
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Statistics

Sixth session

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Consideration of future programme focus

Preparation of the draft programme of work for 2020**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Secretary-General presented his management reform in reports on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations, entitled “Ensuring a better future for all” and “Improving and streamlining the programme planning and budgeting process” at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly in October 2017.^a The proposed measures and changes to the management of the United Nations are intended to make the organization more nimble, effective and efficient. One of the major changes proposed in the reforms was the streamlining of programme planning and budgeting aimed at enhancing the performance and responsiveness of the United Nations. After considering the reports, the General Assembly, in its resolution 72/266, adopted various changes in relation to programme planning and budgeting, which will be implemented starting with the first annual cycle in 2020.

The adopted changes in programme planning and budgeting are summarized in the present note in order to inform the Committee’s deliberations on the overall objective and strategy of the subprogramme on statistics.

^a A/72/492 and A/72/492/Add.1.

I. Decisions of the General Assembly on programme planning and budgeting to be implemented starting 2020

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/266¹, endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions² on the proposed management reform, and made the following decisions:

* ESCAP/CST/2018/L.1/Rev.1.

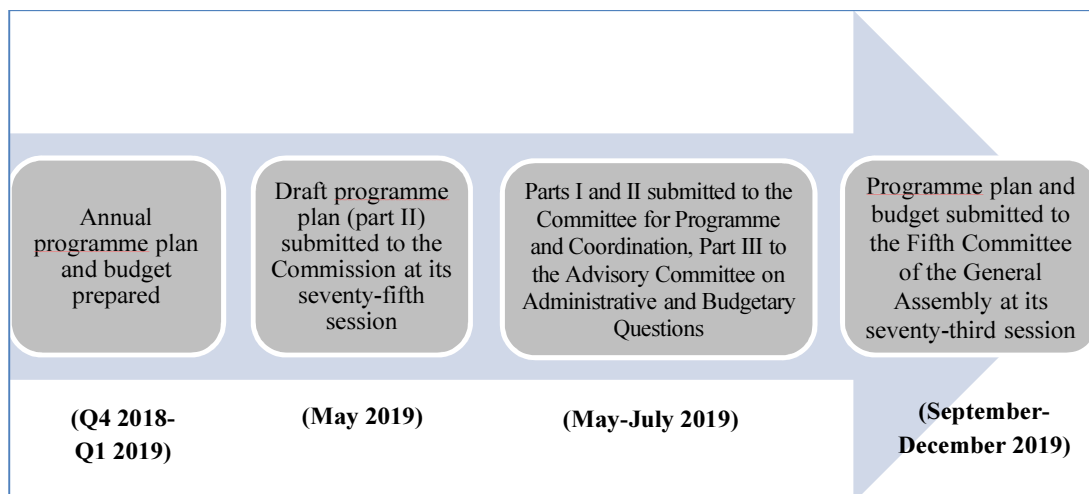
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¹ General Assembly resolution 72/266.

² A/72/7/Add.24.

- (a) To change the budget period from biennial to annual on a trial basis, effective from the programme budget for 2020;
- (b) To request the Secretary-General to conduct a review of changes to the budgetary cycle in 2022;
- (c) To review, at its seventy-seventh session, with a view to making a final decision, the implementation of the annual budget;
- (d) That the programme budget shall consist of:
 - (i) Part I: the plan outline, which shall be prepared once every three years, containing the long-term priorities and objectives of the Organization, similar in scope to the current plan outline (namely, part I of the biennial strategic framework);
 - (ii) Part II: the programme plan, including, in a single integrated report, an annual plan and performance information at the programme and subprogramme levels;
 - (iii) Part III: the post and non-post requirements for the programmes and subprogrammes;
- (e) That the sequential nature of the review process should be maintained by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, tasked with reviewing parts I and II, and that the Advisory Committee would examine Part III;
- (f) That any changes to the budget methodology and budget procedures and practices or to the financial regulations are subject to the review and approval of the Assembly prior to their implementation.

2. The member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific will be consulted on Part II of the first annual programme budget document during the seventy-fifth session of the Commission. Concurrent to the Commission's review of Part II, the Committee for Programme and Coordination will examine Parts I and II and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions will examine Part III, in accordance with their respective mandates. Subsequently, the Fifth Committee will consider the draft programme budget document during the main part of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. The diagram below depicts the expected process for the 2020 proposed programme budget preparation and approval.



3. The programme budget will be prepared based on further guidance and formal instructions from the Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Secretariat.

II. Key considerations in preparing the draft programme of work for 2020

4. The focus of the draft programme plan for 2020 will be on supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by member States across Asia and the Pacific including through the strengthening of the means of implementation for SDGs. The annual Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) serves as the principal forum where regional perspectives on the implementation of 2030 Agenda are formed and the follow-up and review of regional progress is periodically conducted.

5. The regional priorities guiding the normative, analytical and capacity building work on sustainable development were agreed upon in the “Regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific” at the fourth session³ of the APFSD and endorsed in ESCAP resolution 73/9⁴. Data and statistics are identified in the regional road map as a means of implementation for regional cooperation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Considerations of the major outcomes of global conferences such as Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2011-2024, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, and the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data⁵ should be taken into account.

7. Priority shall be given to supporting countries with special needs, namely the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as countries in conflicts situations and post-conflict countries at both regional and subregional levels.

III. The role of the Committee on Statistics in the preparation of the programme of work 2020

8. As mandated by ESCAP resolution 71/1⁶, each subsidiary body of the Commission of ESCAP, within its respective area of purview, shall provide the secretariat, including its regional institutions, with guidance in identifying regional priorities and emerging issues and reviewing the strategic framework and programme of work⁷.

³ See www.unescap.org/events/apfsd4.

⁴ Commission resolution 73/9.

⁵ See <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/Cape-Town-Global-Action-Plan/>.

⁶ Commission resolution 71/1.

⁷ Resolution 71/1 mandates that, as part of its terms of reference, the Committee on Statistics may address primary issues including but not limited to (a) ensure that by 2020 all countries in the region have the capability to provide a basic range of

9. The terms of reference of the Committee of Statistics per ESCAP Resolution 71/1 are supplemented by “Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community”, which was adopted by the Committee at its fifth session and subsequently endorsed by the Commission through its decision 73/29 at its 73rd session⁸. The framework of action aims to accelerate transformation of national statistical systems by emphasizing on five main areas, namely (1) engaging users and investing in statistics; (2) assuring quality and instilling trust in statistics; (3) integrated statistics for integrated analysis; (4) modernizing statistical business process; and (5) having requisite skills sets⁹.

10. In addition to the present information document, the following references may be useful for the Committee’s deliberations:

(a) Regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific¹⁰;

(b) Strategic framework for subprogramme 7 for the biennium 2018-2019¹¹;

(c) Advancing official statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a collective vision and framework for action by the Asia-Pacific statistical community¹²;

(d) Commission resolution 74/6 on Advancing disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific¹³;

(e) Commission resolution 74/8 on Accelerating the implementation of the Regional Action Framework on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific¹⁴;

(f) Commission resolution 72/11 on Advancing disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific for implementation of internationally agreed development goals¹⁵;

(g) Commission resolution 71/14 on Asian and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade, 2015-2024¹⁶;

(h) Commission resolution 70/2 on Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific.¹⁷

population, economic, social and environmental statistics; and (b) to create a more adaptive and cost-effective information management environment for national statistical offices through stronger collaboration.

⁸ See E/ESCAP/73/40.

⁹ See E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1/Rev.1.

¹⁰ See www.unescap.org/publications/regional-road-map-implementing-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-asia-and-pacific.

¹¹ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first session, Supplement No.6 (A/71/6/Rev.1), paras. 16.1-16.48.

¹² See E/ESCAP/CST(5)/1/Rev.1 and E/ESCAP/73/24.

¹³ Commission resolution 74/6.

¹⁴ Commission resolution 74/8.

¹⁵ Commission resolution 72/11.

¹⁶ Commission resolution 71/14.

¹⁷ Commission resolution 70/2.