



**United Nations**

# **Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination**

**Sixty-third session  
(30 May–30 June 2023)**

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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.

## Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Organization of the session . . . . .	5
A. Agenda . . . . .	5
B. Election of officers . . . . .	6
C. Attendance . . . . .	6
D. Documentation . . . . .	8
E. Adoption of the report of the Committee . . . . .	8
II. Programme questions . . . . .	9
A. Proposed programme budget for 2024 . . . . .	9
Programme 1. General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management . . . . .	9
Programme 2. Political affairs . . . . .	13
Programme 3. Disarmament . . . . .	19
Programme 4. Peacekeeping operations . . . . .	23
Programme 5. Peaceful uses of outer space . . . . .	31
Programme 6. Legal affairs . . . . .	33
Programme 7. Economic and social affairs . . . . .	39
Programme 8. Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States . . . . .	45
Programme 9. United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – strategic partnership for progress towards implementation . . . . .	51
Commitment to the subsequent implementation plans of Agenda 2063 . . . . .	51
Programme 10. Trade and development . . . . .	55
Programme 11. Environment . . . . .	64
Programme 12. Human settlements . . . . .	70
Programme 13. International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice . . . . .	73
Programme 14. Gender equality and empowerment of women . . . . .	78
Programme 15. Economic and social development in Africa . . . . .	85
Programme 16. Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific . . . . .	92
Programme 17. Economic development in Europe . . . . .	95
Programme 18. Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean . . .	97

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Programme 19. Economic and social development in Western Asia . . . . .	101
Programme 20. Human rights . . . . .	103
Programme 21. International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees . . .	107
Programme 22. Palestine refugees . . . . .	112
Programme 23. Humanitarian assistance . . . . .	115
Programme 24. Global communications . . . . .	124
Programme 25. Management and support services . . . . .	130
Programme 26. Internal oversight . . . . .	139
Programme 27. Jointly financed activities . . . . .	141
Programme 28. Safety and security . . . . .	144
B. Evaluation . . . . .	147
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives . . . . .	147
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Development Coordination Office regional support . . . . .	148
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of United Nations Secretariat support to the Sustainable Development Goals . . . . .	149
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: subprogramme 3, Shared economic prosperity	150
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe: subprogramme 4, Economic cooperation and integration, and subprogramme 6, Trade . . . . .	150
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: subprogramme 4, Environment and development . . . . .	151
Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of the youth, peace and security agenda: youth participation . . . . .	151
III. Coordination questions . . . . .	153
A. Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2022 . . . . .	153
B. United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want . . . . .	154
IV. Provisional agenda for the sixty-fourth session of the Committee . . . . .	156
Annex	
List of documents before the Committee at its sixty-third session . . . . .	158

## Chapter I

### Organization of the session

1. The Committee for Programme and Coordination held its organizational session (1st meeting) on 27 April 2023 and its substantive session from 30 May to 30 June 2023 at Headquarters. It held 19 formal meetings and numerous informal and “informal informal” consultations, as well as briefings.

#### A. Agenda

2. The agenda for the sixty-third session, adopted by the Committee at its 1st meeting, was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Programme questions:
  - (a) Proposed programme budget for 2024;
  - (b) Evaluation.
4. Coordination questions:
  - (a) Report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;
  - (b) United Nations support for Agenda 2063.
5. Report(s) of the Joint Inspection Unit.
6. Provisional agenda for the sixty-fourth session.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixty-third session.

#### Selection of reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

3. At its 1st meeting, on 27 April, the attention of the Committee was drawn to the note by the Secretariat ([E/AC.51/2023/L.2](#)), submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX), in which it was stated that there were no relevant reports of the Joint Inspection Unit available for consideration at its sixty-third session.

#### Programme of work

4. At its 2nd meeting, on 30 May, the attention of the Committee was drawn to the annotated provisional agenda ([E/AC.51/2023/1](#)) and the revised note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation ([E/AC.51/2023/L.1/Rev.1](#)) listing the documents for consideration by the Committee.

5. At the same 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.

6. Informal briefings were given by the Secretary of the Committee, on organizational matters; by the Senior Finance and Budget Officer, Business Partner Service, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, on logistical

matters; by the Director, Inspection and Evaluation Division, Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), on evaluation issues; and by the Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, on the proposed programme budget for 2024.

## B. Election of officers

7. At its 1st meeting, on 27 April, the Committee elected, by acclamation, Adela Lanuza Dondonilla (Philippines) as Chair and Maria Fernanda Ortega (Dominican Republic) as Vice-Chair for the sixty-third session.

8. At its 2nd meeting, on 30 May, the Committee elected, by acclamation, Hind Jerbouï of Morocco as Vice-Chair and Rouven Klein (Germany) as Rapporteur for the session.

9. Accordingly, the members of the Bureau for the sixty-third session of the Committee were:

*Chair:*

Adela Lanuza Dondonilla (Philippines)

*Vice-Chairs:*<sup>1</sup>

Maria Fernanda Ortega (Dominican Republic)

Hind Jerbouï (Morocco)

*Rapporteur:*

Rouven Klein (Germany)

## C. Attendance

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

Argentina	Eritrea
Armenia	Eswatini
Belarus	France
Belgium	Germany
Botswana	India
Brazil	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Cameroon	Italy
Chile	Japan
China	Kenya
Costa Rica	Liberia
Cuba	Mali
Dominican Republic	Malta

<sup>1</sup> In the absence of any nomination for the position of Vice-Chair from the Group of Eastern European States, the seat remained vacant at the sixty-third session of the Committee.



Morocco	Russian Federation
Pakistan	Tunisia
Paraguay	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Philippines	
Poland	United States of America
Republic of Korea	

11. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented by observers:

Burundi	Switzerland
Israel	Syrian Arab Republic
Mexico	European Union

12. Also present at the session were the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management; the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union; the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa; the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications; the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance; the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support; the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services; the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security; the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC); the Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management; the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Department of Peace Operations; the Head of Mission and Chief of Staff, United Nations Truce Supervision Organization; the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs; the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development; the Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC); the Assistant Secretary-General, Acting Deputy Executive Director and Head of the New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE); the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Assistant Secretary-General/Chief Information Technology Officer; the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources; the Inspector and Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit; and the Secretary of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

13. In addition to in-room representation by representatives of the relevant entities, the following reports were discussed with relevant representatives through videoconference: the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want; the reports of OIOS on the evaluation of subprogramme 4 of ESCAP, on the evaluation of subprogrammes 4 and 6 of ECE and on the evaluation of subprogramme 3 of ESCWA; as were the following programmes

or parts of programmes of the proposed programme budget for 2024: programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; programme 2, Political affairs; programme 4, Peacekeeping operations; programme 5, Peaceful uses of outer space; programme 6, Legal affairs; programme 9, United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want; programme 10, Trade and development; programme 11, Environment; programme 12, Human settlements; programme 13, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice; programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa; programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific; programme 17, Economic development in Europe; programme 18, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean; programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia; programme 20, Human rights; programme 21, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees; programme 22, Palestine refugees; programme 23, Humanitarian assistance; programme 25, Management and support services; and programme 27, Jointly financed activities.

#### **D. Documentation**

14. The list of documents before the Committee at its sixty-third session is set out in the annex to the present report.

#### **E. Adoption of the report of the Committee**

15. At the 19th meeting, on 30 June, the Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the Committee ([E/AC.51/2023/L.4](#) and addenda) and the draft provisional agenda for its sixty-fourth session ([E/AC.51/2023/L.3](#)).

16. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its draft report. The Committee also adopted the draft provisional agenda for its sixty-fourth session and decided that it would be updated in the light of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its 2023 session and by the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

17. Before the closure of the session, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Japan, China, Brazil, Cuba, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Belgium (also on behalf of Malta and Kenya), Poland, the Russian Federation, Pakistan, France, Italy, Morocco, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chile, the Republic of Korea, Belarus, Germany, Paraguay and Argentina. The Chair made closing remarks.

## Chapter II

### Programme questions

#### A. Proposed programme budget for 2024

##### Programme 1

##### General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management

18. At its 17th meeting, on 12 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 2\)](#)).

19. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

##### Discussion

20. A delegation expressed its deep appreciation for the efforts of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to ensure the smooth provision of mandated services for the United Nations, which was crucial to the proper functioning of the Organization. Another delegation expressed its gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General and his whole team for their efforts to make the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and all subsidiary organs and subcommittees, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination, work. It was mentioned that the Department provided essential facilitation for all political processes, assistance in the revitalization efforts of the Assembly and other United Nations bodies, substantive and technical secretariat support to the Committee on Conferences and high-quality conference servicing support, including multilingual meeting and documentation services, to all intergovernmental and expert bodies meeting at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. In that regard, another delegation recognized the Department's key role in the integrated global management of conference servicing operations in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.

21. A delegation expressed its support for the Department's strategy of continuous modernization and improvement in all areas in order to provide high-quality and timely conference services in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, optimizing the utilization of internal and external language capacities as well as increasing the efficiency of its services through the deployment of modern technologies. In particular, the delegation encouraged the Department to continue implementing strategic priorities in such areas as the digital transformation of the United Nations conference services and the use of technologies to create and support data assets and digital commons as a global public good; boosting partnerships; and maintaining business readiness through focused risk management. A delegation applauded the efforts of the Department regarding the provision of substantive and procedural support and the effective conduct of deliberations and follow-up actions of the General Assembly and its committees, assistance in the revitalization efforts of the General Assembly, protocol services for visiting high-level dignitaries and the enhancement of accessibility services for persons with disabilities. The delegation expressed appreciation for the provision of services for ensuring the timely issuance of documentation, and for the significant work that had been done to ensure multilingualism in the deliberations and decision-making processes of

intergovernmental and expert bodies and in the conference services provided by the United Nations in New York. Another delegation stated that, despite the challenging circumstances of recent years, the Department had made commendable efforts to assist in the smooth conduct of the business of many parallel intergovernmental processes. It was expressed that it was highly important for the Department to build on this experience and incorporate the lessons learned to promote more timely, sustainable and cost-effective service provision.

22. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the vital role of the Department in continuing the implementation of the Secretary-General's strategic priorities, specifically in such areas as achieving results through innovation, improving digital cooperation and continuing the digital transformation of United Nations conference services, especially in support of Our Common Agenda. Another delegation indicated that it attached particular importance to the continued use and improvement of digital solutions in the activities and services reflected in the programme. In this regard, the delegation commended the initiatives of the Department to seek feedback from Member States, including through various surveys, which could also contribute to the identification of challenges and possible areas for further improvement.

23. A delegation indicated that it highly valued the tremendous work that had been performed by the Department in the past three years, since the beginning of the pandemic, noting that the proposed programme plan and performance indicators showed the extent to which the Department had proposed to increase its impact on the Organization and how that had been managed. For example, while the e-deleGATE platform had initially been limited, it would – as reflected in one of the performance indicators – be implemented in the six official languages the following year, which would be very valuable not just for New York but for the entire community across all duty stations. The same delegation also highlighted how the Department had incorporated digital tools, such as gText, gDoc and eLUNa, which had been beneficial for the increased performance of the Organization. At its seventy-fifth session, the General Assembly had recommended an increase in the workload standards for the translation services, and because of the renewed and modern approach that had been integrated into the Department's method of work, the increase in the throughput performance was evident. The delegation stated that this benefited the Organization and its financial management and had been made possible in a short period of time.

24. It was expressed that the Department had a critical role in ensuring multilingualism within the Organization. Delegations welcomed and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management to coordinate multilingualism, which was one of the cornerstone values of the United Nations, throughout the Secretariat. Delegations indicated that they had consistently advocated the strengthening of that principle and had always paid particular attention to the need to maintain parity among the official languages of the Organization. Delegations looked forward to more practical and efficient measures and more results in that regard.

25. A delegation thanked the staff of the language services for their hard work and emphasized that adequate training and quality control in interpretation, especially with regard to politically sensitive issues, were of the utmost importance. Another delegation inquired as to how difficult it was to ensure the efficiency of the UNTERM portal while taking into account the principle of equal treatment of all official languages in each organ of the Organization.

26. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the work of the Department in the post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic period. Another delegation stated that it did not believe that business continuity had an expiration date and recalled the

assessment of the Joint Inspection Unit that COVID-19 had been a wake-up call for the United Nations and the United Nations system with regard to business continuity. The delegation commended the Department for its commitment to comprehensive, well-tested business continuity readiness in all areas of conference management, including through its support for hybrid conferencing in 2024.

27. On business continuity, it was mentioned in paragraph 2.9 of the programme that the Department continued to assess new and emerging technologies that enabled the provision of interpretation services for virtual and hybrid meetings within the framework of business continuity requirements. The wildfire smoke experience in New York, which had demonstrated how a health-threatening environment could suddenly emerge within one day, was a serious reminder of how important it was to be prepared for all emergency situations and to have all technologies ready at all times. A delegation asked for an update on the current status of and planning for business continuity. It was stated that the United Nations had to be resilient and capable of reacting to all emergencies.

28. Another delegation stated that the Department had, within its mandate, successfully fulfilled its task of ensuring business continuity during the pandemic. It was stated that when face-to-face meetings had not been possible, owing to the risks of the spread of COVID-19, virtual or hybrid consultations had been held, on a temporary basis, thanks to the Department. It was noted that the Department had always accommodated requests for meetings of intergovernmental bodies to be held in larger rooms. For example, the meetings of the sixty-second session of the Committee for Programme Coordination had, at the Committee's request, been moved to a larger room, where social distancing standards had been observed to avoid health risks. In May 2023, the World Health Organization had deemed that COVID-19 no longer had pandemic status. A clarification was sought as to whether, for that reason, the business continuity mode introduced by the Secretary-General to respond to the challenges of the pandemic had already been ended or would be ended in the near future. The delegation also asked, using the example of virtual meetings, whether there was any difference in terms of mandates between the provision of conference services in New York and at other duty stations.

29. The same delegation indicated that it was also aware that some of the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly continued to operate in a virtual or hybrid mode and that that was their internal decision: each body determined its own methods of work. With regard to the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [77/262](#), that the resource requirements for hybrid and virtual meetings be reviewed ([A/77/7](#), para. 71), the delegation indicated that it looked forward to the next session of the Committee on Conferences, as Member States had decided to discuss the substance of the issue in that forum. However, the delegation indicated that it would appreciate hearing any further information that might already be available.

30. A delegation also highlighted the first element of the external factors indicated in the programme plan, namely respect for the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which preserved and ensured the right of every Member State to participate in all deliberations of the United Nations on an equal footing. The delegation stressed that in any case where that equal footing was not preserved, any arrangement should automatically be discarded. Regarding virtual and hybrid meetings, which needed to be inclusive, another delegation asked whether it was possible to provide videoconferencing access to all Member States in order to ensure inclusivity for all.

31. A delegation recognized the establishment of a global roster of freelancers for interpretation services. The delegation noted the shortage, mostly locally, of language professionals and highlighted that that initiative, in addition to making it possible to

recruit quickly, benefited the representative participation of language professionals from all over the world.

32. On the issue of timely submission of documents, a delegation mentioned that timely submission was one of the big challenges in the Department's work and asked where the programme plan outlined the related performance review, planned results and deliverables for Headquarters in New York, as well as the strategy for improvement. The delegation indicated that the programme plan gave the impression that Member States were very satisfied with the services in that regard; in figures 2.III and 2.IV, the performance measures showed success rates as being around 100 per cent. However, as a result of its work in the Fifth Committee as well as in the Committee for Programme and Coordination, it was aware that discussions on timely submission of documents took place at every session. Key documents, such as the programme plan for peacekeeping operations (A/78/6 (Sect. 5)), had been published on a Friday evening before a long holiday weekend, with the programme plan being discussed immediately after the weekend. Furthermore, documents did not indicate when they had actually been published; in the aforementioned report, for example, the only date given was the distribution date of 25 April 2023, which showed that there was no accountability for late submission. The delegation sought elaboration in that regard, noting that the Committee could not carry out its work if the relevant documents were not ready.

33. A delegation expressed interest in knowing the Department's current practice regarding meetings organized by Member States and the United Nations in the observance of General Assembly-mandated international days, such as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia on 15 March 2023. It asked whether the usual translation and interpretation and information technology services were provided for such meetings.

34. Delegations expressed confidence that the Department would continue to provide high-quality conference services to Member States in the future and expressed their support for the proposed programme plan for 2024.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

35. **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 effective implementation of United Nations mandates, programmes and operations.**

36. **The Committee commended the efforts of the Department in supporting multilingualism as a core and fundamental value of the Organization, thus emphasizing its importance in the activities of the United Nations and contributing to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations.**

37. **The Committee emphasized the importance of respecting the linguistic differences of each of the six official languages in translation and interpretation.**

38. **The Committee commended the Department on its commitment to continuous modernization and the use of technology and innovation to improve the provision of services.**

39. **The Committee appreciated the progress made by the Department to ensure greater efficiencies in its operations, including through the implementation of the revised workload standards for the translation services.**

40. **The Committee noted with appreciation the progress made by the Department to improve conference management software systems operated by**

the Department with the goal of maximizing automation and business continuity in accordance with existing mandates and better facilitate the implementation of the revised workload standards for the translation services as called for in resolution [75/252](#) and further reaffirmed in resolution [77/262](#).

41. The Committee welcomed the Department's commitment to ensuring the quality of parliamentary documentation in all six official languages, including by further developing machine-readable documents.

42. The Committee welcomed the Department's efforts to pursue sustainable practices and to leave a smaller environmental footprint.

43. The Committee welcomed the Department's innovative efforts to improve conference services with a view to facilitating decision-making processes for intergovernmental bodies and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to explore technological and other innovations to advance effectiveness and efficiency in this regard.

44. 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 2024.

## **Programme 2 Political affairs**

45. At its 16th meeting, on 9 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 3\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

46. The representatives of the Secretary-General for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and for the Office of Counter-Terrorism introduced the programme and, together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union and other representatives of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### **Discussion**

47. Delegations expressed appreciation for the programme and the efforts made by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in relation to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at the global level. It was recognized that the Department played the central role in the Secretariat in matters related to those efforts and that it was the lead entity of the United Nations for good offices, political analysis, mediation, electoral assistance, peacebuilding support and political guidance, which were related to the Organization's efforts to strengthen, inter alia, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It was observed that the Department and its mandate of advancing peace processes and conflict prevention were of particular importance.

48. A delegation noted that the global peace and security environment was deteriorating, with an increase in escalations of conflict and complex political crises and transitions. It was also noted that the challenges were becoming more transnational and that there were frequent hindrances to effective multilateralism and global peace and security. In that regard, the delegation stressed that efforts to renew dialogue, cooperation, preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding were of utmost

urgency. The delegation expressed its appreciation to the Department and the respective offices under programme 2 for the efforts made to integrate these values into their work to de-escalate crises and advance sustainable peace while working with the relevant peacekeeping, development, humanitarian and human rights partners.

49. A delegation welcomed the Department's planned results and its entire programme of work, which were aimed at strengthening national capacities for conflict prevention, facilitating dialogue, engaging in preventive diplomacy, advancing inclusive political and peace processes, providing electoral assistance and contributing to sustainable peace efforts by Member States. Another delegation expressed the view that political engagement combined with addressing the root causes of conflict, including development issues such as poverty and social inequality, was the most effective way to attain sustained peace.

50. A delegation welcomed the Department's proposed programme plan for 2024, particularly its efforts to advance relationships with other relevant partners to strengthen its work in support of the peace and security pillar of the United Nations. Another delegation welcomed more information from the Department on its plans to improve inter-agency coordination. A delegation noted the importance of the work of the Department and its efforts to work with regional bodies and offices to ensure peace, security and stability, and expressed its support for the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union that would ensure a coherent, coordinated and timely response to crises in the region.

51. A delegation observed that developing coherent strategies for crisis prevention and peacebuilding required broader inclusion of local communities and people affected by conflicts. It was noted that the Department had a key role in inter-agency coordination with relevant United Nations bodies and entities in situations of complex conflict, including United Nations country teams. In that regard, the view was expressed that strengthening procedures and efficiency of coordination between the Department and United Nations entities to ensure coherence of action on conflict-sensitive issues was essential. The delegation encouraged the Department to make efforts to exclude instances in which politicized considerations might affect the actions of United Nations bodies with specific mandates to act upon the urgent situations where risk factors of atrocity crimes might exist. The delegation opined that it attached great importance to a system-wide approach to prevention and peacebuilding on the basis of the nexus between peace, security, development and human rights. It was observed that efficient and effective prevention efforts required addressing the underlying causes of conflict, which included, in particular gross and systematic violations of human rights and identity-based crimes.

52. A delegation enquired about the reason why special political missions were only briefly mentioned and not presented to the Committee for its consideration.

53. A delegation commended the Department and the respective offices' efforts in mainstreaming the empowerment of women, including the women and peace and security agenda in its programme of work for 2024. It was observed that women and children suffered the most severe consequences of conflict, and the Department's efforts in ensuring that women and youth were included in the road maps for durable and sustainable peace were welcomed. The delegation also noted with satisfaction that the proposed programme plan aimed to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

54. A delegation sought clarification as to how the Department was preparing for the change in the equitable geographical representation mechanism that was adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, and its application in field missions, including special political missions, starting from January 2024. The



delegation enquired whether the Department was conducting awareness-raising activities with field missions and requested further information on the kind of work undertaken in preparation for that change in the applicable equitable geographical representation.

55. A delegation expressed the view that the composition of the Department and all the offices included under programme 2, Political affairs, should be more inclusive and diverse, and expressed its hope that the Department and offices would take prompt and practical measures to increase the proportion of staff from developing countries, in particular from unrepresented and underrepresented countries, so as to better fulfil their mandates and facilitate their work.

56. With respect to subprogramme 1, Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, a delegation expressed its deep appreciation for the Department's work in the area of prevention of conflict over the past year and noted that it attached great importance to the work of the Department and its respective offices in the area of prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at the global level. The delegation expressed its hope that the Department would redouble its efforts to promote the political settlement of conflicts, increase its good offices and mediation, and better fulfil its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation expressed its continued support for the efforts made to improve the capacity and capability of Member States and regional organizations to identify, prevent and address conflict situations.

57. A delegation expressed the view that the United Nations Secretariat and the Department in particular needed to step up their efforts to better fulfil their responsibilities in advancing peace processes and conflict prevention. The delegation noted that responding to conflict situations in a timely manner required the strengthening of early warning mechanisms and thorough analysis and identification of the signs that might lead to further escalation of conflict. It was noted that monitoring and evaluation activities should be impartial, objective, factual and resilient to any manipulation, and that accurate information should be communicated in a timely manner to the United Nations bodies responsible for international peace and security. The delegation commended Secretariat efforts to focus on prevention; however, the delegation expressed the opinion that prevention and "leaving no one behind" should not just remain slogans, but also needed to be realized through results-oriented action.

58. With regard to paragraph 3.19 of the report, a delegation welcomed the efforts to strengthen the capacity of national, regional and subregional organizations for prevention of conflict through the use of the tools of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The delegation was of the opinion that peace became even more complex and elusive when external actors were involved and tried to impose their solutions. The delegation expressed its strong view that parties to a conflict should have the policy space to own and lead political processes to achieve sustainable peace. The delegation observed that the work of the Secretariat became more challenging when it had to deal with misinformation and disinformation, and enquired about how the Department approached such problems as many conflict zones experienced distortions and fake news, which led to hybrid wars.

59. With respect to paragraph 3.19 (c) (viii), and the reference to monitoring and evaluation of the impact and cost-effectiveness of key conflict prevention and mitigation initiatives, a delegation enquired about the type of initiatives and how such evaluations were undertaken. With respect to paragraph 3.19 (c) (xi), the delegation emphasized the need to adhere to language that had been agreed by Member States,

and noted in particular that youth could not be equated to women in terms of their participation in political and peacebuilding activities.

60. A delegation expressed its continued support for the United Nations efforts to improve the capacity and capability of Member States and regional organizations to identify, prevent and address conflict situations. The delegation noted that while it was pleased with the launch of the New Agenda for Peace in 2022, it noted the results of the subprogramme remained difficult to evaluate, and questioned whether the role of the United Nations in conflict situations directly improved the situation or at least prevented or mitigated expanded hostilities.

61. With regard to the programme performance in 2022, several delegations welcomed the progress made by the subprogramme in the development of a New Agenda for Peace and expressed their appreciation for the Department's hard work to design and coordinate the consultative process with Member States, regional and subregional organizations and other actors to develop the New Agenda for Peace. A delegation expressed its hope that the views and concerns expressed by Member States would be fully considered in that process and consensus would be sought so that a good foundation would be laid for the follow-up on the implementation of the Agenda.

62. A delegation expressed its support for the Department's new strategic plan for 2023–2026 and welcomed the continued focus on enhancing political and operational linkages with subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office. In that regard, the Department was urged to take concrete steps to strengthen the internal coherence of its work. The delegation recalled the 2021 evaluation undertaken by OIOS ([E/AC.51/2021/3](#)), in which OIOS had recommended improved coordination across the system and across pillars to produce more integrated analyses. The delegation encouraged further efforts in that regard and requested an update on the issue.

63. Under subprogramme 1, Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, with respect to result 1, a delegation noted with satisfaction that the subprogramme had successfully met its planned targets for 2022 and contributed to the advancement of the political processes in Libya, including the implementation of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission action plan.

64. A delegation expressed the view that one of the lessons learned with respect to the prevention and resolution of conflicts was that the spread of hate speech was a contributing factor to violence in conflict and post-conflict settings and required dedicated responses on the part of the United Nations. In that regard, the delegation expressed its wish to see, in the programme plan, information on the specific efforts made to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations system with respect to monitoring hate speech, identifying trends and critical challenges in that regard.

65. With respect to subprogramme 2, Electoral assistance, a delegation welcomed the proposed programme plan for 2024 and the programme performance in 2022, and expressed its appreciation for the focus on women's participation reflected in result 1. A delegation, while noting that the subprogramme had achieved its electoral assistance benchmarks, including the number of assistance missions, the percentage of Member States receiving an initial response within four weeks of a request for technical electoral assistance, and the percentage of women in parliaments in countries receiving United Nations electoral assistance, encouraged a more rigorous results-oriented assessment of those benchmarks in the future. Another delegation expressed the opinion that there should be an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Department's electoral assistance work.

66. With regard to result 2 and paragraph 3.38, a delegation suggested that providing information on the number of countries, instead of the percentage that received an

initial response within four weeks of a request for technical electoral assistance, would have served as a better measurement.

67. With reference to result 3, a delegation noted the lessons learned regarding the importance of close coordination and partnership with relevant regional and subregional organizations, and requested further clarification as to how the United Nations was working to strengthen strategic and operational coordination.

68. With respect to subprogramme 3, Security Council affairs, delegations expressed their appreciation for the subprogramme's effective and high-quality support provided to the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies in fulfilling their responsibilities. A delegation recognized the Department's crucial role in contributing to the capacity-building of incoming members of the Security Council.

69. With respect to programme performance in 2022, a delegation observed that the e-deleGATE system represented a positive addition and noted the positive change for Member States.

70. A delegation recognized the subprogramme's substantial support provided to the work of the Security Council on sanctions activities, including the establishment of expert panels, and expressed its appreciation for its work to update and maintain a list of experts. The delegation further noted the subprogramme's accomplishment of submitting all expert panel proposals to sanctions committees by the planned target dates. In that regard, the delegation expressed its appreciation for the lessons learned reflected in result 3 about having a list available to expedite the process and to prioritize women's inclusion in expert panels. With respect to paragraph 3.53, another delegation enquired as to whether the roster of experts was a list that was available to the public, or only to members of Security Council.

71. With regard to subprogramme 6, Peacebuilding Support Office, a delegation recognized the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office in facilitating the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and noted that the Peacebuilding Commission played an important role in informing and supporting the United Nations and Member State responses across the peace continuum, including through the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue; the promotion of co-existence and peaceful resolution of conflict; the revitalization of economic growth; and re-establishing essential administrative services. The delegation strongly encouraged closer collaboration across United Nations offices and agencies, and welcomed the efforts to broaden the scope of countries that engaged with the Peacebuilding Commission. Referring to the position it had stated in the context of Member State consultations on the New Agenda for Peace, the delegation expressed its support for an expanded role of the Peacebuilding Commission to enable the United Nations system to address cross-cutting issues of security, climate change, health, development, gender equality and human rights violations and abuses from a prevention perspective, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other United Nations bodies mandated to address such issues with greater effectiveness and accountability.

72. A delegation highlighted the importance of the subprogramme and the need to ensure adequate, predictable and sustained investment in peacebuilding activities through programmatic support by the United Nations and national actors. The delegation expressed its belief that the time had come to focus more efforts and resources on prevention and on addressing the root causes of conflicts, and reaffirmed its commitment to and support for the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission as an increasingly crucial complement to peacekeeping operations, and to the Peacebuilding Fund to which it actively contributed.

73. A delegation recognized that the subprogramme was the backbone of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, and noted that the subprogramme facilitated the functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission and provided for the proper administration of the Peacebuilding Fund. With respect to programme performance in 2022, the delegation welcomed the reported progress in increasing investments in building and sustaining peace at the regional, national and local levels, and expressed its support for the planned results and deliverables for 2024.

74. With regard to the United Nations Office to the African Union, a delegation referred to paragraph 3.207 (c) and requested further information about the meetings of the Political Counsellors of the Security Council.

75. With regard to the Office of Counter-Terrorism, a delegation expressed its support for an optimal level of resources for the Office of Counter-Terrorism and for further diversification of the staff composition, especially from developing countries.

76. With regard to paragraph 3.237 (a), under the strategy section, a delegation noted the use of the term “leadership” and stressed its view that the relevant General Assembly and Security Council mandates for the Office of Counter-Terrorism should be used as the basis for preparing the programme plan, and therefore, the use of the term should be amended.

77. A delegation expressed the view that the focus on strengthened engagement with civil society in the fight against terrorism, noted in paragraphs 3.237 (a), 3.238 (a) and 3.258 of the programme plan, was redundant. The delegation observed that it was necessary to maintain the focus of the Office’s work on fulfilling its main task, which was technical assistance to countries in need. The delegation also noted that the phrases “build capacity” in paragraph 3.237 (f) and “Enhanced capacity” in paragraph 3.238 (b), which had been included in the 2023 programme plan, had been deleted, and expressed its view that these phrases should be reinstated.

78. With reference to paragraph 3.241, a delegation noted the detailed text related to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, and in that regard expressed the view that since [A/78/6 \(Sect. 3\)](#) was the programme budget of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, it would be preferable to reflect an abbreviated version of that paragraph with a focus on the coordination functions of the Office.

79. With respect to evaluation activities, a delegation noted that there were more than 50 projects and programmes implemented by the Office and requested clarification about the selection criteria of the two evaluations completed in 2022, as reflected in paragraph 3.246, and the selection criteria for the three evaluations planned for 2024, as specified in paragraph 3.248. In that regard, the delegation observed that it might be worthwhile to evaluate the implementation of other initiatives as well.

80. A delegation expressed the view that the planned results for 2024 for the Office were too narrow, considering that the programme worked for the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The delegation noted that only a few projects on improved security of major sporting events, enhanced protection and assistance for victims of terrorism, and enhanced coordination among Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities, regional organizations and other partners were included in the planned results. In that regard, the delegation expressed its view that attention should also be given to increasing the capacity of States in combating the financing of terrorism, ensuring border protection, protecting vulnerable targets from terrorist attacks and other important functions of the Office that were included in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and in relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

81. With respect to paragraph 3.258 under result 3, a delegation questioned the reference to the practical steps for regional coordination approved by the Global Compact Coordination Committee in 2021, and noted that that Committee did not include Member States. The delegation further questioned the reason why the performance measure only reflected strengthened cooperation between the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact with a single structure, the Global Counterterrorism Forum. The delegation noted that there was a wide range of relevant international and regional organizations. The delegation reiterated its view that there was an excessive focus on strengthening the participation of civil society in the activities of the Global Compact. The delegation further expressed the view that since that was the programme plan for the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the results should be directly relevant to the Office, and in that regard, the delegation proposed to exclude from the proposed programme plan for 2024 result 3, including paragraphs 3.257, 3.258 and 3.259, as well as table 3.73, or replace it. The delegation noted that the results for 2024 for the Office should have been of a more general and practical nature that were linked to implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and should focus on assistance provided to States in the implementation of relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

82. A delegation welcomed the Office's support to Member States on counter-terrorism and enquired as to whether a reference to Security Council resolution [2349 \(2017\)](#) on the Lake Chad Basin could be included in the programme plan.

83. A delegation enquired about the possibility for an advance discussion among States on the proposed programme plan for the Office, similar to the approach taken in programme 13 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

84. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution [77/254](#), consider the programme plan for programme 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## **Programme 3 Disarmament**

85. At its 6th meeting, on 1 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 3, Disarmament, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 4\)](#)).

86. The representative of the Secretary-General 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**

87. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its multilateral efforts aimed at achieving the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Delegations emphasized the importance of the work of the Office, in particular in the context of the uncertain and deteriorating security environment, and expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and substantive programme plan provided. A delegation expressed the view that programme 3 was a critical instrument in United Nations efforts to

restore and maintain peace and security and noted that its activities were designed to draw attention to the need to end existing conflicts and prevent potential armed conflicts as soon as possible.

88. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts made by the Office to support the implementation of decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. A delegation emphasized that the support provided by the Office should be unbiased, depoliticized and carried out in strict accordance with the mandates given by Member States. Attention was drawn to paragraph 4.3 and table 4.17 of the report, which contained references to *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. In that regard, the view was expressed that Member States had not provided a mandate for its implementation, and that references to the Agenda should be avoided. The delegation emphasized that the programme should not contain provisions that suggested that the Office would perform functions that would fall within the prerogatives of Member States. The same delegation stressed that language on the readiness of Member States to implement the recommendations, resolutions and decisions of relevant meetings and conferences, as reflected in paragraph 4.6 (c), should be avoided as they went beyond the authority of the Secretariat.

89. A delegation expressed the view that geopolitical ambition, the build-up of armaments by individual countries and the expansion of the zones of influence of military-political alliances would lead to an escalation of tensions, a return to the era of the arms race and an increase in the number of armed conflicts around the world. The delegation expressed the view that progress could be made only on the basis of mutual concessions, bearing in mind the principle of multilateralism, and that it was necessary to continue to search for solutions, points of contact for common interests and opportunities that could bring the conflicting parties to agreement. The same delegation observed that modern challenges and threats dictated the need to consider the issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and sustainable development that were closely connected, and expressed its confidence that it was never too late, subject to the principle of multilateralism, to improve the international security system. Another delegation encouraged the Office to make greater efforts to implement its mandated tasks in proving the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, in the context of international security.

90. A delegation expressed the view that it was imperative to protect the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture at all costs, in the context of heightened tensions, in which disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes remained under significant strain. The delegation reiterated its support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and other international instruments that dealt with disarmament and the non-proliferation regime. Another delegation stated that it looked forward to the eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Preparatory Committee, and welcomed the efforts of the Office to support that work and the work related to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty. Another delegation expressed its disappointment that the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had concluded without adopting a final outcome document and noted that that all parties to the Treaty, with the exception of one, would have been ready to support the final document politically.

91. With respect to subprogramme 1, Multilateral negotiations and deliberations on disarmament and arms limitation, a delegation referred to table 4.5 and sought clarification regarding the rationale behind the choice of the performance measure for 2024, especially with regard to the references to codes of conduct, confidence-building measures and pre-negotiations. Another delegation expressed the view that the use of emerging and disruptive technologies, including artificial intelligence,

autonomy, big data and quantum computing, created new opportunities for arms control, while at the same time posing challenges to the existing political, ethical, legal and operational framework. The same delegation noted the potential for increased risk of miscalculation and inadvertent escalation with regard to the use of emerging and disruptive technologies and expressed the view that the development of norms, rules and principles of responsible use and responsible behaviours would contribute to efforts to prevent escalation and build transparency and confidence among States.

92. The same delegation expressed the view that the international community should renew its efforts to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. It also highlighted the importance of the United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons and underscored the need to properly resource, equip and operationalize it.

93. With respect to subprogramme 2, Weapons of mass destruction, a delegation expressed the view that the draft programme plan should be strictly depoliticized and should refrain from mentioning initiatives that were not universally supported, and highlighted the example of the reference to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons alongside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in paragraph 4.31 (b).

94. Another delegation expressed the view that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons filled a legal gap in the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and strengthened the global norm against nuclear weapons. Support was expressed for the planned results for 2024, and specifically the aim to foster trust and understanding among Member States in order to facilitate consensus on effective measures relating to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as strengthening the multilateral nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The same delegation noted the absence of the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons from the programme and sought clarification on why it was not included. Another delegation welcomed the work of the Office in supporting Member States in organizing and servicing intergovernmental meetings and welcomed the forthcoming second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as agreed by the General Assembly in its resolution [77/54](#).

95. A delegation expressed serious concern that the universally accepted global ban on chemical weapons was under increasing pressure and applauded the sustained efforts by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to investigate the use of chemical weapons and fight impunity. Another delegation welcomed the Office's continued close cooperation with the Organisation, while another delegation, with regard to paragraph 4.31 (h), expressed the view that the Secretariat's support for the work of the Organisation should not go beyond its mandate.

96. With respect to subprogramme 3, Conventional arms, a delegation observed that eight biennial Meetings of States on small arms and light weapons had taken place to date and expressed the view that the specific references to the Seventh and Eight Biennial Meetings of States in paragraph 4.44 (c) of the report should be removed.

97. Another delegation expressed grave concern about the serious threats to international peace and security posed by the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and suggested that the regional road maps would be effective tools to contain the uncontrolled flow of small arms and light weapons. The delegation welcomed the finalization of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian



Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas and called upon Member States to sign the declaration and actively engage in the follow-up process to mitigate the humanitarian consequences arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. The same delegation expressed its strong support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

98. A delegation expressed the view that, while small arms and light weapons continued to be the primary cause of death in conflict, it was important to note that activities undertaken by a multitude of actors, including terrorists, violent extremists and criminal elements, further complicated peace and sustainable development efforts and aggravated ongoing conflicts. The delegation stated that the danger of terrorist groups acquiring weapons remained ever present and stressed the importance of addressing the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, in particular to terrorists.

99. A delegation welcomed the focus on education and awareness-raising activities by the Office and stressed the importance of disseminating the idea that humanity would be safer in a disarmed world. In that regard, the delegation noted the creation of the dedicated fellowship training programme in line with General Assembly resolution [77/71](#), as reflected in paragraph 4.53. Another delegation sought clarification on the design and implementation of the fellowship programme, as reflected in annex III to the report, containing a summary of proposed post changes by component and subprogramme. The Chair emphasized that matters 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.

100. With respect to subprogramme 4, Information and outreach, a delegation referred to paragraph 4.59 under the programme performance information for 2022 and welcomed the planned evaluation of the Office's outreach initiative, Youth for Disarmament, in support of General Assembly resolution [76/45](#) on youth, disarmament and non-proliferation, and sought an update on the initiative.

101. A delegation recognized and underscored the importance of diversity in the decision-making process on disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular as it related to the involvement of women and young people. The delegation expressed its hope for a gender balance in the review conferences and called for the meaningful participation of women and young people in discussions relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

102. The same delegation welcomed the work carried out by the Office to improve Member States' access to the relevant databases and underscored the importance of the work.

103. With respect to subprogramme 5, Regional disarmament, a delegation welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Office to integrate a gender-responsive approach into its activities and cited paragraph 4.73 under the programme performance information for 2022 as an example. Another delegation sought clarification on what mechanism would be established to collect data on the representation of women in disarmament meetings and ensure gender mainstreaming related to disarmament and non-proliferation in arms control.

104. A delegation expressed the view that the Office should not engage with civil society on disarmament issues of its own volition without the authorization of Member States and stated that a similar approach should be applied to gender issues, which the delegation opined were not related to disarmament issues. Another delegation expressed its hope that the Office would enhance its efforts to take more initiatives to increase geographical representation.



## Conclusions and recommendations

105. The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 77/254, consider the programme plan for programme 3, Disarmament, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.

## Programme 4 Peacekeeping operations

106. At its 4th meeting, on 31 May 2023, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 4, Peacekeeping operations, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 (A/78/6 (Sect. 5)).

107. The Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas 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

108. Delegations expressed appreciation and strong support for the work of the Department of Peace Operations and United Nations peacekeeping operations in maintaining peace and security and safeguarding the communities that they serve. Delegations also expressed support for the work undertaken by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

109. Delegations expressed their appreciation to troop- and police-contributing countries for their contributions to United Nations peacekeeping. Their tireless work to deliver on their mandates in challenging operational environments and the risks that uniformed personnel took every day were further recognized and appreciated.

110. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the programme plan that was presented in the report. It was noted that the programme plan was very clear and comprehensive. A delegation expressed its satisfaction with the progress reflected in the report and noted that the indicators demonstrated the effectiveness of the work undertaken by the programme. Another delegation enquired whether the programme was compatible with the expected outcomes of the Secretary-General’s New Agenda for Peace and whether there was coordination in the preparation of the programme plan and the initiative, which was expected to be adopted in the coming period.

111. Several delegations expressed their support for the women and peace and security agenda. A delegation reiterated its commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda through its national action plan and welcomed advancements in this field presented in the programme. Another delegation requested an update on the various initiatives to increase the meaningful participation of women in uniformed roles and expressed its support for the call for the integration of gender perspectives into all aspects of peacekeeping and across command levels.

112. A delegation noted the global interest in and global consequences of issues regarding peace and security and the importance of participation by a wide membership on such issues. In that regard, the delegation recalled the role of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

113. A delegation indicated that it had invested in peace and peacebuilding through its active contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations, as demonstrated

by the country's proud 60-year peacekeeping tradition, having deployed more than 14,000 peacekeepers to 21 United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions. The delegation indicated that it would contribute more to the work of the United Nations in the pursuit of sustainable peace in conflict-affected areas around the world by expanding the peacekeeping footprint of its country and would make available more peacekeepers on the ground.

114. A delegation observed that there was no alternative to the United Nations in matters relating to the maintenance of peace in the world and expressed the view that there was a need for a comprehensive reassessment of modern conflicts and the development of viable response measures to destructive trends, both globally and at the regional level. The delegation noted that initiatives under the auspices of the United Nations, aimed at restoring and maintaining peace and security and reflected in the programme plan of peacekeeping operations, should be given careful consideration. The delegation opined that strengthening the capacity to respond to conflicts and to adapt the configuration of peacekeeping activities to modern conditions deserved universal support.

115. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Department in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at the global level at a very challenging time and expressed its support for the Department's activities and peacekeeping as a fundamental pillar of its security policy. Another delegation noted with regret the unprecedented level of tension and distrust in the world and expressed the view that this increased the risks of a military confrontation. The delegation indicated that, in the context of the crisis in the international security system, it would continue to make every possible effort to form a global peace process on the basis of the principle of multilateralism and regional unity, aimed at building a more just and secure world order. In that regard, the delegation noted that it attached specific importance to the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the planning of programmes in the United Nations system and evaluation of implementation and overall coordination of administrative and budgetary activities.

116. A delegation noted that, while the challenges ahead were many, they were not insurmountable, and indicated that it would collaborate with all delegations to contribute to a consensus outcome document for programme 4. Another delegation indicated its readiness for inclusive engagement with all United Nations Member States and expressed its openness to cooperation with partners to effectively strengthen regimes that enjoy a common consensus in the field of global peace and security. In that regard, the delegation expressed the view that the implementation of such tasks and the achievement of the ultimate goal would be impossible without the restoration of trust and the return to an equal and mutually respectful dialogue.

117. A delegation emphasized that it remained a strong supporter of United Nations peace operations as a matter of its national policy, pursuant to its abiding commitment to collective security and the rule of law. In that regard, the delegation recognized that the work of peacekeeping personnel would ensure that peace in affected countries and regions would be able to take root, thrive and be sustained. The delegation also emphasized that the delivery of political and peacebuilding support was adequately provided to prevent the outbreak of war and would help countries to make the transition from conflict to sustainable peace.

118. A delegation welcomed the programme's contribution to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, which supported improved performance and conditions for personnel deployed on the ground. The delegation noted that the treatment of the question of peacekeeping operations in all its aspects by the General Assembly carried specific relevance because it reflected the evolution of the issues and debates and influenced the way in which those issues were perceived by other bodies of the

Organization, especially the Security Council. In that context, the delegation expressed its support for the development of a transparent and democratic peacekeeping system within the framework of the United Nations and recalled that its active participation in peacekeeping missions constituted a clear indication of its commitment.

119. Several delegations emphasized the importance of taking into account the views of troop- and police-contributing countries and of host countries, and in that regard it was recalled that the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should be the main reference point on such matters. A delegation expressed its support for harnessing technology for peacekeeping missions but opined that the sensitivity of host countries should be taken into account. Another delegation emphasized the importance of improved communication with troop- and police-contributing countries and enquired about the geographical representation in the Department. A delegation observed that the protection of civilians would need to be at the front and centre of dialogue in peace operations and that sustained triangular consultations and cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and contributing countries were crucial to improving peace operations.

120. Several delegations expressed their support for a multidimensional approach to peacekeeping operations, noting the importance of the emphasis on the development of the rule of law. A delegation also expressed its support for transitional justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and security sector reform, the effective application of the guidelines related to gender and the adequate execution of protection measures for the civilian population in the peacekeeping mandates that include them, as well as the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Another delegation noted that United Nations peacekeeping missions had evolved to multidimensional missions and that contemporary missions had to address threats by terrorists and that armed groups were targeting peacekeepers. In that regard, the delegation expressed its view that peacekeepers needed additional resources and equipment for mobility and that peacekeepers were underresourced.

121. Delegations expressed their support for the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the priorities set out in the Action for Peacekeeping Plus implementation plan. A delegation welcomed the continued alignment of the peacekeeping programme with the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities and observed that the Action for Peacekeeping initiative set the basis for ensuring that peacekeeping missions could fulfil their mandates. A delegation expressed its support for the prioritization of political solutions, while another delegation recalled that some elements, in particular the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, were supported by a number of Member States with reservations. A delegation reiterated the great importance that it attached to the entire range of issues related to United Nations peacekeeping activities and expressed its appreciation for the personal attention and efforts of the Secretary-General to peacekeeping issues, including within the framework of Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus.

122. Several delegations emphasized the importance of predeployment training for peacekeepers, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping and the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives, and expressed their appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Department in that regard. The view was expressed that such predeployment training would need to be reviewed periodically.

123. A delegation expressed its strong agreement with the need to place an emphasis on political instruments for resolving crises and strengthening global and regional cooperation. Several delegations expressed their support for enhanced collaboration

with regional entities. A delegation expressed the view that cooperation at the regional and local levels should be a goal and should be prioritized. A delegation welcomed the strengthening of the role of African regional and subregional organizations in peacekeeping, while another delegation requested further information on the Department's level of engagement with subregional bodies, such as the Southern African Development Community.

124. A delegation noted the importance of making missions more efficient, effective and accountable and expressed the view that this was fundamental to peacekeeping reform. The same delegation noted its continued support for reforms that improved performance and accountability in peacekeeping and noted that reforms should enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers, as well as increase operational effectiveness and address the underperformance of civilian and uniformed components. The same delegation commended the Secretary-General for his work in that area.

125. A delegation welcomed the prioritization of effective performance and accountability of all mission components through the implementation of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System to evaluate mission performance. It also welcomed the use of data and analysis, the development of an integrated performance policy and accountability framework and increased engagement with troop- and police-contributing countries on performance. Another delegation encouraged continued efforts to implement the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework to address the performance of uniformed and civilian peacekeepers and overall mission performance, and opined that enhanced transparency and accountability would contribute to improved safety and security.

126. A delegation emphasized that missions could succeed only if the performance of all components, both civilian and uniformed, were examined together in a consolidated mission performance system. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the efforts undertaken to ensure accountability and the respect for standards of conduct across all peace operations. The view was expressed that the Secretary-General should ensure that all peacekeeping personnel adhere to the highest standards of conduct and be held accountable for their performance.

127. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the update provided on the collection and the use of data and expressed the view that the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System showed its value and was being adapted in the field. The delegation opined that it was important for the United Nations to continue to improve the collection, sharing and use of data across the board, which would support integrated planning structures in missions. The delegation was of the view that improved data would support evidence-based decision-making in New York and throughout missions. The delegation also opined that such data would feed into the analysis and recommendations provided to Member States and sought clarification on what more could be done to embed processes such as the use of protection of civilians tools such as SAGE and Unite Aware.

128. With respect to improving capacity-building, a delegation requested further information on the measures in place to enhance the collection, sharing and use of data across the board to support the integrated planning structures in various peacekeeping missions. The same delegation encouraged the use of evidence-based decision-making in the Secretariat and throughout field missions and welcomed updates on the implementation of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System and the increased use of digital technologies in peacekeeping operations for the improvement in the safety and security of missions and their personnel.

129. Several delegations welcomed the high priority attached to ensuring the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping personnel. In that regard, a delegation welcomed the additional elements contained in the programme plan and expressed its hope that, during the implementation phase, the Department would communicate with the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers and obtain more support. Another delegation noted that United Nations peacekeeping missions should be accorded adequate resources to address peacekeepers' needs and guarantee their safety and security at all times.

130. With respect to the strategy of the Department, a delegation emphasized its support and expressed the need for further focus on improved safety and security processes, including with regard to medical and casualty evacuation; on improved situational awareness through peacekeeping-intelligence; on deployment readiness; and on working towards an increase in the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of peacekeeping, including senior leadership. The delegation acknowledged the Department's appeal for Member State support in those efforts.

131. With respect to subprogramme 1, Operations, a delegation expressed its support for the efforts undertaken to ensure smooth and effective transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, and in that context referred to the example provided in the programme performance in 2022 regarding the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Tanganyika Province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/78/6 (Sect. 5), paras. 5.19–5.20 and table 5.2). Another delegation expressed its appreciation for the Mission's exit strategy and noted that an exit strategy should always be part of the planning cycle. The delegation also expressed its support for improved and more widespread use of the United Nations integrated strategic framework and other joint instruments, and in that context welcomed the Secretariat's views on ways in which the programme would focus on a joined-up approach among the United Nations system, donors and other stakeholders. A delegation requested further information on the extent to which the Department's mandate was being implemented in full in Africa, and in that regard noted that, in 2022, some initiatives, such as the workshops for regional and subregional political strategies for peacekeeping in Africa, showed that no workshops had been undertaken, compared with a planned target of five workshops (*ibid.*, table 5.5, deliverable 6).

132. With respect to subprogramme 2, Military, a delegation referred to paragraph 5.40 of A/78/6 (Sect. 5) and noted that targets were set for increasing the number of female individual uniformed personnel deployed as military observers and staff officers in United Nations peace operations. The delegation opined that the achievement of any percentage targets should not be at the forefront but rather the appropriate training and qualifications of candidates, the effective implementation of mandated tasks, the actual circumstances of the mission's deployment and the assessment of the security situation. The delegation expressed the view that the deployment of female uniformed personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions, including to leadership positions, should strictly observe the principle of broad geographical representation.

133. A delegation recalled the importance of using terminology agreed by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and drew attention to deliverable 6 of table 5.7 of A/78/6 (Sect. 5), on intelligence. The delegation recalled that the only term agreed upon by Member States was "peacekeeping-intelligence/information gathering and analysis" and indicated that all United Nations activities in that area, including training, should be carried out only in accordance with the parameters defined in the reports of the Special Committee.

134. With respect to subprogramme 3, Rule of law and security institutions, a delegation expressed its support for the performance measure of result 2, enhanced accountability for crimes against United Nations personnel in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The delegation requested further information on why only 124 of the 270 cases were being investigated by host countries, the reason why the remaining cases were not referred to host countries, and whether this would be part of the performance measure in future years.

135. With respect to subprogramme 4, Policy, evaluation and training, a delegation indicated that it could not support secondary (and other) tasks that were not central to peacekeeping mandates. In that regard, the delegation requested clarification on the reference to civil affairs in paragraph 5.58 (c) of [A/78/6 \(Sect. 5\)](#), noting that the term appeared along with the tasks of protecting the civilian population. The delegation also noted that the same paragraph referred to practical guidance and support to missions in addressing disinformation and misinformation. The delegation emphasized the importance of working with all aspects of strategic communications without being limited by some aspects. In that regard, the delegation observed that strategic communication was also designed to promote more effective coordination within peacekeeping missions, which could improve the implementation of mandates, as well as increase the level of security of peacekeepers themselves. The delegation noted that constructive interaction and clarification of the objectives of the mission would contribute to the establishment of trusting relationships, both with the local population and with the Government of the host country.

136. With regard to paragraph 5.58 of [A/78/6 \(Sect. 5\)](#), several delegations noted the importance of strengthening knowledge-sharing and the development of guidance for peacekeeping operations and welcomed the coordination undertaken with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Operational Support. With respect to paragraph 5.60 and the issue of “misinformation and disinformation”, the delegations recalled the important role played by the Department of Global Communications in preventing and addressing disinformation on peace operations and indicated that they would appreciate the addition of “information manipulation” after “disinformation”, where applicable.

137. A delegation sought clarification regarding the increase in other assessed resources indicated in table 5.17 (2) of [A/78/6 \(Sect. 5\)](#) and enquired whether it reflected an increase in programmatic activities. The Chair emphasized that matters related to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee and called upon the Committee to focus the discussion on part A of the programme.

138. A delegation noted that UNMOGIP was one of the first peacekeeping missions established by the United Nations. The delegation observed that UNMOGIP remained a key instrument for the maintenance of regional and international peace and security, with its core function of the monitoring of the ceasefire across the line of control in the internationally recognized disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The same delegation noted its appreciation for and acknowledged the unique role carried out by UNMOGIP, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

139. The same delegation expressed its view that the appropriate and sufficient allocation of budgetary resources was not only important for the efficacy of UNMOGIP, but also central to the implementation of its vital mandate. In that regard, the delegation recalled the audit report of OIOS of November 2022 for UNMOGIP, wherein it called upon the Secretariat to assist UNMOGIP in implementing its mandate in line with the Charter. The delegation opined that, in the interest of regional peace and stability, all efforts would need to be made to ensure effective delivery of

the UNMOGIP mandate, including through the provision of adequate resources. The Chair emphasized that matters related to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee and called upon the Committee to focus the discussion on part A of the programme.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

140. The Committee recognized that peacekeeping operations continued to play a crucial role in conflict prevention, while facing increasing challenges, welcomed relevant efforts to peacefully resolve differences and disputes through dialogue and consultation and emphasized the need for and importance of international cooperation in that regard.

141. 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 in accordance with relevant resolutions.

142. The Committee supported the Secretary-General's continued focus on the primacy of politics in the prevention, mediation and resolution of conflicts and encouraged the Department of Peace Operations to work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that peacekeeping operations were designed and deployed in support of viable political processes and solutions on the ground.

143. The Committee underscored the importance of strategic communication to the implementation of the Organization's mandates and stressed its relevance in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations as a means to enhance the performance and the safety and security of peacekeepers.

144. The Committee noted with concern the increasing amount of misinformation and disinformation directed against United Nations peacekeeping missions, that it could have a negative impact on mandate implementation, imperil the safety and security of mission personnel and erode public trust in United Nations peacekeeping operations, emphasized the critical importance of strategic communications and the prioritization of countering disinformation and misinformation and the distribution of accurate content to the performance of peacekeeping operations, and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States and other relevant stakeholders, to address the issue from the planning stage.

145. The Committee supported the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen United Nations peacekeeping, including through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, and reaffirmed the role of peacekeeping and the importance of developing overarching, coherent political strategies through a collective and integrated effort.

146. The Committee commended the work of the Department of Peace Operations to continue to mainstream a gender perspective into its operational activities, deliverables and results, including through the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

147. The Committee emphasized the importance for the Department of Peace Operations of a reliable audit, investigation and evaluation system. The Committee recalled General Assembly resolution [67/253](#), in which the Assembly welcomed the progress made towards the implementation of enterprise risk management, and recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to reflect its application in the Department's future programme plans.

148. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 4, Peacekeeping operations, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

*Paragraph 5.1*

In the last sentence, replace “a unique instrument for global” with “a vital instrument for international”.

*Paragraph 5.2 (b)*

After “distributing guidance”, replace “on” with “to ensure”.

*Paragraph 5.2 (c)*

After “To strengthen the protection provided by peacekeeping operations, including by” insert, “maintaining the protection of civilians, where mandated, as one of the core objectives of the relevant peacekeeping operations”.

**Legislative mandates**

*Paragraph 5.11*

*General Assembly resolutions*

**Insert**

**76/274 – Cross-cutting issues**

**Subprogramme 2**

**Military**

*Paragraph 5.31 (d)*

After “Facilitate the participation of women in peace operations, at all levels,” insert “in particular in Professional and senior posts on as wide a geographical basis as possible, in conformity with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations,”.

**Subprogramme 4**

**Policy, evaluation and training**

*Paragraph 5.58 (c)*

Replace “civil affairs” with “community engagement with a view to supporting sustainable political solutions”.

Replace “addressing misinformation and disinformation” with “using of strategic communications”.

*Paragraph 5.58 (f)*

Replace “the development and delivery of training materials for pre-deployment preparations” with “timely completion and dissemination of core predeployment training materials to support predeployment training for troop- and police-contributing countries, specifically in areas of emerging challenges”.



## **Programme 5**

### **Peaceful uses of outer space**

149. At its 4th meeting, on 31 May 2023, the Committee considered programme 5, Peaceful uses of outer space, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 (A/78/6 (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.51/2023/9).

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

#### **Discussion**

151. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the programme. A delegation commended the Office for Outer Space Affairs for its work in a rapidly growing sector and noted that it was the third consecutive record-breaking year in terms of satellites launched into outer space. The delegation expressed the view that the initiatives of the Office relating to space debris mitigation, management of space resources and long-term sustainability of outer space activities were more critical than ever. The same delegation also expressed support for the mandate of the Office as the custodian for United Nations treaties governing the rights and obligations of States in space and for the role of the Office as a key multilateral forum for fostering conducive environments that strengthened the safety, stability and sustainability of space activities and built capacity in space law and policy.

152. A delegation expressed that it attached great importance to the space industry, including efforts aimed at preserving outer space for peaceful purposes, and reaffirmed the critical role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the timely planning, management and evaluation of the Organization's implementation of programme 5, Peaceful uses of outer space.

153. The same delegation emphasized that the programme on the peaceful uses of outer space was the basis of basic joint actions for peaceful space exploration. The delegation also emphasized that the purpose of the programme was to assist States in the development of international cooperation and to strengthen their capacity to use the achievements of space science and technology and related technologies. The delegation stated that the use of the space industry should be limited solely for educational and scientific purposes that were aimed at achieving progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

154. A delegation expressed strong support for the rule-based international system with the United Nations at its core and for a multilateral approach to international affairs, including cooperation on outer space issues. The delegation expressed the view that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees were unique international platforms for international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space, including the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices and other transparency and confidence-building measures regulating space activities. The delegation also stated that it recognized the important role of the Office in supporting the work of the Committee and subcommittees and underlined the need to foster increased international cooperation for the stability of space activities and to preserve access to outer space for present and future generations. Another delegation expressed its appreciation for the role of the Office as the substantive secretariat of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees and working groups.

155. A delegation noted the provisions on enhanced cooperation of the Office with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in that regard referred to paragraphs 6.4 (c), 6.6 and 6.16 of the report. The delegation requested clarification on the reference to “other partners” and “other entities” reflected in paragraphs 6.4 (c) and 6.16, respectively. In that regard, the view was expressed that the main function of the Office was to facilitate the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The delegation observed that the Committee acted as an intergovernmental platform for discussing topical issues relating to international space law and that in its assessment, prioritization of relationships with NGOs went beyond the mandate of the Office.

156. With regard to paragraph 6.4 (d), a delegation requested further information on whether Member States had showed adequate interest in requesting the support of the Office and on the types of awareness-raising activities that were being undertaken by the Office to make Member States aware of the availability of such support. The delegation also noted that result 3: direct access to space-based emergency response mechanisms, and item C. (e) “space-based information to support emergency and humanitarian response in at least five developing countries” in table 6.1, indicated that request for support had to be initiated by Member States and requested information on the arrangements in place to ensure that all Member States had the opportunity to avail themselves of the services offered.

157. With regard to paragraph 6.7 of the report, a delegation noted that the Office would pursue cooperative relationships, including with the private sector, to identify new mechanisms for providing access to space. In that regard, the delegation expressed the view that the consideration of such issues was the sole prerogative of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and States, not private companies, and that discussions on such issues should be based on the generally recognized principles and norms of international space law, codified in particular in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

158. In the context of geopolitical confrontation, a delegation expressed the view that there was a direct threat to outer space within the backdrop of a deepening crisis in international relations and the security system. The delegation noted that gaps in the legal regulation on the uses of outer space remained and reiterated that the elimination of the gaps would be facilitated in particular by the adoption of a treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space. In that regard, the delegation referred to the joint Russian-Chinese initiative aimed at banning an arms race in outer space as a good example.

159. A delegation noted that a dialogue on outer space was planned during the upcoming Summit of the Future and stated that the Summit would seek to strengthen high-level political will on the peaceful, safe and sustainable use of outer space, including a commitment to negotiate international instruments to prevent an arms race in outer space, principles and guidelines for the active disposal of space debris, common principles for the governance of space activities and follow-up discussions on the future of space transportation coordination. The delegation commented that it expected a policy brief on the topic, which would be issued by the Secretary-General in the coming weeks.

160. A delegation applauded the consistent efforts of the Office in registering objects launched into space as well as its role in advancing the preparedness of countries to address disaster risks and improve climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience. The delegation expressed its satisfaction with the efforts of the Office to identify opportunities for disability inclusion in the space sector and encouraged the sharing of good practices for accessibility in scientific research, education and

outreach. The delegation also expressed support for the Space for Women project and its promotion of the empowerment of women and girls in the areas of space science, technology, innovation and exploration.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

161. The Committee welcomed the contribution of the Office to the promotion of international cooperation on space activities, including its efforts to strengthen the capacity of a greater number of developing countries to use space science and technology, and encouraged the Secretary-General to further leverage cooperation with other United Nations agencies and Member States in that respect.

162. The Committee recalled the importance of the Office continuing to focus on its core functions, in particular being the secretariat of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, performing its duties as the register for space objects and raising awareness on the need to coordinate actions regarding space debris.

163. The Committee noted the continued increase in the number of space objects launched every year, welcomed the continued development of the register for space objects and reiterated the importance of efforts of the Office in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders to protect the spectrum.

164. The Committee welcomed the implementation of the Space for Women project and Space for Persons with Disabilities project and highlighted the importance of increasing empowerment for women and inclusion for persons with disabilities in the areas of space science, technology, innovation and exploration and of advocating greater awareness in the corresponding education in collaboration with relevant partners.

165. 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 2024, subject to the following modification:

#### **Programme of work**

#### **Strategy and external factors for 2024**

#### ***Paragraph 6.7***

Delete “, to identify new mechanisms for providing access to space”.

### **Programme 6 Legal affairs**

166. At its 6th meeting, on 1 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 6, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect.8\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

167. The Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, 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

168. Delegations expressed support and appreciation for the work of the Office of Legal Affairs, which, as the central legal service of the United Nations, dealt with a broad range of issues, including international law and its codification, the law of the sea, international trade, the registration of treaties and criminal justice. Delegations commended the Office for its professionalism, expertise, accountability, transparency, efficiency and delivery of its results. Some delegations recognized in particular the support provided by the Office to the General Assembly, its Sixth Committee (Legal Committee) and other bodies involved in public international law.

169. Several delegations recognized the important contributions of the Office in support of a multilateral, rules-based system, expressed their appreciation for the comprehensive programme plan of the Office and noted their support to the objectives, strategies and deliverables. The diverse and complex mandate of the Office and its contribution to international justice and accountability were recognized and appreciated.

170. A delegation congratulated the Office for the excellent quality of the subregional workshop on legal matters it had organized for representatives of States in West Africa.

171. A delegation expressed the view that the basis for the prioritization of the activities in the programme plan were not clear, and noted that some activities were described in great detail while others had very brief descriptions. The delegation observed that there was no specificity provided on the work of the Office in assisting the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. The delegation noted that with regard to General Assembly resolution 77/114 on the report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Assembly had recalled that if certain issues raised in the report of the Committee remained unresolved, serious consideration should be given to taking steps under section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement. The delegation stated that it expected to find a description of the specific steps undertaken to solve the problems that the permanent missions of a number of States Members of the United Nations faced in the revised version of the programme plan, and noted that these were very specific tasks (deliverables) that the General Assembly and especially the affected States had expected from the Secretariat.

172. With regard to paragraph 8.5, and the use of the term “the global commons”, a delegation expressed the view that such a concept was not known in international law. The delegation noted that the same term had been used in the Secretary-General’s report “Our Common Agenda” to cover the Antarctic, the high seas, the atmospheres and space, and emphasized that the above spaces had a completely different legal status, regulated by multilateral international treaties. The delegation noted its expectation that the term would be removed from the programme.

173. With regard to paragraphs 8.24 and 8.25, a delegation welcomed the Office’s efforts for the improvement of monitoring and evaluation practices, including through the operationalization of a dedicated evaluation, monitoring and strategic planning function. The delegation also welcomed the more strategic and integrated management of all capacity-building activities of the Office, which would better assist relevant stakeholders and respond to requests by Member States.

174. A delegation expressed the view that the staffing of the Office could be made more inclusive and diversified, and expressed the hope that the Office would take

practical measures to improve the representation of and increase the percentage of staff from developing and under- and unrepresented countries.

175. With regard to subprogramme 1, Provision of legal services to the United Nations system as a whole, a delegation expressed its particular support and appreciation for result 3 with regard to the Office's efforts to ensure that the necessary legal framework would be adopted prior to the holding of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

176. With regard to table 8.6 and category E, Enabling deliverables, a delegation enquired about the mechanism that was referred to in the text that read "legal advice to and support for one United Nations criminal tribunal and its oversight body and other international accountability mechanism". The delegation also sought clarification on the text "legal advice to 18 United Nations entities on the interpretation and implementation of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court", specifically on the type of consultations undertaken and implementation referred to, and requested further clarification on how these were related to the Secretary-General's position that the International Criminal Court and the United Nations were separate structures. In that context, the delegation also sought clarification with regard to the information contained in paragraph 8.127 on the provision of legal support to United Nations entities in cooperation with the International Criminal Court. The delegation questioned how States Members of the United Nations that were not party to the Rome Statute could finance the above-mentioned activities of the Office, and, in the event that such activities were financed from extrabudgetary resources, whether the resources were provided by the International Criminal Court or its Member States. The delegation opined that the International Criminal Court was a politicized institution that was created on the basis of an agreement between a limited number of countries, and emphasized that the regular budget funding of the United Nations should be used for such activities, and that the financing of the cooperation between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court from extrabudgetary resources would be considered a gross interference in the work of the United Nations Secretariat.

177. With regard to subprogramme 3, Progressive development and codification of international law, a delegation referred to paragraph 8.55 (c), expressed its appreciation for the Office's initiatives with respect to the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law, also expressed its wish to see more regional courses on international law for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and requested information on the Office's plans to make such courses more accessible to countries in the region.

178. With regard to the programme performance in 2022, a delegation welcomed the resumption of in-person training programmes under the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, and expressed its appreciation for the extensive dissemination activities conducted, including through social media and United Nations information centres, which emphasized that applications from qualified women candidates were encouraged. The same delegation recognized the role of the subprogramme as the secretariat of the Sixth Committee and the International Law Commission and other bodies as reflected in table 8.15.

179. A delegation welcomed the planned results for the subprogramme, noting in particular result 1 on the advancement of the International Law Commission's study on sea-level rise in relation to international law, and expressed the view that this was an increasingly crucial topic.

180. With regard to subprogramme 4, Law of the sea and ocean affairs, delegations congratulated and expressed appreciation for the work of the Office and specifically

for its essential support to Member States and contributions to the completion of the draft agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. A delegation observed that the completion of the process, which had been under preparation for over 10 years, was a significant demonstration of the ongoing value of multilateralism and an important contribution to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14. Several delegations requested additional information on whether the Office anticipated additional work for the adoption of the draft agreement and on the preparatory work that would be required in terms of establishing new institutional arrangements, benefit-sharing, capacity-building and transfer of technology.

181. A delegation expressed its support for the subprogramme's work, in particular for its contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14, and in that regard requested further information about the cooperation undertaken with UNEP in this field.

182. With respect to the programme performance in 2022, a delegation referred to paragraph 8.70, acknowledged the subprogramme for its work in enhancing the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its role in the advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 14, and also acknowledged other activities of the subprogramme, such as the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, and the work to ensure that the Convention remained relevant today.

183. Several delegations welcomed the support provided by subprogramme 4 with regard to the preparations and substantive servicing for the second United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, held in Lisbon in 2022. In that regard, it was noted that Costa Rica and France would be co-organizing in 2025 the third Conference, and delegations emphasized the importance of providing legal support to this process, as noted in table 8.20.

184. A delegation praised the subprogramme's ongoing work in support of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the United Nations Fish Stock Agreement, and secretariat support for bodies like the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, and expressed the view that the protection of the ocean and its resources would be an integral part of pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals.

185. A delegation noted that the reference to the term "multi-stakeholder initiatives" in the fifth column of table 8.17 was not clear and sought clarification as to why States should implement them as the delegation was not aware of a mandate to develop such initiatives.

186. With regard to paragraph 8.74 and table 8.18, a delegation noted the reference to the term "ocean-climate nexus" and the reference to paragraph 211 of General Assembly resolution 76/72. The delegation observed that the paragraph of the General Assembly resolution referred to the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, which was simply a platform for the exchange of views on topical maritime issues and therefore did not provide a mandate to the Secretariat to carry out the proposed tasks.

187. A request was made for further details on capacity-building efforts under the subprogramme, while a delegation expressed its appreciation and continued support to the ongoing work, including on marine litter, microplastics and plastic pollution.

188. With regard to subprogramme 5, Progressive harmonization, modernization and unification of the law of international trade, a delegation highlighted the important work of the subprogramme as the secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and noted its efforts to coordinate and encourage the harmonization and development of international trade law. The delegation expressed its appreciation for the subprogramme's work to promote the education and engagement of legal practitioners and industry professionals, as well as the full participation of developing countries in the work of UNCITRAL.

189. Another delegation expressed its appreciation of and support for the increased activities of subprogramme, especially technical assistance and capacity-building provided to Governments on UNCITRAL texts, and noted in particular the subprogramme's work relating to a harmonized framework for digital trade and electronic transactions.

190. The subprogramme's work on supporting the United Nations Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships and on reforms to investor-State dispute settlement through the development of multiple solutions (result 3) were recognized and appreciated.

191. With respect to subprogramme 6, Custody, registration and publication of treaties, delegations highlighted the important work of the subprogramme and expressed their appreciation. A delegation requested further clarification on the "data dashboard on participation in multilateral treaties" contained in paragraph 8.99 of the subprogramme, while several delegations expressed their support for the 2022 (actual) result and the access provided to a data dashboard, as reflected in table 8.26. A delegation welcomed the modernization of the processes for the registration of treaties, observed that developing countries in particular greatly benefitted from the electronic registration of treaties, and requested further information on electronic systems for treaty registration. Another delegation expressed its strong support for the subprogramme's work, which contributed to increased knowledge among Member States' representatives on treaty law and practice, through the organization in 2022 of two seminars at United Nations Headquarters and additional seminars at the national and regional levels to be organized in the future.

192. Regarding the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, several delegations expressed their full support for and confidence in the work of the Mechanism, which reflected Member States' commitment to combating impunity and supporting justice and accountability for atrocities and other abuses committed before and after the military coup of February 2021. The view was expressed that preventing new atrocities and other abuses, addressing the needs of victims and survivors and ensuring those responsible for atrocities and other abuses were held accountable were all essential to addressing the ongoing crisis in Myanmar and helping Myanmar return to a path towards a democratic, peaceful and prosperous state. A delegation noted that promoting accountability for atrocities and abuses demonstrated its commitment to human rights and aligned with efforts to bring an end to the violence.

193. It was noted that the February 2021 military coup and the violence that accompanied it had both increased the work of the Mechanism and the challenges of doing this work. The logistical challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic for the Mechanism to travel and collect much of the evidence that was critical to the fulfilment of its mandate were noted, and the Mechanism's efforts to address those challenging circumstances were appreciated. A delegation congratulated the Mechanism on the progress achieved and welcomed its flexibility and effectiveness in adjusting its workflow and planning to address the challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic and the February 2021 coup.

194. The view was expressed that the Mechanism had been mandated pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 39/2, 42/3 and 43/26, and reaffirmed by General Assembly resolution 73/264. A delegation noted the vital role played by the Mechanism in collecting, consolidating, preserving and analysing evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011. The delegation said that the prepared files could be shared with national, regional or international courts or tribunals to facilitate fair and independent criminal proceedings.

195. Other delegations expressed concern and disappointment that the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar was still included in programme 6. They reiterated that the inclusion of what they termed an illegitimate structure was inappropriate and set a dangerous precedent, as the Mechanism had been created by what they saw as an improper and politicized country-specific Human Rights Council resolution for a single Member State and had no relevance to United Nations legal affairs. Some delegations expressed the view that the Mechanism should be removed from programme 6.

196. 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, several delegations expressed support for its work and congratulated the Mechanism on its progress. It was stressed that the Mechanism was vital in bringing accountability to situations of appalling wrongdoing in the Syrian Arab Republic. A delegation noted that, for over a decade, the Syrian people had endured the unimaginable, and in that regard the Mechanism had become a vital instrument that provided prosecutors and investigators with the evidence needed to ensure criminal accountability, thereby achieving a measure of justice for the many victims. The same delegation expressed its view that the Syrian people should be heard and that every Syrian should have the opportunity to seek justice. The delegation recalled that accountability and justice were essential to the international community's efforts to ensure a lasting United Nations-facilitated political process in the Syrian Arab Republic.

197. Several delegations acknowledged the progress made by the Mechanism in implementing its critically important mandate to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses committed in the Syrian Arab Republic over the past decade. The view was expressed that the Mechanism's structural investigations and case-building work provided the foundation for criminal accountability efforts that were necessary to combat impunity, and a delegation noted its strong support for such information to be made available to assist in new prosecutions, where jurisdiction exists. Another delegation stressed that sustainable peace was not possible without justice and expressed its continued full support to the Mechanism, as well as to the complementary mechanisms contributing to the fight against impunity, such as Commissions of Inquiry and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' Investigation and Identification Team. Some delegations expressed their strong view that there was a clear mandate for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, as set out in General Assembly resolution 71/248, and a clear need to include that work presented under programme 6.

198. Other delegations expressed concern and disappointment that the Mechanism was still included in programme 6 and reiterated that the inclusion of what was termed an illegitimate structure was not appropriate. Another delegation expressed its view that the General Assembly had overstepped the powers vested in it under Articles 10 to 12 and 22 of the Charter of the United Nations when it created the Mechanism. The delegation further expressed its view that the establishment of the Mechanism, in the



absence of consent of the Syrian Arab Republic or a resolution of the Security Council adopted pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter, violated of the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. The delegation also recalled that the General Assembly resolution that established the Mechanism had been adopted without the consent of the host country and that the text had been drafted and agreed upon by a group of interested States and against the will of Syrian Arab Republic.

199. The delegation further expressed its view that the Mechanism should not be financed from the United Nations budget and noted that there was limited reporting and a lack of accountability on the use of funds by the Mechanism. Some delegations expressed their strong view that the Mechanism should be removed from programme 6, and the regular budget.

200. The view was expressed that the deliverables and activities of both the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar and 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, lacked specificity and were vague. A delegation also expressed the view that the total staffing and financial resources for the two Mechanisms had increased and were close to a similar level with those of the Office of Legal Affairs.

201. The view was expressed that mandates arising from individual country issues were unacceptable, and that the use of human rights issues for political purposes ran counter to the principles of universality, multilateralism, impartiality and non-selectivity. It was noted that long-standing resolutions on the situation in Myanmar and the Syrian Arab Republic had no added value, but only served as a source of further tension. The same delegation expressed its view that it considered the Mechanisms on Myanmar and the Syrian Arab Republic to be counterproductive tools aimed not at involving interested parties in dialogue but at isolating those countries. The delegation noted that it was convinced that the universal periodic review at the Human Rights Council could and should remain the main inter-State mechanism on human rights issues.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

202. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution [77/254](#), consider the programme plan for programme 6, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## **Programme 7 Economic and social affairs**

203. At its 5th meeting, on 31 May 2023, the Committee considered programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 9\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

204. The Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

## Discussion

205. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the report, which was referred to as “comprehensive”, as well as support for the work carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, noting progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Several delegations encouraged the Department to continue efforts towards implementing the Goals, as well as coordinating efforts so that progress could be made.

206. The importance of the work of the Department being informed by mandates of the Member States was emphasized by a delegation, as was the need for entities in the development pillar to work together in the current post-COVID-19 pandemic environment, especially with regard to overcoming the multiple challenges faced by Member States. Another delegation highlighted the need to put the Sustainable Development Goals back on track and noted that climate change had added pressure to the mix, especially for developing countries that might be most affected and need increased support. The necessity of enhanced cooperation was emphasized, and the Secretariat was requested to share how cooperation might be strengthened going forward.

207. A delegation noted that the Department dealt with a high level of cross-cutting issues and emphasized the importance of reducing duplication and overlap with other United Nations system entities so that its work could be focused on where it added the most value. Another delegation was of the view that more streamlined interaction between the Department and the resident coordinators was needed to support increased assistance to Member States for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

208. It was commented that the programmes of the Department formed the backbone of the support given by the Secretariat to intergovernmental bodies in the area of development, and that the Department’s responsibilities included:

- (a) Substantively supporting development issues, as well as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its related functional commissions and expert bodies;

- (b) Monitoring and analysing development trends and global policy issues;

- (c) Assisting in translating policy frameworks developed at United Nations conferences and summits into policies and programmes at the country level and supporting Member States to develop national capacities for implementation, with a specific focus on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through technical cooperation and United Nations Development Account projects.

209. Appreciation was also expressed for the work of the Department on emerging trends and policies for eradicating poverty, addressing inequalities and promoting opportunities while progressing towards sustainable development.

210. A delegation emphasized the importance of prioritizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and described it as a reconfigured development paradigm with the added component of “sustainability”, taking into account the multiple dimensions of development. The delegation described three elements of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental, which had to be integrated. It was also stressed that the Sustainable Development Goals had to take into account the different realities, capacities and levels of development of individual countries, particularly developing countries, in order to respond to national policies and priorities.

211. Concerns were expressed regarding the slow progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and pledges that were made at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit held in New York in September 2019, as referenced in paragraph 9.3. Moreover, a question was asked about what programmes were in place to speed up the implementation of the Goals and whether they could still be attained with only seven years left, and what, specifically, the Department could do to speed up implementation.

212. A delegation, referring to the strategy and external factors for 2024 (para. 9.5), which mentioned the report of the Secretary-General on Our Common Agenda as one of the sources and guidelines for action, considered that reference to be premature, as the report of the Secretary-General was still being discussed by Member States and no decisions by Member States on the report had been made.

213. A delegation noted with appreciation the Department's work in translating policy frameworks referenced in paragraph 9.6, which were not "one size fits all" and needed customization and benchmarking so that countries could learn from each other when policies had been implemented successfully.

214. A delegation referenced paragraph 9.7 and noted with appreciation the Department's attention to the least developed and landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in Africa. The upcoming fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the Summit of the Future were referenced, as was the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Doha from 5 to 9 March 2023, as important platforms for discussion on those issues, with a nod to the role of the Department in supporting international conferences. Several delegations emphasized the importance of international cooperation in that regard and noted that while challenges still remained, they had to be overcome.

215. Security was raised as a concern; it was noted that the report assumed that the security and political situation in targeted countries and the surrounding regions would allow for implementation of the programmes, but the reality was that challenges might arise in unstable or conflict-affected areas. Questions arose concerning what strategies would be employed to address those challenges faced by the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

216. With regard to programme performance in 2022, a delegation highlighted the 2022 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, held in Lisbon from 27 June to 1 July 2022, stating that priority should be given to funding the development of the oceans, considering the chronic underinvestment in this area.

217. A delegation recognized the work of the Department as key to ensuring common approaches and inter-agency links in order to best support Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Collective involvement was credited with resolving pressing socioeconomic issues towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

218. A delegation raised the issue of reform and recalled that the Secretary-General had identified six mutually reinforcing areas that would constitute the final phase of that reform in response to General Assembly resolution [70/299](#), adopted in 2016. A statement was made that achievement of the reform process required more effort, as there had been no consensus yet in those areas. The Secretary-General was called upon by a delegation to do more, in line with Assembly resolution [75/233](#), to ensure the efficient delivery of United Nations system support for the implementation of the

Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to middle-income countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

219. An update on the measures to include middle-income countries in the Sustainable Development Goals was requested by a delegation, which made the point that the 2021 report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Goals ([E/2021/58](#)) highlighted that 8 out of 10 “new poor” were in middle-income countries and in that regard called upon the Secretary-General to increase support to those countries. The same delegation recalled the agreement made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination to support the full implementation of all relevant resolutions pertaining to the needs of middle-income countries and called for a similar agreement during the current session.

220. Another delegation, citing General Assembly resolution [76/215](#), in which the Assembly called for a coordinated system-wide response plan for support to middle-income countries, referenced the mandate under subprogramme 6, Economic analysis and policy. It was stated that the need for coordination was emphasized by panellists during the high-level meeting of the General Assembly held on 11 May 2023. The same delegation indicated that the requested system-wide response plan could result in a shift in focus from direct financial support to the provision of high-quality policy advice, capacity-building and effective partnerships for middle-income countries.

221. The issue of ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all was raised, as referenced in result 1: accelerated progress towards ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030 of subprogramme 3, Sustainable development, and table 9.11, which mentioned the Water Action Agenda. The United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 was considered very important, as stated by a delegation. Concerns were raised regarding what concrete actions the Water Action Agenda might include; how monitoring might take place; what a dedicated platform meant in that regard; and how to know whether there might be parallel structures.

222. A delegation expressed particular appreciation for result 3: strengthened commitment and action to address the unique needs of small island developing States of subprogramme 3, Sustainable development, particularly as small island developing States continued to face combined challenges, including geographical remoteness, small-scale economies, high costs, and adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters.

223. The element of statistical and geospatial information, as itemized under subprogramme 4, Statistics, was discussed, as it related to the Sustainable Development Goals. More specifically, it was highlighted that the Department aimed to ensure enhanced coherence and more effective functioning and transformation of the global statistical and geospatial system. The Department was asked to elaborate on how “enhanced coherence” was linked to the United Nations process; how it would be handled in the Summit of the Future; what the most important issues or hurdles were in achieving it; and how it might be achieved. A delegation remarked that making statistical data available at the national level was very much supported.

224. The need for additional support for statistical data was emphasized, as countries depended on data to develop responsive policies, especially as they pertained to sustainable development. The topics of knowledge transfer and technical advice were also identified as important issues by a delegation because they related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and were important elements of the Department’s work.

225. It was noted that the economic landscape was not good in the current year and that implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals was lagging. While recognizing and supporting the Department's efforts, a delegation raised a question as to what more could be done and what might be needed to maintain momentum. It was noted that in September 2023, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit would energize countries to accelerate the implementation of the Goals. A delegation noted that the implementation of the Goals was one of the Secretary-General's most important tasks and enquired about the type of support that could be expected.

226. A delegation stated that the Department also needed to address the challenges presented by external factors, perhaps in 2024, and elaborated that the Department might have a greater role with regard to the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the capability of Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including by preparing some reports on their impacts. The response to the food crisis was cited as one to potentially replicate in other areas.

227. Some delegations expressed continued commitment to gender equality, women's empowerment, the rights of persons with disabilities and engagement with NGOs. The impact of emerging and ongoing trends, policies and programmes on the poorest and most vulnerable and on women and girls was highlighted. Financing for social care and older persons was also emphasized as an area of priority by a delegation.

228. Several delegations drew attention to the discrimination against Paralympians, calling for non-discriminatory approaches to persons with disabilities, including in sports, and the commitment to "leave no one behind"; the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda were also mentioned as containing commitments requiring more action from the Department. It was suggested that those issues should be included in the agenda of the next session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

229. The importance of accessibility was noted to be a requirement for inclusive societies, as established in Sustainable Development Goal 16, Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. An enquiry was made as to the type of platform the Department might implement to ensure inclusion, particularly concerning persons with disabilities.

230. Subprogramme 5, Population, was discussed, with interest in the ongoing work in the Secretariat and the Statistical Commission concerning the indicators on migration. It was expressed that the indicators should be focused not only on the countries of destination of migrants, but also on their countries of origin, for which the problem of measuring emigration was very relevant.

231. A delegation raised the theme of effective coordination between the Department, regional commissions and other United Nations development entities, with emphasis on reducing duplication.

232. Attention was drawn to the objectivity of the *World Economic Situation and Prospects* report, which, according to a delegation, linked the impact of the situation in Ukraine on the global economy with the sanctions actions of certain countries. A delegation enquired about how subprogramme 6, Economic analysis and policy, intended to fulfil the mandate on the lifting of sanctions of General Assembly resolution 76/191, and whether there were plans to create a special mechanism for monitoring their humanitarian consequences with the involvement of a network of economic advisers, resident coordinators, development organizations and civil society.

233. The legal aspect of the resident coordinators' in-country presence was also raised as an issue, with a call to improve the situation, as the legal side of the resident coordinators' stay in the country of accreditation had not yet been regularized everywhere. That provision affected the legal status, privileges and immunities of both the resident coordinators and their office, according to a delegation.

234. A delegation voiced the necessity to redouble the efforts of the international community with respect to the means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to financing for development, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and attending, in turn, to the national capacities of States.

235. The Department was reminded to address countries from different geographical regions that had different models of economic and social development in the field of financing for development, and to pay more attention to the potential of developing countries to participate in regional economic agreements.

236. With regard to climate issues, some delegations expressed concern about the impact on the most vulnerable countries. Reference was made to numerous proposals that had been made, including, for example, the Bridgetown Covenant, which linked development with access to climate finance. That was highlighted as an area which also required coordination among the various actors to avoid duplication and overlap. The Secretariat was invited to offer details in that area as it was a topic of particular concern.

237. A delegation stressed the need for United Nations system entities to work on developing matrices that complemented gross domestic product to measure the development progress of a country; the delegation requested a summary of the work being done, including the work on the multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

238. **The Committee commended the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for its work supporting the development pillar of the United Nations and welcomed its efforts in coordinating actions for eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities within and among countries and promoting opportunities and progress towards sustainable development for all, leaving no one behind.**

239. **The Committee expressed concern with the slow progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing that many Sustainable Development Goals were off track, while some had even regressed below the 2015 baseline, and stressed the need to further strengthen the efforts of the United Nations, in cooperation with Member States, for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in time, leaving no one behind. The Committee also noted with appreciation the crucial role of the Department in supporting Member States in their ongoing efforts to achieve the Goals.**

240. **The Committee emphasized the importance of ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls continued to be an integral part of the sustainable development agenda and commended the Department for its work in this regard.**

241. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:**

## **Overall orientation**

### ***Paragraph 9.8***

**Add new subparagraph (f), reading:**

**Continue to support the development cooperation with middle-income countries, in accordance with its mandate.**

### ***Paragraph 9.15***

**Replace the existing text with the following:**

**In addition, in order to support Member States on issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, within the overall scope of the objectives, the Department responded to requests from Member States for in-depth analysis of the impact of the pandemic on development prospects and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and sought to address multiple dimensions of poverty and inequality and shape solid recommendations that drive transformative action for inclusive social, environmental and economic policy, dynamic, sustainable, innovative and people-centred economies, youth employment and women's economic empowerment, and decent work for all.**

### **Subprogramme 1**

**Intergovernmental support and coordination for sustainable development**

### ***Paragraph 9.23 (f)***

**After “vulnerable situations”, add “so that no one is left behind”.**

### **Subprogramme 8**

**Sustainable forest management**

### ***Paragraph 9.114 (f)***

**Replace the existing text with the following:**

**Support common country analyses, which inform the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, in order to provide resident coordinators with the tools to tailor their responses to countries' specific needs and priorities and to effectively support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including through national implementation of sustainable forest management, at the national level.**

## **Programme 8**

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

242. At its 5th meeting, on 31 May 2023, the Committee considered programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 10\)](#)).

243. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

## Discussion

244. Delegations expressed their support and appreciation for the work of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. A delegation noted that the Office had a very broad mandate to assist the 91 most vulnerable countries in the world and that it was important to the development of Africa, as 33 of the 48 least developed countries, 16 of the 32 landlocked developing countries and 7 of the 38 small island developing States were in Africa, as were 20 transit countries, which also benefited from the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024. The delegation commended the excellent work carried out by the Office and expressed its appreciation for the working relationship between the Office and regional and subregional entities.

245. A delegation noted that the Office played a pivotal role and welcomed the Office's intention to present policy recommendations on challenges related to access by the 91 most vulnerable countries to sustainable energy and broadband. Noting that the programme still focused on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, a delegation suggested that its focus should shift to the post-COVID-19 period, and raised concerns regarding the new challenges that the 91 most vulnerable countries would face, particularly in relation to fuel inflation, which affected access to energy by the most vulnerable countries.

246. A delegation stated that the wealth gap, recovery gap and development gap were widening and severely affecting global development. The delegation added that least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States were facing multiple challenges and difficulties, and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would never be fully achieved if those countries were left behind. The delegation expressed an interest in hearing about partnerships with academia and how they helped to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, and in receiving more details about cooperation with resident coordinators and their impact on the Office's activities. The same delegation said that it supported the Office's efforts to strengthen policies to eradicate poverty in least developed countries and to accelerate the structural transformation of their economies, to improve connectivity in landlocked developing countries and reduce their trade transaction costs, and to increase overall resilience in small island developing States. The delegation looked forward to the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States as an opportunity to focus the attention of the international community on the needs of those countries, such as the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index.

247. Noting that the programme focused on key challenges, such as economic issues, including trade and investment, health crises, security, climate change and the environment, gender and disabilities, energy and marine resources, a delegation indicated that a series of meetings intended to foster the engagement of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States had focused on deepening strong cooperation in those areas to find solutions to such problems. The delegation indicated that there was a need to leverage opportunities and design a strategy plan to address some of the key global issues that were affecting the growth and development of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. In that regard, more detail was sought as to what the Office was planning to do to address critical problems that were environmental in nature, such as sea erosion, typhoons and hurricanes.

248. It was noted that the subprogrammes for least developed countries and landlocked developing countries contained steps for the structural transformation of



economies, the development of infrastructure, and the full involvement of those countries in international value chains and world trade, as well as expanded cooperation with international business circles. A delegation suggested adding elderly people to the list of vulnerable population groups mentioned in the Overall orientation section of the report, as without their inclusion, universal coverage of social services, for example, in accordance with the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, would be unattainable. The same delegation noted with satisfaction that the proposed programme plan contained an exhaustive list of activities for the preparation and holding of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, but noted, however, that most of the programme budget was allocated to support the least developed countries, under subprogramme 1.

249. With regard to the strategy and external factors for 2024, in particular paragraph 10.4, a delegation expressed satisfaction that least developed countries and small island developing States and their development partners would embark on comprehensive reviews of the implementation of their respective programmes of action, the outcomes of which would inform the next generation of global compacts aimed at addressing the special needs of those groups of countries. The same delegation said that linkages would be promoted in follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, in particular the 2030 Agenda. The Office would mobilize resources to ensure that the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States had their voices heard in global deliberations, and that representatives of the most vulnerable countries benefited from capacity-building activities, peer learning and the exchange of best practices, all on thematic areas relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals and to building resilience to future crises. The delegation also noted that, as indicated in paragraph 10.5, the Office would raise awareness, mobilize support and build consensus in pursuit of those priorities, and would strengthen engagement in the most vulnerable countries as well as in partner countries and in regional and global organizations and forums. Policy recommendations on how to overcome the specific challenges of the most vulnerable countries, for example in the areas of access to sustainable energy and broadband, would be provided on the basis of cross-cutting research carried out by the Office. The delegation was pleased that, as indicated in paragraph 10.6, the Office would convene the inter-agency consultative groups for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The delegation further noted that paragraphs 10.9 and 10.10 indicated that the Office had included persons with disabilities in its programme of work and had integrated a gender perspective. The delegation was pleased that the Office would work to enhance cooperation with the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth to foster the involvement, participation and input of young people in intergovernmental negotiations and United Nations processes. The delegation also expressed satisfaction that, as indicated in paragraph 10.17, the evaluation of a project entitled “Strengthening the capacity of landlocked developing countries under the Belt and Road Initiative to design and implement policies that promote transport connectivity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals” had been completed in 2022 and had guided the programme plan for 2024. The delegation was also pleased that, as indicated in paragraph 10.19, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Office’s support to the network of national focal points for the least developed countries was planned for 2024.

250. With regard to subprogramme 1, Least developed countries, a delegation referred to the strategy of the subprogramme and in particular to paragraph 10.21 (e), on leading the inter-agency task force on least developed country graduation, and paragraph 10.21 (g), on the holding of annual meetings to share experiences and best practices on mainstreaming the Doha Programme of Action and the Goals into

national development processes, as well as on their implementation and follow-up. A delegation expressed appreciation for the link made with the Doha Programme of Action and the importance of its implementation, and its integration into national strategic planning and the mobilization of resources and knowledge to support the recovery of least developed countries and their sustainable development. The same delegation referred to paragraph 10.28 of the report and expressed the hope that the results in 2023 and 2024 would lead to a result better than the target of integrating 20 per cent of the provisions of the Doha Programme of Action. With regard to the establishment of an online university to promote the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics with a view to obtaining a diploma or access to postgraduate training, as indicated in paragraph 10.29 of the report, the delegation inquired whether any feasibility studies had been done, with a view to enabling the poorest and most vulnerable populations to access the university free of charge or at a lower cost. It was also highlighted that basic issues needed to be addressed, such as uninterrupted power supply and the digital divide, to ensure the viability of an online university. Regarding the activities of the Office for 2024, with reference to table 10.6 on the deliverables of subprogramme 1, the delegation noted that the planned number of support products (documentation and technical materials) either decreased sharply, which could be explained, for example, by the fact that the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries had now been held, or increased slightly, and enquired whether there was an anticipation of the products to be provided by the Office, which were always very useful, for upcoming high-level events.

251. A delegation requested additional information on the food stockholding mechanism mentioned in paragraph 10.21 (a) and, with regard to paragraph 10.21 (d), asked for additional details on conducting advocacy activities to promote resource mobilization in least developed countries, especially public and private financing, including innovative finance, for resilience-building.

252. Highlighting the need for follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which had been held in Qatar and had led to the successful adoption of the Doha Programme of Action, a delegation stressed that the central task ahead for the least developed countries and the international community was to enable the effective implementation of the Doha Programme of Action in support of Agenda 2030.

253. With regard to subprogramme 2, Landlocked developing countries, a delegation indicated that a cross-cutting social element could be added under “Planned results for 2024”, as an integral part of sustainable development. A delegation commended the Office for the seriousness with which it had considered the most vulnerable countries and acknowledged the success of the regional review meeting of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in 2024 in Kigali, and sought further information on the primary focus for landlocked developing countries in the next proposed programme plan. A delegation asked if any plans or programmes had been initiated that were intended to address climate change in landlocked developing countries and least developed countries. The same delegation also asked whether any initiatives were in place to better equip and prepare least developed countries for future emergencies and pandemics that might lead to long-term border closures.

254. With regard to subprogramme 3, Small island developing States, a delegation stated that increased resilience on all fronts in small island developing States remained a critical objective and that having the tools to be able to measure the multi-faceted vulnerability of small island developing States would be a fundamental instrument to address their economic, social and environmental vulnerability, alongside the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The same delegation reaffirmed its support for the work on the development of a

multidimensional vulnerability index, also in the context of the outcomes of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in 2024, as the index would provide a much-needed holistic approach to how small island developing States might be supported and sustained in their needs. The same delegation indicated its support for the planned results for 2024 on climate finance, on addressing the limited or scarce availability of data indicators, and on promoting private partnerships as key areas towards the fulfilment of the Samoa Pathway and the 2030 Agenda. A delegation highlighted the references, in paragraph 10.47 (a), to engaging with international financial institutions and the private sector, and in paragraph 10.48 (a), to strengthened international support for the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, the Paris Agreement and other priorities of small island developing States for sustainable development, and welcomed the reference, in paragraph 10.48 (b), to enhanced access to finance for small island developing States.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

255. The Committee commended the continuous efforts of the Office in advocating strongly on behalf of the most vulnerable Member States, in supporting the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and in continuing to forge broad and durable partnerships, including within and outside the United Nations system.

256. The Committee commended the Office for the successful preparation of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Doha in March 2023, and recommended that the Office continue to monitor follow up on the commitments in the Doha Programme of Action.

257. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to support, consistent with its mandate, the prioritization of the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action by mainstreaming its provisions into national strategic plans and mobilizing requisite resources, as well as through the inter-agency task force on least developed country graduation, and to further develop its cooperation with resident coordinators.

258. The Committee welcomed the efforts of the Office to convene the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developed Countries, in Rwanda in June 2024, and encouraged the Office to continue carrying out advocacy activities to mobilize international support.

259. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to continue to help advancing the Vienna Programme of Action, including enhancing and facilitating trade connectivity and the implementation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation in Landlocked Developing Countries.

260. The Committee emphasized the need for enhancing cross-border collaboration between the landlocked developing countries and transit countries by minimizing disruptions to international transport in order to promote sustainable, inclusive, affordable and resilient regional and global transport systems and value chains.

261. The Committee welcomed the efforts of the Office to advocate for the special case of small island developing States in achieving sustainable development and to lead the preparations for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

262. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to help to implement the Samoa Pathway also through the networks of

national focal points and by supporting the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index to improve access to development finance.

263. 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 2024, subject to the following modifications:

#### **Overall orientation**

After paragraph 10.8, insert a new paragraph, reading:

The Office will further explore the ways of cooperation, support and participation in the global efforts towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, youth, persons with disabilities and older persons.

#### **Subprogramme 1**

##### **Least developed countries**

##### *Paragraph 10.21 (a)*

Replace the existing text with the following:

Provide support to Member States in their intergovernmental processes related to the priorities of the least developed countries, including by supporting the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action, including its deliverables, namely by exploring the feasibility of an online university to support online graduate and postgraduate university-level education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, an investment support centre, a resilience-building mechanism, a Sustainable Graduation Support Facility and a system of food stockholding for the least developed countries on a regional and subregional basis, or alternative means, such as cash transfers, taking into account possible economic implications and risks;"

#### **Subprogramme 2**

##### **Landlocked developing countries**

##### *Paragraph 10.35*

Add new subparagraph (d), reading:

(d) Strengthened social protection for all groups of population in landlocked developing countries, including through access to decent jobs.

#### **Subprogramme 3**

##### **Small island developing States**

##### *Paragraph 10.48 (a)*

After "to implement", insert "the 2030 Agenda,".

## **Programme 9**

### **United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – strategic partnership for progress towards implementation**

#### **Commitment to the subsequent implementation plans of Agenda 2063**

264. At its 15th meeting, on 8 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 9, United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – strategic partnership for progress towards implementation, commitment to the subsequent implementation plans of Agenda 2063, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 11\)](#)).

265. The Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

#### **Discussion**

266. Delegations expressed their support and appreciation for the work completed under programme 9, to assist the Secretary-General in ensuring a coherent and integrated approach to United Nations support for Africa and addressing gaps, monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and commitments made to the development of Africa and coordinating global advocacy in support of Agenda 2063, among other initiatives. A delegation expressed appreciation for the joint work the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Global Communications to assist the African Union, including through a new coordination structure, the African Union-United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform, which had agreed on eight key priority areas.

267. A delegation noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted the implementation of the mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and that much work needed to be done to get back on track towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It enquired whether it was realistic to expect that the proposed programme plan would be implemented in 2024, given the pandemic's negative impact on programme implementation, and how the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa was planning to compensate for any setbacks. The delegation further stated that the Goals could not be achieved without the support of the entire multilateral and international system within and beyond the United Nations, or without innovative and inclusive partnerships, and that the participation of regional and local actors, including civil society, the private sector, academia and community leaders, among others, would be required. It also encouraged the programme to increase the participation of African youth in policymaking, empower women and girls and incorporate a gender perspective and promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, with accessibility considered when the programme plan was elaborated.

268. Another delegation noted that, in view of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on health systems, social protection structures, employment, education and other critical areas for the development of Africa, enhanced coordination and advocacy efforts were critically needed to ensure that the planning and implementation of the programmes and projects to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063 and the priorities established by the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the regional economic communities and African countries to ensure a strong recovery. The delegation also indicated that, despite the challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic had provided an opportunity to build forward, build better and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda during the decade of action to

meet the Sustainable Development Goals. It further stated that, as the United Nations prepared to build forward and build better, it was crucial to ensure that Africa seized the opportunities created by the pandemic, in particular to promote a systemic change that would lead to Africa assuming its rightful place as a dynamic force and an influential global player and partner in the multilateral system, shift the debate towards issues that were crucial for the growth and development of Africa, and change and own the narrative about Africa, including by communicating success stories from African countries. A delegation indicated that challenges and threats should be overcome on the basis of the principle of African solutions to African problems, so that the countries of the continent could themselves agree on the way to move forward. It further stated that the international community should support the efforts of African countries, politically and legally through the Security Council, as well as in material terms, thus increasing those countries' ability to build regional structures of cooperation that were open to the outside world and to countries that were ready to do business with African States on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

269. A delegation noted that 2023 marked the end of the first decade of implementation of Agenda 2063, and that that year, the General Assembly would also be holding the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and advancing the preparations for the Summit of the Future, which would present a unique chance to shape the international dialogue to fast-track the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Another delegation asked what challenges or risks had been identified that could affect the implementation of the mandate of the programme as the world prepared for the second decade of implementation of Agenda 2063 and the second half of the period for implementing the 2030 Agenda. A delegation indicated that, given the pivotal role of Africa in consolidating and accelerating development gains globally, the continent's development needs and priorities should be central to global deliberations if meaningful progress was to be made, and that the new narrative on Africa and from Africa would continue to inform the programme's activities in 2024.

270. A delegation noted that key investments in the digitalization of public services, if targeted correctly, could act as a lever for increasing vertical policy coherence and accelerating development gains, which were pivotal considerations for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It noted that the programme would consolidate the work done over the past few years on the themes of energy, climate, finance and food systems as an essential focus for building increased resilience in Africa and that the prioritization of those issues would contribute to bringing an African narrative to the New York stage. It noted that the programme would step up efforts to maximize the potential of the recovery through coordinated action on areas that were key to the leapfrogging of Africa towards sustainable development and expressed appreciation for the efforts the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Global Communications would continue to make to promote digitalization and the African Continental Free Trade Area as critical tools for recovery.

271. The same delegation noted that in 2019, however, the Office of Internal Oversight Services had noted in an evaluation the lack of a Secretariat-wide strategy on the preparedness, policy coherence and early results of United Nations entities associated with their support for the Sustainable Development Goals. It enquired whether the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa had developed a sector-wide plan or strategy and, if so, whether that plan or strategy had been integrated into Member States' national plans and whether African countries had adapted the plan for national implementation. It further sought clarification as to the other expected outcomes of the pilot role of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in terms of the integrated planning, management and reporting tool in Umoja and what specific impact the

Secretary-General's reforms of the programme had had. It further enquired what the objective was of the fellowship programme for young Africans at United Nations Headquarters that the Office was considering establishing, and how that objective related to its mandate.

272. A delegation expressed the view that the programme did not contain sufficient information on climate change adaptation and related actions, as climate change adaptation pertained to transformation in the energy sector, and that the establishment of the African Union-United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform, which had defined climate action and resilience as one of its eight key joint priority areas, seemed promising.

273. With regard to subprogramme 1, Data and knowledge management for evidence-based policies and advocacy in support of Agenda 2063, a delegation commended the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for monitoring and highlighting the school feeding programme as an accelerator of peace and development, and noted that the number of children not attending school in Africa was staggering, at 150 million, and that that figure was likely to increase as a result of droughts caused by climate change, poverty, poor economies and general underdevelopment challenges. It indicated that the school feeding programme, therefore, would play a major part in turning the fortunes of millions of people on the continent, and encouraged the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to continue to communicate the need for such programmes and encourage the United Nations, the African Union and development partners to sustain the project for at least a generation to allow students to finish school and enable communities to taste the fruits of education, thereby sustainably contributing to peace and the achievement of most development goals. A delegation also welcomed the initiative to strengthen data and knowledge management for evidence-based policies and advocacy in support of Agenda 2063 and welcomed the plan to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, as improved monitoring and evaluation systems on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa and the goals and milestones of Agenda 2063 were needed. The delegation also welcomed the plan to work towards strengthening regulatory frameworks around e-government in African countries, in cooperation with the African Union and other partners, which might have some overlap with the regulatory frameworks to be developed under the African Continental Free Trade Area. It indicated that a strong and continued coordination between the African Continental Free Trade Area stakeholders and partners and ECA on the planned activities under subprogramme 1 would be beneficial. It further indicated its support for the African Union Commission in the implementation of the African Union Data Policy Framework with the objective of harmonizing data governance frameworks across member States and regional economic communities.

274. With regard to subprogramme 2, Regional coordination of United Nations support for the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, a delegation welcomed the plan to conduct policy research and analysis on key African Union priorities and noted that there was a continued need for scientific evaluation of policies and reforms related to the African Continental Free Trade Area to provide a sound basis for decision-making by negotiators.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**275. The Committee commended the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for its efforts in ensuring a coherent and integrated approach for United Nations support for Africa and addressing gaps, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to promote coherence and**

synergy in the work of the United Nations on Africa as mandated and to ensure that the work is consistently aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

276. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the programme to work towards accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2063 by establishing measurable indicators that reflect the support provided by the United Nations to Africa on matters related to the digital economy, infrastructure, industry, energy and climate change, in particular through the reinforcement of the strategic partnership between the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA and the Department of Global Communications.

277. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the cooperation the United Nations has with Africa, especially on opportunities within the Organization on matters related to human resources, prevention management, procurement and investment opportunities at both the regional and subregional levels.

278. The Committee noted the work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in delivering its mandate and, considering the change made to the name of the programme, as approved by the General Assembly following the sixty-first session of the Committee, recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to carry out an in-depth review and report on the impact of the reforms so as to ensure that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa is able to fully leverage the potential of those reforms.

279. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to establish structured and regular meetings with the Group of African States in New York in order to improve the coordination of the United Nations contribution to the implementation of Agenda 2063.

280. The Committee noted with appreciation that the programme would continue to promote enhanced coherence of the United Nations system in Africa, including by leveraging the complementarities between the interdepartmental task force on African affairs, to which the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa provided support.

281. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to encourage the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to continue to work closely with United Nations development entities, ECA, regional economic communities and regional and subregional organizations, especially the African Union, in coordinating international efforts to support African countries in their ongoing management of and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

282. The Committee welcomed the initiative to strengthen data and knowledge management for evidence-based policies and advocacy in support of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, recognizing the importance of improved monitoring and evaluation systems.

283. The Committee noted the relevance of leveraging new transformative technologies to advance sustainable development in the continent and revert the growing digital divide that undermined African countries' development efforts and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in the review of the functioning of the reorganization of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa a proposal with a programmatic narrative and structure on innovation and new transformative technologies for the implementation of Agenda 2063.



284. The Committee emphasized the importance of a conducive environment for digital economy and digital transformation in the public sector across Africa, welcomed the plans to strengthen regulatory frameworks around e-government in African countries, in cooperation with the African Union, and emphasized the importance of strong coordination with the African Continental Free Trade Area stakeholders and ECA.

285. The Committee welcomed the plan to conduct policy research and analysis on key African Union priorities.

286. The Committee emphasized the relevance of the African Union-United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform for action and resilience with regard to climate change in the context of Agenda 2063.

287. The Committee recalled the request of the General Assembly in its resolution [76/236](#) for the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to explore the feasibility of developing deliverables and activities for the promotion of young people and ensuring their inclusion in the strategies of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. In that regard, the Committee recommended that the Assembly encourage the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to continue exploring a fellowship for young Africans at United Nations Headquarters in New York to strengthen institutional capacities in policy analysis, design and monitoring.

288. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 9 – United Nations system support for the African Union’s Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – strategic partnership for progress towards implementation, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modification:

#### **Subprogramme 3**

#### **Public information and awareness activities in support of Agenda 2063**

#### **Planned results for 2024**

#### ***Paragraph 11.53***

**In the last sentence, delete “on the development of a New Agenda for Peace as part of”.**

### **Programme 10**

#### **Trade and development**

289. At its 8th meeting, on 2 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 12\)](#) and [A/78/6 \(Sect. 13\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

290. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Executive Director of ITC introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

#### **Discussion**

291. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022. Several delegations stressed the importance of the work of UNCTAD and ITC and expressed

support for the proposed programme plan for 2024. Some delegations expressed appreciation for the quality of reports.

292. A delegation stressed the great importance it placed on development, which was a very important pillar of work of the United Nations and one that should not be neglected. The delegation commended the work of UNCTAD and ITC for using trade as an enabling means and tool, and expressed the view that that use of trade was also conducive to peace and security, and the full promotion of human rights in an interdependent manner.

293. A delegation pointed out that the current Secretary-General of UNCTAD was the first Latin American woman to hold the position. The delegation noted the importance of international cooperation for development in bolstering synergies between programmes, as well as with other entities, at the regional, national, local and global levels. The delegation stressed the importance of including a gender perspective in the operational activities, results and outcomes, noting that such a perspective was fundamental throughout the work of UNCTAD. The delegation expressed the view that seeking consensus on issues linked to resilient and sustainable development and providing support to developing countries to help them face the current global challenges were important.

294. A delegation indicated that the development policy of its country included among its priorities support for the fight against hunger, poverty and inequalities in developing countries, and a just transition towards sustainable ecosystems, where sustainable meant ecologically, socially and economically viable. In that connection, UNCTAD was an important partner, as it provided new information, advised countries on economic and trade-related strategies and policies, helped lower and ease trade barriers and, as such, was a driver for regional economic integration.

295. The delegation added that it advocated for a strong and efficient UNCTAD and valued the contributions of UNCTAD to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as its efforts to overcome climate change in the context of trade and development, and emphasized its interest in a strong and efficient UNCTAD and an agile, efficient and effective UNCTAD secretariat. The delegation stressed that it would continue to work with UNCTAD and was sure that UNCTAD was on a good path to deliver all of its important mandates.

296. A delegation noted that it looked forward to celebrating, in 2024, the sixtieth anniversary of the foundational conference of UNCTAD. Noting that UNCTAD was responsible for assisting developing countries in integrating beneficially into the global economy in support of inclusive, resilient and sustainable growth and development, the delegation expressed the view that this task was now more critical than ever in the light of the highly regressive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of the reinforcing and cascading crises of the pandemic, armed conflict, inflation, geopolitics and climate change, the delegation noted with concern that it was difficult to predict what the future held. A question was raised as to what strategies were in place to ensure that UNCTAD could still deliver on its mandate even with an unpredictable future.

297. A delegation noted that trade was an engine for development and that the role of UNCTAD was critical in promoting the development objectives of member States across all three of its pillars, namely, trade promotion, trade facilitation and trade investment. Another delegation expressed support for the ongoing work of UNCTAD for the implementation of the four transformations outlined in the Bridgetown Covenant in accordance with its three interrelated pillars of work. A delegation expressed the view that UNCTAD should continue to concentrate on its three pillars of work, namely research and analysis, technical cooperation, and consensus-building and dialogue between countries and groups of countries.

298. Regarding research and analysis, a delegation expressed appreciation for the reports of UNCTAD, such as its reports on the least developed countries, the digital economy, green industry and world investment. The delegation stated that its country had a very positive impression of UNCTAD as one of the hosts for the United Nations science, technology and innovation process and noted, as an example, the hosting by UNCTAD of the session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development held in Geneva in March 2023.

299. Regarding technical cooperation, the delegation highlighted that its country was a voluntary donor to three of the major technical cooperation programmes of UNCTAD, namely, those pertaining to e-commerce and the digital economy, the debt management and financial analysis system, and support for the African Continental Free Trade Area. The view was expressed that UNCTAD was doing a very good job in those areas, and also in supporting least developed countries. The delegation further said that UNCTAD was contributing significantly to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and solutions to overcome climate change in the context of trade and development. It was noted that the implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant was also an important task of UNCTAD.

300. Regarding consensus-building and dialogue between countries and groups of countries, the delegation expressed the view that UNCTAD had made much progress, especially in recent years. The delegation noted the Black Sea grain deal, facilitated by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, as a striking example and congratulated UNCTAD in that regard. The delegation further noted that this example and the very important negotiation and facilitation role of UNCTAD were described in the proposed programme plan.

301. The view was expressed that technical assistance and capacity-building support in areas such as investment promotion, investment regulations, readiness and project development, trade promotion, trade facilitation, e-commerce and digital infrastructure development were important.

302. Clarification was sought as to how UNCTAD avoided duplicating the efforts of other United Nations entities and remained focused on its comparative advantages.

303. It was noted that member States and regions had different levels of trade capacities and activities and that therefore one description for all countries could not be given and the programmes should be driven by member States and upon the request of the regions and countries with different levels of trade activities.

304. A delegation stated that, in view of the multiple crises currently being confronted, there was a clear need for enhanced global efforts and cooperation for inclusive, resilient and sustainable development, as well as for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

305. A delegation sought clarification as to the integration policy, especially with regard to a gender perspective in operational activities, that UNCTAD applied and the concrete steps that would be taken to analyse and address the gender impact of armed conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions were raised as to what specific measures and policy recommendations UNCTAD proposed to address the interrelated challenges of armed conflicts, rising costs of living and climate change, how the progress and impact of those activities would be monitored and evaluated, and how accountability for achieving the goals of the Bridgetown Covenant and the Sustainable Development Goals could be ensured.

306. Delegations emphasized their readiness to support the work of UNCTAD to support a balance of all three of its pillars, namely, intergovernmental dialogue, technical cooperation and analytical work. In that connection, the high quality of UNCTAD analytical products was noted as a valuable source of highly professional,

frequently alternative, views on the most pressing international problems. Furthermore, the view was expressed that it was exceedingly important for measures to improve publication policies to not result in the imposition of political censorship or undermine the intellectual independence of the analytical component of the UNCTAD mandate.

307. It was noted with appreciation that the involvement of UNCTAD in the coordination of the task team of the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance and its participation in negotiations and the promotion of food products and fertilizers to world markets, had shown that it could rise to the challenge. The delegation further noted that the process of building a more agile, impactful and engaged UNCTAD was under way and had momentum, although it was still not where it should be. In that connection, the delegation expressed the view that farm inputs were expensive and asked whether countries, especially those in Africa, could be empowered and financed to have industries that would produce fertilizer.

308. A delegation noted that it considered trade as one of the crucial factors in advancing peaceful and sustainable development for all member States. Given that one of the guiding principles of the United Nations was leaving no one behind, the delegation underlined the role played by UNCTAD in the achievement of inclusive development, and expressed the view that it was important for the Committee to achieve consensus on programme 10 in the current year, as it had done in the previous years.

309. In the context of implementation of goals and tasks included in programme 10, the view was expressed that UNCTAD should be guided by an approach that was both constructive and apolitical. It was noted that such an approach would be particularly necessary in 2024 when the outcomes of the implementation of the Bridgetown Covenant would be assessed, prior to the adoption of a new four-year UNCTAD road map for its sixteenth session. Delegations also noted with satisfaction that the priorities, as enshrined in the Bridgetown Covenant, had been duly reflected in the UNCTAD programme of work for 2024.

310. It was noted that due attention had been paid to the issue of regional integration, thanks to some member States and participating States members of integration associations, and that UNCTAD had managed to more effectively counter external shocks and to implement the goals under the 2030 Agenda. In that connection, UNCTAD was urged to more proactively cooperate with regional organizations and associations. The view was expressed that UNCTAD, as set out in the Bridgetown Covenant, should become a useful mechanism for dialogue between integration associations for the purposes of analysis and leverage of experience countering crises.

311. It was noted that the issues of environmental protection and climate were of great importance to all countries in the light of the risks that those issues posed to sustainable development. The view was expressed that it was important for those issues not to become central in the operations of UNCTAD, as was seen taking place in many other organizations, and that they should be considered from the standpoint of their impact on trade and development. It was emphasized that, in its efforts, UNCTAD should avoid duplication and encroachment upon the purview of other organizations, and that UNCTAD, given its specific benefits and advantages, should focus on the trade aspects of the green agenda, specifically on the risks posed by ecological protectionism to global trade.

312. In the context of the programme's assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the conflict in Ukraine on the global situation, it was noted that the programme had not included a similar assessment of the impact of the monetary policies of developed countries, the rejection of investments in traditional fuels and, most importantly, unilateral coercive measures. The view was expressed

that the latter set of factors had made the greatest contribution to rising energy prices. It was noted that unilateral restrictions on the financial and logistical sectors continued to block their provision of food and fertilizer to global markets, specifically to developing countries that were in greatest need. In that connection, the view was expressed that UNCTAD possessed sufficient experience and professionalism to regularly conduct analysis of the impact of sanctions on trade and development, as well as interlinked issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.

313. Aligning with that view, a delegation stated that the promotion of trade could not be done without addressing trade impediments and barriers. The delegation expressed the view that imposing unilateral coercive measures on the trade of countries constituted a serious barrier to the trade activities of member States and limited trade cooperation. In that context, the delegation stated that UNCTAD urgently needed to address that issue by conducting studies on the negative impacts of such measures on member States, reporting on the issues identified and proposing recommendations.

314. In reference to paragraph 12.4 of programme 10, a delegation noted with appreciation that UNCTAD would support the implementation, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda and the relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The delegation noted that UNCTAD was the custodian of eight Goal indicators, covering topics related to trade, tariffs, development finance, debt, investment, illicit finance and enterprise sustainability, at the global level. The delegation further noted that UNCTAD, through its work and results, would continue to support member States in making progress not only towards the achievement of Goals 8, 9, 10 and 17, but also towards Goals 2, 5, 12, 14, 15 and 16. In that connection, questions were raised as to what strategies or plans were in place to speed up the implementation of the Goals and whether a post-COVID-19 strategy had been developed to jump-start the programmes.

315. With regard to paragraph 12.5 of programme 10, a delegation suggested replacing the term “transforming multilateralism” with “revitalizing multilateralism” for the sake of clarity.

316. In reference to paragraph 12.7, a delegation highlighted the establishment of the Statistics Service as a welcome step that would support developing countries in building their capacity to collect and compile data and measure progress in sustainable, inclusive and equitable trade, growth and development.

317. With regard to paragraph 12.19, a delegation pointed out that its country was also a key partner in the Belt and Road Initiative.

318. A delegation noted that UNCTAD had a mandate to address many of the most important issues confronting the world and to advance a number of Goals. The view was expressed that UNCTAD had historically fallen short of its promise, since it had not taken necessary reform measures in more than a decade. In that connection, the delegation said that it was pleased to hear that the Secretary-General was making institutional reform a priority and recommended a stronger focus on institutional reform in the 2024 programme plan.

319. The delegation said that it and others had long called for increased transparency and recalled that the Joint Inspection Unit, in its 2012 report on the review of management and administration in UNCTAD ([JIU/REP/2012/1](#)), had also called for increased transparency. In that connection, it was noted that the 2024 proposed plan contained a call for increased trade transparency and support for transparent governance by member States but no acknowledgement or offer of a path to improved transparency at UNCTAD itself.

320. The delegation expressed support for the recent comments by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD in favour of peer review of UNCTAD publications and stated that economic analysis was one of its most important functions. It also expressed the view that peer review processes had been a long-standing recommendation by the delegation and others. In that connection, it was noted that the only reference to peer reviews in the 2024 proposed programme plan was in paragraph 12.49, which did not contain a reference to UNCTAD publications per se. Clarification was sought as to what steps UNCTAD was taking to institute peer review for its publications.

321. The delegation further said that, for over a decade, there had been calls for UNCTAD to institute results-based management, to improve efficiency and consistency, and recalled that the Joint Inspection Unit, in its 2012 report, had recommended that the Secretary-General should “define and elaborate, as a matter of priority, a clear results-based management integrated framework and implementing strategy”. In that connection, the calls of the Secretary-General for results-based management at UNCTAD were noted with appreciation. The delegation noted that there was one passing reference to results-based management in the programme plan in paragraph 12.20, and the view was expressed that this did not provide sufficient detail about when UNCTAD used results-based management or if it had a standing policy on such management. Further clarification was sought on the current status of results-based management and how and when UNCTAD would implement its widespread use.

322. Regarding subprogramme 1, Globalization, interdependence and development, a delegation expressed support for the objectives and strategy outlined under the subprogramme and said that the inclusive and integrated treatment of development economics should incorporate balanced treatment of issues, along with acknowledgement of common but differentiated responsibilities, especially with regard to sustainable development policies. The view was expressed that promotion of cooperation at all levels of the interplay between successful development finance strategies, debt sustainability and effective debt management, as also mentioned at paragraph 12.23 (c), would be vital. The delegation expressed support for the provision of technical assistance to support the Palestinian people. The delegation highlighted that, together with UNCTAD, its country was formulating strategies for economic diversification, renewable energy adoption and sustainable agricultural practices to promote inclusive and environmentally friendly growth.

323. With regard to subprogramme 2, Investment and enterprise, a delegation took positive note of the objectives and strategy and further noted that its country had taken up the review of its national investment policy and looked forward to the support of UNCTAD in that matter.

324. As regards subprogramme 3, International trade and commodities, a delegation expressed support for the objective, in particular in paragraph 12.49 (h), to seek policy recommendations on the post-pandemic recovery specific to national situations.

325. Regarding subprogramme 4, Technology and logistics, a delegation indicated that it seemed to be a very important part of the programme of UNCTAD and proposed that UNCTAD consider providing capacity-building projects, including the transfer of knowledge and new technologies to member States in the area of trade cooperation. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the work on bridging the digital divide and digital transformation of developing countries, called for a balanced digital governance framework and expressed support for the planned results under that subprogramme.

326. Regarding subprogramme 5, Africa, least developed countries and special programmes, a delegation expressed the view that UNCTAD had an important role to play in supporting developing countries in integrating into the global economy and

taking full advantage of trading opportunities, and sought further information as to what was being done to support graduation from the least developed country category.

327. In reference to paragraph 12.95, a delegation noted with appreciation the coordination by the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD of cross-cutting institutional processes, such as the systematic inclusion of gender equality aspects in all areas of the work of UNCTAD. The delegation further noted that the Gender Task Force, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD, was mandated to improve and better coordinate gender mainstreaming activities, including by appointing, for each UNCTAD subprogramme, a gender focal point whose responsibilities included reviewing trust fund project documents from a gender mainstreaming perspective. In that connection, a question was raised as to whether UNCTAD could work with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to use the same gender focal points to avoid duplication so that scarce resources of the United Nations could be used in the most cost-effective way.

328. With respect to the programme plan for subprogramme 6, Operational aspects of trade promotion and export development, on ITC, contained in document [A/78/6 \(Sect. 13\)](#), a delegation noted with appreciation that, in 2024, ITC would keep delivering transformative and sustainable trade to help put the Sustainable Development Goals back on track and to build inclusive and prosperous economies. In that connection, a question was raised as to what strategies or plans could be shared with the Committee.

329. A delegation noted that it followed the activities of ITC closely and knew that ITC had a unique mandate, the promotion of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, mostly by enhancing capacities in relation to trade, and that ITC was in a unique position as a relatively small affiliate organization of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations. The view was expressed that the limited size of ITC and its clear-cut mandate made it possible that ITC could pursue flexible and innovative approaches to new items. In conclusion, the delegation described ITC as a very agile organization.

330. The delegation said that ITC was playing a crucial role in the creation of trade-related employment and income, and that it also provided market intelligence and useful digital tools. It was noted that, in recent years, the targets ITC set for itself had almost always been fulfilled, in spite of the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

331. The delegation welcomed the reference made in the programme plan to the ITC strategic plan for the period 2022–2025, and noted that member States had been involved in the preparation of the strategic plan and that it had been a very smooth and transparent procedure.

332. A delegation noted that at least 80 per cent of ITC country-level assistance would be provided to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, small and vulnerable economies, countries in armed conflict or at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict, and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and expressed appreciation for the support provided to the countries of sub-Saharan Africa to ensure that they could create stable economies. In that connection, a delegation said that there should be more reference to the fact that ITC contributed to developing countries in general, in line with the links of its work with the structural challenges faced by those countries, in particular given the fact that they had been seriously affected by the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that post-pandemic recovery was uneven, with widened structural development gaps.

333. The delegation expressed the view that consideration must be given in the work of ITC to the fact that middle-income countries were in a different situation, with structural challenges such as inequalities, poverty, persistent regional disparities and deficiencies in terms of infrastructure development. In the same context, the delegation further expressed the view that it was also necessary for the cooperation mechanisms of ITC to take into account the particular needs of middle-income countries, which included the majority of Latin America and the Caribbean.

334. A delegation noted that ITC was responsible for the business aspects of trade development. The delegation further noted that its country, through the support of ITC, had adopted e-commerce platforms to bring entrepreneurs, especially women and retailers, new business opportunities, both in the country and across borders. The delegation noted that its country further partnered with the United Nations system and the private sector to promote women in trade and development, and that there had been a series of training sessions for women and girls to ensure that they vigorously participated in trade for socioeconomic development.

335. Support was expressed for the mention of sub-strategies of the Centre aimed at accelerating digital trade, environmentally sustainable trade, and trade by women and youth. A delegation noted that efforts should be made to ensure avoidance of the prioritization of one dimension, in particular the environmental dimension, over another, as could happen with the idea of “environmentally sustainable trade”. The delegation noted that there was no multilaterally agreed definition in the competent forums of “environmentally sustainable trade”. The delegation expressed the view that the scope and commercial implications of the term with regard to standards for trade were not clear and that it could result in the imposition of environmental standards on trade, which might not be in line with the conditions and priorities of developing countries.

336. It was noted with great appreciation that the interventions of ITC to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals would be further integrated and scaled up through the implementation of specific sub-strategies aimed at accelerating digital trade, environmentally sustainable trade, and trade for women and youth, and that increased attention would be placed on the needs of the most vulnerable. Furthermore, it was noted with appreciation that women were encouraged to engage in trade for socioeconomic development. The delegation extended further gratitude for the involvement of youth, as they were the future of countries.

337. Support was expressed for the general objectives and projects proposed by ITC, as they helped member States to promote more inclusive trade, with special support for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, and with a gender perspective. The delegation noted that this was in line with the 2030 Agenda and with the vision promoted by its country in forums such as WTO, in which it had adhered to the joint declarations issued on the margins of the 11th Ministerial Conference of WTO, held in Buenos Aires, on micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and on the economic empowerment of women and trade and gender, while participating in joint initiatives on those issues within the framework of WTO.

338. A delegation welcomed the work of ITC related to the least developed countries and small island developing States, including in ensuring a gender-responsive approach in its operational activities, deliverables and results, as described in paragraph 13.10. Firm support was expressed for the objective of subprogramme 6, contained in paragraph 13.4, to increase the competitiveness of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. The delegation further said that it was confident that the specific activities related to providing advisory services, training and awareness-building to enterprises, business support institutions and government agencies would deliver impact in areas that were key to the competitiveness of micro-, small and



medium-sized enterprises. In that connection and in reference to paragraph 13.5 (c), further clarification was sought as to how ITC would support business transactions and investments for refugees and how ITC would work with other relevant entities in that regard.

339. A delegation noted that the main objective of the subprogramme was the inclusive and sustainable development of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and expressed the view that this was positive for fostering economic growth and development. The delegation commended the coordination work of ITC with other organs, entities and mechanisms of the United Nations, and made reference to paragraph 13.9. The delegation noted with appreciation the references to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development and General Assembly resolution [75/233](#), and expressed the view that the resolution was a very important document providing guidance and clarifications on the priorities of member States to ITC and UNCTAD.

340. A delegation welcomed the inclusion of the promotion of connectivity in digital trade under lessons learned and planned change for result 3. The delegation emphasized the issue of connectivity as an important factor in the process of building global resilience and promoting sustainable development.

341. A delegation welcomed the opportunity to partner with ITC to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through the initiatives described in the proposed programme plan for 2024. The delegation further welcomed the focus in the ITC strategic plan for the period 2022–2025 on the well-being of workers, inclusive trade, the environment and sustainable development and stated that the plan was consistent with its country's own trade agenda. Appreciation was expressed for ITC support for private sector-led growth and for the Centre's focus on countries in armed conflict and its dedication to the least developed countries, sub-Saharan Africa, landlocked developing countries, small and vulnerable economies and small island developing States.

342. The delegation highlighted that it shared the Centre's interest in supporting the African Continental Free Trade Area during its formational years and that the ITC flagship One Trade Africa programme complemented the Prosper Africa initiative, led by the United States Agency for International Development. The delegation added that it was working collaboratively with ITC on issues related to e-commerce and digital trade and on further developing tools that addressed sustainable growth and climate change and provided market access information for the private sector.

343. A delegation noted that its country, like other countries and organizations, had contributed and was still contributing to a number of ITC programmes and initiatives such as the Trade for Sustainable Development Forum and the SheTrades initiative, which were mentioned in the programme plan. The delegation highlighted that both programmes were successful, as they fulfilled their targets or even exceeded them, and said that it would be appreciated if more of the core resources of ITC could be dedicated to those programmes.

344. Several delegations indicated that they would submit specific language proposals to improve the programme plan.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

345. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution [77/254](#), consider the programme plan for programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## Programme 11

### Environment

346. At its 8th meeting, on 2 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 14\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan for 2024 by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2023/9](#)).

347. The Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the UNEP New York Office introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### Discussion

348. Delegations expressed appreciation for the quality of the report and the crucial role played by UNEP as the key United Nations agency in the field of environment, and highlighted the leadership and coordination roles of UNEP with regard to actions on environmental matters within the United Nations system, with a view to creating a healthy and sustainable environment by combating climate change, biodiversity loss, nature loss, pollution and waste, in particular post-COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, delegations pledged support for the work of UNEP in such areas as scientific assessment, capacity-building, technical assistance, air quality, chemicals and pollution action, ocean issues, plastic contamination, early warning systems and environmental law. A delegation noted that the report had highlighted the importance of incorporating environment into governance.

349. Several delegations expressed support for the medium-term strategy of UNEP for the period 2022–2025, with a delegation suggesting that UNEP focus on the objectives of the strategy. Noting that UNEP was in the second year of implementing the plan, a delegation stated that the present session was an opportunity to review its implementation. The same delegation pointed out that the report strongly underscored that the success of the plan depended on a recognition that the world was facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste that threatened the way people lived, and proposed transformative shifts targeting the root causes and drivers of those crises. The delegation urged Member States to change global consumption and production patterns to guarantee a sustainable and equitable future.

350. Another delegation however noted that terms referred to in the medium-term strategy – including planetary sustainability, nature loss or three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution and waste – could not be found in any intergovernmental document. The delegation recalled that, when that strategy had been adopted, it had been made clear that some of those terms had not been multilaterally agreed.

351. Several delegations expressed anticipation for a legally binding international instrument on plastic pollution. A delegation commended the adoption of the resolution that established an intergovernmental committee to negotiate the instrument. Taking into account the full term of the life cycle of those objects, including microplastics, the delegation expressed hope that the treaty would be adopted definitively by the end of 2024. A delegation requested additional information on how UNEP was supporting that process and what the next important steps were in that regard, while another delegation questioned if the goal of a 2024 adoption was realistic and asked for a status update.

352. With regard to nature-based solutions, a delegation stated that a well-designed nature-based solution could be cost effective, outlast conventional options, be more resilient to climate change and provide multiple benefits, often beyond what conventional options provide.

353. Another delegation, with regard to the deliverable on the number of subnational, national and international entities that had committed to incorporating environmental considerations into the One Health approach, noted that the deliverable stated only 21 countries, and stated its understanding that the One Health approach was very important to prevent further and future pandemics. The delegation also asked why the deliverable was so conservative and what had been the experience in the previous years.

354. A delegation sought information on how the role of nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development was reflected in the programme, whether in terms of publications or other aspects of the medium-term strategy.

355. Turning to oceans, a delegation stated that sustainable use of ocean resources lied at the heart of UNEP activities and pointed out that Costa Rica and France were organizing the United Nations third conference on Oceans, to be held in 2025. The delegation urged support for the Conference from UNEP and Member States.

356. A number of delegations appreciated the need for enhanced efforts at all levels to address the three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution increase, with one delegation noting the effects on the Latin America and Caribbean region. On the other hand, another delegation disagreed with the continued reference to the three planetary crises and stated that the term conveyed the wrong impression that other very concerning crises were of a lesser nature. The delegation added that poverty, inequality and hunger were also impending crises that Member States must fight. Furthermore, the delegation pointed out that the use of controversial terms did not align with the guidance provided by Member States at the previous session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, and referred to paragraph 345 of the related report of the Committee (A/77/16). Reference was also made to General Assembly resolution 76/236, in which the Assembly reiterated its guidance to the Secretary-General to ensure that terms and expressions referenced in the proposed programme plan have been agreed at the intergovernmental level.

357. Several delegations recognized the importance of the environmental dimension in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A delegation added that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had an integrated, holistic approach guided by the core principles of the Organization to tackling its three pillars in a balanced manner. Another delegation recognized the importance of UNEP in focusing global efforts on addressing environmental degradation and crises in a multitude of areas, including the support of the 2030 Agenda and delivering on the environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals. The delegation noted that UNEP played a paramount role in helping Member States achieve the 2030 Agenda and meet its goals.

358. In terms of the strategy and external factors for 2024, a delegation expressed support for the role of UNEP to support Member States in developing and implementing policies, strategies and programmes to strengthen the environmental dimension of political engagement. That same delegation expressed the view that the programme of UNEP for 2024 should focus on meeting current and future expectations while delivering on the promises made to Member States in 2012. The delegation also recognized the role of UNEP in supporting countries' capacity to fulfil their environmental goals and commitments, and encouraged UNEP to continue to advocate for science-based decision-making processes and improved global environmental governance. Another delegation expressed the hope that the leadership

of UNEP would, in accordance with the mandate, ensure non-politicized work for the protection of nature, taking into account the balance between the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development, and be based on scientific facts.

359. A delegation commended UNEP for committing to advance the realization of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as it was imperative to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

360. Noting with appreciation subprogramme 7, Science policy, and its objective of enabling a science-based approach to dealing with the challenges of tackling environmental issues, a delegation noted that the United Nations and its Member States should be able to communicate in a strategic, agile and effective way and that the use of credible unbiased scientific data was particularly important.

361. Reference was made to several international agreements:

(a) A delegation noted the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technological Support and Capacity-building following the decision of UNEP Governing Council, based in Nairobi;

(b) On climate action, a delegation noted that the subprogramme should contribute to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement and limiting warming to 1.5°C. The delegation expressed its support for investments in clean energy technologies, including low-emission and low-carbon technology, to help reach net zero global emissions by mid-century or before;

(c) A delegation appreciated the mandate derived from the relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions, as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the role and mandate of UNEP;

(d) In the context of combating climate change, a delegation noted the need to act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Paris Agreement and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(e) On the Montevideo Programme, a delegation enquired on how the lessons learned, as mentioned in paragraph 14.66 of the report, would be applied and how the planned performance measures were determined.

362. A delegation called for the strengthening of strategic partnerships, including with the private sector and the finance community, which it viewed as crucial for increased investment in renewable energy sources and improved environmental sustainability. The delegation encouraged UNEP to leverage the United Nations Development System reform and engage with the Development Coordination Office to ensure its work was embedded in the new generation of United Nations country teams. It stated that integration of the priorities of multilateral environmental agreements into global follow up and review process was equally important. Considering the external factors, the delegation acknowledged the need for continued commitment from Member States for the implementation of UNEP activities.

363. Another delegation requested the perspective of UNEP on its approach to effective coordination with other parts of the United Nations system, as indicated in paragraph 14.5 of the report, to leverage work at the regional, subregional and country levels. The delegation asked how coordination was being measured and how UNEP strived to avoid duplication of efforts on environmental work across the United Nations system.

364. A delegation enquired about coordination and avoidance of duplication and overlapping, in particular with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change, while another delegation wanted to hear briefly about the synergies with the activities carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular for subprogramme 6, Finance and economic transformations.

365. A delegation expressed the view that it was very important for the medium-term strategy to also be linked to civil society. It stated that civil society was an important component in that area and welcomed the initiatives of the United Nations Environment Assembly, whose composition was universal. The delegation continued that that was an important step forward in the common initiatives that should be undertaken in that area. The delegation expressed support for the role of UNEP in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and shared its belief that it was also very important for civil society to be brought in for the achievement of that goal because it was clear that the goal could only be achieved if all components were involved. The delegation stated its plan to be vigilant on climate change matters, in cooperation with the Secretariat, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the all the efforts undertaken to that end.

366. Several delegations noted with appreciation the plan of UNEP to support countries in establishing early warning systems; one delegation requested additional information on UNEP action in that regard and noted that that was an important priority.

367. Another delegation stated that UNEP had an important role to play in ensuring that the goal set out at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for the world to be covered by an early warning system by the end of 2027, was met.

368. With reference to subprogramme 1, Climate action, a delegation pointed to the performance measure on the number of countries that have established early warning systems and questioned the 2024 planned result of 22. The delegation expressed the belief that early warning systems were crucial in times of climate crisis asked why the ambition was so low.

369. A delegation noted the importance of the issue of sustainable management of electronic waste raised in the report and expressed the view that efforts to develop appropriate national strategies were important to address that growing problem.

370. A delegation emphasized the key role of forests in combating climate change as contained in the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

371. Multiple delegations commended UNEP for its gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive approach, including in climate action. A delegation underscored the critical role played by women and girls in addressing the climate crisis and further explained that climate change did not affect women and men equally as women suffered disproportionately and faced barriers in accessing climate decision-making. The delegation continued that, despite those challenges, women and girls around the world were leading the way in mitigating, adapting to and addressing the impacts of climate change. Women and girls in all their diversity brought fresh perspective, skills and talents to climate mitigation, where innovative and sustainable clean energy solutions were needed to transform the high emitting global energy sector. The same delegation applauded the inclusion of persons with disabilities in UNEP programme planning, including by raising awareness of their needs and concerns in its programme and project design and implementation and tailoring its projects to fit the conditions and needs of local communities. Another delegation requested examples of how UNEP would address the concerns and needs of persons with disabilities in climate-related early warning systems and projects dealing with environmental disasters and conflicts.

372. On the matter of biodiversity, a delegation emphasized the importance of synergy and cooperation among multilateral agreements, as well as between the processes and instruments linked to biological diversity and land deterioration or soil

erosion and for this to be amplified and made more operational in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda. The delegation expressed its commitment to the principle of cross-cutting incorporation of biodiversity, as well as the implementation of measures geared towards creating an environment conducive to all decision-making in terms of biodiversity protection.

373. A delegation expressed concern about the harmonization of funding programmes and asked whether UNEP endeavoured to synergize and coordinate with other environment funds, such as the Global Environmental Facility, the loss and damage fund and the Green Climate Fund.

374. A delegation referred to subprogramme 1, Climate action, and noted the focus on Sustainable Development Goals 5, 7, 15 and 17 in paragraph 14.18 (f) of the report. The subprogramme highlighted implementation of resolutions on energy and climate change that were not focused only on those Goals. The delegation expressed the view that, for instance, Goal 1, on the eradication of poverty, was an element present in those resolutions, and so were other Goals, such as Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities. The delegation questioned whether those should also have been included. The delegation continued that subprogramme 2, Digital transformations in supporting environmental action, was of particular relevance for developing countries, and that that could have been made clearer over the narrative and specifically in its objective and strategy. The same delegation then asked a specific question regarding paragraph 14.5, which mentioned a new generation of United Nations country teams, and in particular what exactly that new generation was.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

375. The Committee commended UNEP for its ongoing work in such fields as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, healthy and productive ecosystems, environmental governance, chemicals, waste and air quality, resource efficiency and keeping the environment under review, in accordance with its mandates and as set out in the relevant subprogrammes, while mainstreaming its work on resilience to disasters and environmental impact of conflicts, in accordance with its mandates.

376. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage UNEP to continue to ensure the alignment of the programme objectives with its mandate and medium-term strategy.

377. The Committee appreciated work undertaken by UNEP in engaging with the United Nations country teams, in collaboration with the Development Coordination Office, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to encourage UNEP to continue to enhance cooperation and leverage its work within its mandate at the regional, subregional and country levels.

378. The Committee welcomed the work of UNEP in supporting Member States to attain a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to encourage UNEP to continue to comply with Assembly resolution [53/242](#).

379. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 11, Environment, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

#### **Overall orientation**

##### ***Paragraph 14.2***

**Delete “three planetary”.**

*Paragraph 14.3*

Delete “three planetary”.

*Paragraph 14.5*

Delete “three planetary”.

Insert new paragraph 14.8, reading:

As for its own personnel, UNEP will strive to fully implement Environment Assembly resolution 5/13 and enhance the application of Article 8 and Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations in all matters relating to the composition of its secretariat, at all levels.

**Subprogramme 1****Climate action***Paragraph 14.18 (f)*

Replace “Sustainable Development Goals 5, 7, 15 and 17” with “Sustainable Development Goals 1, 5, 7, 11, 15 and 17”.

*Paragraph 14.20*

In the second sentence, replace “Forests” with “Along with initiatives aimed at changing the paradigm of promoting high-consumption chains of production and carbon and derivatives production, forests”.

**Subprogramme 3****Nature action***Table 14.8***B. Generation and transfer of knowledge***Deliverable 5*

After “flows for”, insert “conservation, management and sustainable use approaches, such as”.

**C. Substantive deliverables**

Replace “post-2020 global biodiversity framework” with “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”.

At the end of the sentence, add “to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans”.

**Subprogramme 4****Environmental governance***Table 14.10***C. Substantive deliverables**

At the end of the sentence, replace “environmental crime” with “crimes that affect the environment”.

## Programme 12

### Human settlements

380. At its 8th meeting, on 2 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 12 Human settlements of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 15\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

381. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

#### Discussion

382. Delegations expressed support for the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in promoting sustainable urban development and expressed their appreciation for the presentation of the programme plan for 2024.

383. A delegation commended UN-Habitat for its commitment to promoting the Sustainable Development Goals and inclusive urban planning with a focus on vulnerable groups. Another delegation expressed its appreciation for the continuous work of UN-Habitat to integrate valuable perspectives into the development of its programmes. The delegation welcomed the initiative to prioritize the living standards of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees, to integrate disability inclusion, to prioritize the rights of persons with disabilities and to include a gender-based approach in pursuing environmental sustainability.

384. The fundamental role of UN-Habitat in advancing resilient and sustainable cities globally was recognized. A delegation reiterated its country's support for measures geared towards improving living conditions for communities across the globe. Another delegation expressed the view that it was crucial to deal with the issue of rapid urbanization in developing countries, where the urbanization rate was 90 per cent; it noted that, on the basis of current projections, the urbanization rate in developing countries would increase the global urbanization rate from 56 per cent in 2021 to 68 per cent by 2050.

385. A delegation recognized the work of UN-Habitat with local authorities and a network of resident coordinators in targeting the achievement of cities implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to capture reliable data and undertake evidence-based planning towards the implementation of transformative projects. The delegation expressed appreciation for the ongoing work by UN-Habitat on its flagship publication scheduled for 2024 that would showcase progress on resilient settlements for the urban poor, inclusive cities, the positive impact of urban migration and people-centred smart cities.

386. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the efforts of UN-Habitat to collaborate directly at the local and national levels to determine the root causes of urban migration, and for the effectiveness of UN-Habitat in responding to authorities with urban diagnostics and interventions.

387. Several delegations commended UN-Habitat for its technical expertise, and a delegation expressed appreciation for the work of UN-Habitat in its country. Reference was made to a participatory slum upgrading programme, as well as to Sustainable Development Goals monitoring work. The delegation referred to a positive impact of technical support provided by UN-Habitat, resulting in improved capacity to deliver evidence-based strategies.



388. A delegation expressed a wish for its country to be supported by UN-Habitat from 2024 onwards in the implementation of an affordable housing programme with a target of creating 250,000 units annually, aimed at providing decent housing for the urban poor and eradicating informal settlements.

389. More information was requested on the plans of UN-Habitat to increase capacity-building initiatives.

390. A delegation stressed the need for inter-agency collaboration and synergies to achieve sustainable cities and communities. A question was raised about the experience of UN-Habitat in this regard. Another delegation noted that other United Nations agencies were active in the urban domain, and information was sought on the approach of UN-Habitat to collaborating with these agencies and the scope for further collaboration and measures to avoid duplication. Another delegation expressed its encouragement for UN-Habitat to continue to collaborate with different stakeholders to ensure shared expertise.

391. Commending UN-Habitat for incorporating climate action into its programmatic work, a delegation expressed the view that that such incorporation was a recognition of the fact that cities were both a major source of potential solutions for climate change while at the same time contributing to it. The delegation indicated that there would be some scope to mainstream climate change considerations more deeply across the whole portfolio of UN-Habitat work by including them in the performance measures for each subprogramme. A question was raised as to how climate action could be mainstreamed in the work of UN Habitat.

392. Congratulating UN-Habitat on organizing the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 June 2023, a delegation expressed the view that that session presented an opportunity for Member States to position UN-Habitat as the main body tasked with providing leadership in issues of urbanization and human settlements and with giving direction towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11.

393. While matters relating to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a delegation expressed the view that securing reliable financing for UN-Habitat in the form of regular budget resources was crucial. The delegation expressed an appeal to the Secretary-General to ensure UN-Habitat had enough resources to deliver on its mandated work.

394. A delegation confirmed its country's preparations for the UN-Habitat Assembly by working on a resolution on the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

395. A delegation expressed the view that its country opposed the notion that nature-based solutions were the only viable alternative among management, conservation and sustainable use approaches, and stated that ecosystem-based approaches and the bioeconomy were other approaches. The delegation suggested that result 3 of subprogramme 3, Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment (paras. 15.63 and 15.64) could be reformulated to include other approaches to livelihoods in order to better respond to the needs of developing countries.

396. A delegation noted that there was no need to refer to one subprogramme in paragraph 15.12 by using the term "integration of environmental sustainability". The delegation expressed the view that the economic and social dimension of the issues cities face should also be included in the paragraph and stated that the delegation would prepare and submit language with an adequate reformulation.

397. With regard to paragraph 15.10, a delegation noted that no institutions representing developing countries were mentioned. A question was raised as to why the particular partners mentioned in the report had been listed.

398. A delegation raised concerns that some resolutions that were not linked directly either to the mandate of UN-Habitat or to Sustainable Development Goal 11 were listed under subprogramme 3. For example, there were resolutions on the issues of climate protection and disaster risk reduction. The delegation noted that, at the same time, some general resolutions relating to poverty eradication and financing had not been mentioned under subprogrammes 1, Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum, and 2, Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions. A question was raised for the clarification of such a choice, and a suggestion was made for there to be a more balanced approach by either limiting the number of resolutions referring only to UN-Habitat in subprogramme 3 or expanding it to include all the resolutions referring to sustainable urban development in all subprogrammes.

399. A delegation inquired if it would be possible to correct the current document before the upcoming UN-Habitat Assembly.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

400. The Committee took note with appreciation of the ongoing efforts of UN-Habitat on implementing current governance reform.

401. The Committee commended UN-Habitat for its work in supporting regional bodies and national and local governments in addressing structural inequalities exposed by the pandemic, scaling up access to basic and social services, sustainable mobility and safe public spaces, in particular in transformative actions targeting homelessness, urban slums and informal settlements, and putting the most vulnerable people first, by disseminating toolkits, best practices and technical guidelines.

402. The Committee noted with appreciation that the programme plan for 2024 continued to support and drive the delivery of sustainable urbanization, to reduce poverty and inequality across the urban-rural continuum, to streamline social inclusion and to promote a transformative change to positively transform lives in cities and communities around the world.

403. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage UN-Habitat to continue to make judicious use of resources.

404. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 12, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

#### **Overall orientation**

##### ***Paragraph 15.10***

**Insert new second sentence, reading:**

**UN-Habitat will also explore and deepen partnerships with relevant institutions from the global South.**

##### ***Paragraph 15.12***

**In the first sentence, after “integration of environmental”, insert “, social and economic”.**

Merge the first and second sentences, by replacing, in the second sentence, “It will collaborate” with “as well as”.

### **Subprogramme 3**

#### **Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment**

##### *Planned results for 2024*

##### **Result 3**

In the title of the result, replace “Nature-based solutions” with “Conservation, management and sustainable use approaches, such as nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches”.

##### *Paragraph 15.63*

In the second sentence, replace “nature-based solutions” with “conservation, management and sustainable use approaches, such as nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches”.

##### *Paragraph 15.64*

In the first sentence, replace “nature-based solutions” with “conservation, management and sustainable use approaches, such as nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches”.

In the second sentence, replace “nature-based solutions” with “conservation, management and sustainable use approaches, such as nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, to be implemented in a manner consistent with the relevant mandates”.

##### *Figure 15.X*

In the title of the figure, replace “nature-based solutions” with “conservation, management and sustainable use approaches, such as nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches”.

## **Programme 13**

### **International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice**

405. At its 6th meeting, on 1 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 13, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect.16\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

406. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

#### **Discussion**

407. Delegations expressed support for the work of UNODC in its contribution to countering illicit drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism, and promoting criminal justice. Delegations also expressed their appreciation for the presentation of the programme plan for 2024. A delegation emphasized that its country’s commitment to

countering illicit drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism was underlined by its continued support as one of the largest donors to UNODC. The delegation expressed strong support for UNODC as the primary international body with drug control and anti-crime expertise, including in the fields of countering cybercrime and corruption. Another delegation welcomed the continued focus on delivering the UNODC strategy and the Office's ability to pivot within that framework to focus on emerging issues.

408. A delegation commended UNODC for its efforts in improving its organizational structure and management in line with the United Nations reform process. The delegation welcomed a stronger focus on results-based management, risk management, monitoring and evaluation to achieve effective and sustainable outcomes. The same delegation stressed improvement potential for some areas to increase accountability and performance and to respond to evidence-based research, and suggested exploring the option of expanding the independent evaluation section in order to cover the work of UNODC in Vienna.

409. Some delegations shared their own experiences of cooperation with the Office. A delegation referred to completing a five-year programme with UNODC and welcomed future cooperation with the Office. The delegation expressed the view that combating illicit drugs was a cross-border issue that required cooperation among Member States. The same delegation requested UNODC to enhance the involvement of Member States, in particular those affected by the issue of trafficking in drugs. Another delegation expressed the view that UNODC had been a great source of support for the law enforcement agency in its country, which was a transit point for cross-border drug-smuggling activities. The delegation expressed the need for more cooperation with the Office on those issues.

410. A delegation stressed the importance of having a unified approach to combating the financing of crime, corruption and terrorism, as well as trafficking in persons, and to bolstering capacities worldwide, given the transnational nature of those threats. The delegation recalled that some work in that area had already been done under the auspices of UNODC through the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

411. A delegation stressed that implementation and follow-up activities should be balanced and consistent with the mandates and guidance of the governing bodies. The delegation noted the Office's plans to enhance its work across three main thematic areas: normative work, research and policy support, and technical assistance. Another delegation expressed the view that the indispensable work of the Office should be focused on its core mandate of assisting Member States in those three areas.

412. With regard to research work, a delegation expressed the view that priority should be given to topics and areas that were of common interest. The delegation stressed the need for close consultation with Member States for effective technical assistance, based upon synergies across the Office's global, regional and national programmes, as well as close coordination with UNODC field offices. Another delegation, which indicated that its country was a large donor to the technical assistance and capacity-building work of UNODC, expressed its enthusiasm about further results-oriented cooperation, taking into account the UNODC strategy while keeping in mind the need for coordinated responses with other United Nations agencies and multilateral organizations. The delegation noted that efforts to tackle transnational organized crime had origins in trade, environmental, migration and human rights policies, as well as law enforcement operations; accordingly, threat analysis, countermeasures and strategic approaches addressing transnational organized crime had to be rolled out through the development of governance, development cooperation or cross-border counter-terrorism efforts.

413. Another delegation referred to the experience of its country in supporting the rule of law and alternative sources of income for small-scale farmers in order to promote crops other than drug crops, and emphasized its intention to increase support in that area. The delegation referred to its annual work, together with two other Member States, on a resolution for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. It also referred to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016 and highlighted the need to help drug-addicted individuals.

414. A delegation highlighted the importance of tackling criminal finance through financial investigations as a key element in uncovering criminal activities, deterring crime and preventing its infiltration of the legal economy and society. The delegation encouraged UNODC to use its competence as guardian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption to promote a “follow the money” approach.

415. A delegation stressed that the transnational nature of most crimes was the subject matter of programme 13, in particular issues of crime prevention, including crimes of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, anti-corruption efforts, international drug control, terrorism and criminal justice. Another delegation expressed the view that tackling transnational crime, ensuring controls on illegal drugs and ensuring access to criminal justice could only be achieved in close collaboration with Member States. The same delegation commended UNODC for ensuring the coordination of information on the ground and in Vienna.

416. A delegation expressed the view that supporting criminal justice was an important element of combating corruption and trafficking in human beings.

417. Some delegations expressed the view that, in providing technical assistance, priority should be given to developing countries. Another delegation expressed the wish to see more capacity-building and technology transfer relative to the policy and advisory activities in the Office’s programme of work. Still another delegation stressed the importance of focusing technical assistance on law enforcement measures.

418. A delegation recognized the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a global framework for sustainable development that could help countries to work towards global peace and prosperity. The delegation expressed the view that, while the Office’s work could occasionally complement broader efforts towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the implementation of the Goals should not be a driving factor in determining the Office’s programme of work, which should primarily be focused on helping Member States to implement their commitments under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as well as other non-binding policy commitments on drug control, crime and corruption.

419. A delegation noted that the Office’s mandate and its subprogrammes dealt with issues of great importance that posed a threat to humanity and could trap people in a vicious cycle of crime, poverty and exploitation. The delegation noted the interrelation of the work of the Office with the 2030 Agenda as an instrument that could help Member States to tackle complex issues in a more holistic manner.

420. A delegation commended the Office’s effort to continue with its programmatic work despite the fact that an agreement on the programme plan had not been reached the previous year.

421. Concern was expressed by delegations about the use of terminology that had not been intergovernmentally agreed. A delegation recalled concerns being raised previously on the use of terminology that had not been intergovernmentally agreed and commended the Office for the reduced use of such terms in the programme plan for 2024. The delegation noted a single use of the term “environmental crime” in the resources section of the report (para. 16.179), even though the term “crimes that affect the environment” had been used elsewhere in the document. Another delegation expressed willingness to continue to work with UNODC on the issues of crimes that affected the environment.

422. A number of delegations stressed that the phrase “the needs of individuals in vulnerable situations” should be used in lieu of “the needs of the most vulnerable” in paragraph 16.5 and a suggestion was made to delete the phrase “vulnerable groups such as” in paragraph 16.26.

423. A delegation expressed disagreement with the softening of the language used in paragraph 16.144, namely the use of the term “misuse” in lieu of “illicit consumption”.

424. A delegation stressed that the quality of programmatic work of UNODC largely determined the success of the measures and projects under implementation. The delegation positively noted that some adjustments, in particular in the legislative mandates, had been reflected in the current programme plan, despite a lack of conclusions and recommendations on the previous programme plan.

425. Another delegation stressed the importance of knowledge dissemination and commended UNODC for its success in the areas of knowledge generation and transfer. The delegation also commended UNODC for an increase in publications in subprogramme 1, Countering transnational organized crime, and expressed the hope that the high level of publications be sustained.

426. A delegation expressed dissatisfaction about insufficient reflection of the topic of combating trafficking in persons in the proposed programme plan. Concerns were raised about missing references to that critical area of work in paragraphs 16.1 and 16.24 of the report. The delegation insisted on a more comprehensive reflection of anti-trafficking issues in UNODC programmatic activities and stated that it would present suggestions to improve the language of the programme. A question was raised as to why the issue of trafficking in persons had not been included in result 2 of subprogramme 6, Research, trend analysis and forensics, pertaining solely to the smuggling of migrants.

427. A delegation raised a concern about the arrangement of the UNODC mandates and requested clarification on the implications of having conventions or resolutions reflected in the general section under paragraph 16.18, as opposed to reflected under subprogrammes. The delegation pointed to General Assembly resolution [77/194](#) on trafficking in women and girls being listed among the general mandates as an example. Furthermore, the delegation referred to subprogramme 4, Terrorism prevention, having its own list of conventions and protocols that were not found under other subprogrammes.

428. A delegation noted that there had been unjustified attempts to strengthen the human rights component of the Office’s work relating to counter-terrorism. The delegation expressed the view that such an approach diverted attention from the Office’s work on core issues, namely law enforcement measures. The delegation expressed the view that such an approach was not advisable for the results of subprogramme 4, Terrorism prevention (paras. 16.64 (c) and 16.71), and that, in the context of law enforcement activity, it was more proper to refer to State obligations

in that area using the following language: “relevant obligations of Member States in accordance with international legal instruments on human rights”.

429. A delegation expressed concern that the Office’s activities to assist in combating terrorism had been complemented with terrorism prevention (subparas. 16.64 (b) and (d)). The delegation expressed the view that, as the primary United Nations body responsible for international counter-terrorism cooperation was the Office of Counter-Terrorism, there was no justification for expanding the mandate of UNODC.

430. A delegation raised concern that information on fundraising strategy and resource mobilization was missing from the programme document, and expressed the wish that the Office align the programmes with the decisions by Member States on the resolutions of either the General Assembly or the Security Council.

431. With regard to subprogramme 1, a delegation noted with concern an increasing misuse of information and communications technology (ICT), in particular the Internet, to facilitate various aspects of transnational organized crimes, including trafficking in persons. The delegation emphasized that, in that regard, women and children, in particular girls, were among the most vulnerable persons to be trafficked, especially for the purposes of sexual exploitation. In that context, the delegation referred to the subprogramme’s work to address the misuse of ICT for criminal purposes, which also covered trafficking in cultural property, wildlife crime and crimes that affected the environment. The delegation referred to the ongoing work of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes and expressed support for the inclusion of that programme in the work of UNODC. Another delegation positively noted the integration into the programmatic activities of UNODC of issues relating to the role of ICT, in the context of both the use of such technologies in criminal activities and in the fight against them. Another delegation stressed the importance of successfully concluding the work regarding the referenced Convention.

432. With regard to subprogramme 2, A comprehensive and balanced approach to counter the world drug problem, a delegation stressed that result 2, sustainable livelihoods through alternative development (paras. 16.43 and 16.44 and table 16.3) did not correspond to the mandate of the subprogramme and asked why that result had been included.

433. A delegation raised concerns that paragraph 16.37 (e) referring to strategy of subprogramme 2 no longer listed efforts to assist States in the area of strengthening border security and identifying illegal drug trafficking networks.

434. With regard to subprogramme 3, Countering corruption, a delegation raised concerns about slow progress in the number of countries better equipped to enhance whistle-blower protection. The delegation stressed the importance of protecting whistle-blowers in combating corruption. It noted that the figure referring to the number of countries joining the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities reported in 2022 in figure 16.VIII, namely 20, was low compared with the figure planned for 2024 indicated in figure 16.IX, namely 85.

435. With regard to subprogramme 7, Policy support, a delegation raised concern about an attempt to artificially elevate the profile of civil society in the area of combating crime, drugs and corruption (para. 16.104).

436. With regard to subprogramme 4, a delegation positively noted a several-fold increase in the number of meetings of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2023, as reflected in table 16.8.

437. Also with regard to subprogramme 4, UNODC was requested to provide details of the technical assistance that it provided to respond to emerging terrorist threats associated with exacerbated inequalities, and whether it had a mandate to do that work (para. 16.16).

438. With regard to subprogramme 8, Technical cooperation and field support, a delegation noted with appreciation the critical role of field missions. The same delegation expressed recognition for the programme, reflecting on the importance of coordination across the United Nations, in particular in the field, and welcomed the increasing use of regional coordinators.

439. With reference to paragraph 16.6, pertaining to the Office enhancing its capacity and impact through a revisited fundraising strategy, a request was made to share some information in that regard.

440. With regard to the UNODC strategy for the period 2021–2025, a question was raised as to whether the strategy would be refreshed as 2025 drew nearer, and if so, what that process would look like.

441. With reference to the foreword of the report, a question was raised as to how the Office's work through its network of field offices helped it to embed its work within a wider framework.

442. With reference to the UNODC office in New York, a delegation requested more information about its involvement solely in subprogramme 7 and expressed confidence that the liaison office could play a more significant role in all areas of UNODC programme activities. The delegation believed that UNODC should consider increasing its presence in New York.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

443. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution [77/254](#), consider the programme plan for programme 13, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## **Programme 14**

### **Gender equality and empowerment of women**

444. At its 7th meeting, on 1 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 17\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

445. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### **Discussion**

446. Several delegations expressed appreciation and support for the programme and for the work carried out by UN-Women. A delegation communicated its appreciation by thanking all United Nations agencies that played a critical role in the work of women and girls. Support was expressed for the activity carried out by UN-Women to mainstream a gender perspective and ensure effective gender equality. In addition,



delegations noted the central role played by UN-Women in contributing to the attainment of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

447. With reference to programme performance in 2022 (para. 17.39 of the report), another delegation complimented the work carried out by UN-Women on its tracker, which analysed the gendered impact of COVID-19 responses globally, and requested further information on the future use of that tool and any lessons learned.

448. Support was also expressed for the programme's focus on the five thematic areas: developing and implementing global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment; promoting women's leadership and political participation; facilitating women's economic empowerment; eliminating violence against women and girls; and reiterating women's contribution to peacebuilding and humanitarian relief efforts.

449. A delegation noted the value of the programme's report and stated that it would be necessary to have collective and precise action that was effective and inclusive on gender in order to address the structural crisis and create just societies.

450. Another delegation stated that, while there had been positive developments, statistics had shown that the number of vulnerable women and girls was still high and, in some cases, might be on the rise.

451. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the programme's support for advancing gender-responsive climate policies in the context of environmental and disaster risk reduction and of all actions to advance peace and security. The delegation also welcomed the growing number of national action plans on women and peace and security, and the support of UN-Women for strengthening legislative frameworks to promote gender balance in elections and decision-making institutions.

452. The delegation mentioned that its country, with the support of UN-Women, had adopted e-commerce platforms to bring women entrepreneurs and retailers new business opportunities, both in the country and across its borders, thus enabling women to enter traditionally male-dominated sectors. In addition, the country partnered with UN-Women and other United Nations entities, as well as the private sector, to promote women in trade and development, and implemented a training series training for women and girls to ensure that they participated fully in trade for socioeconomic development.

453. Another delegation highlighted its country's development of a programme to eliminate violence against women and girls. The delegation stated that the programme would support gender equality, which was good for the economic empowerment of women.

454. A delegation complimented the work of UN-Women in coordinating and supporting, with its expertise, the work of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women and expressed its support for the role of UN-Women as a normative and policy-setting entity. The delegation highlighted, in particular, the work of UN-Women on gender-based violence; women and peace and security; and conflict-related sexual violence; as well as the country briefs that UN-Women had provided.

455. Another delegation commended the leadership of UN-Women in advancing the women and peace and security agenda at the country and regional levels and in the context of priorities established by intergovernmental bodies in relevant resolutions. In that regard, the delegation stressed that the actions of UN-Women had translated into legislation, policies and development plans that contributed significantly to advancing sustainable peace and development. The delegation welcomed the critical role of UN-Women in strengthening the participation of civil society, especially in

the context of actions to prevent conflict, build peace and catalyse gender-responsive humanitarian action.

456. In the context of the political participation of women, the delegation stated that the obstacles and threats to the security of women had increased and that the focus had to be on the opportunities and obstacles to implementing the frameworks and, equally, to address the need for gender-responsive judicial and constitutional frameworks.

457. The delegation also stated that gender equality was not just a goal but a catalyst for sustainable development. The delegation shared its intention to pursue the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda with priority, including by seeking to mainstream women and peace and security language across different dossiers while ensuring that the voices of women, including among civil society, would have a platform.

458. The delegation further stated that its efforts aligned with the proposed programme budget for 2024, that it had contributed to the core funding of UN-Women and that it would, in the current year, contribute, in particular, to the programme's valuable work on women and peace and security. The delegation looked forward to actively collaborating with UN-Women and other Member States to maximize the impact of its collective efforts in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

459. With regard to strategy and external factors for 2024 (see paras. 17.3 and 17.5 of the report), a delegation expressed support for the programme's strategic plan for the period 2022–2025 which guided the activities, strategic direction, objectives and approaches of UN-Women with a view to supporting the efforts of Member States to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as the enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls.

460. In that regard, the delegation sought information on the specific gender-responsive programme that UN-Women was currently advocating, beyond what had been done over the years. The delegation also sought further details on the initiatives for the sustainable empowerment of women that were being put in place to address the ever-growing gender disparities in the world.

461. The delegation referenced paragraph 17.5 of the report and expressed its appreciation for the continued focus of UN-Women on integrated approaches to address the root causes of gender inequality and its work to effect broader systems change by advancing the seven systemic outcomes, given the interconnected nature of global challenges.

462. The same delegation stated that it was preparing for its elections that year and was working to launch programmes that would support the participation of women in parliament and other decision-making forums.

463. Another delegation also expressed support for the work done by UN-Women and welcomed the programme's intention to continue to integrate disability inclusion in its work in line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the UN-Women global strategy on disability inclusion.

464. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the attention paid by UN-Women to marginalized and vulnerable groups of women and girls, including those with disabilities, and expressed support for the intent expressed in the 2024 programme plan to enhance focus on the UN-Women country offices engaging in activities related to the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities.

465. Another delegation stated its intention to accelerate the effective mainstreaming of disability inclusion in its institutional processes and programming, including mitigating measures to overcome any operational challenges, and also stated that it

prioritized the empowerment of women and girls, especially those with disabilities, to ensure their participation in science, technology and innovation through the private sector, with the Government providing scholarships for girls with disabilities.

466. A delegation pointed out that the work of UN-Women was in line with the commitment of its country to strengthen gender equality and the protection of the rights of women. The delegation stated that it had proudly launched its first national action plan on women and peace and security, for the year 2022, to strengthen the capacity of women across all areas. Another delegation supported the importance of international cooperation and the exchange of knowledge offered by UN-Women and the importance of implementing national action plans on women and peace and security, and noted that its country was currently working on its first national action plan and its implementation.

467. Gratitude was expressed for the significant contribution of UN-Women to the elaboration of the action plan. The cooperation between the delegation's country and UN-Women had been strong, and the delegation expressed appreciation for the cooperation and support from UN-Women. The delegation stated that it was the responsibility of all to support the achievement of gender parity and the empowerment of all women and girls.

468. The view was expressed that women and girls in many parts of the world continued to be excluded from decision-making and to be targeted by discrimination and violence, although their contribution to peace and decision-making processes had already proven effective and beneficial. The delegation stated, since the adoption of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), its country had supported the resolution and the subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, and had devoted significant efforts and resources to promoting the meaningful participation of women in peace and international mediation processes. The delegation also stated that, to strengthen its commitment, it had adopted a national action plan, which was now in its fourth cycle (2020–2024), and that funding had been allocated to promote relevant initiatives by civil society organizations.

469. Another delegation highlighted that women remained central to the development of their households, economies and the welfare of their families and that they played a vital leadership role in their communities and nations. The delegation stated that evidence had suggested that the surest way to improve economic development was to empower women.

470. A delegation commended UN-Women for the work it carried out for the United Nations and ultimately the Member States, and indicated that it placed great importance on the empowerment of women and girls, gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda. The delegation further mentioned that it was indeed essential to incorporate the gender perspective in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as stated in the report.

471. Recognition was given by another delegation to the UN-Women programmatic plan and objectives, which, it opined, was generally in line with the mandates conferred by intergovernmentally agreed documents aimed at the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5, racial equality and empowerment of women, and the implementation of a cross-cutting approach to a gender perspective in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

472. The same delegation stated that the programme of UN-Women correctly tackled its triple mandate and aligned in a general manner with the mandates and planning documents currently orienting its operational activities for development, such as the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the 2022–2025 strategic plan, the

repositioning of the United Nations development system and the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, the delegation noted that, overall, the programme acknowledged the need to act in the field in response to requests from host countries, in line with their own nationally established plans and priorities.

473. The delegation also noted that the programme plan lacked mention of the ethnic racial perspective in the criteria presented for the empowerment of women and gender equality. The delegation believed that the ethnic racial factor was an important cross-cutting component that should have been better explored.

474. Another delegation expressed its support for ensuring the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 through initiatives such as addressing issues of gender-based violence and gender disparities, especially in the workplace, and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

475. A delegation remarked that it had successfully participated in the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and it commended the work of the Commission and complemented the excellent commitment that had been demonstrated in organizing and leading the session, the theme of which was innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

476. The delegation stated that women and girls remained underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as innovation, proving that women and girls continued to be challenged by discrimination and stereotypes preventing their meaningful participation in that sector. The digital revolution would have significant potential to generate great socioeconomic benefits and could contribute to advancing gender equality.

477. The delegation highlighted the importance of encouraging women and girls to challenge stereotypes and seize opportunities that could uplift them. The delegation added that having more women and girls in science and technology was a key driver for the achievement of the commitment of Africa to power sustainable development through science, technology and innovation, as was highlighted in the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 of the African Union.

478. The delegation stated that there should be continued investment in women-led innovations and in research conducted by women to raise the level of venture capital directed towards women-led startups.

479. Delegations raised questions with regard to result 2, youth as agents of change in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, paragraph 17.28, figure 17.II, under subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships, where it was noted that the performance measure indicated the high increase in the number of young women and girls with strengthened capacities to contribute to relevant intergovernmental policy discussions and forums during the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, but in the years 2023 and 2024, there was only a 5 per cent increase. Clarification was sought as to why there was such a small increase.

480. With reference to paragraphs 17.20 and 17.21 of the report, a delegation agreed with the strategy of subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships, and accountability of the United Nations system with regard to gender equality and the cross-cutting nature of a gender perspective. The delegation highlighted the importance of including capacity development in the United Nations system and women throughout the system.

481. In the context of table 17.5 of subprogramme 2, Policy and programme activities, clarification was sought as to the exact nature of category D, communication deliverables, external media relations and digital platforms and

multimedia content. The delegation requested further clarification as to how UN-Women intended to be more adaptive in 2024 when the technological environment was not the same throughout the world.

482. Another delegation stated that its country was developing a feminist foreign policy, the goal of which was to institutionalize and make cross-cutting a gender perspective and its intersectionality. The delegation expressed the view that gender gaps limited the full participation of women in building democracy. The delegation stated that it had been proven that the full participation of women in building democracy contributed to the social, economic and political potential of a country.

483. A delegation shared aspects of its country's reasons for pursuing a feminist foreign policy, indicating that the rights of women served as a barometer of the state of societies and that, in places where all people enjoyed equal opportunities and rights to participate in community life, everyone benefited.

484. The delegation stated that its feminist foreign policy would seek to achieve equality for women and girls worldwide, to attend to the particular concerns of marginalized groups, to achieve a world in which all human beings enjoyed the same rights, to ensure their equal representation in all areas of life, to pave the way for them to have equal access to resources, to harness the fact that women as agents of change and in senior positions propelled societies forward and strengthened democracy, and to achieve all of the above for all people in equal measure.

485. For that reason, the delegation stated that UN-Women was crucial to strengthening and defending the rights of women all over the world. The delegation assured its full support and thanked UN-Women for presenting the proposed programme plan. In that context, a question was asked as to which of the expected six results that were present in the programme plan was thought to be most difficult to achieve and for what specific reasons.

486. Another delegation shared that the foreign policy of its country combated sexual violence and supported the empowerment of women, together with gender equality and the increased political participation of women. That was why the delegation's country was a trusted partner of women and the agenda on sexual equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

487. The delegation shared its belief that multilateralism was the key to addressing the major challenges, acknowledged that UN-Women faced challenges, and encouraged Member States to remain united in support of UN-Women as it coordinated efforts to increase the empowerment of women and girls.

488. Another delegation expressed the view that it attached great importance to the development of international cooperation in the area of gender equality and the empowerment for all women and girls. The delegation mentioned its support for the mandate of UN-Women, in particular for its special role in moving forward the global development agenda, and pledged to continue to interact with UN-Women effectively as it implemented its strategic plan.

489. At the same time, the delegation highlighted the need for the programme activity of UN-Women to be implemented only with the consent of the host country, taking into consideration national realities, capabilities and levels of development, national priorities and legislation.

490. The delegation drew attention to the need to use terminology that was agreed in the course of intergovernmental negotiations, which would help with the constructive interaction among delegations and other stakeholders with UN-Women. In that regard, the delegation stated that it would put forward a number of proposals on the text of the programme with a view to bringing its terminology in line with the

universally agreed language. The delegation's proposals would address the use of language related to gender statistics, the application of an intersectoral approach and the use of the expression "gender-sensitive".

491. Another delegation expressed the view that programme 14 required adjustment. In particular, the delegation referenced paragraphs 17.12, 17.31, 17.32, 17.48 and 17.69, which it felt would require further adjustment because they ignored the fundamental point that any activity of UN-Women within countries, including interactions with civil society, should be carried out only at the request of the relevant interested State. The delegation further stated that it could not agree that UN-Women played a decisive role in the integration of gender perspectives in the adoption of national action plans, in particular when it came to women and peace and security (as referenced in para. 17.42).

492. The same delegation stated that it was obvious, in practice, that when such documents were developed, the content would be under the purview of the Government in question, and the efforts of UN-Women were only to provide advisory assistance. In that context, the delegation did not agree with the performance measure in figure 17.IV on the number of adopted national action plans on women and peace and security with monitoring indicators (cumulative). The delegation stated that the performance measure was never adopted at the intergovernmental level. At the same time, the delegation expressed the view that UN-Women, within its mandate, could contribute to the activity of other bodies and United Nations entities but not replace them. The delegation applied this to the disability issues (as referenced in paras. 17.12, 17.31 and 17.32) and youth issues (para. 17.28). The delegation stated that it would submit written proposals with regard to its comments.

493. Another delegation, in renewing its support for the work of UN-Women, stressed the importance of the work that was being done in its country to support women, describing the launch of a programme in 2023 dedicated to victims of violence. The programme was the first of its kind to empower women and to give them the support that would allow them to participate in economic activities, which reflected the delegation's belief in the equality of women and in supporting their independence so that they could effectively build their society.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**494. The Committee recognized the contribution of UN-Women and its focused engagement within the United Nations development system to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls continued to be an integral part of the sustainable development agenda.**

**495. The Committee supported the work of UN-Women on its established thematic impact areas: (a) governance and participation in public life; (b) women's economic empowerment; (c) ending violence against women and girls; and (d) women and peace and security, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction.**

**496. The Committee highlighted the importance of the women and peace and security agenda and its implementation in order to achieve sustainable peace and political solutions.**

**497. The Committee commended UN-Women for continuing to contribute to accelerating the effective mainstreaming of disability inclusion in its institutional processes and programming, in line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the UN-Women global strategy on disability inclusion.**

**498. The Committee encouraged UN-Women to continue to build strategic partnerships with United Nations entities, including through inter-agency**

mechanisms, to deliver results for women and girls in a coordinated and coherent way, especially in the area of sustainable development.

499. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

#### **Overall orientation**

##### ***Paragraph 17.9***

Delete the seventh sentence.

##### ***Paragraph 17.12***

Replace the final sentence with “Together with United Nations partners, the Entity, within its mandate, will promote disability inclusion work with persons with disabilities.”

##### ***Paragraph 17.19***

Replace subparagraph (b) with the following:

“Work of UN-Women on gender stereotypes and negative social norms”.

#### **Subprogramme 1**

##### **Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships**

##### ***Paragraph 17.31***

Replace “an intersectional” with “a comprehensive”.

In the final sentence, before “to support countries” insert “, upon their request,”.

##### ***Paragraph 17.32***

In the first sentence, replace “engagement” with “the engagement of UN-Women, within its mandate,”.

#### **Subprogramme 2**

##### **Policy and programme activities**

##### ***Paragraph 17.48***

At the end of first sentence, add “, upon the request of interested Member States”.

Delete the final sentence.

### **Programme 15**

#### **Economic and social development in Africa**

500. At its 10th meeting, on 5 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 18\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan for 2024 by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2023/9](#)).

501. The Acting Executive Secretary of ECA introduced the programme and, together with another representative of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### **Discussion**

502. Several delegations commended the Commission on its work aimed at the attainment of economic and social progress in the African region, as well as for its comprehensive presentation of the proposed programme plan, comprising nine subprogrammes and five components for 2024, and for the performance for 2022. Delegations pledged their support for the work of the Commission and committed to cooperating with the Commission in all areas of its activities. A delegation, in expressing its support for the work of the Commission, highlighted the Commission's role in promoting the economic and social development of its member States and in fostering interregional and international cooperation for the development of Africa.

503. A delegation appreciated the Commission's work, in particular on capacity-building, which ensured that the delegation's country was able to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into its national development frameworks, as well as to align its frameworks with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Another delegation expressed support for the Commission's mandate and efforts to promote, inter alia, regional cooperation, economic diversification and industrialization, trade, digital connectivity and youth engagement, as well as efforts towards building resilient food and health systems and achieving a just energy transition. The delegation commented that the Commission's proposed programme would unlock more opportunities for the economic and social development of countries in the region, in particular in relation to food security, data collection, regional integration programmes, the African Continental Free Trade Area and different cooperation programmes.

504. Underscoring the wisdom of delegations that had worked to ensure that the Committee's session had been extended to five weeks, a delegation encouraged other delegations to progressively overhaul the way in which the Committee worked in order to achieve better results.

505. Several delegations welcomed the references in the proposed programme to Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union and the post-COVID-19 recovery elements of the programme. Clarification was sought as to how the programme would strengthen African normative frameworks and their implementation to ensure sustainable ownership, in particular of the issues related to gender, disability and young people.

506. A delegation commented that the establishment of the Commission had brought a major economic boost to African economies in many sectors through its work with Governments within the continent to promote macroeconomic policies that were intended to sustain growth and economic development. It was also noted that the Commission had a critical role to play in providing its members and regional economic communities with innovative solutions, together with demand-driven and tailor-made policies and technical advice, grounded in evidence, in pursuit of strengthening social and economic resilience and attaining the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The delegation further noted that the Commission worked to build the capacity of its members to formulate and implement policies for sustainable development, including through the implementation of the regular programme of technical cooperation and Development Account projects. The delegation highlighted that one of the greatest achievements of the Commission, in conjunction with the African Union, had been the framework document for the African Continental Free Trade Area, which was the continent's greatest achievement



in recent times that was aimed at promoting cross-border trade and investment. The same delegation added that the promotion of regional trade among the member States of the African Union and other regional organizations had helped to foster lasting cooperation among member States.

507. It was noted that gender empowerment, private sector development, the combating of climate change, technology and natural resources were key areas for the advancement of the Agenda 2063 vision and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The view was expressed that the challenges of poverty, starvation and other inequality issues persisted as impediments to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Clarification was sought with regard to what the African continent could do to ensure the realization of the agendas.

508. A delegation noted with appreciation that, in 2024, the Commission would step up its work on boosting socioeconomic recovery from the global crises, towards resilient prosperity and the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. A delegation asked whether the Commission foresaw any impediments to the implementation of the proposed programme plan for 2024, given the negative impacts of global crises on socioeconomic recovery.

509. A delegation thanked the Commission for its comprehensive and insightful presentation of the proposed programme plan and stated that the original perspective remained one of the main pillars of the United Nations development system. The delegation asserted that the original Economic Commission for Africa had played a key role in advancing regional mechanisms for sustainable development in its three dimensions and enhancing synergies and policies for development at all regional levels.

510. Another delegation requested that the Commission focus on the areas that were most needed by African countries, including post-pandemic recovery, trade and investment, poverty eradication, digital economy, climate change, industrialization and employment.

511. A delegation pointed out that the Commission, in its foreword to the report, had underscored that it would, inter alia, support progress in Africa towards resilience, prosperity and the attainment of the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The delegation noted that the Commission had aimed to undertake these measures through its convening and operational functions, as well as international advocacy.

512. Another delegation welcomed the Commission's engagement in various fields of work, such as in the development of innovative financing tools to boost domestic resource mobilization, and commended its efforts to create an enabling business environment, in particular in the food, energy and infrastructure sectors.

513. A delegation highlighted that the Commission had significantly boosted its work and its missions since the strategic transformation that had enabled effective interventions, in terms of both implementing the structures to enable regional integration and combating the scourges that the continent faced. The delegation applauded the endeavours in the regional structures and pointed out that it hosted the Central African structure, which was very sensitive to the work in Central African States. The delegation noted that the structural changes that had been initiated several years before, which were supposed to enable better mobilization of resources at the continental level, had not yet been completed.

514. A delegation noted the Commission's current efforts and the central role that it played, together with the African Union, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa as well as better economic integration to accomplish the objectives laid down in Agenda 2063.

515. Another delegation observed that, with only seven years left, African countries were far behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and requested details of the Commission's plan in 2024 to continue to facilitate the identification and proposal of innovative financing tools and economic governance instruments, including the boosting of domestic resource mobilization.

516. One delegation positively assessed the activities of the Commission and its role in tackling issues regarding the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It expressed support for the Commission's work aimed at balanced accompaniment of the two major agendas, which would help to facilitate their completion, given Africa's leading role in the consolidation and the acceleration of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on the global stage. The delegation alluded to its partnership with Africa and expressed strong interest in ensuring a strong foundation that allowed for the crafting of new, mutually beneficial and promising projects.

517. A delegation welcomed the planned programme of activities for 2024 and appreciated the constant efforts of the Commission to support African countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, while another delegation underscored the critical role of the Commission, including through the promotion of the economic and financial empowerment of African women entrepreneurs.

518. A delegation commended the Commission for its commitment and efforts to employ all of the tools at its disposal and that of the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, intergovernmental bodies, academia and the private sector to promote and help implement the African Continental Free Trade Area.

519. Another delegation stated that it was waiting to see a boost in cooperation with economic operators and asked whether the change in paradigm in terms of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, with a focus on the Agenda 2063, had changed the way in which the Commission operated on the ground. If so, the delegation asked how that would be translated into the organizational charter that was under review. The same delegation requested details of the cooperation dynamics between the Commission and the other regional economic commissions, in particular ECLAC.

520. A delegation reiterated its support for the Commission, as it played a major role in the implementation of regional reform processes through an effective African regional collaborative platform.

521. A delegation recommended that the Commission enhance partnerships with entities under the development pillar, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and other regional economic commissions, in order to strengthen cooperation and enhance programmatic performance.

522. A delegation stressed the role of private sector investment in research, development and innovation and noted the initiatives coordinated in 2022 around joint priorities of the regional commissions. The delegation encouraged the Commission to continue its efforts to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of experiences among the regional commissions.

523. A group of delegations shared the view that the full operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area was key for unlocking the continent's full potential and, in that context, the delegations expressed appreciation for subprogramme 2, Regional integration and trade, and the goals established to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. A delegation expressed the view that Africa's new free trade agreement could mark the dawn of a new era as the world's largest fully realized free trade zone and asked why its

implementation had been delayed and what strategies were in place to speed up implementation. The same delegation also asked why the African industrialization strategy was taking so long to implement.

524. A delegation welcomed subprogramme 2, Regional integration and trade, and its targeted support for the accelerated operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area, especially as that was the theme of the year of the African Union. The delegation shared the view that the Commission could play a strong role in supporting regional integration and that the implementation of the Area was a fantastic opportunity to support post-COVID-19 recovery and address food sovereignty concerns. The delegation requested more information about overcoming the challenges of implementing the Area, while another delegation asked what type of support the Commission was providing to member States to ensure that the Area was implemented and beneficial to the people.

525. A delegation commended the Commission's strong collaboration with the African Union Commission and regional economic communities on promoting intra-Africa and interregional trade, as that helped to increase the number and momentum of countries in Africa graduating to middle-income economies.

526. Another delegation pointed out that some members of the Commission were least developed countries and noted the Commission's plans to provide tailor-made support to accelerate the graduation of African countries from the least developed country category, including a smooth transition strategy, which was a very important contribution and support for the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. As many of the least developed countries aspired to graduate from that category, the delegation requested further elaboration and thoughts on that important subprogramme.

527. A delegation observed that the Commission had assessed all 54 African States on their capacities for regional integration but had not achieved the target of 20 States adopting the recommendations of the report, with only 10 States doing so. Nevertheless, the delegation was encouraged that the Commission had set even higher targets of 25 and 30 States for 2023 and 2024, respectively, as seen in figure 18.VI. The same delegation shared the view that having all countries adopt the recommendations of the assessment report, while taking into account identified priority areas of their country-specific, industrialization-related strategies for the implementation of the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, would accelerate regional integration and therefore accelerate intra-African trade, reduce trade imbalances and increase innovation, production differentiation and the diversification of economies as countries developed their comparative advantages while reducing poverty and increasing resilience to climate change.

528. With reference to part B of table 18.19 in subprogramme 7, component 1, Subregional activities in North Africa, a delegation noted positively that, among the programmes planned for 2024, the Commission would cover new areas that had not been covered in 2022 and 2023. Regarding item 8 under B, entitled "Building a database on migration in selected members of ECA", the delegation noted that the Commission had already produced a report for 2022 and that there would be no further reports for 2023 and 2024. The delegation asked why that decision had been made and whether there would be any update to the statistical data of the Commission. Another delegation asked whether there was a reason that data and ICT had been separated into subprogramme 4, Data and statistics, and subprogramme 5, Technology, climate change and natural resources management.

529. With regard to result 2 of subprogramme 4, Data and statistics, and specifically figure 18.XII, on the number of members of the Commission that had implemented the road map on digital transformation and modernized official statistics, it was noted

that there was a marked difference between the planned numbers for 2023 and 2024, at 5 and 20 member States, respectively. It was asked whether there was a reason for that difference from a methodological point of view.

530. A delegation commended the role of the Commission in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and welcomed the results presented for subprogramme 6, Gender equality and women's empowerment. The delegation encouraged the Commission to continue its engagement in that area. Another delegation welcomed the strong push to consider gender and disability as well as young people in the programme. On the same subprogramme, the delegation requested details of how the Commission was coordinating with the liaison office of UN-Women to the African Union and how the proposed monitoring and reporting requirements in the programme were linked to existing African Union equivalents such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

531. Noting that the report indicated that the Commission's work had been minimally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and that there had been no adverse effects on programme implementation, a delegation enquired about the kind of support that the Commission provided to its members to assist in accelerating recovery. Another delegation appreciated the Commission's efforts in mainstreaming lessons learned from the pandemic, including the use of e-learning, and noted the completion of the Commission's 2022 evaluation of the project on building urban economic resilience during and after the pandemic.

532. A delegation noted with regret the analysis in the report concerning the scale of the impact of the crisis in Ukraine and stated that it was difficult to call the stance taken objective. The delegation stated that there was mention of the activities of the so-called Emergency Crisis Response Group in terms of energy and food and concluded that there was an attempt to assert that all global problems were due to the Ukraine crisis, including hunger and poverty. The delegation argued that the attempt was not only unobjective but also destructive, because it diverted the international community from coming to grips with the real reasons for global crises in the socioeconomic realm. The delegation stated that Member States should not lose sight of the short-sighted financial policies of Western countries and the policies implemented to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, when trillions of dollars not backed by anything had been created, stoking inflation that had led to an increase in key interest rates. Because of the interrelationships within the international economy, the burden had been shifted onto the countries of the South that had already been under pressure, and the delegation recalled the forced energy transition that had begun to derail economies in 2021. The delegation emphasized the deleterious effects of unilateral sanctions by Western countries against other countries that disrupted supply chains and transactions, which was in line with the many long-standing conflicts in which the West was directly involved.

533. A delegation commended the Green Recovery Action Plan of the African Union as a blueprint for work on climate change and COVID-19 recovery and requested information on support for the Plan.

534. A delegation asked about the plans to combat illicit financial flows, noting that, despite all of the efforts thus far, the issue had not yet been resolved. The delegation stated that the Commission's advice to Member States, as well as its cooperation with UNCTAD and other United Nations agencies, did not seem to be yielding any results.

535. A delegation noted the strategic transformation and stated that, in terms of the administrative charter, the Commission had allocated all of the resources required to fully implement the programme.

536. A delegation noted with appreciation that the Commission would be oriented towards increasing the investment in climate change solutions for enhanced national resiliency, promoting the circular economy and harnessing the green and blue economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction. The delegation asked the Commission to continue to promote investment in poverty reduction programmes, as most Africans remained in poverty. The delegation expressed gratitude that the Commission would continue to coordinate a coherent approach to its work with Member States and resident coordinators in order to ensure that innovative demand-driven technology produced in Africa would support the development of an African agenda. The delegation also noted with appreciation that the Commission had a critical role to play in providing innovative solutions and continuing to build the capacity of its member States.

537. A delegation emphasized that education, water, food security, infrastructure and health care were all necessary for development but that they alone were not sufficient. There was a need for economic opportunities as well. The delegation asked that this be the lesson learned for all African countries. The delegation questioned the use of increasing the supply of crops if there were no markets for them and asked how education would transform the lives of young people if there were no jobs for recent graduates. The delegation also asked how bright entrepreneurs could create businesses if there was no capital or credit. The delegation urged the Commission and member States to commit to the creation of economic opportunities so that all Africans could begin to improve their skills.

538. On the other hand, the same delegation noted with appreciation the plans of the Commission to scale up support in the area of migration by promoting new and positive narratives as well as training and developing the capacity of public officials and other stakeholders through the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning.

539. While matters relating to parts of the programme dealing with posts and non-post resource requirements were not within the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a delegation stated that the Commission should be provided with all of the resources needed to improve its support and assistance to member States in framing policy recommendations for key priorities on sustainable development.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

540. **The Committee commended ECA for its efforts in promoting the economic and social development of Africa and supporting the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and underlined the importance of its role in fostering regional integration and promoting international cooperation for the development of Africa.**

541. **The Committee reiterated the need for the Commission to continue to support 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, to collaborate with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional, subregional and country levels.**

542. **The Committee welcomed the Commission's continuing to focus on fast-tracking the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, promoting the economic and social development of its member States, fostering intraregional integration and promoting international cooperation for the development of Africa, especially in achieving the post-pandemic recovery in a sustainable, resilient and inclusive manner.**

543. The Committee recognized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the programme implementation of the Commission and commended its efforts to mainstream and incorporate lessons learned and best practices to ensure more effective implementation of the programmes, as appropriate.

544. The Committee welcomed the Commission's consistent priorities on economic diversification and industrialization, investments in infrastructure, productive sectors and domestic resource mobilization, the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area, poverty eradication and digital transformation and further emphasized the need for continued support to African countries, taking into account their national priorities and needs.

545. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Commission would continue to facilitate the identification and proposal of innovative financing tools to boost domestic resource mobilization, and address debt servicing as a main mitigating measure. Its activities would also entail targeted support for national development planning and the creation of an enabling business environment in relation to food systems and would address land, energy and infrastructure. The sustained operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area would play a critical role in deepening the value chains in Africa in various productive areas, including the pharmaceutical sector.

546. The Committee noted that countries were implementing the recommendations contained in their respective African Continental Free Trade Area strategies in order to better harness the benefits of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, in the hope that this would result in more coherent, coordinated and responsive interfaces between the African Continental Free Trade Area and the free trade areas and customs unions of the regional economic communities.

547. The Committee noted that member States and regional economic communities continued to cooperate among themselves for harmonized actions, focusing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

548. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Commission would further build on its medium-term programme framework (2022–2025) aimed at providing forward-looking planning guidance and bringing together all the work streams of its divisions and subregional offices, including concerning the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning.

549. 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 2024.

## **Programme 16**

### **Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific**

550. At its 10th meeting, on 5 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 19\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

551. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP introduced the programme and, together with other representatives, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### **Discussion**

552. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the programme and reiterated their support for its work.

553. A delegation congratulated ESCAP on its achievements in the past few years and highlighted that ESCAP, as the principal intergovernmental platform for the United Nations in the Asia and the Pacific region, was of utmost relevance for the region to assist member States and associate members in pursuing solutions for sustainable development and help with research and analysis, the facilitation of intergovernmental consensus-building and norm-setting, and capacity development.

554. A delegation said that it took positive note of the plan of ESCAP, as contained in the proposed programme plan, to further advance the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals on the basis of a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. The delegation expressed the view that it was important for the Commission's work to continue to adequately reflect the priorities of developing countries.

555. A delegation noted that the programme covered various aspects of important issues, including environment, transportation, trade and disaster risk management, as well as statistics and social development in the Asia and the Pacific region. The delegation said that it believed that ESCAP was playing a leading role in development activities in Asia and the Pacific and expressed the view that ESCAP, including its various centres, was doing well in covering all aspects of development in the region.

556. Another delegation recalled that in discussions earlier in the session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had talked about how different cascading challenges, including the challenge of post-COVID-19 recovery, had heightened the urgency to accelerate collective efforts for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

557. The same delegation expressed the view that ESCAP, as an intergovernmental regional economic commission of the United Nations, had a very important role to play for economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific. The delegation noted with appreciation the work of ESCAP to promote multifaceted regional economic cooperation and integration, including through the advancement of policy dialogue, the sharing of experiences and best practices and capacity-building. The delegation indicated that, consistent with its policy for regional cooperation for development, its country would continue to maintain an active profile and constructively contribute to the Commission's work.

558. A delegation welcomed the work of ESCAP in supporting delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals across Asia and the Pacific and expressed appreciation for the support ESCAP provided to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States because, as stated in the report, they made up over half the ESCAP membership and they faced some of the most acute challenges, including on climate adaptation and energy transitions. The delegation noted that it was also interesting to hear about the work of ESCAP on climate change.

559. Another delegation welcomed the efforts of ESCAP to foster stronger regional cooperation on climate action by identifying solutions to climate change and curbing greenhouse gas emissions, including through science-based and policy-driven cooperation among member States to improve air quality management through

improved air quality standards, the sharing of open data and the exchange of best practices.

560. The same delegation noted the objective of ESCAP to mainstream lessons learned and best practices related to adjustments to and adaptation of the programme as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed appreciation for the intention to consider the most effective modalities, including hybrid and virtual modalities, for implementing its programme of work.

561. A delegation said that it was grateful for the work that ESCAP performed to further advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, as well as the active participation of women in decision-making.

562. A delegation expressed the view that implementation of the plans of action contained in the programme was very crucial and said that the Regional Plan of Action on Sand and Dust Storms in Asia and the Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network and ESCAP multi-donor trust funds were very crucial mechanisms to implement the ideas and projects on disaster risk management.

563. The same delegation sought further information about the initiatives to mobilize resources for various projects and programmes in the area of transportation, environment and disaster risk management in the Asia and the Pacific region and expressed the view that they were excellent projects and programmes.

564. Another delegation noted that the world had seen recently, yet again, how climate-induced disasters were having an impact on millions of lives and livelihoods in different parts of the Asia and the Pacific region and sought further information as to how ESCAP was helping member States in their efforts to build back better based on climate-resilient infrastructure.

565. The same delegation expressed the view that the potential of regional cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, innovation, rail and road connectivity, environment and ICT, among others, had to be tapped more effectively.

566. Regarding subprogramme 5, Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction and management, a delegation sought further information as to what steps were being taken to ensure the protection of data and privacy, including through the introduction of universal digital identification. The same delegation referred to paragraph 19.12 and enquired as to which models were being promoted by ESCAP to achieve digital goals.

567. Regarding subprogramme 9, Energy, the delegation welcomed the subprogramme and noted that it could in particular be a hub for expertise and solutions across departments. The same delegation referred to paragraph 19.65 and expressed the view that supporting energy transitions would be crucial for meeting climate targets, and sought further details as to how ESCAP saw that portfolio developing.

568. A delegation, taking into account the diversity and different levels of development in the Asia and the Pacific region, sought additional thoughts and comments as to how ESCAP was assisting the member States in mobilizing financing for development.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

569. **The Committee commended ESCAP for its efforts in promoting the economic and social development of Asia and the Pacific and supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in accordance with its mandate, and encouraged the Commission to accelerate its efforts to support its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable**



**Development Goals, in close coordination with its partners at the regional, subregional and country levels.**

570. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue its efforts to build resilience and sustainability, alleviate poverty and inequality and invest in the welfare of people, by promoting regional transport networks and connectivity, trade facilitation and digitalization and paying attention to those member States in special situations, namely the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

571. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue its efforts to promote international and regional cooperation in support of the efforts of its member States to achieve sustainable development in a resilient manner, giving special attention to the needs of the developing countries that were particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

572. The Committee recognized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the programme of the Commission and commended the efforts of the Commission to mainstream and incorporate lessons learned and best practices to ensure more effective implementation of the programme, as appropriate.

573. The Committee welcomed the use of virtual and hybrid meetings by the Commission, which facilitated the delivery of the programme by facilitating access to and participation in meetings, and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue to ensure inclusion of all member States while acknowledging the constraints for several member States to access and participate in virtual platforms.

574. 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 2024.

## **Programme 17 Economic development in Europe**

575. At its 12th meeting, on 6 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 17, Economic development in Europe of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 20\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

576. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration.

### **Discussion**

577. Delegations expressed appreciation for the work of ECE, with one delegation describing it as helpful, and encouraged ECE to continue the good work of the programme plan into 2024.

578. A delegation emphasized that ECE played a vital role in facilitating dialogue, cooperation and coordination among member States, as it provided a platform for engagement with many countries and global stakeholders, allowing for the exchange of knowledge and collaboration on common challenges to achieve the commitments made under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

579. A delegation further praised ECE for supporting its member States, civil society, NGOs, the private sector and local governments to convene and cooperate on initiatives for economic growth. One delegation especially applauded the Forum of Mayors, which facilitated knowledge-sharing and collaboration by cities in the region supported by ECE.

580. Another delegation stated that the Commission's norms, standards and conventions had a direct positive impact on the lives of those in the region and were considered global best practices, noting the Commission's reliable platform for technical experts to cooperate and develop innovative approaches to economic challenges. The delegation welcomed the development of the new strategy to guide ECE concerning partnerships with the private sector, stressed the importance of that strategy operating effectively and encouraged ECE to ensure that staff were trained on its proper use. ECE was asked to comment on the new partnership strategy.

581. One delegation commended the Commission's expertise, technical assistance and support for capacity-building, as well as its support in implementing international legal instruments related to sustainable development, economic growth, transport, energy, environment and other critical areas.

582. Another delegation, with reference to paragraph 20.4 of the report, urged ECE to continue its integrated approach by providing multisectoral policy advice and capacity-building through cross-sectoral collaboration with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including:

- (a) Digital and green transformations;
- (b) Circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources;
- (c) Sustainable and smart cities for all ages;
- (d) Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity;
- (e) Measuring and monitoring progress towards achieving the Goals.

583. The framework for the preparation of environmental performance reviews was cited by one delegation as successful under the leadership and guidance of ECE, and support was pledged in supporting the Commission's work on promoting smart cities. ECE was asked to elaborate on projects and initiatives regarding the support of urban sustainability and smart cities.

584. Another delegation expressed support for discussions on transport in the Inland Transport Committee, which had a positive impact, and urged the Commission to ensure that that Committee did not promote one set of regional regulations and agreements over other regional agreements.

585. Furthermore, the delegation noted that the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations was not mentioned in the programme plan for 2024, and the Commission was reminded of the fact that upgrades were necessary for its function. ECE was requested to explain how it would improve the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations in 2024.

586. The topic of Ukraine was introduced to the discussion, with one delegation recalling that the main objective of the Commission's programme was to support development in the region, but that one country was nonetheless destabilizing and destroying instead of developing the region with an aggressive war on Ukraine. The destruction of the dam in the Kherson province was cited as an example of that destruction. ECE was asked to comment on how that might affect its work and how reconstruction would be included in the programme in the future. Other delegations echoed the comments, voiced support for the people of Ukraine and agreed that the Commission's leadership should continue to support development in the region that

it served, pursuant to its mandate to support economic cooperation for peace and promote regional cooperation and security in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

587. One delegation indicated that it welcomed discussions to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations; strengthen the regional response to the war in Ukraine; and hold accountable a delegation that did not uphold those values and principles. Another delegation added that reconstruction and recovery from war must be a core focus of ECE in the coming years.

588. One delegation opposed the inclusion of the Ministerial declaration of the ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, 2016 (ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/Add.1) and the Nicosia ministerial statement on education for sustainable development (ECE/NICOSIA.CONF/2022/Add.2) under legislative mandates, owing to the blocking of its participation in the Ministerial Conference, which was against the rules, according to the delegation. As a result, the delegation had been denied the opportunity to participate in drafting the final ministerial declaration, which, it claimed, contained politicized provisions that it deemed unacceptable. Accordingly, the delegation requested the removal of the two documents from the programme plan.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

589. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 77/254, consider the programme plan for programme 17, Economic development in Europe, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at its the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## **Programme 18**

### **Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

590. At its 9th meeting, on 2 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 18, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 21\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

591. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC introduced the programme and responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

### **Discussion**

592. Appreciation and support were expressed for the work of ECLAC and for the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information in 2022. It was emphasized that ECLAC played a vital role in promoting the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and achieving the commitments to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a view to unlocking the region’s full socioeconomic potential. A delegation noted the contribution of the programme to the promotion of fair economic growth in the long term, with the support of Latin American and Caribbean countries. Another delegation noted that ECLAC had been located in Chile since 1948 and had recently celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. A different delegation expressed its support for the work carried out by the Commission for the past seventy-five years.

593. A number of delegations welcomed the Commission's collaboration with Member States and underscored the importance of cooperation and partnerships with other global, regional, national and local entities in order to achieve sustainable development and respond to the social and economic challenges facing Latin America and the Caribbean in the current post-pandemic period. One of those delegations also remarked on the Commission's collaboration with civil society and academia. A delegation welcomed the conclusion of a framework agreement in 2019 between ECLAC and the Italian-Latin American Institute. It noted that the Institute had been an observer member of the General Assembly since 2007.

594. A group of delegations highlighted the importance of the work of the programme through its convening capacity, technical analysis, research and evidence-based comparative analysis of development processes, as well as its capacity development, technical cooperation and advisory services. It was also stated that ECLAC had been a stronghold for critical thinking and knowledge production in the region and had helped countries in the development of policies to foster growth. A delegation stated its expectation that the proposals contained in the report to transform the development model provide the necessary tools to relaunch the sustainable socioeconomic environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, including production, inclusion and sustainability.

595. A number of delegations said that the COVID-19 pandemic had had a negative impact on the Latin American and Caribbean region and had aggravated persistent structural problems and economic development, with a slow economic recovery and increasing poverty and inequality in the region. It was observed that the impact of the pandemic as cited in the report (para. 21.5) was equivalent to a loss of a decade of progress.

596. It was expressed that, while the region was marked by peacefulness, there were persistent challenges to overcoming poverty and underdevelopment, for which the programme's support was paramount. A delegation noted the limitations facing the implementation of the programme plan for 2024 due to outside factors, including the pandemic, other local crises and inflation. Another delegation emphasized the importance of the continued mainstreaming of lessons learned and best practices related to the adjustments to and the adaptation of the programme owing to the pandemic, and sought clarification on the pandemic's negative impact on a slow regional recovery, the extent to which the programme would be able to implement the proposed programme plan for 2024 and whether there were any foreseen obstacles to implementation.

597. Several delegations highlighted the importance of the work on gender equality. In that context, a delegation expressed concern that women had suffered a disproportionate impact of the economic hardships imposed by the pandemic and slow recovery and expressed appreciation for the measures taken to integrate a gender perspective in operational activities, deliverables and the results of the programme. Another delegation expressed its support for the Commission's focus on integrating a gender perspective throughout the report. In respect of the programme performance in 2022 under subprogramme 1, International trade, integration and infrastructure, the same delegation took note of trade policies with a gender perspective. Another delegation expressed support for the work of subprogramme 5, Gender equality and women's autonomy.

598. Clarification was sought on the approach that ECLAC would take to ensure that it delivered strong results across all the subprogrammes.

599. A group of delegations remarked that the programme was comprehensive and covered a myriad of issues affecting the region. One of those delegations expressed the view that the programme reflected many of the themes that had been discussed in

other programmes, including support for the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises as cited in the report (para. 21.23 (a)) and the support available to developing countries and small island developing States, as well as support for the challenges faced by middle-income countries, as cited in the foreword of the report. Another delegation highlighted the wide-ranging issues covered by the programme, including financing for development, international trade and integration, infrastructure, gender equality, ageing and South-South cooperation.

600. Support was expressed for the work of ECLAC to further advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including inclusive and comprehensive measures regarding the accessibility of facilities and reasonable accommodations.

601. A delegation highlighted the importance of achieving productive infrastructure through innovation and the development of new technologies and the need to bolster regional cooperation in the digital field, and welcomed the Commission's work in that area. It commented on hybrid models for the holding of workshops and for the sharing and exchange of information and requested that innovative means for the provision of technical assistance continue. Another delegation welcomed the continued promotion of economic integration in the Latin American and Caribbean region as part of the programme, as cited in the report (para. 21.3).

602. With respect to subprogramme 2, Production and innovation, a delegation expressed the view that the subprogramme's purpose was to ensure production through innovation and the development of new technologies.

603. With regard to subprogramme 4, Social development and equality, a delegation welcomed and sought further clarification on programme performance in 2022 and the support provided to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour of Haiti for the development of an implementation plan for the country's national social protection and promotion policy. The delegation requested clarification on whether ECLAC was considering any additional measures or actions to bolster the support that had been provided to Haiti in that and other areas. In respect of result 1 of the planned results for 2024 under the same subprogramme, the delegation noted a reduction in the number of national officers with increased capacity to develop innovative sectoral and intersectoral social policies, from 121 in 2022 (actual) to a planned target of 115 for 2024. Another delegation underscored the focus on subprogramme 4, Social development and equality, and noted that the main aim of that subprogramme was to improve the general well-being of the people of the region and achieve greater social and economic equality.

604. Several delegations highlighted the work of subprogramme 7, Sustainable development in human settlements. With regard to paragraph 21.104 of the report, the view was expressed that the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) was essential for access to public information and to environmental justice in Latin America and the Caribbean and noted its role to generate and foster support for environmental defenders. The same delegation expressed their countries' commitment to the Escazú Agreement and its implementation, including its ratification in 2022.

605. With regard to subprogramme 11, Subregional activities in Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Mexico, and subprogramme 12, Subregional activities in the Caribbean, it was stated that the full implementation of those subprogrammes would contribute to achieving sustainable socioeconomic recovery in the region.

606. While matters relating to the parts of the programme that dealt with follow-up action taken to implement relevant recommendations of advisory and oversight bodies

were not within the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a delegation commented on the recommendations of the advisory and oversight bodies contained in annex II to the report. It was expressed that the programme should undertake a review of its country-level activities, put in place an improved mechanism to plan, coordinate and monitor project-based technical cooperation and capacity-building work, and develop a detailed internal strategic plan defining its role and envisioning responsibility.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

607. The Committee commended the Commission for its efforts to promote the economic and social development of the region, and underlined the importance of its role in ensuring regional and subregional cooperation for sustainable development, in accordance with its mandate.

608. The Committee recognized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the programme implementation of the Commission and commended its efforts to mainstream and incorporate lessons learned and best practices to ensure more effective implementation of the programmes, as appropriate.

609. The Committee commended the efforts of the Commission for its work with the countries of the region in exploring measures and raising awareness to address and fight poverty and inequalities aggravated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

610. The Committee reiterated the need to promote coordinated actions to foster integration, an inclusive and resilient economic recovery, and sustainable development in the regions, with a gender perspective, in accordance with the mandate of the Commission.

611. The Committee welcomed the Commission's use of online and hybrid meetings which facilitated the delivery of the programmes by facilitating access to and participation in meetings, and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue to ensure the inclusion of all Member States while acknowledging the constraints faced by several Member States with regard to access to and participation in virtual platforms.

612. The Committee commended the Commission's plans to increase its work on social protection while also promoting health and educational policies, as well as labour and social inclusion, in accordance with its mandate.

613. 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 2024, subject to the following modification:

#### **Overall orientation**

##### ***Paragraph 21.8***

Replace "and Ibero-American organizations" with ", Ibero-American organizations and other relevant organizations".

## **Programme 19**

### **Economic and social development in Western Asia**

614. At its 14th meeting, on 7 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 22\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

615. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

#### **Discussion**

616. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the programme and for the work carried out by the Commission.

617. A delegation highlighted that the Commission played a pivotal role in support of inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region and expressed appreciation for the Commission's commitment to equitable and inclusive social development, with particular consideration for the needs of persons in vulnerable situations, such as women, young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

618. A delegation highlighted the importance of the Commission's work and expressed the view that it was especially relevant in the context of Arab countries.

619. A delegation commended the work of the Commission under the leadership of Rola Dashti and expressed deep appreciation for its proactive engagement with and support to the Arab region. The same delegation also commended the Commission's key role in regional discussions on migration, financing for climate change action and adaptation, social protection and inclusion, and support for Arab Member States in the achievement of their national development plans and the Sustainable Development Goals. Another delegation aligned itself with that view and expressed support for the main objectives of the subprogrammes, especially with regard to inclusive social development, equitable economic growth and coordination in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

620. A delegation voiced support for the proposed inclusion of Djibouti as a member State of ESCWA and expressed the hope that the request for membership would be endorsed by the Economic and Social Council. The delegation noted that Djibouti would be the twenty-first country of the League of Arab States to establish relations with ESCWA and recognized that as a positive development. The same delegation highlighted that the recent mandates that had been adopted had a direct impact on the Commission's work and welcomed the Commission's focus on the least developed countries, in line with the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, as a positive development.

621. A question was raised as to what risks, challenges and opportunities ESCWA had considered in the preparation of its proposed programme plan for 2024.

622. A delegation commended the Commission's continued mainstreaming of lessons learned and good practices related to the adjustments to and adaptation of the programme owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

623. A delegation highlighted that the Commission remained a trusted source of expertise and reliable data obtained through the various policy simulation tools and knowledge products. The same delegation expressed its willingness for continued engagement with ESCWA in areas including economic diversification, trade, social protection and climate change.

624. A delegation highlighted the launch of the Social Expenditure Monitor in its country and expressed gratitude for the Commission's efforts and incredible work in support of the development agenda in its country and in the Arab region as a whole.

625. Clarification and further details were sought regarding the programmes that were implemented by ESCWA to establish partnership relations outside the United Nations and other traditional frameworks.

626. The view was expressed that the high population growth in the Arab region would intensify the demand for resources and the need for resilience. In that context, a delegation welcomed the Commission's focus on water, energy and food security, meteorology and climate risk forecasting. The same delegation commended the Commission's work to date to accelerate climate action.

627. A delegation highlighted its close cooperation with the Commission on water management, combating climate change and other very important programmes and expressed appreciation for the expertise shared with the Arab countries. Another delegation aligned itself with that view and welcomed the progress that the Commission had made in relation to the digital database on groundwater resource management.

628. A delegation welcomed the Commission's efforts in the fields of natural resource management, renewable sources of energy and the circular economy.

629. A delegation asked why there was no specific mention of nature-based solutions to climate change in the programme plan and whether such solutions were part of future planning. In that connection, the delegation asked whether there was any forward thinking regarding how the programme could include major initiatives, such as those on energy transition, following the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

630. A delegation highlighted its cooperation with the Commission, which had helped its country to adopt vital policy frameworks related to women's economic empowerment and begin to analyse key drivers of poverty and policy options.

631. In reference to subprogramme 2, Gender justice, population and inclusive development, and to subprogramme 3, Shared economic prosperity, a delegation welcomed the activities on improving women's economic participation and asked whether there were any further linkages between those two subprogrammes to make optimal impact; for example, by leveraging gender-responsive social protection systems to increase women's workforce participation or make progress in other areas.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**632. The Committee commended ESCWA for promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region, in accordance with its mandate.**

**633. The Committee recognized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the programme implementation of the Commission and commended its efforts to mainstream and incorporate lessons learned and best practices to ensure more effective implementation of the programmes, as appropriate.**

**634. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Commission to continue, within its mandate, collaboration and coordination with other relevant United Nations entities at the regional, subregional and country levels.**

**635. 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 2024.**



## Programme 20

### Human rights

636. At its 16th meeting, on 9 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 20, Human Rights, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 24\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

637. The United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights introduced the programme and, together with another representative of the Secretary-General, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### Discussion

638. Delegations thanked the High Commissioner for the presentation of the programme and expressed support for the work carried out under the programme and for the proposed programme plan for 2024.

639. OHCHR was recognized by a delegation as the leading entity of the United Nations on human rights, and the comprehensive nature of its work was described as fundamental in promoting and protecting all human rights for everyone. A delegation expressed the view that the rights to subsistence and development were the primary human rights. Delegations expressed their support for the work of OHCHR in the context of the current challenges in the world, including growing insecurity, the climate crisis and the food crisis. A delegation emphasized the importance of promoting and protecting universal and indivisible human rights for all as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, regardless of differences in legal systems, cultural heritage, traditions or religious backgrounds.

640. A delegation expressed appreciation for the continued emphasis on mainstreaming human rights throughout the United Nations system and around the world.

641. Delegations expressed appreciation for the more detailed information contained in the proposed programme and commended the efforts towards more transparency, including the practice of discussing the programme plan in Geneva, which was considered useful for building trust. A delegation raised a concern that the programme plan was available for review only a few days before its consideration by the Committee, and it was hoped that there would be more time to study future programme plans.

642. A delegation expressed appreciation for the comprehensiveness of the report. It was noted that OHCHR had been attentive to the comments made by members of the Committee the previous year and had substantially refined the programme to reflect the discussion of some of the key mandates and concepts, including the right to development and unilateral coercive measures. A delegation requested adherence to wording and language from acknowledged international instruments and refraining from referring to concepts that had not received universal recognition.

643. A delegation emphasized that the mandate of the Human Rights Council would be implemented effectively only with the consent of the country of concern, an approach enshrined in General Assembly resolution [60/251](#).

644. Delegations emphasized the importance of the inclusion of the references to unilateral coercive measures in the report. A delegation expressed concern that, despite recommendations adopted by the General Assembly, references to unilateral

coercive measures had not been given more prominence in the report and sought further information on the matter. Another delegation emphasized that references to unilateral coercive measures were limited to a list of relevant resolutions and that the topic of the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on human rights had not been sufficiently studied and required more attention from OHCHR. As regards the resolutions included, a delegation raised a question as to why Assembly resolutions 76/161 and 43/15, as well as Human Rights Council resolutions 37/21 and 45/5, on unilateral coercive measures, were not included in the report. Delegations raised questions concerning the status of a planned study on the impacts of unilateral coercive measures on human rights and whether OHCHR had any plans in 2023 or 2024 for any initiatives on that subject.

645. A delegation expressed support for the work of OHCHR in working to ensure accountability around the world, including through the work of human rights monitoring missions and commissions of inquiry set up by the Human Rights Council, and expressed the opinion that strong accountability was crucial to provide justice to victims and to deter more human rights violations in the future.

646. A delegation expressed the view that, as the third pillar of the United Nations, human rights were the cornerstone of peace, stability and sustainable development. Another delegation emphasized the contributions that the work of OHCHR had made in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

647. A delegation underlined the importance of the work of OHCHR being guided by the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality and indivisibility to the full realization of all human rights and expressed support for the independence of OHCHR, which was echoed by another delegation, which welcomed the impartiality and objectivity of the programme. A delegation expressed the contrary view, that the increase in the number of investigative mechanisms and special rapporteurs was inconsistent with OHCHR having an unbiased and non-selective approach (para. 24.2). Another delegation expressed the hope that OHCHR would carry out its mandate in strict accordance with General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions and that OHCHR would work in accordance with the principles of objectivity, impartiality, non-selectivity and non-politicization. The delegation further articulated the need for OHCHR to stay committed to promoting dialogue among Member States on an equal footing and to bridging differences and expressed firm opposition to double standards and politicization of human rights issues.

648. Delegations made reference to 2023 being the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was also emphasized that 2023 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and a call was made to States Members of the United Nations to recommit to observing all human rights.

649. In relation to addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a delegation raised a question on whether OHCHR had undertaken a review of the social and cultural impact on the programme. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the focus on addressing inequalities and discrimination as among the priority areas of the work of OHCHR in the post-pandemic environment and emphasized the importance of building on those efforts with special attention to the needs of developing countries.

650. A delegation also expressed appreciation that OHCHR engaged with a wide range of stakeholders in executing its mission, including civil society alongside Member States, other international and regional organizations and national human rights mechanisms while another delegation raised concerns regarding OHCHR's work with some NGOs that had political affiliations.

651. A delegation expressed support for the work of OHCHR: to counter discrimination on all grounds including race, sex, language or religion; to advance the rights of children and women; to raise awareness of human rights; to respond to the needs of the vulnerable for protection; and to address situations of international concern identified by the Human Rights Council and other relevant United Nations organs. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the work undertaken to follow up on the recommendations regarding the treaty bodies, and in particular regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

652. Information was sought concerning activities aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights of older adults, as well as persons with disabilities, and the progress that has been achieved.

653. With regard to the right to development, a delegation emphasized that it did not recognize that right, and that commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, *inter alia*, should not be contingent on the level of development or require debt forgiveness or resource transfer. Another delegation expressed the view that OHCHR should promote all kinds of human rights in a balanced manner, prioritize the aspirations of developing countries, focus more on economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development and help developing countries strengthen their capacity-building in human rights, based on the consent of the countries concerned. Another delegation expressed its support for the inclusion of references to the right to development in the report and expressed the view that that was an essential foundation for implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or any of the other international covenants.

654. A delegation sought information on how the programme plan reflected the fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights among the most vulnerable groups, including indigenous populations, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people and measures to protect the environment. Another delegation welcomed the reference to the inclusion of gender issues in OHCHR operational plans and deliverables and its results.

655. A delegation expressed the view that the result of evaluations that were not considered and endorsed by Member States should not be incorporated in the programme or set the direction of the programme.

656. A delegation expressed the view that, while virtual and hybrid formats had allowed the United Nations to operate effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic, since there had been a return to working in person, virtual and hybrid formats should only be auxiliary ways of working. A continuation of working in that way, including in the Human Rights Council, would have to be approved by the relevant governing bodies of the United Nations. Another delegation emphasized that not all countries had equal access to the hybrid or online platforms and expressed the view that those formats should not be considered to be fully inclusive.

657. In the context of the overall orientation, delegations welcomed the inclusion of various elements, including the references to the 2030 Agenda (para. 24.6), the organizational support for the universal periodic review (para. 24.7) and the reference to gender (para. 24.12). A delegation welcomed the inclusion of references to gender (para. 24.12) and disability inclusion (para. 24.13).

658. Concern was raised, however, regarding the inclusion of “there is political will on the part of States to work with the programme” as an external factor (para. 24.11 (a)), and the view was expressed that sovereign States were not an external factor for OHCHR.

659. With regard to paragraph 24.15, a question was raised by a delegation seeking clarification on the continued positive impact that using new technologies and increased virtual participation had had, in particular with regard to participation by delegations in the universal periodic reviews and the expanded scope for civil society participation in sessions of the Human Rights Council.

660. With regard to the legislative mandates in paragraph 24.16, a delegation sought clarification on the inclusion of resolutions not directly related to human rights, namely, General Assembly resolutions 67/1, 70/262 and 76/70 and Security Council resolutions 2282 (2016) and 2558 (2020).

661. With regard to subprogramme 1 (a), Human rights mainstreaming, a delegation expressed its appreciation for its contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Another delegation welcomed the planned results for the subprogramme to ensure that understanding, promotion and protection of human rights was integrated into the United Nations wider work. Other delegations expressed their concern as regards the mandate for the inclusion of the development of a framework to monitor civic space trends, presented as a performance measure for 2024 for result 1, and expressed the view that result 1 should be deleted. One of the delegations also expressed the view that capacity-building should be provided only upon request by Member States and key stakeholders without infringing on sovereignty and interfering in Member States' internal affairs, with reference to result 2. Another delegation sought clarification relating to the performance measure for result 2, "Increased capacity of parliamentarians and national authorities".

662. Delegations raised questions concerning the reference to an elements paper (para. 24.30), its content and the process of preparation of the paper and, in particular, questioned the nature of any consultations that had been held. A delegation sought clarification on the inclusion of the reference to a global network of actors under planned result 3 (table 24.5). As regards table 24.6, another delegation sought clarification on the inclusion of strengthening national protection systems, areas of human rights protection and institution-building under the technical materials section, and the integration of human rights aspects into development, humanitarian, peace and security, governance and rule of law areas under the substantive deliverables section of the list of deliverables for the period 2022–2024 for the subprogramme.

663. With regard to subprogramme 1 (b), Right to development, a delegation recalled that all human rights were indivisible and interdependent, and in this regard proposed replacing the word "encourage" with the word "promote" in paragraph 24.35 (d). Another delegation sought clarification on why the performance measure for result 2 (figure 24.II) for 2024 was lower than the actual result for 2022.

664. With regard to subprogramme 1 (c), Research and analysis, delegations sought further information on the fellowship programme referenced in result 1 (figure 24.IV). A delegation sought clarity on the meaning of the performance measure for 2024 for result 2 (table 24.10). Another delegation questioned whether a specific activity or measure was planned for result 2.

665. With regard to subprogramme 2, Supporting human rights treaty bodies, a delegation welcomed the support that the subprogramme provided to human rights treaty bodies, and the active engagement with all actors (Member States, United Nations agencies, NGOs and others). With regard to planned result 1, another delegation expressed the view that a large number of treaty body sessions and personnel had been allocated to the processing of individual communications, which had seriously affected the work of the treaty bodies in considering State parties' compliance reports and the current situation of the backlog of communications addressed through changes to procedures, standards and working methods, and therefore suggested that the result be deleted. Another delegation sought clarification

concerning the performance target for 2024 for result 2 (figure 24.VII), and whether a more ambitious target could have been included. With regard to planned result 3 of the subprogramme, a delegation emphasized that the treaty bodies should use all six official languages, not only the working languages on the grounds of financial and technical difficulties. With regard to the substantive deliverables for the subprogramme (table 24.13), a delegation expressed the view that consultation, advice and advocacy should be provided only upon request by Member States, and the collection of relevant data should not exceed the mandate of the treaty bodies.

666. With regard to subprogramme 3, Advisory services, technical cooperation and field activities, a delegation expressed support for the provision of awareness-raising and training on human rights through mutually agreed advisory services and technical cooperation programmes in paragraph 24.76 and enhancement of national capacities to translate international human rights obligations into effective laws, regulations and policies, and meet the challenges to the full realization of human rights in paragraph 24.77. With regard to the planned result 1 for 2024, another delegation expressed the view that provision of data should be on a voluntary basis only and that therefore the result should be deleted. The same delegation also expressed the view that the deliverables of technical support and substantive and secretariat services for country-specific missions listed under consultation, advice and advocacy and the deliverables listed under databases and substantive digital materials were not mandated and should be deleted from table 24.15.

667. With regard to subprogramme 4, Supporting the Human Rights Council, its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms, a delegation emphasized the importance of the Human Rights Council as the main forum for cooperation, dialogue and consensus on human rights within the United Nations system and expressed support for measures to strengthen its work, while another delegation expressed the view that the universal periodic review mechanism was the main intergovernmental mechanism for addressing human rights issues in all countries without exception. Another delegation expressed the view that the briefings by the Secretary of the Council to non-governmental organisations, included under consultation, advice and advocacy in table 24.17, were not mandated and should be deleted.

668. While matters relating to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, delegations expressed views and raised questions related to the resources, including extrabudgetary resources, of OHCHR.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

669. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 77/254, consider the programme plan for programme 20, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## **Programme 21**

### **International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees**

670. At its 12th meeting, on 6 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 21, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect.25\)](#)). 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.51/2023/9](#)).

671. The representative of the Secretary-General 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**

672. Delegations expressed support for the work carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including its efforts to assist refugees, asylum-seekers, persons with disabilities and stateless persons, which was one of the United Nations priorities under the humanitarian pillar. A number of delegations acknowledged the crucial role of UNHCR as the main international agency for the protection of those categories of persons, in particular in the context of the ongoing migration and refugee crisis affecting almost the entire globe. It was noted that the Office continued to successfully perform its important functions under the current challenging conditions, and that ongoing conflicts around the world were forcing hundreds of thousands of people to leave their places of permanent residence in search of protection. Delegations expressed their support for and their intent to collaborate with UNHCR to help it to realize its 2024 programme plan.

673. Delegations expressed appreciation for the presentation of the document and its content, noting that it was comprehensive, compact and logical. Clarification was sought on how the planned results for 2024 reflected the impact of the war in Ukraine, which had increased the level of forced displacement and consequently affected the work of the Office.

674. Some delegations opined that the work of the Office was of great importance as it supported States in protecting and assisting millions of people around the world who had been forced to flee as a result of armed conflict, persecution, discrimination and the climate emergency. The Office was encouraged to advocate adherence by States to relevant international and regional instruments and to support the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, including by advocating greater financial support for refugee host countries and communities and by reacting swiftly to new humanitarian crises, including in conflict-affected areas.

675. A delegation emphasized that it was important for UNHCR to conduct its functions in strict accordance with its mandates, the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality, and international law. The delegation also emphasized that predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing among States and stakeholders was critical, and noted that addressing the root causes of displacement was essential for achieving durable solutions.

676. Another delegation emphasized the importance of dealing with the underlying causes of displacement, including climate change and unilateral coercive measures, and of a strengthened partnership for sustainable development. A delegation opined that UNHCR should focus on its core functions and that the humanitarian nature of its work should be safeguarded to avoid politicization. The delegation expressed its serious concern at the abuse of refugees during transit, and noted that prevention, mitigation and responding to sexual and gender-based violence and violence against children, including sexual violence, was critical. The delegation expressed its hope that UNHCR would advocate against the practice of transferring refugees to other continents.

677. A delegation noted with regret that a list of countries were subject to illegally imposed unilateral coercive measures, which affected the speed with which much-needed humanitarian assistance was provided to the most vulnerable victims. In that regard, the delegation inquired about UNHCR's plans to work towards lifting the sanctions that had been imposed, and the full implementation of humanitarian exemptions.

678. A delegation noted that the mandate of UNHCR included providing assistance for the inclusion of refugees in local societies and for their repatriation, return and resettlement. The delegation said that the programme plan insufficiently presented and covered durable solutions for refugees, and expressed the hope that other areas of the Office's work would be reflected in future programmes. The heavy burden of refugees on host States in terms of education and health services, job opportunities, infrastructure and water was emphasized, and the view was expressed that the Office's programmes needed to mobilize resources to respond to the demands of host countries, especially in the development of infrastructure, such as the construction of schools and health-care facilities, for the benefit of both refugees and local communities. While the Office's efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources were recognized, a delegation opined that such resources were not adequate to meet the minimum needs of refugees. The delegation highlighted the regional aspect and noted that refugees often had an impact on more than one country, and in that regard emphasized the importance of regional projects.

679. A delegation noted the seriousness of the global refugee situation. The total number of forcibly displaced persons had increased to 103 million, which presented many risks. It was further noted that developing countries were hosting over 80 per cent of refugees. The view was expressed that refugees should be included in the pandemic-related and economic plans of host States, and that UNHCR should encourage developed countries to provide more support to refugees and host countries.

680. With regard to the Yaoundé Declaration on Solutions in the context of Forced Displacement related to the Central African Republic Crisis, a delegation noted the difficulties experienced in refugee camps in terms of accessing medical services, the provision of food and shelter, and the risk of tensions between the host population and refugees because of a lack of funding and refugees settling outside shelter sites.

681. A delegation said that the staffing of UNHCR could be made more inclusive and diverse, and expressed the hope that the ratio of staff from developing and underrepresented and unrepresented countries would increase.

682. The Chair emphasized that matters 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.

683. With regard to the strategy and external factors, a delegation welcomed the programme's reference to the role of the Global Compact on Refugees in achieving sustainable solutions for refugees. A delegation noted that it looked forward to the Global Refugee Forum to be held in December 2023 and the opportunity that it presented for the work of UNHCR, member States and those across society to advance progress towards achieving the objectives of the Compact.

684. A delegation expressed its support for the mandate of UNHCR and for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, and acknowledged the importance of protection in humanitarian assistance and in the mandate of UNHCR, and noted the complex environment in which the Office operated. The delegation highlighted the challenges that UNHCR faced in terms of security, particularly in the context of armed conflict, as well as the risks of violence to which the Office's staff were exposed. The delegation also noted the financial challenges faced by the Office and recalled the importance of flexible and predictable support, highlighting its own multiannual funding commitment of €30 million over three years.

685. A delegation recalled that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967 were the main legal foundation of the international refugee protection regime. The delegation said that the work of UNHCR should be guided by

the Global Compact on Refugees, with strengthened cooperation with States and other stakeholders. At the same time, the delegation recalled that the provisions of the Compact were not legally binding, and noted that it was important for UNHCR to align its activities with the national laws and policies of affected States.

686. With respect to paragraph 25.3 (d) of the proposed programme plan, a delegation emphasized the need to adhere to intergovernmentally agreed terms in the preparation of programme plans.

687. With reference to paragraph 25.3 (f), a delegation noted with satisfaction that enhanced protection for internally displaced persons was mentioned in the programme plan, and asked how the programme would make best use of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's independent review of humanitarian responses to internal displacement, and the potential learnings that this would provide.

688. Noting the importance of the work carried out by UNHCR to ensure the international protection of refugees and other persons of concern, a delegation emphasized the importance of close cooperation with national and local authorities in order to achieve maximum impact, and in this regard asked about the actions that were envisaged to strengthen national asylum systems at both the global and regional levels. Another delegation welcomed the commitment of UNHCR to devoting more than 25 per cent of its expenditure to local and national responders and emphasized the need for stronger involvement of local civil societies.

689. With reference to the planning assumption that voluntary funding from donors would enable UNHCR to meet the budgeted needs of refugees and other persons of concern in full, as reflected in paragraph 25.6 (e), a delegation asked UNHCR to elaborate on the efforts undertaken by the Office to encourage voluntary contributions.

690. With reference to paragraph 25.7, a delegation noted with satisfaction that a reference to "the principle of participation" had been included in the programme plan, and sought clarification on the Office's relationship with refugee interlocutors and the mechanisms to engage with them. In the context of programme delivery partners, UNHCR was requested to provide further information about its accountability to affected populations and its localization efforts, particularly with regard to refugee-led organizations. With reference to the same paragraph, another delegation noted the growing necessity and urgency of active work to attract donor resources, including from international financial institutions and development banks, and sought clarification about the proposed work in that area.

691. With respect to paragraphs 25.9 and 25.10, support was expressed for the commitment of UNHCR to include a gender perspective and disability inclusion framework to mitigate the needs of the most vulnerable. With respect to the gender perspective, a delegation said that there was a need to provide access to health care, psychosocial support, safe shelter and legal aid, among other services, and sought clarification on whether UNHCR planned to coordinate with local partners and other NGOs to provide such essential services. A question was asked about the protection of beneficiaries against sexual abuse and exploitation. A delegation emphasized that it was important that the programme plan address that issue, particularly with reference to possible abuses by humanitarian actors. With respect to paragraph 25.9, a delegation expressed the view that the term "sexual and gender-based violence" should be reformulated as "sexual violence against women and girls".

692. Noting its strong support for the mandate of UNHCR, which had a unique and crucial responsibility to protect the continuously increasing number of people around the world that were forced to leave their homes behind, a delegation welcomed the Office's innovation efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that the basic needs of refugees were met, in particular the use of digital tools to provide services



in the areas of telehealth, education, refugee status determination and cash assistance support. The efforts of UNHCR to innovate and digitize some of its activities following the pandemic were welcomed. At the same time, the importance of protecting the data of beneficiaries was emphasized. A delegation welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to reduce its environmental impact, both in terms of its management and the activities implemented, and further noted its support for the increased use of direct financial assistance (cash) as a more dignified and sustainable means of supporting recipients.

693. With respect to evaluation activities, a delegation welcomed the Office's efforts to take into account the results of and lessons learned from evaluations in the proposed programme plan for 2024, and sought clarification on which country strategies would be evaluated in 2024. Noting the reference to development actors, a delegation sought clarification on how UNHCR viewed the division of labour and responsibilities with such actors, while maintaining its refugee protection mandate in contexts where crises were not acute but where protection needs remained. It was noted that UNHCR had significant global operational activities, with staff resources representing up to 30 per cent of resources, and in this regard it was noted that evaluation activities should also address how to make operations more effective and efficient.

694. With respect to programme performance in 2022, a delegation commended UNHCR for its efforts to assist 13.3 million persons of concern and 5 million children in emergency situations.

695. With respect to planned results for 2024, result 1: strengthened protection of and durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers through individual registration, a delegation made reference to paragraph 25.19 and expressed its strong support for the efforts of UNHCR, which had exceeded its planned target by 2.5 million for the number of refugees and asylum-seekers who had received registration and documentation services in 2022, and sought clarification regarding the specific challenges faced in the process.

696. With respect to planned result 2: solutions through resettlement provided for refugees at risk, a delegation noted with concern the low actual performance rate for the number of resettled refugees in 2022 against the planned target. The delegation noted the planned target of 100,000 and inquired about the plans for achieving that goal. Another delegation noted the reasons for the shortfall in meeting the planned target in 2022 and asked whether other reasons, such as institutional or funding challenges, had also affected the delivery of the Office's mandate. With respect to figure 25.III, it was noted that the graph reflected the number of resettled refugees who departed for resettlement to third countries and, in that regard, clarification was sought about what measures UNHCR was implementing to encourage the voluntary return of refugees to their own countries.

697. With respect to paragraph 25.27 and the deliverables listed in table 25.1, a delegation inquired about the measures UNHCR was taking to encourage peaceful coexistence between refugees and local populations, and to extend partnerships with, for example, the Peacebuilding Fund or the World Food Programme, in support of refugees.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

698. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution [77/254](#), consider the programme plan for programme 21, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## Programme 22

### Palestine refugees

699. At its 14th meeting, on 7 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 22, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 (A/78/6 (Sect. 26)).

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

### Discussion

701. Several delegations thanked the representatives of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for their physical presence and virtual presentation of a comprehensive programme plan for 2024. Delegates emphasized their support for the mandate and activities of the Agency while recognizing its crucial role as a stabilizing force in the region, a role that the Agency could not continue to assume without adequate international financial support. In doing so, a delegation reaffirmed its commitment to providing financial support, including multi-year and flexible funding to UNRWA, amounting to €14 million over a period of three years, as it was important to maintain sustainable and predictable funding for UNRWA so it could carry out its work effectively. Continued efforts by the Agency to increase transparency, efficiency and accountability were supported. In December 2021, another delegation had decided to allocate voluntary contributions for UNRWA in the total amount of \$10 million for the period up to 2026. In addition, a delegation expressed support for a higher contribution equivalent to \$33 million, representing a 20 per cent increase for 2023.

702. With regard to integrating a gender perspective, delegations commended the Agency for its work in mainstreaming gender across its six subprogrammes and for placing particular emphasis on the inclusion of refugees with disabilities. The sustained efforts to minimize the negative impact of the restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular on the education of children and young people, were also commended. In that context, a delegation welcomed the Agency's efforts to develop digital tools and to invest in their accessibility, as well as its ongoing digitization efforts. While the development of the new digital learning platform was supported, the Agency's attention was drawn to the importance of remaining vigilant regarding data protection and the safety of young people online. Information was sought on that aspect of data protection and the measures to be put in place in the future in that regard.

703. A delegation positively assessed the activities of the Agency aimed at providing support to millions of the most vulnerable people. The delegation opined that, from its inception in the mid-twentieth century to the present, the Agency had remained a key specialized source for meeting the basic needs of Palestinian refugees, which included food, shelter, primary health care and education. It was noted that the efforts of UNRWA contributed to the realization of the human potential of internally displaced persons living in difficult conditions. The innovative focus of the Agency's activities, which made it possible to improve the quality of the services provided and their uninterrupted nature, as well as to ensure a flexible response to changing conditions, was also noted. In addition, the focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which were a strategic benchmark for the functioning of the entire United Nations system, deserved special attention. Moreover, the delegation recognized the importance of the Agency's staff development programmes, which on one hand contributed to the universalization of specialists, and on the other led to an

increase in the qualitative and quantitative indicators of their work, as well as an integrated approach to solving priority tasks. At the same time, the delegation urged UNRWA to be attentive to increases in financial expenses, which led to a greater burden on the Agency's budget. It was pointed out that the main criterion for this policy should be efficiency, especially in the context of existing debts and the general lack of funds for programme implementation.

704. Another delegation expressed support for the programme plan, as it was considered a collective interest to have a strong and effective UNRWA. The view was also expressed that UNRWA was indispensable for the people in need – and was an anchor of overall stability in the region. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the Agency's services, especially its schools and health facilities, were a lifeline to one of the most vulnerable refugee communities, and that the Agency also preserved a sense of hope for the majority of the young people in the region. As a strong supporter of the Agency, the delegation reaffirmed its continued contribution to achieving adequate funding, taking into account that sustainable and predictable funding was crucial to the Agency's work, as underlined during the recent pledge conference. The same delegation was of the view that as long as the Palestine refugee crisis was not resolved, UNRWA remained essential to the provision of services to Palestinian refugees. In that regard, the delegation indicated that efforts would continue to end the conflict and to advocate for a two-State solution, allowing Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security.

705. With regard to subprogramme 4, Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities, the same delegation noted that the programme performance related to microfinance services in 2022 was not part of the deliverables for 2024, as was the case in 2021. Clarification was sought on whether the performance indicator was only used irregularly and if so, the reasons for that. Under subprogramme 6, The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance, it was also noted that figure 26.XXI showed decreasing performance indicators for 2023 and 2024 in terms of the number of vulnerable Palestine refugees receiving social transfers. In that regard, the delegation sought clarification on whether that was linked to the financial situation of the Agency or to the addition of the category "Number of vulnerable Palestine refugees who received supplementary cash assistance in Lebanon".

706. Delegations supported the important humanitarian role of the Agency and expressed appreciation for its contribution to the provision of education, health and social services to the millions of Palestinians living in difficult and often dangerous conditions in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. One delegation was convinced that the Agency served as a key element, for which there were no alternatives, in assisting the Palestinians in both the occupied territory and neighbouring Arab countries until a just settlement of their status was reached within the framework of the resolution of the Palestinian question. It was pointed out that, in the context of periodic outbreaks of violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the significant destabilization of the situation in neighbouring Arab countries, the needs of Palestinian refugees had increased significantly, and humanitarian assistance remained limited and difficult. At the same time, it was noted that UNRWA served as the only international structure within the United Nations that had been providing assistance to about 5 million Palestinian refugees in the Middle East for more than 70 years. The same delegation expressed its appreciation for the fact that, unlike many international agencies involved in the humanitarian field, the Agency had been able to maintain a very balanced and unbiased line for many decades and, despite external pressure, avoided politicizing its activities and, in general, effectively carried out its extensive mandate in extremely difficult conditions.

707. Several delegations noted the financial difficulties faced by the Agency, and that the need for adequate resources to support its activities was highlighted when this issue was discussed in the administrative and budgetary bodies of the General Assembly. Despite the chronic lack of donor funding, it was important for UNRWA to continue its work in full and in accordance with its mandate, without delegating its functions to other humanitarian actors. In that regard, delegations expressed gratitude to all Member States that had rushed to the rescue and made additional financial commitments, and called on other countries to support UNRWA in a depoliticized manner in order to ensure its sustainable and uninterrupted operation. As a permanent member of the Security Council and an active participant in the Middle East Quartet of international mediators, one delegation indicated that it had consistently advocated for the early resumption of direct Palestinian-Israeli dialogue based on the fact that a final solution could only be reached on a universally recognized international legal basis within the framework of the concept of building two States living in peace and harmony.

708. Another delegation expressed support for the programme, including the extension in December 2022 of the Agency's mandate until 30 June 2026. It was emphasized that the programme was vital to making progress on human development indicators, meeting the humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees across the Agency's five fields of operation and contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a particular focus on Goal 17. The delegation also remained committed to supporting UNRWA until a lasting political solution for Palestinian refugees could be found. Looking ahead to the evaluations planned for 2024, as reflected in paragraph 26.16 of the budget document, it was noted that technical and vocational education services were included, which, in the delegation's view, should fall under subprogramme 4. Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities. Owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Agency's education system and learning outcomes reflected in table 26.4, additional information was sought regarding the Agency's views on how to evaluate the basic education programme under subprogramme 3, Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education.

709. A delegation expressed its firm commitment to the Agency's critical humanitarian and human development work, as well as its full support to the UNRWA mission of providing protection, education, health, social services and humanitarian relief to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank and Gaza. Appreciation was also expressed to the many nations that had helped UNRWA address critical budget shortfalls and calls were made for those who had not yet provided funding to make robust contributions.

710. A delegation pointed out that, in addition to providing vital services, UNRWA helped to stabilize the region; however, the Agency's annual funding shortfalls undercut its role as a humanitarian partner and stabilizing force. In that regard, the same delegation stressed the need to work together and to develop solutions for those chronic financial shortfalls and to provide stability for the Agency and the Palestinian refugees that depended on it. UNRWA efforts to expand its donor base, including the private sector and partnerships with other United Nations entities and development institutions, were acknowledged. The delegation requested that UNRWA provide further information regarding potential benefits for the Agency that could result from different opportunities and concrete next steps. With regard to cross-cutting, appreciation was expressed for the continued cross-cutting measures already taken and encouragement was given to UNRWA to continue pursuing efficiencies while maintaining high quality services. It was noted that efforts to increase donations and control costs – while still seeking to improve the efficacy of programming – would be key to ensuring sufficient, predictable and sustained funding for UNRWA.

## Conclusions and recommendations

711. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the essential work of UNRWA, which maintained the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance, as well as protection services, for the benefit of 5.9 million registered Palestine refugees, in particular women and children.

712. The Committee reiterated that, by alleviating the plight of the Palestine refugees, UNRWA played a vital role for the stability of the region and the viability of the two-State solution. The Committee commended the staff of the Agency for carrying out its invaluable work under an exceptionally difficult security, political and financial environment, as well as throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

713. The Committee supported the efforts of UNRWA to further advance disability inclusion in line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

714. The Committee welcomed the proposed strategic outcomes for 2024.

715. The Committee supported the efforts of UNRWA to strengthen its partnerships and expand its donor base, including ongoing conversations with the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

716. The Committee emphasized the importance for UNRWA of a reliable audit, investigation and evaluation system, in accordance with the “three lines of defence” approach. The Committee stressed that it was important for UNRWA to consider its risk assessment, carried out as part of the enterprise risk management and internal control policy,<sup>2</sup> when preparing its programme plans, and encouraged UNRWA to incorporate those risks identified into the external factors of its programme plan, when relevant.

717. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 22, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme budget for 2024.

## Programme 23 Humanitarian assistance

718. At its 15th meeting, on 8 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 27\)](#)).

719. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

## Discussion

720. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, underscored the critical leadership role undertaken by both offices in the provision of international response to humanitarian emergencies and in that regard welcomed the presentation of the respective programme plans for 2024. A delegation expressed its view that the capacities of both institutions should be strengthened in all phases of their work, including preparedness, mitigation, operational response and rehabilitation.

<sup>2</sup> [A/66/692](#), annex.

721. Some delegations acknowledged the active and indispensable role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in coordinating principled humanitarian action that ensured coherent, effective and consistent system-wide response strategies to meet the humanitarian needs of affected people in vulnerable situations. The delegations expressed their full support for the role that the Office played as the key organization of the international community to facilitate the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and sustainable development.

722. A delegation welcomed the initiatives planned by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to enhance data gathering, sharing and analysis to ensure methodologically sound, evidence-based and informed strategic decisions on humanitarian response efforts, and the prioritization of limited humanitarian resources. In that regard, clarification was sought on how the Office planned, through its reform initiatives, to ensure that a quality, inclusive and evidence-based approach remained at the core of its humanitarian approach.

723. A delegation expressed its agreement with the overall strategy and results outlined in the programme plan for 2024, including the focus on improved policy and analysis, coordination of humanitarian action, humanitarian advocacy, disaster management, risk reduction and resource mobilization, which it opined would enable early action. The delegation expressed its view that successful implementation of the programme would be possible if the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs prioritized its core mandated functions from the humanitarian programme cycle to gain access to information management, among others, through a robust field presence and headquarters support.

724. A delegation expressed its appreciation to the United Nations, and specifically to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, for the quick mobilization of resources and support that it had provided in 2022 when its country had been hit by a hurricane. Another delegation expressed its gratitude to the United Nations system and the international community for their support provided in the aftermath of a devastating flood that had affected millions of lives and livelihoods in its country in 2022. The delegation noted that close coordination between the offices and other United Nations agencies and bodies was vital for the effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance, and further expressed its appreciation for the offices' commitment in that regard. The delegation opined that the work of providing humanitarian assistance would benefit from an equitable global financial architecture that addressed the liquidity issues of debt-stressed countries that were facing humanitarian issues, which could also help the United Nations in its efforts. The same delegation requested further clarification on how the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction planned to improve their preparedness for timely humanitarian assistance and facilitate the transition from relief to rehabilitation.

725. A delegation highlighted the importance of the coordination function between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and the United Nations system, which was essential in providing effective and efficient assistance during crises. The delegation further highlighted that priority should be given to women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and persons in vulnerable situations. In that regard, the delegation expressed appreciation for the relationship between the Office and its government through the White Helmets programme, which was aimed at improving cooperation to reduce disaster risk and provide international humanitarian assistance within the current humanitarian frameworks and laws.

726. A group of delegations welcomed the programme's emphasis on the continued importance of cooperation and partnerships, including with local-level actors and international financial institutions, to enhance collective response to humanitarian crises. The delegations further noted the need for the continuous alignment of humanitarian, development and peace efforts to achieve shared goals and ensure that foreign aid reached more people in crisis. The delegations also acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the support and recognized the vital role that local humanitarian actors played, including by risking their lives on the front lines of crises to bring life-saving aid to millions of people.

727. A delegation recognized that a number of projects to address humanitarian crises could not always keep pace with the impacts of climate change and technological advances, and expressed the view that approaches taken should be as comprehensive as possible and should comply with international law and international humanitarian law.

728. A delegation recalled that its government had allocated 60 per cent of its humanitarian budget in a flexible and predictable way, notably through multi-annual contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund and other pooled funds. The same delegation expressed its firm belief that such an approach enabled effective and appropriate response to urgent humanitarian needs.

729. Another delegation noted that the comments provided by its delegation in the previous session of the Committee were taken into account. The delegation further stated that it would submit additional written amendments to the text.

730. Under section I, "Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs", with regard to the subsection entitled "Strategy and external factors for 2024", and paragraph 27.7, a delegation welcomed the inclusion of a gender perspective and expressed its strong belief that women's participation and leadership in humanitarian assistance was crucial and indispensable. Support was also expressed for the increased participation of local women representatives in affected populations in need of assessment and response planning, and for their participation in the briefings of the Office to the Security Council on the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and other humanitarian crises. Another delegation commended the inclusion of the reference to the most vulnerable in the programme plan, and opined that they were the ones who deserved special attention in the post-pandemic period. The delegation expressed its view that there was a need to implement a gender approach to humanitarian crises in all prevention and response actions since armed conflicts and humanitarian crises disproportionately affected women and children. The same delegation stressed the importance of focusing on the gender approach and the full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making. With regard to the use of the term "early action", a delegation recalled that the term had been a subject of discussion the previous year and noted that the approved formulation had been "early warning early action systems". The delegation further stated that it would have appreciated the use of the same formulation, as agreed the previous year.

731. With regard to subprogramme 1, Policy and analysis, a delegation highlighted the importance of continued evidence-based assessment of humanitarian needs. The delegation expressed its concern that, in the current digital age, where misinformation was widespread, some humanitarian crises could be downgraded by the constant rampaging of propaganda aimed at concealing the scale or even the existence of humanitarian needs.

732. Another delegation sought clarification on which mandate formed the basis of the use of the term "humanitarian diplomacy" reflected in result 1: consolidated analysis for more focused evidence-based policy discussions and analysis. The delegation expressed the view that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs seemed to only plan for the flagship initiative of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, which, in its view, was not an ambitious objective for 2024, considering other existing contexts. The delegation expressed its concern that there were neither concrete objectives mentioned for the whole initiative nor key performance indicators nor an evaluation model, and clarification was sought on the views of the Office on these issues.

733. With regard to result 2: strengthened humanitarian assistance to address the growing impacts of the crisis of climate change, a delegation welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to improve its policy analysis activity in the face of increasing challenges, in particular the impact of climate change. Another delegation expressed the view that the Office seemed to only focus on four countries, presented in table 27.4, and enquired as to whether the four countries were the countries of the Emergency Relief Coordinator's Flagship Initiative, namely, Colombia, the Niger, the Philippines and South Sudan. Furthermore, with regard to the 2023 performance measure "road map for adapting humanitarian assistance to climate change developed by various stakeholders", delegations enquired about the status of the road map and whether it would be publicly accessible.

734. A delegation made reference to result 3: collective solutions for the protection of the humanitarian operating environment against emerging risks, and noted that the approach emanated from the Global Humanitarian Policy Forum. While it acknowledged the need for the approach, the delegation emphasized that the Forum only provided a summary report, which should not serve as the source of programme mandates. The delegation sought clarification on why the Forum was presented in the programme plan and stressed that the references and terms included in the programme plan should arise from intergovernmental mandates.

735. Support was expressed for the use of new technologies on the grounds that was presented under result 3: collective solutions for the protection of the humanitarian operating environment against emerging risks, and paragraph 27.28. A delegation enquired as to whether the Office could organize regular thematic briefings on successes and challenges in that area. Another delegation stressed the importance of finding a balance between the use of new technology and the importance of physical presence in the field while ensuring the protection of data, and further clarification was sought on that aspect of data protection. Clarification was sought on how the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had planned its research and analysis on the safe use of ICT and how it would utilize and build on existing findings and mechanisms within the United Nations system, for example, the Office of Information and Communications Technology. The delegation further enquired about how the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs would adhere to and deal with the trend of using ICT in an effective way in the long term.

736. With regard to subprogramme 2, Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response, a delegation expressed its strong view of the need to operationalize both the new mandates and the established mandates to create a more coherent nexus between development, peace and humanitarian assistance. The delegation further noted that the humanitarian mandates for development and peace were an integral part of security and the New Agenda for Peace, and reiterated that that nexus would make the policies more innovative and effective. Another delegation highlighted the importance of the subprogramme and opined that the increased use of anticipatory approaches and early warning systems could assist in preventing massive loss of life while at the same time allowing more funds to be allocated to other humanitarian hotspots.



737. With regard to figures 27.I and 27.II, a delegation welcomed the positive results presented and commended the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response.

738. With regard to result 1: strengthened humanitarian response planning, a delegation expressed the view that, on the basis of its experience, it was difficult to implement Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework 1.0 in the humanitarian context due to high complexity and intensive needs of human resources. In that regard, the delegation noted that several Member States had raised concerns on whether there were enough capacities to implement Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework 2.0. The delegation further expressed its view that the target rate of 100 per cent implementation planned for 2023 and 2024 seemed unrealistic and asked the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its views.

739. With regard to result 2: increased use of anticipatory approaches and early warning early action systems, and the performance measure for 2023 reflected in table 27.8, a delegation shared its understanding that the pilot phase would end in December 2022 and that it would be mainstreamed into the context of the Central Emergency Response Fund programme from 2023 onward. The delegation sought clarification on an update regarding the vision of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for anticipatory action after the pilot phase. With regard to the performance measure for 2024, a delegation sought clarification on whether the target of 10 per cent of the Fund would be used for anticipatory action and, if that were the case, whether that should also be mentioned in that result as a deliverable. The Office's role in promoting early warning systems in mitigating disasters was also emphasized.

740. With regard to result 3: transforming humanitarian programming to improve the delivery of aid to people in need, and the performance measure for 2024 reflected in table 27.9, a delegation questioned whether the performance measure of 75 per cent of humanitarian country operations report simplified, shorter humanitarian programme cycle processes and improved ability to focus on delivery of humanitarian assistance was realistic, taking into consideration the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework.

741. With regard to subprogramme 3, Emergency support services, a delegation highlighted the significance of the unimpeded access of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian actors to any area where humanitarian response was required. The delegation further expressed its regret that delivery of vital support to women, children and older persons in need of humanitarian aid could be hindered owing to political considerations.

742. With regard to subprogramme 4, Humanitarian emergency information and advocacy, a delegation expressed appreciation for the continued advocacy efforts undertaken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to raise awareness of humanitarian principles and the need for an adequate response to any humanitarian situation, considering that armed conflicts, threats to food security and many other drivers of humanitarian crises remained in place.

743. Another delegation acknowledged the programme performance reported in 2022 and the accomplishments of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, including its development and use of the Horn of Africa drought data explorer, which brought together critical information on many interconnected issues, such as food insecurity, rainfall levels and conflict, and facilitated the tracking of developments by humanitarians towards better-informed decision-making. The delegation noted that the data explorer had helped to raise awareness of the needs of people affected by drought, as well as of acute food insecurity in the region, operational priority areas and the required funding.

744. With regard to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, delegations welcomed the strategy and results presented by that Office, which emphasized the importance of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and improved understanding of and the prevention of disasters.

745. With regard to result 1: scale up resilience at the local level through global partnership, and paragraph 27.122, a delegation sought clarification on the initiative “Making Cities Resilient 2030” and the innovative outreach model that had been adopted, which in its view seemed successful. The delegation sought further clarification on whether the model would be taken into consideration for the planned results for 2024.

746. A delegation expressed the view that the staffing composition of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction should be made more inclusive and diverse. The same delegation expressed its hope that both offices would take measures to improve geographical representation by recruiting more staff from underrepresented developing countries.

747. While matters relating to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee, a delegation emphasized that the regular budget was funded by Member States and, as such, its resources should be utilized only for the implementation of the decisions agreed upon by Member States, as reflected in the documents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

748. **The Committee commended the work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the face of increasing humanitarian needs and interlocking global challenges.**

749. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to work towards further consolidating United Nations system mechanisms and capacities for ensuring the facilitation of the safe and unhindered humanitarian access of United Nations agencies to respond to the needs of affected people in situations of armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies, in full respect of the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.**

750. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to continue to pursue efforts to strengthen partnerships at the global level with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, relevant humanitarian NGOs and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of humanitarian response.**

751. **The Committee appreciated the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office to continue to ensure the timely, coherent, coordinated and principled response of the international community to natural disasters and complex emergencies and to facilitate the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and sustainable development.**

752. **The Committee underlined the importance of better integrating disaster risk reduction into humanitarian response and also highlighted the critical role of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in continuing to strengthen its coordination within the United Nations system, including its support to United Nations country teams and resident coordinators in integrating disaster risk reduction and resilience into common country analyses and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.**

753. The Committee also underlined the importance of anticipatory approaches and early warning early action systems, and the need to improve them in the humanitarian system, and of scaling up resilience in cooperation and collaboration with national Governments and relevant authorities, as well as regional and subregional organizations, as appropriate.

754. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

# **I. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

## **Overall orientation**

### ***Paragraph 27.3***

Replace “early action and anticipatory approaches” with “anticipatory approaches and early warning early action systems”.

Replace “early action and a prompt” with “timely and effective”.

### ***Paragraph 27.6 (a)***

Replace “other disasters” with “other factors”.

### ***Paragraph 27.6 (c)***

Before “disasters” delete “other”.

Replace “, including armed conflicts,” with “and armed conflicts”.

After “conflicts” insert “and humanitarian crises”.

### ***Paragraph 27.7***

Delete “For example, the Office promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through its action plans, inter-agency policies and tools, and its senior advisers were deployed in support of humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams.”.

### ***Paragraph 27.9***

Replace “In line with” with “Noting”.

Delete “, in line with the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action”.

Delete “and rights”.

### ***Paragraph 27.11***

Delete “For example, the 2022 Global Humanitarian Policy Forum was conducted virtually, which enabled the engagement of approximately 6,000 participants from across all regions”.

## **Subprogramme 1**

## **Policy and analysis**

### ***Paragraph 27.23***

Before “access” insert “humanitarian”.

Delete “and humanitarian diplomacy”.

Delete “, which met the planned target, with more than 6,000 participants from 145 countries (75 per cent from the global South) in the Forum in 2022, representing a 200 per cent increase in participation compared with 2021”.

*Table 27.4*

*Column “2022 (actual)”*

Delete “ for example, the call by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for”

*Column “2024 (planned)”*

After “adverse” insert “ effects of”.

Replace “events” with “change”.

In the title of result 3, replace “collective solutions for the protection of the humanitarian operating environment against emerging risks” with “addressing emerging risks on the humanitarian operating environment”.

*Paragraph 27.28*

After “principles of” insert “humanity,”.

**Subprogramme 2**

**Coordination of humanitarian action and emergency response**

*Paragraph 27.34*

Replace “by a mixture of conflict” with “by a mixture of armed conflicts, natural disasters”.

Replace “climate shocks” with “adverse impacts of climate change”.

Delete “health”.

Replace “time-sensitive” with “timely”.

*Table 27.8*

*Column “2023 (planned)”*

Replace “climate-related natural disasters” with “disasters related to climate change”.

*Paragraph 27.40*

Replace the existing text with the following:

“The humanitarian programme cycle consists of a set of interlinked tools to assist the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the humanitarian country team to improve humanitarian assistance and protection. The implementation of the cycle is increasingly challenged by the growing humanitarian needs, complex operating environments, evolving global expectations and mismatch between capacities and resources. There is a need to balance rigorous needs and response analysis with contextual flexibility. The subprogramme has been examining the ways in which coordination mechanisms can continue to be improved.”.

*Paragraph 27.41*

Delete “improved prioritization within”.

After “targeting of beneficiaries” insert “based on need”.

*Table 27.9**Column “2022 (actual)”*

Delete “cycle facilitation package for 2023,”.

**Subprogramme 3****Emergency support services***Paragraph 27.53*

Replace “timely access” with “safe and unimpeded humanitarian access”.

*Paragraph 27.54*

After “involved in” insert “armed”.

Replace “by enhancing the use of humanitarian negotiations and humanitarian diplomacy” with “in order to establish and maintain humanitarian access and, in so doing, fulfil humanitarian needs.”.

After “unimpeded” insert “humanitarian”.

After “older persons and ethnic and religious minorities” insert “, within the mandate of the Office”.

*Table 27.11*

In item 3, replace “environmental emergency response” with “emergency response to disasters, natural hazards and adverse effects of climate change”.

*Paragraph 27.59 (a)*

Delete “unimpeded and”.

*Table 27.12**Column “2022 (actual)”*

Replace “on the frontline of the response” with “in the closest proximity to those in need”.

**II. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction****Programme of work***Paragraph 27.112*

After “taking into account climate change” delete “risk”.

*Paragraph 27.114*

Replace “ In line with” with “Noting”.

***Paragraph 27.116***

Replace “The Bali Agenda for Resilience, the summary of the seventh session’s proceedings,” with “and”.

***Paragraph 27.126***

Replace “Climate and disaster risk analytics” with “Climate change and disaster risk analytics”.

**Programme 24**  
**Global communications**

755. At its 9th meeting, on 2 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 24, Global communications, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 28\)](#)).

756. The Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications 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**

757. Delegations expressed appreciation for the essential work done by the Department of Global Communications in building global support for the work of the United Nations, including its fight against misinformation and disinformation and hate speech, and for its efforts in publicizing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Some delegations also expressed appreciation for the commitment of the Department to delivering accurate, impartial, balanced and objective news and information in a timely manner.

758. Several delegations acknowledged the efforts undertaken by the Department to release factual, engaging and accessible information through its various media, including the United Nations website and social media accounts. Some delegations expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the Department to Member States on issues pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic and the promotion of the verified campaign in combating misinformation related to the pandemic. Clarification was sought on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the challenges related to fighting misinformation through the provision of verified and factual information. Some delegations also requested more information on crisis communication and on ways the Department addressed and implemented such communication requirements.

759. Some delegations called on the Department to continue its work on addressing hate speech, misinformation and disinformation by promoting tolerance, dialogue and peaceful coexistence, and establishing fair, peaceful and inclusive societies. A delegation encouraged the Department to double its efforts on fighting racism, hate speech and discriminatory speech, especially against Asians, people of African descent and Africans. The delegation acknowledged the growing importance of spreading the voice and work of the United Nations in a turbulent world. The same delegation emphasized that the work of the Department was closely linked to people’s perception of the United Nations, and in that regard called on the Department to ensure that news disseminated by the United Nations was objective, neutral, accurate, fair, comprehensive, balanced, coherent and timely. The same delegation further expressed its desire to hear more voices from developing countries and countries

impacted by hate speech, racism and discriminatory speech, which it opined would help the United Nations in conducting its work with such Member States

760. With regard to multilingualism, delegations emphasized its importance and acknowledged the work undertaken by the Department to reach global audiences in many languages and across multiple platforms to tell the story of the United Nations, and to persuade those audiences to support the United Nations agenda. Some delegations stressed the need for an agile approach and called for the adoption of multilingualism in disseminating information to the public in a strategic and creative manner. A delegation recalled the importance of multilingualism and respect for the parity of the six official languages of the United Nations for the dissemination of information to ensure the veracity of reliable information and the dissemination of the Organization's documents and news.

761. A group of delegations highlighted how multilingual content facilitated the dissemination of up-to-date information on a broad range of issues to millions of people worldwide and helped various nationalities and ethnic groups better understand the activities of the United Nations, which improved the image of the United Nations and the standing of the multilateral system. Some delegations expressed their strong views that the Department should use all six official United Nations languages equally, reduce the gap between the use of English and the other five languages and ensure the full and fair treatment of all official United Nations languages in all its activities. A delegation noted that Chinese had the largest number of speakers in the world, as 1.5 billion people, or one fifth of the world's population, used it, and in that regard sought clarification about the initiatives that would be taken by the Department to spread the voice of the United Nations to those 1.5 billion people.

762. A delegation expressed appreciation for the work of the Department to foster multilingualism that was not confined to the six official languages, but rather went further, as it was noted that digital media content was produced daily in Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese.

763. A delegation opined that multilingualism promoted inclusion and tolerance and cautioned that multilingual parity should be a reality and not just an aspiration. The same delegation called for the publication of all documents, decisions, reports and statements by the Secretary-General in all official languages to allow the Organization to carry out its mandate.

764. A delegation expressed its strong view that multilingualism was a core principle of the United Nations and should be a priority of the Department. The delegation opined that equitable access to information in all official United Nations languages should be a priority of all United Nations information services. The delegation made reference to paragraphs 28.45 to 28.47 of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 (A/78/6 (Sect. 28)), which referred to lessons learned in the implementation of the programme, and highlighted the phrase "by making live and on-demand webcasting available on multiple platforms and languages, it could reach larger and broader audiences around the world". The same delegation noted that the Department had finally concluded that the distribution of materials on various platforms in all languages made it possible to reach a wider global audience. The delegation reiterated its view that it had systematically raised the issue of introducing metadata in all languages for years at all possible levels, and opined that the recognition by the Department that multilingualism made it possible to reach a wider global audience was similar to an example in which a person created the wheel and later came to the conclusion that the wheel expedited transport, and then decided to include that conclusion as part of its lessons learned and planned changes.

765. A delegation expressed strong support for the Department's three subprogrammes and its corresponding plans, and for its efforts to fight the increasing spread of misinformation and disinformation. The delegation further opined that although the three subprogrammes contributed to the same overall objective, the delegation encouraged the Department to specify and distinguish the objectives for the individual subprogrammes so that objectives and performance measures could be better linked.

766. With regard to the strategy and external factors for 2024, and specifically paragraph 28.10, some delegations expressed support for the integration of a gender-responsive approach in the Department's operational activities, deliverables and results. The view was expressed that the representation of women in communications and media products was crucial in empowering women and promoting gender equality, and in meeting the goals of the Organization.

767. A delegation stressed its view on the importance of reducing the gender digital divide to empower women and girls and sought clarification about the Department's activities in that area. Another delegation raised the need to address the same issue of digital divide, but referred to the growing inequalities that had a negative effect on the information landscape and led to the unequal access to reliable, timely, trustworthy and multilingual information, including the spread of misinformation, disinformation, fake news and hate speech.

768. With regard to subprogramme 1, Campaigns and country operations services, some delegations reaffirmed the effectiveness of specialized information campaigns in raising global awareness on the most significant issues in the world and in mobilizing global support and action towards sustainable development, climate change, peace and security, and human rights. The creative and innovative approaches undertaken by the Department in implementing information policies, including guidance on strategies and crisis communications to resident coordinators, officers and United Nations country teams, were welcomed.

769. With regard to paragraph 28.21 (d), a delegation welcomed the Department's stated intention to strive to serve as a source of reliable, fact-based information that advanced the work, principles and purposes of the United Nations. The delegation further expressed appreciation for the Department's focus on providing guidance with regard to countering misinformation and disinformation and developing and promoting content to counter false narratives and build confidence among global audiences.

770. A delegation expressed its satisfaction with how the Department continued to expand its audience reach through the use of a strategic and data-driven approach to reaching a diverse range of audiences, including young people. The delegation sought further clarification on how the Department used data to prioritize its programme of work.

771. A delegation emphasized the crucial and important role of the Department in ensuring neutrality in the dissemination of information. The same delegation opined that simply emphasizing the issues would be counterproductive for the Department, and expressed its view that it was equally important for the Department to abide by its code of conduct in the implementation of its mandates. The same delegation expressed its belief that, in some instances, information could have been disseminated with more accuracy, and reiterated its view that the Department was responsible for ensuring that the decisions of Member States reflected in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council and other bodies were accurately and impartially disseminated.



772. With regard to paragraph 28.28 and figure 28.III, which included a performance measure regarding the number of social media followers across platforms, a delegation enquired about the reasons why the planned results for 2023 dropped by 1.5 million after surpassing the 64.5 million subscribers reported in 2022.

773. With regard to result 3 of subprogramme 1, on increased public engagement with the global peace and security agenda, some delegations commended the Department's activity with regard to the peace and security agenda, and welcomed the cooperation undertaken between the Departments of Global Communications, Peace Operations and Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. A number of delegations commended the assistance provided to peacekeeping missions in addressing disinformation. Some delegations also commended the efforts undertaken by the Department of Global Communications to combat misinformation targeting United Nations peacekeepers.

774. A delegation welcomed the Service and Sacrifice campaign that was aimed at protecting and acknowledging peacekeepers serving in missions. The same delegation noted that the presence of the Department at the interactive art installation at Times Square in New York, which celebrated peacekeepers and all those who worked together to build and maintain peace across the world, honoured the service of peacekeepers and was a manifestation of the Department's commitment to the protection of peacekeepers. Another delegation sought clarification on whether the presidential statement of the Security Council on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers had been released and how the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative pertained to the work of the Department. Another delegation expressed its view that the issue of misinformation and disinformation was broad and expressed its intent to present language to include information manipulation in the programme where applicable.

775. A delegation noted that the United Nations website ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)) had reached some 250 million views per year on the basis of figures from May 2023, and the United Nations peacekeeping website ([peacekeeping.un.org](http://peacekeeping.un.org)) had reached 565,000 views that same month. In that regard, the delegation sought clarification on the basis used for the target of 80,000 views for 2024 presented in paragraph 28.32 and figure 28.IV, given the good results reported on the aforementioned sites.

776. With regard to subprogramme 2, News services, a delegation welcomed the Department's plan to use the United Nations Web TV platform in the six official languages, as reflected in result 3. The same delegation also welcomed the Department's efforts to provide communications support and accessibility for persons with disabilities, and in that regard enquired whether subtitles would be used on the platform.

777. With regard to paragraph 28.35 (c) and the emphasis made on multilingualism, a delegation expressed support, reiterated that multilingualism was stressed by the Committee on Information and enquired about the criteria that would be used in implementing the components linked to multilingualism.

778. With regard to subprogramme 3, Outreach and knowledge services, reference was made by a delegation to paragraph 28.50 (c). The delegation noted the Department's intent to organize outreach and education programmes on the Holocaust, and welcomed this positive step. However, the delegation opined that General Assembly resolution [76/250](#) went a bit further in its guidance, as the Assembly requested the United Nations outreach programme on the Holocaust, as well as all relevant United Nations specialized agencies, to continue to develop and implement programmes aimed at countering Holocaust denial and distortion. The same delegation sought clarification on how the Department planned to continue the integration of resolution [76/250](#) in its work in the future.

779. Another delegation underlined the importance of General Assembly resolution [76/250](#), and opined that it served as a signal to condemn and confront the disturbing trends of diminishing, distorting or denying the Holocaust. The same delegation expressed appreciation and strong support for the Department's activities to implement the mandate contained in the resolution, which it noted was part of the 2024 programme of work.

780. With regard to paragraph 28.54 and the increase in the actual unique downloads of United Nations content on its platforms, a delegation expressed the view that the growing figures over the past few years were a clear testament to the importance of both the subprogramme's work and that of the Department. In that regard, the same delegation acknowledged the work of the Department and expressed its full support.

781. With regard to result 2 of subprogramme 3, on increased engagement and action for the Sustainable Development Goals through the global football community, a delegation expressed its support to the "Football for the Goals" initiative and noted its success in getting the football community involved in promoting the Goals to a wide audience. The same delegation sought clarification on how the performance measure target for 2024 shown in figure 28.X was derived and whether it was a realistic target.

782. While matters relating to parts of the programme dealing with resources were not within the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a delegation called on the Department to pay close attention to the conduct of staffing reforms, which it noted were tending towards increasing the number of personnel and therefore imposed a greater financial burden on the budget. The delegation was of the view that the main criterion for such increases should be effectiveness, especially in the context of limited financial resources. Another delegation noted that the Department planned to establish one post for each language, and expressed its belief that this would not be adequate with regard to providing full accessibility to information on events posted on the United Nations media website ([media.un.org](https://media.un.org)). The same delegation reiterated its view that this applied to all official languages other than English and requested that representatives of other Member States raise the issue in other contexts. The same delegation noted that the Department was large and had an extensive structure designed to address the most complicated challenges that could be faced by the United Nations, and that the Department's resources would allow it to introduce new practices and methods at a scale that would only be available to the United Nations. Another delegation expressed concern over the unbalanced staff composition of the Department, and requested that the Department take measures to improve its geographical representation by recruiting more staff from underrepresented developing countries.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

783. **The Committee expressed appreciation for the important work carried out by the Department of Global Communications, as well as for the further implementation of the global communication strategy for the United Nations, including by ensuring its communications were strategic, coordinated, audience-based, impact-focused and included an emphasis on multilingualism from the planning stage, as well as the timely delivery of accurate, impartial, inclusive, comprehensive, balanced, coherent and objective news and information.**

784. **The Committee reaffirmed multilingualism as a core and fundamental value of the Organization and emphasized the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations. The Committee also emphasized the importance of making use of all the official languages of the United Nations, ensuring their full and equitable treatment in all the activities of**

the Department of Global Communications, with the aim of eliminating the disparity between the use of English and the use of the five other official languages.

785. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly urge the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to achieve full parity among the six official languages on all United Nations websites and social media platforms and urge him to strengthen his efforts to develop, maintain and update multilingual United Nations websites, including United Nations Web TV, its video content and metadata, and the web page of the Secretary-General in all the official languages of the United Nations, on an equitable basis.

786. The Committee highlighted the crucial role of the Department of Global Communications in addressing the spread of misinformation, disinformation and information manipulation.

787. The Committee recognized the efforts of the Department to also disseminate accurate, relevant information in non-official United Nations languages, in accordance with respective mandates.

788. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in particular the Department of Global Communications, to continue contributing to the observance of international days and celebrations established by the Assembly and to play a role in raising awareness and promoting those events in accordance with respective Assembly resolutions, and in cooperation with the specialized agencies in charge of their implementation, where appropriate.

789. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 24, Global communications, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

#### **Overall orientation**

##### ***Paragraph 28.5***

After “In an age when misinformation”, insert “, disinformation and information manipulation”.

#### **Subprogramme 1**

##### **Campaigns and country operations services**

##### ***Paragraph 28.21 (d)***

Replace “and disinformation” with “, disinformation and information manipulation”.

#### **Subprogramme 3**

##### **Outreach and knowledge services**

#### **Result 3**

##### ***Title***

Replace “engagement by macro influencers” with “communication and advocacy”.

##### ***Paragraph 28.58***

Replace “and disinformation” with “, disinformation and information manipulation”.

**Paragraph 28.59**

Before “will provide support to such influencers”, insert “the Department of Global Communications, within its mandated activities,”.

**Programme 25  
Management and support services**

790. At its 4th and 13th meetings, on 31 May and 6 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 25, Management and support services, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 29\)](#), [A/78/6 \(Sect. 29A\)](#), [A/78/6 \(Sect. 29B\)](#), [A/78/6 \(Sect. 29C\)](#), [A/78/6 \(Sect. 29D\)](#), [A/78/6 \(Sect. 29E\)](#) and [A/78/6 \(Sect. 29F\)](#)).

791. The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, the Assistant Secretary-General, Chief Information Technology Officer in the Office of Information and Communications Technology and other representatives of the Secretary-General 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**

792. Delegations welcomed the integral role of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and expressed appreciation and support to the Department for the efficient and effective delivery of its mandate and for promoting a United Nations with a management system that was transparent and accountable and delivered effectively in accordance with its mandates. The Department’s commitment to continuous improvements and to driving results-based management policies and practices into the daily functioning and culture of the Organization was commended. A delegation expressed its appreciation to the Department, which it saw as the author and executor of many of the Secretary-General’s reform initiatives and as one of the key units of the Secretariat, both from a substantive and a technical perspective. Another delegation expressed its support for the significant work of the Department in realizing the Secretary-General’s management paradigm and enriching ongoing reforms through continuous improvement and new ways of working internally. The delegation commended the Department’s strategy for 2024, which aimed to advance the new management paradigm through an integrated approach with four interlinked pillars: the enterprise resource planning solution; programme planning, finance and budget; human resources; and business transformation and accountability. A delegation welcomed the Department’s policy leadership in all management areas through the provision of a clear, integrated global management strategy and policy framework and through strengthened monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, especially internal control.

793. Noting how hard the Department was working to support the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, and thus the whole Organization, a delegation cited a former President of the General Assembly, who once had stated that the Fifth Committee was the backbone of the Assembly (and, the delegation added, the Committee for Programme and Coordination was part of the overall budgetary process), and concluded that, by the same logic, it could be said that the Department was the backbone of the United Nations Secretariat, noting that the two Committees would not function without the Department’s support and the Organization could not deliver on its mandates without

adequate finance and liquidity, comprehensive accountability, capable management and diverse and competent human resources.

794. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the vital role the Department continued to play in implementing the Secretary-General's reform agenda throughout the Organization and making the United Nations operational, efficient and productive throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. The delegation was joined by others, which expressed support for efforts to strengthen the Organization's resilience, including its preparedness to maintain business continuity in emergencies by guiding, monitoring and adjusting the post-COVID-19 ways of working at United Nations Headquarters to continually adapt to changing environments, risks and opportunities.

795. A delegation thanked the Department for assisting Member States in finding agreement on two very important resolutions in recent years, on human resources management (General Assembly resolution [77/278](#)) and the budget cycle reform (Assembly resolution [77/267](#)). In that regard, it noted that, in the previous year, the last piece of the Secretary-General's reform agenda had been completed and that his vision for management reform had been delivered with the decision, by consensus, to lift the trial period of the annual budget cycle in order to consolidate the benefits of a shorter cycle and to focus on mandate delivery and performance. The delegation mentioned that the whole Organization and all Member States were benefiting from a more results-oriented culture and more agile programme planning, but that for the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, that required even more work and much commitment. A delegation expressed interest in how the Department was preparing to implement the budget cycle resolution, what elements it deemed important and what everyone should have in mind for the smooth implementation of the resolution. Another delegation enquired whether, with the sessions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination beginning earlier starting the following year, in mid-May, there were any considerations that discussions would start in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions before the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

796. Recalling paragraph 40 of resolution [77/278](#), in which the Assembly had recalled the Secretary-General's bulletin on flexible working arrangements, a delegation asked how the new internal working practices, as mentioned in the strategy for 2024 under the overall orientation and under subprogramme 1, Enterprise resource planning solution, services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, and management advisory services, component 3, Management advisory services, result 1, on post-COVID-19 new internal working practices, would relate to the internal administrative provision that staff be physically present at Headquarters three days a week.

797. Appreciation was expressed for the significant work done by the Department to ensure an effective recruitment process attracting the most qualified candidates while advancing equitable geographical representation and gender parity. A delegation highly appreciated that the Department would work towards the equitable geographical representation of Member States and looked forward to seeing progress. In that regard, another delegation noted paragraph 29A.9 and requested more information on the Secretariat's plan to bring about such improvements. With regard to the change in the desirable ranges system, approved by the Assembly at the first part of its resumed seventy-seventh session in resolution [77/278](#) and expected to enter into force from January 2024, a delegation asked how the Department was preparing itself for the change and when it expected Member States to start seeing changes in the composition of the Secretariat.

798. Delegations welcomed further work to implement the strategic action plan on addressing racism mentioned in paragraph 29A.2 (h) and to promote dignity for all staff across the Secretariat, expressing the view that it was important to ensure that the United Nations was an inclusive and respectful workplace for staff, and requested information on the implementation of the anti-racism strategy.

799. Efforts to strengthen the exercise of delegation of authority were also welcomed, and a delegation asked for some recent examples where it had had a positive impact on the way the United Nations delivered its mandates and on the results on the ground. Efforts by the Department to strengthen the accountability framework, simplify policies, enhance transparency and facilitate risk management monitoring and reporting were applauded.

800. A delegation welcomed the Department's work to prevent sexual harassment through a system-wide and victim-centred approach (mentioned in paragraph 29A.9) and enquired as to how the Department would encourage bystanders to act, combating inaction towards instances of sexual harassment. Referencing table 29A.35 and the planned result for 2024, namely the reporting of behaviour that constituted sexual harassment, another delegation, while agreeing with the importance of preventing sexual harassment, expressed concern that establishing performance measures such as increased reporting of behaviour that constituted sexual harassment might lead to false accusations. The delegations enquired as to how the Department would address that issue, and proposed language in that regard for consideration indicating that false allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse made with knowledge of their falsity constituted misconduct for which disciplinary measures should be imposed.

801. Under result 3, digital transformation and innovations through Umoja for more effective decision-making, under subprogramme 1, component 1, delegations, while expressing their appreciation and support for digital transformation, such as the workforce portal, questioned why the basis of the initiative mentioned was the framework set out in Our Common Agenda and "United Nations 2.0", as indicated in paragraph 29A.27, when neither had been discussed by Member States yet.

802. Referring to paragraph 29A.28, in which it was stated that the component would enhance the user experience of Umoja, a delegation was unclear on the division of labour between the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Office of Information and Communications Technology, as Umoja served as a business transformation tool, while information technology was under the responsibilities of the Office, and requested clarification in that regard.

803. A delegation noted that the Department had successfully provided technical support to the Secretariat through the enterprise resource planning system and to Member States. The delegation also noted that, with every year, the quality and accessibility of information afforded to Member States on elections had improved.

804. With regard to result 1, improved information available to delegates, under subprogramme 1, component 2, Services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a delegation indicated that it might be good to look towards the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management on what measures might be useful to make documents, which Member States needed to read, available as soon as possible.

805. A delegation expressed deep appreciation for the high-quality support and the hard work of the secretariat of the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as well as to the Programme Planning and Budget Division for its efforts in improving the quality of the budget reports, including monitoring the terminology used, early engagement with Member States and providing more tables and charts for easy reference.

806. With regard to subprogramme 2, Programme planning, finance and budget, a delegation noted the importance of a coherent and comprehensive approach to the analysis of financial statements, strengthening accountability in all United Nations operations, improvement in the quality of data analysis to facilitate the management of resources in special political missions, and independent and responsible risk management for the Organization's capital projects. The delegation noted that, through the document, it was able to familiarize itself with the Finance Knowledge Gateway, an integrated digital platform and United Nations global community for Umoja finance users, and sought additional information thereon as well as the corresponding mandate.

807. With regard to paragraph 29A.58, with regard to the strategy for component 1, Finance, a delegation proposed adding text on strengthening the management of extrabudgetary resources.

808. With regard to figure 29A.IV, which indicated the budget confidence levels for ongoing global United Nations construction projects, for result 2, independent risk management for global United Nations capital construction projects, under component 2, Field operations finance, a delegation suggested including the strategic heritage plan of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

809. With regard to result 3, improved accuracy of budget proposals, under component 3, Programme planning and budgeting, where it was mentioned in paragraph 29A.95 that the component would propose tailored recosting adjustments for specific items when the projected price changes for the item were significantly different from the consumer price index, a delegation enquired as to how the tailored recosting would be done and for what kind of specific items, and what kind of conditions would be considered other than inflation.

810. With regard to subprogrammes 3, Human resources, and 4, Business transformation and accountability, a delegation called upon the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to be guided by the view of the General Assembly, especially in terms of human resources management, as a resolution thereon had been adopted in April 2023 for the first time in six years. The delegation sought information on how the Secretariat had taken on the resolution.

811. With regard to paragraph 29A.98 (f) under the strategy for subprogramme 3, component 1, Global strategy and policy, where reference was made to adopting new values and behaviours in talent management, a delegation expressed interest in hearing more and asked what new values and behaviours were referred to.

812. With regard to paragraph 29A.107, where it was mentioned that the component would embark on a staff selection 2.0 multi-year programme, with an expected end result of delivering a new, effective, fair, efficient and agile recruitment process, a delegation indicated that it highly appreciated and welcomed the initiative as equitable geographical representation remained a core concern, and that it looked forward to its implementation and fruitful result.

813. With regard to the Department of Operational Support, delegations commended the support it provided to the United Nations Secretariat, including advisory, operational and transactional support services, such as process simplification, data analytics, support for partnerships and capacity development. A delegation valued the efforts to innovate and put clients at the heart of process design, with a view to enabling Secretariat entities to deliver on their mandates and achieve results. Another delegation indicated that it recognized the crucial role of the Department as the operational arm of the Secretariat and the client-facing interface for operational support matters, and expressed its appreciation for the vital role the Department played in business process improvement, business continuity and making the United

Nations operational, efficient and productive throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Another delegation commended the Department for its collaborative spirit.

814. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the Department's attention towards the Sustainable Development Goals and valued its contribution in guiding the procedural changes needed across the United Nations to accelerate the achievement of the Goals. The delegation sought feedback on how the Department might go further in seeking collaboration opportunities and synergies, such as through the effective use of mutual recognition, including in the areas of human resources and supply chain management.

815. A delegation strongly supported the Department's plans to continue to support efforts to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities to the United Nations premises and to leverage the increased use of digital tools and platforms to upgrade the digital infrastructure at Headquarters in order to increase accessibility.

816. The delegation also expressed its support for the Department's efforts to strengthen outreach and training for vendors, including for women-owned businesses.

817. A delegation recalled the crucial role of the United Nations Global Service Centre in providing high-quality and customized counselling to field missions on the reduction of their environmental footprint.

818. A delegation indicated that equitable geographical representation remained a concern and requested information on what measures the Department would take in that regard.

819. A delegation, referring to paragraph 29B.7 (b), where, with regard to external factors, it was mentioned that the overall plan for 2024 was based, among other factors, on the planning assumption that relevant United Nations and non-United Nations partners continued to cooperate, amplifying the Department's impact in supporting client needs and discharging its mandates to ensure timely and sustained delivery of operational support, sought clarification on who those non-United Nations partners were.

820. Referring to paragraph 29B.11, where, in the context of support to Member States and clients on issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was mention of the medevac mechanism, a delegation indicated that it understood the mechanism was to close at the end of 2022 and asked about its status and the Secretariat's plan with regard to the mechanism.

821. Support was expressed for the approach of the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support to organizing the work of the Department in accordance with existing mandates. In that regard, a delegation referred to General Assembly resolution [76/274](#) on cross-cutting issues, which referenced cross-cutting logistical and procurement mandates of the Secretariat as well as the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that had been endorsed to be considered for the work of the Department, and pointed out that it was missing under legislative mandates and sought clarification on why it was not included.

822. With regard to the enabling deliverables for subprogramme 1, Support operations, component 1, Human resources support, in the area of administration, a delegation indicated that it was surprised to find information about the Department's plans to implement and review new sustainable supply chain technologies. The delegation noted that in paragraph 20 of its most recent resolution on procurement (resolution [69/273](#)), the General Assembly had not yet approved the concept of sustainable procurement. The delegation recalled and expressed support for the



recommendation contained in paragraph 39 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/69/809), that the Secretary-General should prepare a comprehensive report on the concept and its relationship with the four procurement principles set out in the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, as well as the impact of its implementation if approved by the Assembly. The delegation added that such a report had not yet been submitted to the Assembly for consideration. In that regard, it requested an explanation on the meaning of sustainable supply chain technologies, and what the previously mentioned wording meant and whether it had anything to do with the concept of sustainable procurement.

823. With regard to table 29B.4 under result 2, improved young professionals programme, under the same component, the delegation made reference to the 2024 planned performance measure, namely that at least 55 per cent of appointed young professionals programme candidates were from unrepresented/underrepresented countries, and requested an explanation. The delegation's understanding was that the programme in principle could only take in candidates from unrepresented/underrepresented countries and therefore sought comments on the planned indicator for 2024, noting the information provided that candidates appointed through the programme included those from overrepresented countries as well as countries within the range.

824. A delegation welcomed the strategy set out in component 2, Capacity development and operational training, as well as component 3, Health-care management and occupational safety and health, particularly the training on emergency blood transfusion provided to field medical personnel in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

825. On paragraph 29B.54, which referenced gender-sensitive medical services under component 3, a delegation asked how many cases requiring such services had been reported in the past few years.

826. A delegation welcomed subprogramme 2, Supply chain management, component 1, Integrated supply chain management, and stressed the importance of result 3 regarding the Department's environmental strategy to reduce the environmental footprint in the field. It noted that the strategy would come to an end soon, so it would be crucial for the Secretariat to propose a way forward in consultation with Member States. The delegation recalled that the consultation process was ongoing and, in its capacity as Co-Chair of the Group of Friends leading on environmental management in the field, indicated that it was proud to contribute to that process and looked ahead to the final way forward that would be proposed.

827. It was noted that, with regard to subprogramme 3, Special activities, and result 3, on mutually beneficial collaboration in support operations through a support partnerships framework, in table 29B.22, the planned indicator for 2024 indicated that the United Nations Support Office in Somalia would be enabled to provide operational support to non-United Nations security forces in Somalia. A delegation proposed to change the indicator to reflect that the United Nations Support Office in Somalia would be enabled to provide operational support to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, in accordance with its mandate as endorsed by the Security Council.

828. With regard to the Office of Information and Communications Technology, delegations expressed support for and commended the Office's work, particularly in its post-COVID-19 pandemic efforts, enabling a mobile and digital workforce and navigating digital transformation in a rapidly changing digital landscape, supporting the General Assembly with meeting formats that were inclusive for everybody, the delivery of cloud computing support and the establishment of a data architecture

blueprint to meet the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere.

829. A delegation thanked the Office for presenting an ICT strategy, which outlined a five-year vision to harness the power of technology and data for more effective mandate implementation, and encouraged the Office to submit refined elements of the strategy in the context of a detailed, time-bound implementation road map, which should include: (a) precision on the strategy's intended objectives, identifying for each objective concrete actions to achieve it; (b) key performance indicators, deliverables and a clear and effective governance and accountability framework that clarified the balance between central control and operational freedom; (c) estimates of the resources needed for the implementation of the ICT strategy made with a view to rationalizing the allocation of existing ICT expenditures and to avoid duplication and overlap; (d) information on the Secretary-General's efforts in leveraging the power of technology innovation in the pursuit of the Organization's objectives, particularly the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and (e) an outreach component to promote awareness.

830. The same delegation recommended that a risk analysis exercise be undertaken with regard to security of information and communication, and enquired about the state of play of the ICT strategy implementation road map and comprehensive risk analysis. Furthermore, the delegation recalled paragraph 29C.25 of the document and enquired as to how the planned result to strengthen data-driven decision-making for several United Nations entities was embedded in the quintet of change of the Secretary-General towards a United Nations 2.0. Lastly, the same delegation sought clarification on the performance measure reflected in figure 29C.II, specifically about the increase in the number of users with access to desktop telephone services using Microsoft Teams from 43 to 6,500, and requested details on the current number for 2023 and the chances for progress in 2024.

831. A delegation expressed support for the continued shift to enterprise platforms from legacy applications, leading to a more cohesive, coherent and resilient ICT ecosystem, and enquired about the plans to update the underlying infrastructure of the Wi-Fi service in the Secretariat Building to meet the requirements of the delegates, the wider user community and the Secretariat.

832. Recognition was given to the contribution that data made towards effective mandate implementation. In that context, support was expressed for the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General as part of the quintet of change, and efforts to strengthen system-wide interoperability and synergies were encouraged in order to better enable mandate implementation. A delegation referred to paragraph 29C.7, which discussed the Office's approach to innovation, and sought information on the Office's assessment of the demand for innovation across the United Nations Secretariat and its capability to use, deploy and exploit any innovative approaches.

833. A delegation recalled the reference to hybrid and virtual meetings in the document and drew attention to the fact that hybrid and virtual formats of meetings for intergovernmental bodies had been devised exclusively to ensure business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic and following the recommendations of local bodies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States of America, which had indicated that in-person meetings should not take place. Furthermore, the delegation emphasized that the General Assembly had not provided a mandate to conduct meetings in those formats and recalled that the Committee on Conferences would discuss the matter in September 2023. Clarification was sought as to the ways in which the Office of Information and Communications Technology was collaborating with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the only department of the Secretariat that provided conference services

to Member States, and specifically how the Office chose various platforms and which office had the authority to decide on those platforms from the standpoint of their mandates.

834. With regard to the United Nations Offices at Nairobi, Geneva and Vienna, a delegation commended the efforts to draw on lessons learned from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including in the context of the strategic heritage plan, building on lessons learned to ensure business continuity in the three Offices to support the next normal planning efforts, and asked all three Offices to share their plans for crisis preparation and planning, following the disruption caused by COVID-19. Another delegation thanked the Offices for their programme plans for 2024 and recognized their excellent work in 2022.

835. A delegation expressed support and appreciation for the work done by the Offices in carrying out their mandates of management support services and underscored the accountability to Member States for the efficient and effective delivery of those mandates entrusted by them in the areas of finance, human resources, ICT procurement and infrastructure. The delegation expressed support for diverse procurement, including from developing countries, and support for outreach to developing countries through international procurement seminars.

836. With regard to human resources management, a delegation requested additional information on the work being done to achieve equitable geographical representation in all offices away from Headquarters, and a delegation indicated that it supported the equitable geographical representation of posts, including at the senior level.

837. Another delegation sought clarification on the current situation with regard to the face-to-face visits to the United Nations Office at Vienna and United Nations Office at Nairobi buildings by the staff of the complex. A question was raised regarding the proportion of staff attending the workplace in person five days a week and staff working remotely.

838. A delegation expressed appreciation for the comprehensive nature of the programme plan of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which reflected a breadth of ambition, scope and results, enabling business continuity through service provision to over 60 United Nations agencies and increasing support to the global resident coordinator system and overall support to Our Common Agenda. The delegation noted that the previous year's programme had referenced the business operations strategy 2.0, which incorporated new business and delivery models as part of the future growth of the Office, and enquired about the reasons for not reporting on the strategy in the current programme plan.

839. A delegation noted that a key function of the United Nations Office at Nairobi was to provide human resources administration, payroll and finance services to international staff in 131 resident coordinator offices around the world, as well as to the globally dispersed offices of UNEP and UN-Habitat. The same delegation commended the comprehensive staff health and well-being programme of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, particularly regarding mental health post-pandemic, and enquired as to how the Office was leveraging the available knowledge resources across other duty stations, including United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Office at Vienna and the United Nations Office at Geneva, including through exchanges of best practices. Furthermore, the delegation commended the United Nations Office at Nairobi for continuing to utilize lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and for maintaining a commitment to business continuity management for 2024. Lastly, the delegation noted the strong support of the Government of Kenya and the city of Nairobi, and asked for an update on upcoming partnerships with both to upgrade and improve infrastructure, particularly regarding the UN Avenue project.

840. A delegation recalled the reference in paragraph 29D.14 to the evaluation of the Joint Inspection Unit on business continuity management in United Nations system organizations completed in 2022, which had guided the plan to review its business continuity performance during the pandemic and identify gaps for corrective measures in 2024. In that regard, the delegation sought clarification about the gaps already identified and the proactive measures that could be taken to mitigate gaps.

841. A delegation noted that non-United Nations institutions were involved in the recruitment process at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, requested further information on the modalities used for that process and sought clarification on the specific improvements to the recruitment process, noting that previous human resources recommendations had not been fully implemented and acknowledging that some recommendations seemed difficult to implement. The delegation asked for an update on how the Office would improve going forward. On another topic, the delegation noted that measures rolled out to combat COVID-19 at the United Nations Office at Nairobi had been more drastic than in New York, and recalled the daily tests referenced in the report. However, the delegation noted that daily COVID-19 tests had not been conducted during the sessions of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat held in 2022, and requested an update about the measures currently in place. Lastly, the same delegation noted that one of the key functions of the Office was to provide travel services and asked for further information on how Umoja was used for travel and whether it was helpful in organizing and purchasing travel.

842. A delegation enquired about the utilization level of the Nairobi campus and its facilities and sought clarification about the size of the campus, which was cited as 142 acres in paragraph 29D.5 and as 140 acres in table 29D.7.

843. With regard to the United Nations Office at Geneva, a delegation welcomed the continued focus on building a sustainable infrastructure to moderate meetings and conferences in accordance with the business continuity model, and underlined the importance of ongoing and proactive maintenance to safeguard Member States' investment in the strategic heritage plan. The delegation asked about the best model for operating the newly renovated building and the best use of space.

844. A delegation commended the United Nations Office at Geneva for continuing to cope with challenges following the pandemic and in the context of the strategic heritage plan, especially for supporting, at short notice, special high-level negotiations organized by special political missions. The delegation enquired about the Office's initiative to assess the level of disability inclusion for ICT solutions available to Geneva client entities, as noted in paragraph 29E.12. The delegation noted that the new upward feedback system mentioned in paragraph 29E.38, which was implemented globally for all directors and with which staff were evaluated against workplans to improve team interaction and adaptability, was well received by staff, and enquired about the next steps in improving performance management. Regarding the strategic heritage plan, the delegation asked about the current utilization level of open office space compared with traditional office space.

845. In welcoming and expressing gratitude for the exceptional work done at the three duty stations, a delegation noted the work done in the conference rooms in Geneva and the new building having a sophisticated ventilation system above the standards. The delegation noted a third category of gender-neutral restrooms for those using the facilities and enquired from which mandate it had been initiated. The delegation also enquired about the progression of the construction work and for how long the digital platforms for meetings would be necessary.

846. A delegation noted the hard work that had gone into preparing the programme plans, and expressed the view that that type of reporting, increasing transparency, could only help Member States support the work of the Offices. The delegation

expressed its support for the strategy described in paragraph 29E.50 to equip rooms with hybrid conference equipment. The delegation's reflection was that an extension of business continuity arrangements to allow for the continued provision of hybrid conferencing services was needed to make effective use of those facilities. The delegation noted that the Human Rights Council had obtained an extension until the end of the calendar year, but assumed that a broader, medium-term solution for all the entities to whom the United Nations Office at Geneva provided hybrid conferencing services could be needed.

847. Another delegation pointed out that one of the key functions of the United Nations Office at Geneva was to provide conference services to meetings of intergovernmental bodies. The delegation welcomed the measures the Office had taken in 2022 to ensure the continuity of the intergovernmental process during the pandemic, namely the organization of virtual or hybrid meetings as a temporary measure in cases where the face-to-face format had not been possible owing to the risks of the spread of COVID-19. Considering that those problems were now behind, the delegation stated that the Secretariat, including the United Nations Office at Geneva, did not have a mandate from the General Assembly to hold intergovernmental meetings in a virtual or hybrid format. The delegation indicated that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the key department of the United Nations Secretariat for the provision of conference services, operated in that paradigm, and expressed the view that that was how the United Nations Office at Geneva should act.

848. A delegation noted that the business continuity plan of the United Nations Office at Vienna did not meet the target of increased preparedness for future crises, as a recent OIOS audit on ICT security had confirmed that further adjustments would be needed in 2023. In that regard, the delegation sought information elaborating on the adjustments needed to meet the business continuity targets on the basis of the assessment.

849. A delegation commended the continued focus of the United Nations Office at Vienna on issues relating to human resources, in particular, efforts to create a more inclusive, respectful and supportive work environment, as set out in paragraph 29F.31. While recognizing the central role of the training of staff, the same delegation pointed out that it would be useful to see some other metrics in assessing the impact of the programme in order to understand whether the objectives of the programme were being met. A question was raised on whether plans were in place to measure success.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

850. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 77/254, consider the programme plan for programme 25, Management and support services, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

### **Programme 26 Internal oversight**

851. At its 11th meeting, on 5 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 26, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 (A/78/6 (Sect. 30)).

852. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### **Discussion**

853. Several delegations expressed strong support for the valuable work of OIOS and its unique mandate within the United Nations, including the prioritization of initiatives to ensure the physical and mental well-being of all United Nations staff members. Delegations viewed the responsibilities of the Office in the areas of internal audit, inspection and evaluation, and investigation as key components for increasing accountability and transparency, as well as improving overall performance within the United Nations system. Appreciation was expressed for the vital role played in driving improvement across the Organization and supporting the Secretary-General's reforms, including with respect to geographical representation and the significant work done in preventing and responding to sexual misconduct, harassment, racial discrimination, fraud and corruption.

854. A delegation thanked the leadership of the Office for introducing the programme plan and indicated that the goals set by the Under-Secretary-General, as presented in the foreword to the budget document, were fully shared and agreed. In addition, the need to further increase accountability and transparency in achieving United Nations mandated results and targets in 2024 was recognized. A delegation supported the strategy set out in paragraph 30.2 of the budget document on internal oversight coverage of United Nations activities in management areas, such as: (a) implementation of governance, peace and security and development reforms; (b) strengthening of organizational culture; (c) procurement and supply management, including countering the risks of fraud and corruption; (d) oversight of phased out or reconfigured peacekeeping operations; and (e) strengthening of the whistle-blower protection system. While the activities of OIOS were built on the basis of mandates received, the lack of General Assembly resolutions in paragraph 30.12 of the budget document was pointed out. A delegation expressed concern that there were no General Assembly resolutions adopted in recent years that had to be added to the list of legislative mandates for the programme, and noted that OIOS had to accept the relevant instructions as a result.

855. Appreciation was expressed for the contribution of subprogramme 1, Internal audit, to strengthening work planning processes and the efficient delivery of results. With regard to subprogramme 2, Inspection and evaluation, a delegation welcomed the objectives of the subprogramme and considered that effective evaluation was deeply important to improving decision-making and learning and in supporting a culture of continuous improvement. In addition, the Office's contribution in providing methodological guidance and quality assurance was appreciated. In paragraph 30.41 of the document, it was noted that the lesson learned was that a greater focus on evaluating outcomes and outputs – although more complex – would ensure that the eventual evaluation reports could better contribute to improved decision-making, accountability and learning. While this shift to focusing on evaluating outcomes was very much welcomed, the delegation requested an update on how OIOS had improved in this area and how the impact of evaluation reports would be assessed. Additional information was also sought on what the consultative process mentioned in the same paragraph would look like in practice.

856. Regarding subprogramme 3, Investigations, the same delegation supported OIOS in responding effectively to tackle misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and considered that a focus on prevention was also vital. Given that effective and prompt investigations increased trust in the United Nations, the view

was expressed that investigations should take a victim-centred approach, including offering support and information to victims, as this had been considered important.

857. Furthermore, delegations welcomed the efforts of OIOS to reduce misconduct investigation timelines, a critical step to increase trust in the investigation process, and noted that figure 30.VI of the document demonstrated an increase in the number of reports received and investigations initiated. In that regard, additional information was requested to explain the reason for the gap. At the same time, clarification was sought as to what measures had been taken to further increase trust in the investigation process and what additional steps had been taken to reduce the timeline during the investigation process.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

858. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 77/254, consider the programme plan for programme 26, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 under the agenda item entitled “Programme planning” at the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly.**

## **Programme 27**

### **Jointly financed activities**

859. At its 17th meeting, on 12 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 27, Jointly financed administrative activities, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 (A/78/6 (Sect. 31)).

860. The Chair of ICSC, the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit and the Secretary of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration.

### **Discussion**

861. Several delegations expressed support and thanked all representatives of ICSC, the Joint Inspection Unit and CEB for a comprehensive presentation of the programme plan. Support was also expressed for advancing the work of the three entities.

862. With regard to ICSC, a delegation thanked the Commission for its important work to safeguard and improve the conditions of service of staff of the United Nations common system as it faced system-wide challenges brought about by an ever-changing global employment market. The delegation congratulated the Commission for its recent achievement related to the new parental leave framework, which would provide for extended paid leave for parents, regardless of gender, and allow women to have greater equality with men in terms of career opportunities, as well as allow for more flexibility in a rapidly changing work environment. ICSC efforts to strengthen a coherent and effective human resources management system that was aligned closely with the achievement of organizational goals and objectives, including the promotion of geographical diversity and rejuvenation of the workforce, and the integration of a strong gender perspective in its operational activities, deliverables and results, as appropriate, were also welcomed. Another delegation expressed gratitude for the efforts of ICSC in promoting geographical diversity and the rejuvenation of the workforce. While a reduction in the ICSC budget resulting from the conclusions of the Finance and Budget Network was noted, a concern was shared regarding the financial constraints faced by the Commission for 2024. A

delegation sought clarification on not including the ICSC proposal for the establishment of a P-4 Legal Officer post for 2024, which had also been proposed the previous year. The Chair reminded the Committee of its working methods and that questions on resources were for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

863. In reference to the Commission's performance measure planned for 2024 under result 1 as reflected in table 31.2, namely positive indications with regard to the attraction and retention of staff, in particular women at hardship duty stations classified as D and E, a question was raised as to what was meant by "positive indications".

864. Regarding the Joint Inspection Unit, one delegation expressed support for a strong Unit that had controlled the efficiency of services and the proper use of funds of the United Nations and that provided an independent view aimed at improving management and methods while achieving greater coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system. It was noted that better information for legislative body decision-making and improved efficiency, effectiveness, coordination and collaboration were crucial for the organizations of the United Nations system, and that the Unit played an essential part in ensuring that all of those objectives were met. The unique role of the Unit as an external and independent system-wide inspection, evaluation and investigation body was of utmost importance for that reason, and it was expected that the level of resources required by the Unit would reflect that importance, as expressed by the General Assembly in its recent resolution. The delegation welcomed the Unit's plan for 2024, in particular the focus on its capability to effectively monitor the acceptance and implementation of its recommendations. Another delegation noted the reduction of the Unit's budget by the Finance and Budget Network for 2024, while recognizing that the mandate of the Unit had been taken very seriously. The same delegation pointed out that it would be vigilant in supporting the full budget of the Unit as the will of the Assembly to intervene would be requested.

865. In reference to paragraph 31.42 under result 2, increased acceptance of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations, it was noted that the programme's work in 2022 had contributed to 74 per cent of the Unit's recommendations being accepted by participating organizations, which had met the planned target. Given the target of 76 per cent for 2024, a delegation requested clarification on how such a specific target could be planned and actually achieved. At the same time, it was also noted that figure 31.V showed that the availability of reviews carried over from the previous year (annual) had only been 50 per cent in 2022, while the planned performance measure for 2023 and 2024 was 100 per cent. Information was requested to explain the discrepancy in that regard. Clarification was also sought with regard to the strategy for 2024 as reflected in paragraph 31.30 (d), develop and implement effective platforms for the sharing of good practices and knowledge in the various thematic areas of the work of the Unit, including the innovative practices and institutional knowledge originating from the COVID-19 pandemic.

866. With regard to CEB, a delegation expressed support for its crucial work to strengthen and amplify the capacity of the multilateral system to deliver on all aspects of its sustainable development, human rights, humanitarian and peace actions around the world and to leverage the collective capacity of the organizations of the United Nations system for the effective delivery of mandates. The following aspects, in particular, were welcomed: strengthening the efforts to drive the systemic change through a focus on providing better data, including analysis and communications; innovation and digital transformation; strategic foresight; stronger results orientation; and a work culture that would simplify and encouraged collaboration. In that regard, a



question was raised as to how the work of CEB linked to the overall United Nations 2.0 process.

867. In reference to the performance measure planned for 2024, as reflected in table 31.20 under result 1, planned result for 2024, namely improved accessibility for United Nations organizations and Member States to a larger volume of United Nations system-wide financial data, with enhanced functionality for interactive data analysis and effective, evidence-based decision-making, clarification was sought as to what was meant by “improved accessibility”.

868. Another delegation welcomed the continued efforts of CEB to support the effective implementation of the United Nations priorities and commended its wide-ranging efforts, which would: (a) drive innovation in working methods; (b) improve transparency and accountability; (c) prioritize risk management; and (d) lead digital transformation for increased coordination across the United Nations system. The delegation underscored the importance of the support of CEB for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The CEB data webpage was described as dynamic and interactive, notably with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, and that use of the CEB website for the presentation of data was valued in particular. Furthermore, the delegation commended CEB for providing the tool, which was more accessible and made it easier to disaggregate and filter data to create tailored analyses. In that regard, additional information was requested to explain the value of a dynamic online platform for users. While appreciation was expressed for the work of CEB, a delegation enquired whether issues covering the areas of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse were taken in 2023 and why no reference to such work was included in the budget review for 2024.

869. One delegation expressed support for the programme and emphasized that there was no doubt that the important work by ICSC, the Unit and CEB was carried out within the United Nations system, especially those activities related to ICSC and the Unit. The delegation highlighted the traditional call on CEB to continue its work based on established mandates and recalled in relevant General Assembly resolutions that the Committee had reaffirmed the need for the Assembly to request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure that activities of the Board were in line with intergovernmental mandates. For 2024, it was observed that the programme of work did not contain a single reference to multilingualism, although the Committee had reiterated its call for multilingualism, which was one of the core and fundamental values of the United Nations system. In that context, questions were raised as to what action had been taken by CEB to promote multilingualism and why that information was not included in the programme of work for 2024.

870. Another delegation highly appreciated the work carried out by CEB in strengthening collaboration, harmonization and coordination within the United Nations system. While the vital importance of multilingualism to the work of the United Nations was stressed, a call was made to reduce the gap between English and the other five official languages of the United Nations. In addition, the delegation expressed serious concern about the issue of geographical representation and called for further efforts to increase representation from underrepresented countries for an inclusive and diverse workforce.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

871. **The Committee commended the work carried out by ICSC, noting its key role in enabling member organizations to deliver on their mandates by creating conditions of service that helped to attract and retain staff, the most valuable resource of the United Nations common system, and stressed the need for legal expertise within the ICSC secretariat.**

872. The Committee welcomed the proposed focus of ICSC for 2024 on the inclusion of the workforce diversity component in the human resources management framework, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [73/273](#) on common system organizations, as well as on standards of conduct.

873. 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.

874. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage CEB to continue its efforts to promote the system-wide delivery of mandates aimed at ensuring efficiency, in particular in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

875. The Committee also 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 and fundamental value of the United Nations system, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

876. The Committee reaffirmed the need for the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure that activities and initiatives were in line with intergovernmental mandates.

877. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage CEB to continue its efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse and all other forms of misconduct and harassment.

878. The Committee also recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General to ensure transparency and accountability of the established budgetary procedures of the cost-sharing arrangement between the entities represented in the Finance and Budget Network.

879. The Committee further recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 27, Jointly financed activities, of the proposed programme budget for 2024.

## **Programme 28**

### **Safety and security**

880. At its 11th meeting, on 5 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 28, Safety and security, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance in 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 34\)](#)).

881. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

### **Discussion**

882. A delegation expressed strong support for the Department of Safety and Security and recognized the Department as a critical partner in executing humanitarian assistance, especially in insecure environments. It was noted that the growing conflict and insecurity around the world continued to increase humanitarian needs and that many of the world's most vulnerable faced multiple destabilizing factors, including unprecedented levels of climate change-induced migration and indifference to international humanitarian law. The delegation commended the efforts of the Department to increase its engagement in broader United Nations planning processes, including those led by humanitarian actors, development entities and peace operations.

The delegation also commended the Department's efforts to improve its information and knowledge management systems and encouraged the use of public and transparent risk incident systems in cooperation with regional and non-governmental organization partners, as well as the adoption of standard operating procedures regarding the victims of violence registry for fatalities in service, which is designed to follow up with relevant host Governments on cases of serious crimes and acts of violence resulting in death or serious injury of United Nations personnel, in collaboration with other departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat. The Department's integration of gender perspectives into a gender-sensitive security management system, as well as the implementation of a disability strategy to foster and improve diversity, equity and inclusion, was welcomed.

883. With regard to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, the same delegation expressed concern given the increase in safety and security incidents affecting all humanitarian personnel, including increased fatalities and injuries from acts of violence, as well as increased intimidation and harassment, all of which were highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General on safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel ([A/77/362](#)) from January 2021 to June 2022. In particular, the delegation expressed concern about improving the protection of locally recruited humanitarian workers, who represented the majority of deaths, injuries and abduction of aid workers, and urged the United Nations to improve internal protection and accountability measures for cases of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by United Nations personnel or aid workers against other aid workers. To that end, support regarding the use of all tools available to promote accountability, consistent with international law, for those responsible for unlawful acts on medical and humanitarian personnel, was emphasized. Furthermore, the delegation pointed out that maintaining the safety of humanitarian personnel and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need was critical to keeping people alive. The view was expressed that the long-standing work must continue to keep the humanitarian crises in Ethiopia, Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic and South Sudan on the agenda of the Security Council. Questions were raised with regard to what, if any, information-sharing and accessibility improvements had been made by the Department during the past year to facilitate data-driven decision-making, and to what extent the Department had engaged in contingency planning for non-traditional security issues such as cybersecurity, the weaponization of artificial intelligence and data security.

884. Appreciation was expressed by another delegation for the work of the Department in ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel. The same delegation welcomed the training programme on providing access to psychosocial support and resilience-building for United Nations security management system personnel in response to critical incident stress and mental health issues under subprogramme 3. That delegation was of the opinion that, as the security environment remained complex and unpredictable, several constant risks existed and none of them could be neglected. In this regard, clarification was sought as to why the Department deemed it relevant to list specific risks at the expense of others, and why, in the opening statement and foreword of the report ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 34\)](#)), reference was made to climate change – just one of the multiple factors affecting the security environment. The view was expressed that it was not appropriate to highlight climate change, as it was not relevant to the discussion.

885. Delegations thanked the Department for the presentation of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and welcomed its efforts to continually improve and change, as well as to look at ways to improve service delivery, lessons learned and work across the United Nations system to ensure a better joint approach. Appreciation was expressed for the Department's important role in enabling the United Nations

system to carry out programmes and activities at Headquarters and in the field, as well as keeping United Nations personnel safe in often complex and challenging operating environments. The leadership role that the Department played in the development, updating and implementation of system-wide policies and measures was noted, while at the same time it was pointed out that it was crucial to increase coherence between services and system-wide approaches to safety and security. In reference to the two evaluations planned for 2024, as reflected in paragraph 34.19 of the report, a question was raised as to how the focus of those evaluations would be determined and how to ensure they contributed to continuous improvement in carrying out the Department's mandate. With regard to paragraph 34.5 of the same report, additional information was sought regarding the anticipated benefits to the work of the Department in consolidating policy and partnerships functions in the proposed Division of Partnerships and Specialized Support. Another delegation requested background information on the benefits of partnerships in the proposed division.

886. A delegation welcomed efforts undertaken by the Department to integrate a gender perspective in support of a gender-sensitive approach to security management and security operations, as well as to incorporate disability inclusion when developing plans and strategies. In respect of the strategy in paragraph 34.34 (c) under subprogramme 2, Field operations, the same delegation asked what the Under-Secretary-General was planning with regard to cases of rapid deployment. Information was also requested regarding the ability of the Secretariat to find staff and whether local staff would be considered.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

887. **The Committee commended the important work carried out by the Department of Safety and Security in providing leadership, operational support and oversight of the United Nations security management system to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises and to support the implementation of United Nations mandates, programmes and operations in the increasingly complex global security environment.**

888. **The Committee noted the ongoing efforts of the Department in improving the dissemination of information, the effectiveness of the security risk management process and an effective and adequate surge capacity.**

889. **The Committee welcomed the rapid deployment of crisis management expertise and surge support in response to multiple crises, where the capacity was unavailable or insufficient.**

890. **The Committee commended the Department for its efforts in mainstreaming disability inclusion into its activities and operations, including its plan to improve physical accessibility for persons with disabilities.**

891. **The Committee emphasized the importance of the accountability system of the Secretariat, as well as the need to strengthen risk management, the internal control framework, results-based management and transparency. The Committee also emphasized the importance for the Department of a reliable audit, investigation and evaluation system. The Committee recalled General Assembly resolution [67/253](#), in which the Assembly welcomed the progress made towards the implementation of enterprise risk management, and recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to reflect its application in the Department's future programme plans.**

892. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 28, Safety and security, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

**Overall orientation**

*Paragraph 34.2*

Replace the existing text with the following:

The security environment in which the United Nations operates remains highly complex and unpredictable, owing to multiple factors including war, conflict, civil unrest and crime, as well as the expansion by non-State armed groups of their scope and capabilities by exploiting unaddressed grievances, the indifference to international humanitarian law of some actors and unprecedented levels of climate change-induced migration, in specific contexts, interacting with social, political and economic drivers, in places where the United Nations is called to deliver its mandates.

*Paragraph 34.4*

In the second sentence, insert “various economic challenges, including” before “rising inflation globally”.

## **B. Evaluation**

### **Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives**

893. At its 3rd meeting, on 30 May 2023, the Committee considered the report of OIOS on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives ([A/78/70](#)).

894. Representatives of OIOS introduced the report and, together with representatives of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

#### **Discussion**

895. Several delegations expressed thanks to OIOS for the report. A delegation welcomed the report, remarking that it was useful and that the Office was invaluable to the United Nations system, and noted that its role in strengthening evaluation at the Secretariat was very important, as evaluation drove continuous improvement. Another delegation expressed the view that evaluation was the most important process in programming and planning.

896. A delegation commended the cooperation between OIOS and the Department, and specifically its Business Transformation and Accountability Division.

897. The same delegation noted that the review had led to the finding that evaluation culture and capacity were still weak, owing to a variety of factors, including resources, and enquired as to what more could be done to establish a stronger evaluation culture. The delegation also commented on the use of evaluations and enquired about examples of how the results of those evaluations had been effectively used. The delegation expressed appreciation to staff for their continuous effort to continue to conduct evaluations despite restrictions related to COVID-19.

898. Delegations enquired about the integration of cross-cutting issues in evaluation. A delegation wondered if standardized guidance for the integration of cross-cutting issues was available. Another delegation noted that disability inclusion could be improved and asked about guidance on disability inclusion.

899. A delegation referred to findings regarding the use and quality of reports, noting that focal points from peacekeeping operations had not found evaluation reports to be very useful. The delegation also commented that figure VIII, on the average quality rating of evaluation reports, showed that the quality of reports in the peacekeeping group had dropped considerably as compared with the trend, and asked if the Office was concerned about that and what actions could be taken to address the situation.

900. The same delegation also expressed concern that, while evaluation was very important for the Organization and its future, in general, entities had indicated a need for expert guidance. The delegation recalled that the General Assembly had expressed concern about the use of external consultants and recommended that it should be kept to a minimum. In relation to that issue, the delegation referred to paragraph 52 of the OIOS report, in which improvements to the consultants database were set out, and suggested that there should be clear criteria on which situations required the use of consultants' services.

901. The delegation also noted that figure VI, on use of evaluation reports, showed the different uses of those reports, such as for reporting to donors and reporting to intergovernmental bodies, and asked for further information on that, as delegations expected to see a higher percentage of reporting use directed to intergovernmental governmental bodies rather than to the donors.

902. Another delegation sought clarification about how OIOS evaluations were prioritized, referencing the planned OIOS evaluations for 2024 and 2025.

### **Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Development Coordination Office regional support**

903. At its 7th meeting, on 1 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the Development Coordination Office regional support ([E/AC.51/2023/2](#)).

904. Representatives of OIOS introduced the report and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration thereof.

### **Discussion**

905. Delegations thanked representatives of OIOS for the report. A delegation welcomed the positive findings contained in the report, including those relating to human rights, gender mainstreaming and the Peer Support Groups. The same delegation expressed concern about inconsistencies in results across the Groups. The delegation welcomed further information about the timeline for the implementation of recommendations.

906. A delegation requested information about the strategy for resident coordinator system evaluations and the timeframe for reviews. The delegation asked whether there was an intention to compile recommendations into an overall multi-year evaluation report.

907. A delegation commented on the lack of a specific mandate for resident coordinators to promote human rights in host countries. The same delegation stated that the focus of the work of resident coordinators was on development and poverty

eradication. The delegation noted that the report did not include reference to support provided for disaster risk reduction.

908. A delegation emphasized the need for the resident coordinator system to conduct its role in strict compliance with its mandate. The same delegation expressed interest in further assessments of resident coordinator system support for regional representation, timeliness and resident coordinator system funding and resource utilization.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

909. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 46 and 47 of the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the Development Coordination Office regional support.**

### **Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of United Nations Secretariat support to the Sustainable Development Goals**

910. At its 7th meeting, on 1 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of OIOS on the thematic evaluation of United Nations Secretariat support to the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/AC.51/2023/3](#)).

911. Representatives of OIOS introduced the report and, together with representatives of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

### **Discussion**

912. Delegations welcomed and thanked representatives of OIOS for the report. A number of delegations conveyed their appreciation for the timing of the report and also expressed agreement with the recommendations contained therein. A delegation expressed support for the measures adopted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to improve the interoperability of data in line with the priorities of Member States.

913. A delegation asked the Secretariat to clarify how the evaluation was interlinked with other Sustainable Development Goal stocktaking processes and how Member States could link the findings of the evaluation with the stocktaking exercises to give guidance on strengthening the support provided to Member States in relation to the Goals.

914. Another delegation noted that, in the report, OIOS referred to the lack of support from the Secretariat for promoting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the need to establish coherent action to help Member States to create institutional capacity for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The delegation also noted that it was important for the Secretariat to think about the Sustainable Development Goal support strategy established during the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2022. The delegation noted that the pandemic had significantly delayed the achievement of the Goals and that, while additional efforts were needed, a mechanism should be created to avoid or mitigate the duplication of resources.



**Conclusions and recommendations**

915. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 49 to 51 of the report of OIOS on the thematic evaluation of United Nations Secretariat support to the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: subprogramme 3, Shared economic prosperity**

916. At its 14th meeting, on 7 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of OIOS on the evaluation of ESCWA: subprogramme 3, Shared economic prosperity ([E/AC.51/2023/4](#)).

917. The representative of OIOS introduced the report and the Executive Secretary of ESCWA responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

**Discussion**

918. A delegation welcomed and thanked OIOS representatives for the report.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

919. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 61 to 63 of the report of OIOS on the evaluation of ESCWA: subprogramme 3, Shared economic prosperity.

**Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe: subprogramme 4, Economic cooperation and integration, and subprogramme 6, Trade**

920. At its 12th meeting, on 6 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of OIOS on the evaluation of ECE: subprogramme 4, Economic cooperation and integration, and subprogramme 6, Trade ([E/AC.51/2023/5](#)).

921. The representative of OIOS introduced the report and, together with representatives of ECE, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

**Discussion**

922. A delegation noted the finding of the evaluation on the impact of the suspension of voluntary contributions to ECE by the Russian Federation on the sustainability of the work of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division and emphasized the finding that States in Central Asia were the most affected.

923. Noting recommendation 1 on establishing technical cooperation tracking mechanisms, recommendation 2 on developing a division-wide integrated strategic plan, recommendation 3 on developing action plans to operationalize ECE strategies on resource mobilization, partnerships and technical cooperation and recommendation 4 on ensuring the integration of gender, environment, disability inclusion and human rights considerations in its workstreams, a delegation sought information on how ECE would address them.



## **Conclusions and recommendations**

924. **The Committee considered the report of OIOS on the evaluation of ECE: subprogramme 4, Economic cooperation and integration, and subprogramme 6, Trade.**

## **Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: subprogramme 4, Environment and development**

925. At its 10th meeting, on 5 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of OIOS on the evaluation of ESCAP: subprogramme 4, Environment and development ([E/AC.51/2023/6](#)).

926. Representatives of OIOS introduced the report and, together with representatives of ESCAP, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

## **Discussion**

927. A delegation noted that recommendation 7, on integrating the Disaster Risk Reduction Section within the Environment and Development Division, and recommendation 8, on strengthening the mainstreaming of gender, human rights and disability inclusion into the substantive programme of work of ESCAP, were very relevant and asked how ESCAP was addressing them.

928. With regard to figure XVIII of the report, on the collaboration of the Environment and Development Division with other entities, and related paragraphs 73 and 75 on the challenging and evolving collaboration between ESCAP and other United Nations entities, including country teams and resident coordinators, a delegation asked about the potential operational impact of that challenging collaboration.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

929. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 89 to 96 of the report of OIOS on the evaluation of ESCAP: subprogramme 4, Environment and development.**

## **Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of the youth, peace and security agenda: youth participation**

930. At its 11th meeting, on 5 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of OIOS entitled “Thematic evaluation of the youth, peace and security agenda: youth participation” ([E/AC.51/2023/7](#)).

931. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report and, together with representatives of OIOS, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

## **Discussion**

932. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the report of OIOS entitled “Thematic evaluation of the youth, peace and security agenda: youth participation”.

933. A number of delegations welcomed the three recommendations in the report. One delegation highlighted recommendation 2, which called for strengthening the coordination and coherence of the implementation of the agenda. Another delegation emphasized the importance of considering and implementing the recommendations to ensure the participation of young girls and women, in particular.

934. Several delegations spoke about the importance of and synergies between the women and peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda. A delegation, referring to paragraphs 2 and 4 of the evaluation report, enquired about the progress that had been made with regard to the link between the two agendas.

935. A number of delegations noted that some progress had been made in increasing youth participation, but that challenges remained. Those delegations asked the representatives of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations what steps were being taken to broaden youth engagement. Information was sought about the limited and inconsistent resources for the youth, peace and security agenda as highlighted in the evaluation report. Some delegations queried the data gaps on the results of the youth, peace and security agenda as highlighted in the evaluation report.

936. Delegations enquired about initiatives taken to protect young people who faced repercussions for their political participation in peace- and security-related decision-making processes and initiatives, the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda, the creation of a road map for countries to implement and the existence of a programme to record the contribution of national strategies to the agenda.

937. A delegation noted the importance of youth participation and spoke about the initiatives in its country in support of the agenda. A number of delegations recognized that the Peacebuilding Fund had been a key source of dedicated funding for the agenda, and one delegation asked if all developing countries had access to those funds.

938. A delegation commented that prevention programmes helped to bring young people out of the grip of extremist organizations. The delegation encouraged investments in such initiatives and asked about strategies and plans in that regard.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**939. The Committee considered the report of OIOS on the thematic evaluation of the youth, peace and security agenda: youth participation.**

## Chapter III

### Coordination questions

#### A. Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2022

940. At its 17th meeting, on 12 June 2023, the Committee considered the annual overview report of CEB for 2022 ([E/2023/51](#)).

941. The Secretary of CEB and Director of the CEB secretariat introduced the report and, together with other representatives of CEB, responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

#### Discussion

942. Delegations thanked the Secretary of CEB for introducing its annual overview report for 2022 and welcomed the continued efforts of CEB to support the effective implementation of the priorities of the United Nations.

943. A delegation commended the work of CEB, indicating that the comments that it had made on programme 27, Jointly financed activities, namely those commending the efforts by CEB to drive innovation in working methods, improve transparency and accountability, prioritize risk management and lead digital transformation, thereby increasing coordination across the United Nations system, applied to the present item as well. In addition, the delegation underscored the importance of support by CEB to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and expressed its appreciation for the focus on Our Common Agenda in order to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

944. Another delegation emphasized the need to strike a balanced approach to the work of CEB in keeping with intergovernmental mandates. The view was expressed that the objectives of CEB should remain (a) ensuring that it fulfils its core mandate of system-wide coordination and (b) ensuring that the organizations of the United Nations system fully discharge their mandates, which were set out by Member States, and improve their results. Implementing decisions that did not have the consensus of Member States undermined the credibility of CEB. The delegation assured that it stood ready to continue to participate constructively in further discussions on the agenda item to ensure that CEB acted strictly within established mandates, thereby strengthening its role by garnering the support of Member States.

945. Concern was expressed about the analysis contained in the annual overview report regarding the consequences of the situation in Ukraine, which one delegation indicated could not be described as objective. The delegation rejected the reference to the conflict in Ukraine (para. 5 of the report) and the attempts to ascribe a range of problems to that situation, stating that the international community was straying from the real causes of crises, which lay in the socioeconomic sphere.

946. The CEB webpages on United Nations system data and statistics, as referenced in paragraphs 27 to 30 of the report, were seen as valuable, in particular because they were dynamic and interactive and allowed users to track financial information against the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. The website served as a tool to make data more accessible and to facilitate tailored analysis through disaggregation and filtering functionality. The Secretary of CEB was requested to expand on the value of presenting the United Nations system data to users in a dynamic online format.

## B. United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

947. At its 18th meeting, on 15 June 2023, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General entitled “United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa we want” ([E/AC.51/2023/8](#)).

948. The Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa introduced the report and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the report.

### Discussion

949. Several delegations thanked the Under-Secretary-General for the presentation and expressed strong support for the work being done by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, stating that their comments made during the discussion on programme 9 also applied to the present item. Delegations also emphasized the importance of Agenda 2063, welcomed the Office’s efforts to promote the alignment of United Nations efforts with African priorities, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, respectively, as well as in the engagement with the African Union Commission, and expressed readiness to support that approach. One delegation highlighted lack of coordination as a challenge and proposed the organization of coordination meetings between the Permanent Missions of African countries to the United Nations in New York and the diplomatic missions of African countries in other locations as a way to ensure coherence between the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

950. Support was expressed for the report’s analysis of the paradoxes affecting Africa. The focus of the report on projects and activities implemented by the United Nations system to support African countries in unleashing food systems’ potential for economic growth through agro-industrialization, innovation and job creation was underlined. The strengthening of human capital, social cohesion, peace and stability, and resilience, through enhanced nutrition and by leveraging agricultural projects for the inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable populations, was underscored. The proposal of innovative financing opportunities to enable the transformation of food systems was appreciated. The need for new resources to provide predictable funding for key sectors, such as energy and agrifood systems, was pointed out. The United Nations Food Systems Summit, which would be held in Rome from 24 to 26 July 2023, was highlighted as a stocktaking opportunity and a framework to celebrate progress, assess and address hurdles encountered during the first biennium and commit to accelerating transformations of sustainable food systems.

951. Further elaboration was requested on how the Office was working with each platform and/or coalition mentioned in section II on the coordination of the United Nations system and with the African Union in support of the continent’s development, and how the Office was promoting coordination among them.

952. One delegation highlighted the positive impact of ICT on development and urged the United Nations system to make efforts to support the African countries in developing capacities in that area. Another delegation hoped that the approach followed in the current report to address Africa-specific challenges on food systems could be extended to other areas requiring support, such as technology, infrastructure, energy and unlocking human capital potential.

### Conclusions and recommendations

**953. The Committee commended the work undertaken by the United Nations to support African countries in unleashing food systems’ potential for economic growth; strengthening human capital through enhanced nutrition; promoting**

the inclusion of the most vulnerable, including women and youth, through agricultural projects; and promoting social cohesion, peace and stability, resilience and sustainability through food and agriculture.

954. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to continue its efforts to enhance global cooperation and advocacy in support of Agenda 2063 and stronger food systems in Africa.

955. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa to extend the progress made in the field of food security to all the key sectors for the development of Africa, in particular through the strengthening of partnerships between the Office and the Department of Global Communications and ECA, in order to increase its strategic contribution in favour of an integrated and measurable achievement of the priorities contained in Agenda 2063.

956. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage the Office of the Special Adviser for Africa to work towards accelerating the implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063 by establishing measurable indicators that reflect the support provided by the United Nations to Africa on matters related to the digital economy, infrastructure, industry, energy, human resources and climate change.

957. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraph 64 of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa we want”.

## Chapter IV

### Provisional agenda for the sixty-fourth session of the Committee

958. 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-fourth session, together with the required documentation.

959. 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.

960. The draft provisional agenda for the sixty-fourth 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-fourth session of the Committee

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Programme questions:
  - (a) Proposed programme budget (in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [72/266 A](#), [77/254](#) and [77/267](#));

#### Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget: 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](#), [77/254](#) and [77/267](#))

- (b) Evaluation.

#### Documentation

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its sixty-first session on the evaluation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its sixty-first session on the evaluation of United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development provided by programme 9 through the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Global Communications

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its sixty-first session on the inspection of the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

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 2023 (Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX))

- (b) United Nations system support for Agenda 2063.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

5. Report(s) of the Joint Inspection Unit.
6. Provisional agenda for the sixty-fifth session.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixty-fourth session.

## Annex

### List of documents before the Committee at its sixty-third session

<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/1</a>	Annotated provisional agenda
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/L.1/Rev.1</a>	Note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/L.2</a>	Note by the Secretariat on the report(s) of the Joint Inspection Unit
	Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget for 2024: part two: programme plan for programmes and subprogrammes and programme performance information (in fascicle form) (in accordance with General Assembly resolutions <a href="#">72/266 A</a> , <a href="#">74/251</a> , <a href="#">75/243</a> , <a href="#">76/236</a> , <a href="#">77/254</a> and <a href="#">77/267</a> ):
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 2)</a>	Programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 3)</a>	Programme 2, Political affairs
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 4)</a>	Programme 3, Disarmament
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 5)</a>	Programme 4, Peacekeeping operations
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 6)</a>	Programme 5, Peaceful uses of outer space
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 8)</a>	Programme 6, Legal affairs
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 9)</a>	Programme 7, Economic and social affairs
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 10)</a>	Programme 8, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 11)</a>	Programme 9, United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 12)</a>	Programme 10, Trade and development
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 13)</a>	Programme 10, subprogramme 6, International Trade Centre
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 14)</a>	Programme 11, Environment
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 15)</a>	Programme 12, Human settlements
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 16)</a>	Programme 13, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 17)</a>	Programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 18)</a>	Programme 15, Economic and social development in Africa
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 19)</a>	Programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 20)</a>	Programme 17, Economic development in Europe
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 21)</a>	Programme 18, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean



<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 22)</a>	Programme 19, Economic and social development in Western Asia
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 24)</a>	Programme 20, Human rights
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 25)</a>	Programme 21, International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 26)</a>	Programme 22, Palestine refugees
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 27)</a>	Programme 23, Humanitarian assistance
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 28)</a>	Programme 24, Global communications
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 29)</a>	Programme 25, Management and support services
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 29A)</a>	Programme 25, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 29B)</a>	Programme 25, Department of Operational Support
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 29C)</a>	Programme 25, Office of Information and Communications Technology
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 29D)</a>	Programme 25, Administration, Nairobi
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 29E)</a>	Programme 25, Administration, Geneva
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 29F)</a>	Programme 25, Administration, Vienna
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 30)</a>	Programme 26, Internal oversight
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 31)</a>	Programme 27, Jointly financed activities
<a href="#">A/78/6 (Sect. 34)</a>	Programme 28, Safety and security
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/9</a>	Note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan for 2024 by sectoral, functional and regional bodies
<a href="#">A/78/70</a>	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/2</a>	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Development Coordination Office regional support
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/4</a>	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: subprogramme 3, Shared economic prosperity
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/5</a>	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe: subprogramme 4, Economic cooperation and integration, and subprogramme 6, Trade
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/6</a>	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: subprogramme 4, Environment and development
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/3</a>	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of United Nations Secretariat support to the Sustainable Development Goals

<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/7</a>	Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the thematic evaluation of the youth, peace and security agenda: youth participation
<a href="#">E/2023/51</a>	Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2022 (Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX))
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/8</a>	Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations system support for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/L.3</a>	Note by the Secretariat: provisional agenda and documentation for the sixty-fourth session of the Committee (Economic and Social Council resolution 1894 (LVII))
<a href="#">E/AC.51/2023/L.4</a> and addenda	Draft report of the Committee

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