms of identifying the risks and responding to those risks.

588. In addressing the issue of geographic diversity, a delegation questioned the actions being taken by OIOS to achieve an equitable geographical representation among its staff. It was noted that geographic diversity was another important principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

589. Delegations welcomed the efforts by the Office in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some delegations requested an update regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the work of OIOS.

590. As regards subprogramme 1, Internal audit, reference was made to paragraph 30.37, in which it was indicated that OIOS would maintain its focus on governance and management of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. A delegation questioned the mandate for OIOS to conduct inspections in respect of the Pension Fund and expressed serious concern that OIOS had exceeded its authority and mandate in 2018 during the preparation of the report on the governance of the Fund. It was emphasized that the recommendations, which had been included in the report of OIOS and had directly affected the competence of the Fund's Board, had been rejected by the General Assembly. The same delegation stressed the need to reflect on that and use the lessons learned.

591. As regards subprogramme 2, Inspection and evaluation, information was sought in reference to paragraphs 30.51 and 30.52 on the evaluability assessment, the evaluation of reform initiatives, in particular of the resident coordinator system, and support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was noted that the Office planned to conduct evaluations and inspections of Secretariat programmes and cross-cutting themes, focusing on the peace and security and development pillars for improved decision-making of departments and Member States on reform and on matters relating to the Sustainable Development Goals. A question was raised on the mandate of OIOS to conduct any activities with respect to Member States. Clarification was sought as to whether the Office would evaluate and inspect, for example, the efficiency of the work of the Committee in the future and what was meant by evaluability assessment of the resident coordinator system. Another question was raised on the possibility that the effectiveness and efficiency of the resident coordinator system could not be evaluated.

592. A delegation raised a concern that the performance measure for 2021, as reflected in table 30.3 under the same subprogramme (higher percentage of all inspection and evaluation recommendations accepted by programme managers, and timelier implementation) was not clear, as it did not reflect the success criteria. Another delegation expressed concern regarding the performance measure, as reflected in figure 30.IV (percentage of programme and thematic inspection and evaluation reports requested by intergovernmental bodies as a proportion of total reports prepared), for which a decrease in the percentage of reports requested was noted in 2018–2019 as compared with 2016–2017. Clarification was sought as to whether there was a plan to cooperate in the future with Member States on anti-corruption.

593. With regard to subprogramme 3, Investigations, a delegation commended the efforts in improving accountability and reducing the number of months to complete an investigation (A/75/6 (Sect. 30), para. 30.61). The importance of timeliness in the process of investigations was emphasized. Clarification was sought as to what else could be done to further improve the timeliness of investigations.

Conclusions and recommendations

594. **The Committee commended the contributions of OIOS in improving the accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the United Nations.**

595. **The Committee welcomed the strategy for 2021 of OIOS focusing on: (a) implementation of the Secretary-General's reforms; (b) organizational culture, including investigations of sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, fraud and corruption and other forms of misconduct; (c) procurement and supply chain management; and (d) missions in drawdown or transition.**

596. **The Committee welcomed the plan of OIOS to focus on combating corruption and fraud, and in that regard recommended that the General Assembly call on the Secretary-General to learn best practices from Member States with the aim of continuously enhancing organizational culture.**

597. **The Committee stressed the need for OIOS to ensure the protection of whistle-blowers in a consistent and effective manner and monitor the cases reported by whistle-blowers rigorously and comprehensively, and recommended that the General Assembly request OIOS to specifically report thereon in its annual reports.**

598. **The Committee noted with appreciation the work of OIOS in addressing sexual harassment within the United Nations Secretariat, maintaining more rigid adherence to investigation completion timelines and contributing to the guidance for the investigation of sexual harassment within the Organization.**

599. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 26, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for 2021, subject to the following modifications:**

Overall orientation

Strategy and external factors for 2021

Paragraph 30.11

Replace the fourth sentence with the following: "The Inspection and Evaluation Division conducts its evaluations in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and United Nations Evaluation Group guidance documents."

Programme 27

Jointly financed activities

600. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 27, Jointly financed activities, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 31)).

601. The Chair of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Secretary of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and Director of the secretariat of CEB introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

602. Delegations expressed support for the programme and its role with respect to the coordination and coherence of activities within the United Nations system.

603. With regard to the International Civil Service Commission, several delegations reaffirmed their support for the United Nations common system and the crucial role that the Commission played in fostering a single unified international civil service with common personnel standards, methods and arrangements, which was essential for the effective and efficient functioning of the United Nations system. Concerns were raised at the current disparities in the United Nations common system arising from the decision of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization on post adjustment, and delegations thanked the Commission for its efforts in addressing the issues relating to post adjustment. It was emphasized that the General Assembly had made clear its view on the mandate and authority of ICSC, and it was pointed out that full and consistent implementation of the compensation package by the organizations of the common system remained an important performance measure.

604. A delegation expressed its full support for a single and unified approach in regulating and coordinating conditions of service within the United Nations common system. It was emphasized that the only subsidiary organ of the General Assembly mandated through its statute to make corresponding decisions was the International Civil Service Commission, and that those 28 organizations which voluntarily accepted the regulations applied in the common system were expected to implement such decisions without exception and undue delay. The same delegation noted that the proposed programme plan for 2021 did not contradict the Commission's mandate and supported the intention of the Commission to strengthen and develop a common system of salaries, allowances and benefits.

605. It was stressed that the basic Noblemaire and Flemming principles must be respected, with the hope that the review of salary survey methodologies would be completed as planned and that the conditions of employment of General Service staff would still be based on best prevailing local conditions. While taking into account the declared objective to make the post adjustment system more stable and predictable, the view was expressed that post adjustment, as a variable element, should, as previously, reflect the real difference in the cost of living between duty stations and the base city, New York.

606. Speaking about the issue of diversity, a delegation recalled that staff composition throughout the organizations of the United Nations common system should reflect a workforce that was also diverse from a geographical distribution perspective and requested the Commission to compile a comprehensive report reflecting all the perspectives of diversity. Emphasis was also placed on the role of the Commission, which should be determined only by the General Assembly, without the need to involve third parties in the process.

607. While delegations welcomed the focus in the proposed performance measure for 2021, which reflected the impact on organizational programme delivery, the view was expressed that it was not just a matter of paying staff more, as there needed to be a clear focus on ensuring that measures were in place that met organizational needs and were affordable and that the Commission was encouraged to consider Member States as part of its focus on stakeholders. A question was raised as to whether the "absence of litigation from staff" was a realistic performance measure, especially since evidence-based changes did not always result in an increase in allowances. Additional information was requested on the number and points of contention in cases of staff litigation against decisions by ICSC in 2019 and 2020 to date and the current situation of such cases. An updated timeline of the review of the post adjustment methodology

and the implementation of the next round of cost-of-living surveys, considering the impact of COVID-19, was also requested.

608. In reference to paragraphs 31.14 and 31.15 of the report, some delegations requested clarifications on the communication strategy that ICSC planned to implement, including how to raise awareness of the technicalities involved in the Commission's work and outreach to management in organizations, in addition to the staff of participating organizations in the United Nations common system. The view was expressed that efforts in building a robust communication strategy would go a long way to maintaining coherence and increasing communication on the various aspects of the United Nations common system compensation package.

609. As regards the Joint Inspection Unit, several delegations welcomed the work of the Unit and its continuing efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness and coordination in the United Nations system. In particular, the relevance and quality of the Unit's reports were highly appreciated. Another delegation expressed satisfaction with the proposed programme plan of the Unit for 2021. As the Unit remained the only independent external oversight body of the United Nations system mandated to conduct evaluations, inspections and investigations system-wide, a delegation expressed the view that it should also integrate a geographical distribution perspective into its operational activities, deliverables and results, as appropriate, and expected to see a system-wide report on improving the geographical distribution of underrepresented and unrepresented countries.

610. In reference to paragraph 31.38 of the report, it was noted that the choice of inspection subjects was important to maintain and enhance the relevance of recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. Questions were raised on how the Unit decided on target organizations or themes from competing proposals and inputs. Clarification was also sought on the measures being taken by the Unit to increase the rate of acceptance of its recommendations.

611. Several delegations welcomed the work that CEB had done over the previous year and expressed appreciation, in particular of the important work carried out system-wide to strengthen the efforts of the United Nations system to prevent and address sexual harassment in the workplace. Delegations emphasized that it was important that the United Nations system maintained its efforts to ensure zero tolerance for sexual harassment, with a strong victim-centred approach, and expressed confidence that the model code of conduct for United Nations events, the Clear Check screening database and robust and timely investigations of cases of sexual harassment would help realize that goal. It was noted that innovation was crucial to ensure that the United Nations was able to deliver its mandates effectively and could respond to new and emerging challenges and priorities. It was stated that it was equally important that the United Nations system entities had the human resources policies and practices to ensure that they recruit, retain and develop the talent needed to be able to respond to the new demands and challenges that the United Nations faced in delivering its programmes.

612. While several delegations welcomed the work of the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system and expressed gratitude for the victim-centred approach, a delegation expressed the need for a more transparent and balanced approach in CEB priority setting and emphasized that any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, language or religion was absolutely unacceptable, as reflected in several articles of the Charter of the United Nations. The importance of having a working environment free of any form of harassment was highlighted. On the proposed programme plan for 2021, the same delegation was of the view that the work of the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system should also cover

cases of false charges of sexual harassment, as well as address the need to work out guidelines that ensured the preservation of the rights and freedoms of those defamed.

613. The same delegation noted that CEB should carry out its activities in strict compliance with the existing mandates and questioned whether CEB was mandated to perform several activities mentioned in the report. Clarification was sought on the reason for launching a complementary initiative to develop a framework human resources strategy for the United Nations system workforce. Further clarification was sought on the joint procurement action (request for proposal) for banking services and additional information was requested regarding the mandates. A delegation also requested an update on requests made by the General Assembly to the Secretary-General in his capacity as the Chair of CEB to conduct a review of the jurisdictional setup of the common system, since the United Nations common system organizations faced the challenge of having two independent administrative tribunals, and to make every effort to ensure that decisions of the General Assembly were implemented across the United Nations common system in full and without undue delay.

614. Delegations congratulated CEB on its work in providing support to Member States on multilingualism and requested an update on the invitation of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General, through his role in the Board, to support a comprehensive and coordinated approach on multilingualism within the United Nations system.

Conclusions and recommendations

615. **The Committee commended the work carried out by the International Civil Service Commission and noted its key role in enabling member organizations to deliver on their mandates by creating conditions of service to attract and retain staff, the most valuable resource of the United Nations common system.**

616. **The Committee reiterated the authority of the Commission, as reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 74/255 A-B, to establish post adjustment multipliers for duty stations in the United Nations common system, and underlined paragraph 3 of resolution 74/255 A, in which the Assembly urged the member organizations of the United Nations common system to cooperate fully with the Commission in line with its statute to restore consistency and unity of the post adjustment system as a matter of priority and as early as practicable.**

617. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to urge all common system organizations to ensure the full, uniform and timely implementation of all decisions of ICSC and the General Assembly.**

618. **The Committee reiterated that the General Assembly, in resolution 74/255 B, requested the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to conduct a review of the jurisdictional setup of the common system and submit the findings of the review and recommendations to the General Assembly as soon as practicable.**

619. **The Committee commended the work carried out by the Joint Inspection Unit and underlined the importance of its long-standing commitment to strengthening transparency and accountability across the United Nations system.**

620. **The Committee underlined the fact that the General Assembly, in its resolution 73/287, took note with appreciation of the preparation by the Joint Inspection Unit of a medium-term and long-term strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029, and encouraged the Unit to consult and engage with the participating organizations, as well as to apply lessons learned in developing its strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029, while taking into account ongoing organizational reforms.**

621. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue to foster a coordinated approach to multilingualism, which was a core value of the United Nations system, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

622. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 27, Jointly financed activities, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.

Programme 28

Safety and security

623. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered programme 28, Safety and security, of the proposed programme plan for 2021 and programme performance information for 2019 (A/75/6 (Sect. 34)).

624. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security introduced the programme and, together with other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

625. Delegations expressed appreciation and respect for the important mandate of the Department of Safety and Security, especially for the work done to ensure the safety and security of staff in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

626. Noting that, owing to the early dates in 2020 when the programme plan had been drafted and compiled, mention of the impact of COVID-19 was absent in the budget document, a delegation recommended that the programme be updated across the board to reflect the adjustments that would need to be made because of the pandemic. Interest was expressed as to the measures adopted to protect the personnel of the Department, and to follow up on their health, in particular with regard to the security officers at Headquarters, where the pandemic had had a heavy impact, making them in effect the frontline workers for the United Nations during the pandemic.

627. Another delegation expressed gratitude for the vital functions carried out by the Department in the field and its focus on improvement. A question was raised on what was being done to ensure the presence of staff with the right profile to respond to challenges, in particular the COVID-19 outbreak. Clarification was also sought as to how the Department planned to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel. The same delegation welcomed the training of mid-level personnel.

628. While some delegations expressed appreciation for a comprehensive and informative presentation of the programme, concerns were raised regarding the lack of quantitative information on the deliverables. A delegation expressed the view that it was interesting to see that the Department had a solid account of its deliverables given the change in format, but stressed the fact that there was more information on the outputs than on the deliverables. The importance of having a detailed level of substantive deliverables linked to performance measures was emphasized, as they served as important elements of the programme plan.

629. In reference to the Department's internal realignment as indicated in paragraph 34.2, a delegation sought further clarification as to how the realignment, which resulted in a streamlined division of services, integrated with the broader management reform of the United Nations. The same delegation requested the Department to provide examples of the deliverables to understand its work and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

630. With regard to subprogramme 1, Security and safety services, gratitude was expressed for operating in difficult situations. In reference to result 2: continuous improvement in security and safety services despite increasing risks (new result) and paragraph 34.27, clarification was sought concerning the role of the Department with regard to the threats associated with cybersecurity, as new security challenges evolved.

Conclusions and recommendations

631. The Committee noted with appreciation the efforts of the Department of Safety and Security to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and to enable the effective implementation of United Nations mandates, programmes and operations.

632. The Committee noted the progress made by the Department in reviewing its internal structure to ensure greater effectiveness in the future.

633. The Committee noted the Department's efforts to ensure a varied workforce at all levels, with the necessary multidisciplinary skills, gender balance and equitable geographical representation to be able to meet the multifaceted safety and security challenges.

634. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 28, Safety and security, of the proposed programme budget for 2021.

Chapter III

Coordination questions

United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Introduction

635. During its sixtieth session, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (E/AC.51/2020/9/Rev.1).

636. The Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa introduced the report and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

637. Delegations expressed appreciation to the Special Adviser on Africa and the contributing United Nations agencies for the preparation of the report and noted its high quality as well as its comprehensive nature. Delegations also appreciated the efforts and initiatives of the African Union, such as NEPAD and Agenda 2063, and reiterated their commitment and support to inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa.

638. The view was expressed that the efforts made in the preparation of the report were particularly important in the context of the institutionalization of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD and the launch of the operational phase of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

639. A delegation commended the multiple United Nations agencies and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for the targeted assistance provided to the continent related to the tracks of industrialization, infrastructure development, the strengthening of the agrifood sector, transit cooperation, trade facilitation and tourism, among others. The delegation also stressed the importance of United Nations assistance to Member States in promoting food security and nutrition and highlighted the analysis of the impact of economic slowdowns and downturns on that sector in Africa, as described in paragraph 54 of the report.

640. With regard to transportation, one delegation expressed appreciation for the cooperation under way to create a continental transportation network. Another delegation welcomed the fourth African Road Safety Conference, held in September 2019, convened jointly by the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission.

641. A delegation commended the assistance provided by the United Nations to Member States in strengthening national health systems in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

642. Regarding future reports, a delegation noted that the inclusion of more information on the activities and projects undertaken by the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development would be appreciated. The delegation expressed gratitude for its partnership with WFP in support of school feeding in Africa, and indicated the use of multi-year debt-swap initiatives and the donation of specialized trucks to strengthen logistical capacity on the continent. It was noted that an additional annual contribution of \$10 million would be allocated to WFP, as a follow-up to the first Russia-Africa Summit in October 2019,

for its assistance to Africa. A delegation also cited its collaboration with UNDP to support the efforts of African partners in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

643. It was noted that 2020 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development, and support to inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa was reiterated.

644. Several delegations expressed regret that the Secretariat continued to promote the concept of “humanitarian development, peace and security nexus”, referred to in paragraph 94 of the report, despite the absence of consensus on the concept among Member States.

645. Given the rich and informative content of the report, a delegation suggested that the report be presented with an appendix that would provide a synopsis of the events, figures and areas covered during the year.

646. Concerning the first recommendation by the Secretary-General to conduct a review and appraisal of the support of the United Nations system to NEPAD, one delegation expressed its support. Another delegation requested that such an analysis be balanced, and not sideline the socioeconomic development dimension as a result of an excessive focus on its “interlinkages” with the peace and security and human rights pillars of that work.

647. Delegations expressed support for the second recommendation of the report, namely that, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, an assessment be made of the United Nations system support for the strengthening of health systems in Africa, and how to strengthen the continent’s preparedness against potential future threats.

Conclusions and recommendations

648. The Committee took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and encouraged that the information provided therein be of a high quality and be made available more widely in future, and ensure that the concerns of all Committee members be addressed.

649. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office of the Special Adviser to explore cooperation between the Common Fund for Commodities and the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD with the aim of financing more developmental projects in Africa.

650. The Committee stressed the importance of realizing the potential of youth on the continent and requested that the General Assembly encourage the Office of the Special Adviser to explore the feasibility of a dedicated subprogramme on youth.

651. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to address the comments made by the Committee members.

652. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 118 to 124 of the report ([E/AC.51/2020/9/Rev.1](#)).

Chapter IV

Provisional agenda for the sixty-first session of the Committee

653. In accordance with paragraph 2 (e) of Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/41 and paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution [34/50](#), the Committee shall submit to the Council and to the Assembly, for their review, the provisional agenda for its sixty-first session, together with the required documentation.

654. In its decision 1983/163, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of intergovernmental and expert bodies, before decisions were adopted, any request for documentation that exceeded the ability of the Secretariat to prepare and process on time and within its approved resources, and to draw the attention of intergovernmental bodies to areas where duplication of documentation was likely to occur and/or where opportunities for integrating or consolidating documents that dealt with related or similar themes might exist, with a view to rationalizing documentation.

655. The draft provisional agenda for the sixty-first session of the Committee is set out below. It has been prepared on the basis of existing legislative mandates and will be completed at the end of the current session in the light of the recommendations adopted by the Committee.

Draft provisional agenda for the sixty-first session of the Committee

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Programme questions:
 - (a) Proposed programme budget for 2022 (in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/266 A](#));

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget for 2022: part two: programme plan for programmes and subprogrammes and programme performance information (in fascicle form) (in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [58/269](#), [59/275](#), [62/224](#), [72/266 A](#) and [74/251](#))

- (b) Evaluation:

Documentation

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening of the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the inspection of the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

4. Coordination questions:

- (a) Report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;

Documentation

Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2020 (Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX))

- (b) New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (General Assembly resolution [59/275](#))

5. Report(s) of the Joint Inspection Unit.
6. Provisional agenda for the sixty-second session.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixty-first session.

Annex

List of documents before the Committee at its sixtieth session

E/AC.51/2020/1	Annotated provisional agenda
E/AC.51/2020/L.1/Rev.1	Note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation
E/AC.51/2020/L.2	Note by the Secretariat on the report(s) of the Joint Inspection Unit Reports of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget for 2021: programme plan for programmes and subprogrammes and programme performance information (General Assembly resolution 72/266 A):
A/75/6 (Sect. 2)	Programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management
A/75/6 (Sect. 3)	Programme 2, Political affairs
A/75/6 (Sect. 4)	Programme 3, Disarmament
A/75/6 (Sect. 5)	Programme 4, Peacekeeping operations
A/75/6 (Sect. 6)	Programme 5, Peaceful uses of outer space
A/75/6 (Sect. 8)	Programme 6, Legal affairs
A/75/6 (Sect. 9)	Programme 7, Economic and social affairs
A/75/6 (Sect. 10)	Programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
A/75/6 (Sect. 11)	Programme 9, United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development
A/75/6 (Sect. 12)	Programme 10, Trade and development
A/75/6 (Sect. 13)	Programme 10, subprogramme 6, International Trade Centre
A/75/6 (Sect. 14)	Programme 11, Environment
A/75/6 (Sect. 15)	Programme 12, Human settlements
A/75/6 (Sect. 16) and A/75/6 (Sect. 16)/Corr.1	Programme 13, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice
A/75/6 (Sect. 17)	Programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women
A/75/6 (Sect. 18)	Programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa
A/75/6 (Sect. 19)	Programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific
A/75/6 (Sect. 20)	Programme 17, Economic development in Europe
A/75/6 (Sect. 21)	Programme 18, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean
A/75/6 (Sect. 22)	Programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia
A/75/6 (Sect. 24)	Programme 20, Human rights
A/75/6 (Sect. 25)	Programme 21, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees

A/75/6 (Sect. 26)	Programme 22, Palestine refugees
A/75/6 (Sect. 27) and A/75/6 (Sect. 27)/Corr.1	Programme 23, Humanitarian assistance
A/75/6 (Sect. 28)	Programme 24, Global communications
A/75/6 (Sect. 29)	Programme 25, Management and support services
A/75/6 (Sect. 29A)	Programme 25, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
A/75/6 (Sect. 29B)	Programme 25, Department of Operational Support
A/75/6 (Sect. 29C)	Programme 25, Office of Information and Communications Technology
A/75/6 (Sect. 29E)	Programme 25, Administration, Geneva
A/75/6 (Sect. 29F)	Programme 25, Administration, Vienna
A/75/6 (Sect. 29G) and A/75/6 (Sect. 29G)/Corr.1	Programme 25, Administration, Nairobi
A/75/6 (Sect. 30)	Programme 26, Internal oversight
A/75/6 (Sect. 31)	Programme 27, Jointly financed activities
A/75/6 (Sect. 34)	Programme 28, Safety and security
	Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its fifty-seventh session (General Assembly resolution 72/9):
E/AC.51/2020/7	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of recommendations from the programme evaluation of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs
E/AC.51/2020/2	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe
E/AC.51/2020/3	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
E/AC.51/2020/6	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
E/AC.51/2020/8	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
E/AC.51/2020/4	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of recommendations from the programme evaluation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
E/2020/5	Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2019 (Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX))

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- [E/AC.51/2020/9/Rev.1](#) Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (General Assembly resolution [60/257](#))
- [E/AC.51/2020/L.3](#) Note by the Secretariat: provisional agenda and documentation for the sixty-first session of the Committee (Economic and Social Council resolution 1894 (LVII))
- [E/AC.51/2020/L.4](#) and Draft report of the Committee
addenda
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