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Agenda item 7

**Adoption of the report of the Committee on its
fifty-ninth session**

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Jun Yamada (Japan)

Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the year 2020

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 27 Jointly financed activities

1. At its 4th meeting, on 4 June 2019, the Committee considered programme 27, Jointly financed activities, of the proposed programme plan for 2020 and programme performance information for 2018 ([A/74/6 \(Sect. 31\)](#)). 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.51/2019/CRP.1/Rev.2](#)).

2. The Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Secretary of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and Director of the CEB secretariat and a representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the overall orientation of the programme, in particular for the need to preserve consistency and unity within the United Nations system.

4. As regards the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), several delegations acknowledged the wide range of work that had been undertaken by the Commission, as reflected in the programme performance information, and welcomed its intention to rationalize the use of resources and reduce its carbon footprint in



response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular through a reduction in the number of publications. Clarification was sought as to whether the reduced number of publications would have an impact on the publication of mandated materials. In that regard, a delegation requested that a table be produced outlining the objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement in order to clarify how the results would be achieved.

5. The essential role played by ICSC in regulating and coordinating the conditions of service across the United Nations system was highlighted, in particular the work of the Commission related to the strengthening of the implementation of the common system compensation package. An update was requested on work conducted in that regard.

6. A delegation expressed satisfaction with the planned increase in the number of seminars and training events organized by ICSC, as that would contribute to a better understanding by the staff of the recommendations made by the Commission. The delegation also noted improvements made to the website of ICSC, but pointed out that more needed to be done to improve communications by ICSC on any new recommendations at an earlier stage.

7. In its comments on the highlighted result in 2018, a delegation pointed to the difficulties encountered in making references to paragraphs that were not numbered. The delegation noted that, under the subheading “Result and evidence”, it was clear that the result was an overall understanding of the compensation package. The delegation noted, however, that the highlighted result was less evident owing to the way in which the narrative was formulated. The delegation requested further information on how ICSC was intending to make progress in achieving the full and consistent implementation of the common system package across the entities of the United Nations and asked whether there had been resistance to its implementation by any such entity.

8. As regards the Joint Inspection Unit, several delegations recognized the role of the Unit as the only body that carried out system-wide oversight reviews and stressed that all recommendations that were system-wide must be carefully considered by the relevant leadership bodies. A delegation welcomed efforts by the Unit to prioritize and produce reports of better quality.

9. Some delegations expressed regret that the Universal Postal Union (UPU) was not acting in accordance with the recommendations of the Unit and sought further information on the matter. A delegation stated that it was not convinced by the argument that UPU, which was created long before the United Nations and therefore not subject to the regulations governing the Unit, was exempt from the recommendations.

10. Regarding CEB, several delegations expressed appreciation for the work of CEB and its role in ensuring consistency in and coordination on the policies and practices of the United Nations system. A delegation noted the range of initiatives that were undertaken by the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system and expressed the hope that the matter would remain a priority in the year ahead.

11. Emphasizing that CEB acted upon mandates given by the General Assembly, a delegation drew attention to the highlighted result in 2018, which contained a reference to the existence of an organizational culture of impunity and mistrust that needed to be changed with urgency and determination. The delegation asked how that conclusion had been drawn, and whether it was a question that had been put forth for consideration by the General Assembly and, if that had not been the case, why had the Assembly not done so. Questions were raised concerning the results of the global

staff survey and how staff members viewed the culture and behaved in cases of sexual harassment. Clarification was also sought on the data behind the conclusion, and it was asked whether the measures created had been implemented and accepted by staff members. Given that, as stated in the proposed programme plan, the United Nations had a clear policy for investigating sexual harassment fairly and confidentially, the delegation also questioned the reasons for changing something that was working well. The delegation also questioned the role and legal status of the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment. As regards the result of the work of the task force, which included the development of a uniform definition of sexual harassment, a set of common principles for sexual harassment policies and a United Nations system model policy on sexual harassment, the delegation asked whether an expert legal analysis had been carried out as part of the development of the uniform definition. The delegation asked whether the problem really existed or whether the issue had been brought up as a result of current trends.

12. A delegation was of the view that the mention of the existence of a culture of impunity was neither inappropriate nor the result of a trend, but rather a reflection of a growing recognition that the culture of impunity was a worldwide problem and a common manifestation in many large organizations. In that regard, the delegation stressed that it was important to resist the temptation to blame the victims and instead to listen to them and to work towards alleviating the problem.

13. Regarding the matter of reporting on sexual harassment, a delegation said that, in the highlighted result in 2018, it was not evident whether a plan had been made to develop a metric to quantify the scale of incidents, and clarification was sought as to whether, in the shift from metrics to deliverables, certain aspects had been omitted. A question was also raised as to whether the Organization was ready to track performance and whether systems for that purpose were in place.

14. On the issue of the format of the programme plans, several delegations expressed support for the range of information presented and emphasized the need to increase transparency. Several others voiced concern regarding the presentation of the programmes, sought clarification on the legal basis for the changes made to the format and highlighted inconsistencies between result narratives, performance measures, presentations of evidence and deliverables. A delegation requested the development of a table that contained objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement.

15. A delegation noted that, while there was some consistency in the presentation of the programmes, such as an expressed alignment with the 2030 Agenda, it was difficult to discern the overall view of the expected goals for 2020 of the entities of the Secretariat. That sentiment was echoed by several delegations. While recognizing the importance of the 2030 Agenda, the same delegation said that there was insufficient information presented regarding specific mandates from the 2030 Agenda or other intergovernmental mandates, and that the Sustainable Development Goals were not embodied in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the delegation asked whether there was an intergovernmental mandate that called for the 2030 Agenda to be included in all programme plans.

16. Several delegations stated that the programme plans should be consistent and understandable. One asked whether the new presentation of the programmes had been prepared on the basis of the principles of results-based budgeting, which included organizational objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. The view was expressed that the basis for that approach entailed having a consistent narrative and a consistent programme plan, which included results-based elements.

17. Several delegations called for clarity on terminology. One sought clarification on the classification of the words “result” and “deliverable”, which, in its view,

referred to different levels in the programming process. It was further noted that there were several deliverables but only one result highlighted for 2020, and the rest were not included in the plans presented. While several delegations recognized that there had been a decision to change aspects of the format, it was pointed out that some aspects had not been clearly defined by the General Assembly. In that regard, a delegation stated that the Committee would have to decide and make recommendations to the Assembly on how to move forward. In response to the clarification provided by the Secretariat that programme managers had been given complete freedom in terms of how to highlight an expected result, the delegation expressed interest in learning what the Secretariat had requested programme managers to include in every part of the new format.

18. Regarding other issues relating to the format, several delegations insisted on paragraph numbers. One said that it would be useful if the Committee were provided with more information on the structure of the programme plans, which would help in understanding the shift to the highlighted results, which were quantifiable in some cases but not in others. Several delegations echoed the need for more information on the structure and format and requested that the information be provided in writing.

19. A number of delegations welcomed the clarification provided that all results and deliverables would be recorded in the enterprise resource planning system.
