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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 14

Gender equality and the empowerment of women

1. At its 15th meeting, on 12 June 2019, the Committee considered programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women, of the proposed programme plan for 2020 and programme performance information for 2018 ([A/74/6 \(Sect.17\)](#)). 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.51/2019/CRP.1/Rev.2](#)).
2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and noted the importance of the programme in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The view was expressed that gender issues were cross-cutting in nature and applied to all entities of the United Nations system.
4. A delegation expressed appreciation for the reference to the march in Santiago in which women walked peacefully in favour of women's reproductive rights and greater punishment for gender-based violence.



5. Various contributions made by UN-Women locally were highlighted, including in Ethiopia and in Africa as a whole as well as in Chile, where UN-Women had contributed to the strengthening of civil society organizations in promoting gender equality across the world. A delegation noted the excellent working relationship with UN-Women since its office was opened in Buenos Aires and highlighted the importance of programmes such as the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls and the Win-Win programme for the economic empowerment of women. A delegation expressed gratitude for the support that had been provided at the governmental level and referred to a bill against sexual abuse that had been adopted in April 2019. Another delegation recognized the work of UN-Women with the private sector.

6. A delegation highlighted that, in 2020, the world would celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Fourth World Conference on Women. While much had been achieved, no country had achieved full gender equality yet and much work remained to be done. The view was expressed that the results were slow to materialize despite the strong efforts. A delegation recalled that Africa was the continent with the lowest number of girls in school and that practices such as breast ironing and female genital mutilation continued to impact the continent. Several delegations stressed that the United Nations must accelerate its efforts to translate its work into concrete results on the ground.

7. A delegation emphasized its support for the programme in the areas of promoting women's dignity and economic empowerment and preventing violence and discrimination against women and girls. The view was expressed that UN-Women should focus on those core mandates to support Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

8. A delegation expressed its view on the importance of the work of UN-Women with multiple institutions and actors in addressing the underlying social norms that fail to prevent violence against women, emphasizing the involvement of communities that could bring about more sustainable change, including schools and the younger generation.

9. It was highlighted that women's and girls' rights were fundamental and pertained to all. A delegation was of the view that it was essential to mobilize the full potential of women for maximum economic and social growth.

10. Clarification was sought in connection with the lack of action on studying the importance of the scale and size of women's contributions. A delegation expressed its view that one way to increase awareness of the importance of gender equality was to underscore the role and contribution of women in economic and social affairs. A delegation expressed satisfaction with the fact that the United Nations had reached gender parity in senior management.

11. Regarding the overall orientation, the view was expressed that the alignment with all the Sustainable Development Goals was misleading given that only Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls was the prerogative of UN-Women. The view was also expressed that the alignment with the Charter of the United Nations appeared artificial. Divergent opinions were expressed regarding the alignment with the Goals. One delegation expressed the view that, given the cross-cutting nature of Goal 5, it helped the advancement of all the other Goals, while another stated that UN-Women could also make a contribution to Goals other than Goal 5. The same delegation expressed concern about the misleading nature of paragraphs 17.5 to 17.10 under "Recent developments", and the objective in paragraph 17.23, given that they were not directly related to the work of UN-Women.

12. With regard to cooperation with other entities, referred to in paragraph 17.17 under “Strategy and external factors for 2020”, the view was expressed that a precise consolidated statement on how UN-Women coordinates its work with other entities should be further developed. In addition, it was noted that a similar lack of detail related to coordination had been identified in the proposed programme plans of other entities.

13. It was reiterated that any country-based activities by UN-Women, including interaction with civil society (as mentioned in paragraphs 17.13 and 17.29) must be carried out only in response to requests from the particular Member State.

14. Regarding subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships, it was noted that the highlighted planned result for 2020 included the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women while not referring to intergovernmental support. Clarifications were sought on whether UN-Women could alternatively refer to support at an intergovernmental level in 2020.

15. A delegation noted the highlighted result in 2018 related to the deliberations of the Commission on the Status of Women on rural women and expressed the view that the planned result for 2020 should place greater focus on intergovernmental support. Regarding the same highlighted result, another delegation referred to the prevalence of specific conditions, such as isolated, often very poor areas, unpaid and invisible labour or patriarchal stereotypes, which oftentimes led to situations in which rural women and girls were suffering from multiple forms of discrimination, and in that regard stressed that leadership by rural women and accelerated participation by women in political and social processes were indispensable in order to eliminate intersectional gender discrimination.

16. A delegation sought additional information on the rationale for the existence of only two subprogrammes, which appeared to be insufficient in accurately reflecting a very broad and cross-cutting programme such as “Gender equality and the empowerment of women”.

17. Regarding subprogramme 2, Policy and programme activities, a delegation raised concerns regarding the rewording of the objective contained in [A/71/6/Rev.1](#) from “To enhance efforts in the elimination of discrimination against women and girls and the achievement of gender equality ...” to “... eliminate and prevent all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls”. In that connection, UN-Women was requested to clarify the basis for the change, notably the mandate for the significant reduction in scope of the subprogramme.

18. A question was raised about the meaning of the term “service delivery institutions” referenced in paragraph 17.29.

19. Several delegations expressed support for the proposed programme plan of UN-Women. A delegation expressed the view that the presentation of the programme needed improvement and that the report had been written in too general terms with limited linkages to the financial portion. Another delegation expressed full support for the changes in the presentation proposed by the Secretary-General.

20. A delegation noted the reference in the programme to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and recalled that the Compact had not been universally approved given that multiple Member States had voted against it in the General Assembly.

21. A delegation referred to information provided in paragraph 17.39 on resources that would be provided for the Executive Board, in line with General Assembly resolution [64/289](#) and annex I to Assembly resolution [48/162](#), and sought clarification

on what the Secretariat had done with the unspent resources. It also sought clarification regarding the increase in the proposed resources for travel and the changes made under the staffing structure. In response, several delegations recalled that resource discussions fell outside the purview of the Committee.
