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Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution [67/290](#), entitled “Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development”

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report details additional budgetary requirements resulting from the adoption of resolution [67/290](#), entitled “Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development”, by the General Assembly on 9 July 2013. In accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, the Secretary-General submitted a statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/67/L.72 \(A/67/927\)](#), prior to the adoption of the draft resolution, in which the Secretary-General informed the Assembly that the implementation of the recommendations contained in the draft resolution would give rise to additional resource requirements in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015. It should be noted that, before the adoption of the resolution, the President of the Assembly drew the attention of the Assembly to the statement on the programme budget implications and noted that the Fifth Committee would examine, during the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly, the programme budget implications arising from the draft resolution and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon. Consequently, the financial provisions, as appropriate, would be considered in the budget appropriations to be adopted for the biennium 2014-2015 (see [A/67/PV.91](#)).

* [A/68/150](#).



The Secretariat estimates that the additional requirements of \$741,800 would be required under section 9, Economic and Social Affairs of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 in the implementation of paragraphs 6 (b), 7 (a), 23 and 25 of resolution [67/290](#). The conclusions and actions required of the General Assembly are detailed in part VI of the present report.

I. Overview

A. Introduction

1. At its 91st plenary meeting, on 9 July 2013, the General Assembly, in its resolution [67/290](#), decided on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as called for in resolution [66/288](#). In accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, the Secretary-General submitted a statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/67/L.72](#) ([A/67/927](#)) to the Assembly in which the Secretary-General informed the Assembly that the implementation of the recommendations contained in resolution [67/290](#) would give rise to additional resource requirements in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

2. Before the adoption of the resolution, the President of the General Assembly drew the attention of the Assembly to the statement of the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/67/L.72](#), and noted that the Fifth Committee would examine, during the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly, the programme budget implications arising from the draft resolution and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon. Consequently, the financial provisions, as appropriate, would be considered in the budget appropriations to be adopted for the biennium 2014-2015 (see [A/67/PV.91](#)).

3. It may be recalled that resolution [67/290](#) responds to a mandate from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012. In the outcome document of the Conference, entitled “The future we want”, Heads of State and Government decided to establish a universal, intergovernmental, high-level political forum, building on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development and subsequently replacing the Commission (see resolution [66/288](#), annex, para. 84). The high-level political forum will follow up on the implementation of sustainable development and avoid overlap with existing structures, bodies and entities in a cost-effective manner. As mandated, an intergovernmental and open, transparent and inclusive negotiation process was conducted under the General Assembly to define the format and organizational aspects of the high-level forum. Resolution [67/290](#) results from the culmination of that process. The forum will subsequently replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, as decided at the Conference.

B. Decisions contained in the resolution

4. The decisions on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level forum are contained in paragraphs 2-4, 6-8, 15, 18, 20, 23 and 25-28 of resolution [67/290](#).

5. In summary, the General Assembly, in its resolution [67/290](#), decided that the high-level political forum on sustainable development would provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development; follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments; and enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. It was also decided that the high-level political forum would be convened alternatively under the auspices of the General Assembly (every four

years) and of the Economic and Social Council (every year). The thematic focus of the forum would be to reflect the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in line with the thematic focus of Council activities and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda. Resolution [67/290](#) contains details on the activities of the forum and on participation. It also includes a mandate to abolish the Commission on Sustainable Development effective from the conclusion of its twentieth session, to be held prior to the first meeting of the forum.

II. Estimated additional resource requirements for the biennium 2014-2015

6. The Secretariat has reviewed the additional resource requirements in the implementation of the resolution, and details are provided in part II below.

7. The activities referred to in the resolution would fall under programmes 1 and 7 of the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2014-2015 and sections 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and 9, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

A. Section 2. General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management

8. It is assumed that the requirements of the forum with regard to meetings and documentation, as detailed below, would not exceed the existing entitlements of the Commission on Sustainable Development and that there would be no impact on the workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management:

(a) In accordance with paragraph 6 (b) of the resolution, it was decided that the meetings of the forum under the auspices of the General Assembly will be convened every four years by the President of the Assembly for a period of two days, at the beginning of the session, as well as on other occasions, on an exceptional basis, upon a decision by the Assembly;

(b) In accordance with paragraph 7 (a), it was further decided that the meetings of the forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council will be convened annually by the President of the Council for a period of eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment to be held in the framework of the substantive session of the Council, building on and subsequently replacing the annual ministerial review as from 2016.

9. It should be noted that, in accordance with paragraph 26, the General Assembly recommended that the Economic and Social Council abolish the Commission on Sustainable Development effective upon the conclusion of its twentieth session, to be held prior to the first meeting of the forum, pursuant to resolution [67/203](#).

B. Section 9. Economic and social affairs

10. In accordance with paragraph 23 of the resolution, the high-level political forum would be supported by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, as the secretariat of the forum, in close cooperation with all relevant entities of the United Nations system within their respective mandates, especially by the Division for Sustainable Development, which would be engaged and would cooperate with the United Nations system in supporting the work of the forum. This would be done by using existing coordination mechanisms supported by the Department, notably the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs plus.

11. In addition, paragraph 25 of the resolution states that travel expenses for one representative of each of the least developed countries would be paid from the United Nations regular budget for participation in the first meeting of the forum. In this regard, no provisions have been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for the travel of representatives to New York and Geneva or the travel of staff to support the high-level political forum meeting in Geneva.

12. Pursuant to paragraphs 10 and 11 above as well as paragraphs 6 (b) and 7 (a) of the resolution, additional resources would be required for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to support the work of the forum. The additional activities would include:

(a) A meeting of the forum to be convened under the auspices of the General Assembly every four years for a period of two days;

(b) A meeting of the forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council to be convened annually by the President of the Council for a period of eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment to be held in the framework of the substantive session of the Council, building on and subsequently replacing the annual ministerial review as from 2016;

(c) Payment of travel expenses for one representative of each of the least developed countries from the United Nations regular budget for participation in all formal meetings of the forum.

Policymaking organs

High-level political forum

Additional resource requirements: \$695,800

Travel of representatives in 2014

13. One representative from each least developed country would be supported for the eight-day meeting of the forum, including its ministerial segment. Travel of representatives from 49 least developed countries (one per country) to the forum meeting held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in New York will require \$377,300.

Travel of representatives in 2015

14. One representative from each least developed country will be supported for the eight-day meeting of the forum. Travel of representatives from 49 least developed

countries (one per country) to the forum meeting held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva will require \$318,500.

Programme of work

Subprogramme 3. Sustainable development

Additional resource requirements: \$46,000

15. The Division for Sustainable Development of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs will provide support to the high-level political forum, building synergies and drawing upon the capacities of other Department divisions and the broader United Nations system. The secretariat requirements for servicing the high-level political forum would build on the support previously provided by the Division to the Commission on Sustainable Development, which the forum would replace. No modifications would be required to the programme of work of that division as presented in the Secretary-General's proposed programme budgets for the bienniums 2012-2013 and 2014-2015.

Travel of staff in 2015

16. The amount of \$46,000 would be required for travel of eight staff from the Division for Sustainable Development to provide substantive support to the forum meeting held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva.

III. Resource requirements for the forthcoming biennium 2016-2017

17. Under the terms of paragraph 27, the General Assembly would request the President of the Assembly to convene the first meeting of the forum at the beginning of the sixty-eighth session for the duration of one day. The second of those meetings, to be conducted under the auspices of the Assembly, is therefore expected to take place in 2017, the requirements of which would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

18. The Secretary-General will revert to the General Assembly, in accordance with rule 153 of its rules and procedures, should there be any financial implications resulting from its review of the format and the organizational aspects of the forum at its seventy-third session, unless otherwise decided pursuant to paragraph 29 of the resolution.

IV. Summary of additional resource requirements

19. The additional requirements of the Secretary-General's proposal, amounting to \$741,800, required under section 9, Economic and Social Affairs under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, are detailed in the table below.

Additional resource requirements

(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Section 9, Economic and Social Affairs</i> | <i>2014</i> | <i>2015</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Policymaking organs | | | |
| Travel of representatives | 377.3 | 318.5 | 695.8 |
| Programme of work — subprogramme 3 | | | |
| Travel of staff | — | 46.0 | 46.0 |
| Total | 377.3 | 364.5 | 741.8 |

V. Contingency fund

20. It may be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions [41/213](#) and [42/211](#), a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures were proposed that exceeded the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or the modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

VI. Conclusion and action required of the General Assembly

21. Accordingly, it is estimated that the additional requirements of \$741,800 would be required under section 9, Economic and Social Affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

22. The General Assembly is requested to approve the proposals of the Secretary-General for additional requirements of \$741,800 under section 9, Economic and Social Affairs. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund for the biennium 2014-2015.