



Economic Commission for Europe**Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards****Ninth session**

Geneva, 26(pm)–28 June 2024

Item 3(b) of the provisional agenda

Programme of work**Draft programme of work of the Trade subprogramme for 2025 and outline of key components of the programme of work for 2026****Draft programme of work of the Trade subprogramme for 2025*****Note by the secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. This document sets out the draft programme of work of the Trade subprogramme (“the subprogramme”) for 2025. The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (“the Committee”) is invited to adopt it and recommend to the Executive Committee for approval. Any subsequent additional, carried over or terminated deliverables will be reflected in United Nations Umoja system used by the Secretariat for planning, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the programme.
2. The draft programme of work applies a results-based management (RBM) approach, a broad management approach which establishes logical relationship between the hierarchical results (deliverables-results-objectives-impact) known as “results chain”, the resources (human and financial) known as “inputs” and the external factors (strategic, governance, operational, financial) which can prevent from achieving the objective.
3. The objective, the strategy, the planned results and the deliverables in the draft programme of work correspond to those contained in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) proposed programme budget for 2025 (A/79/6 (Sect.20)). The work of the subprogramme is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In attaining its objective, the subprogramme will continue to build on cross-sectoral collaboration with other subprogrammes in relevant ECE areas where multiple SDGs converge, including on the high-level themes designated by the Commission sessions. This type of collaboration enables the subprogramme to maximize existing synergies, increase the efficiency of its work and have a multiplying effect on the impact of its actions to support countries to implement SDGs. The deliverables of the subprogramme fall into the following main categories: (a) facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies; (b) generation and transfer of knowledge,

* This document has not been formally edited by ECE.



including technical cooperation projects, training events, seminars, workshops and publications; (c) other substantive deliverables and (d) communication deliverables.

4. The details of the proposed publications are provided in annex I. The overall ECE legislative mandates and those specific for the subprogramme are listed in annex II.

II. Objective

5. The objective, to which the subprogramme contributes, is to strengthen trade facilitation and electronic business, regulatory cooperation and standardization policies, agricultural quality standards and trade-related economic cooperation in the ECE region and beyond.

III. Strategy

6. The responsibility for the subprogramme is vested in the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of ECE.

7. The strategy of the subprogramme is to support international policy dialogue on reducing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, including those caused by cumbersome trade procedures and paperwork, by differences in trade procedures, standards and documents, or by divergent regulatory approaches and product standards; to facilitate the development of standards and recommendations in the areas of trade facilitation and e-business, agricultural quality standards and regulatory cooperation; and to provide capacity-building and enable the sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

8. To contribute to the objective, the subprogramme will:

(a) Promote simple, transparent and effective processes for global trade through its normative work to develop standards and recommendations in the areas of trade facilitation and electronic business;

(b) Facilitate international policy dialogue on establishing digital trading environments and on compliance with the multilateral trading system requirements, including the dissemination of standards, recommendations and guidelines;

(c) Promote the circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable and resilient value chains and the enhanced traceability of supply chains, e.g. minimizing waste and maximizing the use of natural resources towards circular economy through studies, policy dialogues and technology-based pilot initiatives such as blockchain-based traceability for textile value chains;

(d) Strengthen regulatory cooperation and promote standards and best practices in regulatory frameworks, risk management, conformity assessment and market surveillance to facilitate a predictable and harmonized regulatory environment;

(e) Provide practical ways forward for standards bodies wishing to mainstream a gender perspective in standards. The subprogramme will further support capacity-building and dissemination on the use of standards and regulatory cooperation, notably with its Standards for Sustainable Development Goals Portal (<https://standards4sdgs.unece.org/>) and its initiative on education on standards (<https://learnqi.unece.org/>);

(f) Promote up-to-date agricultural quality standards and explanatory guidelines through its normative work and promote awareness of food loss reduction through policy dialogues, partnerships with international organizations and technology-based initiatives to address food loss and waste;

(g) Identify regulatory and procedural barriers to trade and assist Governments in setting action-oriented recommendations for implementing the instruments developed by the subprogramme through analytical evidence-based studies;

(h) Deepen its international policy dialogue, normative, technical assistance and capacity-building activities on the digitalization of trade processes in order to support a sustainable and resilient recovery.

9. The above-mentioned work is expected to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 17 and to result in:

(a) Increased implementation of simplified trade processes, and the digitalization of member States' trading environments, leading to greater productivity;

(b) Increased transparency and traceability of the value chains and reduction of waste, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns;

(c) Increased uptake of international standards by countries to enable the implementation of internationally harmonized regulatory processes;

(d) Improved gender equality in trade through the increased participation of women traders;

(e) Enhanced digitalization of trade procedures (e.g. progress towards adoption of trade related digital services like single window) to support the public and private sectors' efforts in member States to facilitate trade.

IV. Planned results for 2025

Result 1: Increased facilitation of agricultural trade through the adoption of agricultural quality and electronic business standards in Economic Commission for Europe member States

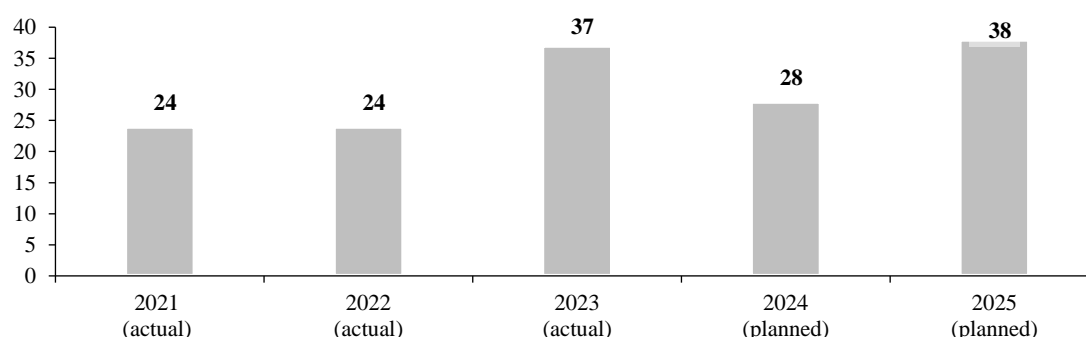
Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

10. The subprogramme's work contributed to 37 ECE member States fully or partially implementing the Commission's standard for "electronic application and issuance of electronic sanitary and phytosanitary certificates", which exceeded the planned target of 28.

11. Progress towards the objective and the target for 2025 are presented in the performance measure below (see figure I).

Figure I

Performance measure: number of ECE member States fully or partially implementing the Commission's standard for "electronic application and issuance of electronic sanitary and phytosanitary certificates"^a (cumulative)



^a The data for 2022 are based on past progress as reflected in the survey conducted in 2021, given that the data are captured every two years through the United Nations Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation.

Result 2: Mainstreaming a gender perspective in standards development organizations

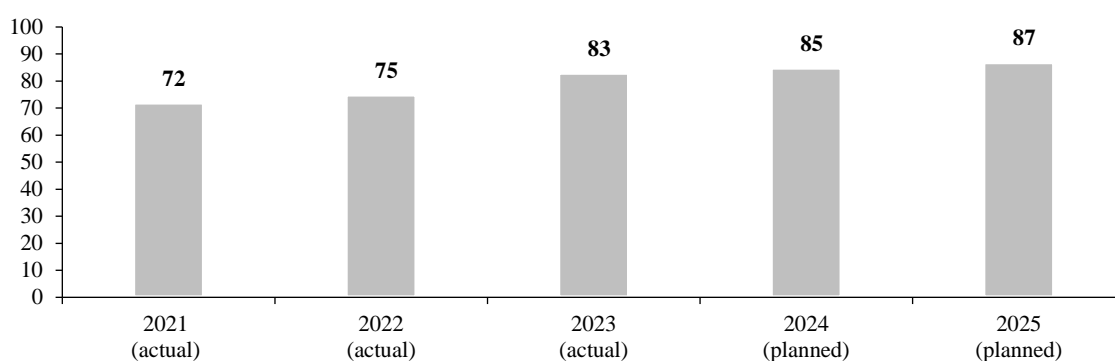
Programme performance in 2023 and target for 2025

12. The subprogramme's work contributed to 83 standards development organizations that have committed themselves to implementing the ECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development,¹ which exceeded the planned target of 80.

13. Progress towards the objective and the target for 2025 are presented in the performance measure below (see figure II).

Figure II

Performance measure: number of standards development organizations that have committed themselves to implementing the ECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development (cumulative)



Result 3: Enhanced digitalization of trade

Proposed programme plan for 2025

14. Facilitating trade through increased digitalization of trade processes such as simplification and dematerialization of trade processes, adoption and harmonization of international standards and guidelines, and the promotion of interoperable digital systems are a priority of the subprogramme. To date, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business has produced more than 40 policy recommendations on trade facilitation, 400 electronic business standards, several training materials and guidance materials, which are available freely to the global trading community. This normative work, along with policy guidance, technical assistance and capacity-building activities, is geared towards greater digitalization of trade to help facilitate trade, reduce the cost of trading and in turn increase competitiveness.

Lessons learned and planned change

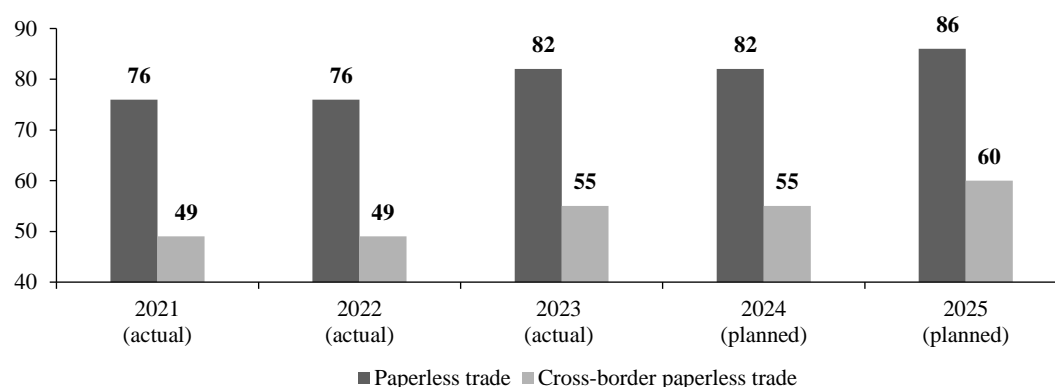
15. The lesson for the subprogramme was that there is a growing demand to integrate cross-cutting themes, such as digitalization, a circular economy, or resource efficiency, into trade-related work. For example, electronic traceability systems will increasingly be used to provide proof of the origin, content and sustainability of traded goods. In applying the lesson, the subprogramme will expand work on cross-cutting issues with a focus on minerals, textiles, and agri-food sectors. For example, the ECE Team of Specialists on Environmental, Social and Governance Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains in the Circular economy will develop digital standards for product circularity data and for environmental, social and governance traceability in critical minerals.

¹ <https://unece.org/trade/wp6/Gender-Resp-Stds-declaration>

16. Expected progress towards the objective is presented in the performance measure below (see figure III).

Figure III

Performance measure: average implementation rate of trade facilitation measures in the ECE region (percentage)



V. External factors

17. The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objective on the assumption that: (a) member States continue to guide ECE intergovernmental processes, support the work of ECE and give high priority to regional and subregional cooperation and integration, with a view to achieving sustainable development; (b) all relevant stakeholders at the national level have the political will to cooperate in implementing the ECE legal instruments, norms and standards; and (c) voluntary resources continue to be available.

VI. Deliverables to be implemented in 2025

18. The table below lists all deliverables of the subprogramme.

<i>Category and subcategory</i>	<i>2025 planned</i>
A. Facilitation of the intergovernmental process and expert bodies	
Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)	102
1. The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards	13
2. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies	14
3. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards	60
4. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business	15
Substantive services for meetings (number of three-hour meetings)	96
5. The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards and its Bureau	4
6. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies, its Bureau and related expert bodies	13
7. The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its specialized sections	26
8. The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business	53
B. Generation and transfer of knowledge	
Field and technical cooperation projects (number of projects)	5
9. On enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls	1
10. On food loss reduction in agriculture supply chains	1
11. On trade facilitation	3
Seminars, workshops and training events (number of days)	18

<i>Category and subcategory</i>	<i>2025 planned</i>
12. Workshops for policymakers and experts in low- and middle-income countries in the ECE region on trade procedures, supply chain management, conformity assessment and market surveillance, and women's entrepreneurship	6
13. Seminars for standardization and inspection agencies and other stakeholders in transition economies and developing countries in the ECE region or beyond on ECE agricultural quality standards	3
14. Seminars for policymakers and experts in countries with economies in transition and developing countries in the ECE region or beyond on support for the implementation of trade-related standards, recommendations and guidelines	9
Publications (number of publications)	9
15. On regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in a country to be decided	1
16. On trade standard guidance in the following areas: quality infrastructure, risk management, education, sustainable development	2
17. On mainstreaming a gender perspective in standards	1
18. On agricultural trade, supply chains and food loss and waste	1
19. On trade facilitation recommendations, standards and strategies	4
Technical materials (number of materials)	8
20. Guidelines on cross-border trade	1
21. Training material and guidelines on trade standards and/or regulatory cooperation	2
22. Standards and guidelines on agricultural quality	4
23. Training material on trade facilitation and electronic business	1
Fact-finding, monitoring and investigating missions (number of missions)	3
24. Fact-finding missions on trade facilitation and electronic business, agricultural quality standards, regulatory cooperation and standardization, and regulatory and procedural barriers to trade	3
C. Substantive deliverables	
Consultation, advice and advocacy: advisory services to government officials and other stakeholders in at least 10 ECE member States on trade facilitation and electronic business, agricultural quality standards, regulatory cooperation and standardization, and regulatory and procedural barriers to trade.	
Databases and substantive digital materials: databases for e-business standards and codes.	
D. Communication deliverables	
Outreach programmes, special events and information materials: booklets, promotional materials, fact sheets and information brochures reaching at least all programme countries in the ECE region and for more than 1,000 public and private sector experts.	
External and media relations: press releases, publication launch events and articles in external newsletters intended for government officials and experts working on trade.	
Digital platforms and multimedia content: website of the subprogramme.	

Annex I

Details of proposed publications for 2025

<i>PP item No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Mandate</i>	<i>Print and /or electronic</i>	<i>Trim size</i>	<i>No. of pages</i>	<i>Original language</i>	<i>Translated language(s) and source of funding (RB or XB)</i>	<i>No. of copies and language</i>
1	Publication on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade	ECE/CTCS/2018/4 para 3 -“Review the results of demand-driven studies (financed by extra-budgetary resources) that identify procedural and regulatory barriers to trade in member States in coordination and cooperation with other relevant international organizations”. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the ninth session of the ECE Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards that will take place in June 2024 and be reflected in its report ECE/CTCS/2024/2.	Print and electronic	A4	180	E	F, R (RB)	100E, 50F, 100R
2	Gender perspective in standards	This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the thirty-fourth session of the ECE WP.6, that will take place in 2024 and be reflected in its report ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2024/2.	Print and electronic	A4	20	E,F,R		250E, 50F, 50R
3	Trade standard guidance in the following areas: quality infrastructure, risk management, education, sustainable development	This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the thirty-fourth session of the ECE WP.6, that will take place in 2024 and reflected in its report ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2024/2.	Print and electronic	A4	20	E,F,R		150E, 50F, 50R
4	Trade standard guidance in the following areas: quality infrastructure, risk	This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the thirty-fourth session of the ECE.	Print and electronic	A4	60	E, F, R		150E, 50F, 50R

<i>PP item No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Mandate</i>	<i>Print and /or electronic</i>	<i>Trim size</i>	<i>No. of pages</i>	<i>Original language</i>	<i>Translated language(s) and source of funding (RB or XB)</i>	<i>No. of copies and language</i>
	management, education, sustainable development.	WP.6, that will take place in 2024 and reflected in its report ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2024/2.						
5	Agricultural trade, supply chains and food loss and waste	This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the seventy-ninth session of WP.7, which will take place in 2024 and reflected in its report ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2024/2.	Print and electronic	A4	60	E, F, R		100E, 100F, 100R
6	Trade facilitation recommendations, standards and strategies	This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the thirtieth session of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), that will take place in July 2024 and reflected in its report (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2024/2) along with its UN/CEFACT Programme of Work 2025 – 2026.	Print and electronic	A4	60	E, F, R		200E, 100F, 50R
7	Trade facilitation recommendations, standards and strategies	This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the thirtieth session of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), that will take place in July 2024 and reflected in its report (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2024/2) along with its UN/CEFACT Programme of Work 2025 – 2026.	Electronic	A4	40	E, F, R		0E, 0F, 0R
8	Trade facilitation recommendations, standards and strategies	This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the thirtieth session of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), that will take place in July 2024 and reflected in its report	Electronic	A4	40	E, F, R		0E, 0F, 0R

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9	Trade facilitation recommendations, standards and strategies	(ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2024/2) along with its UN/CEFACT Programme of Work 2025 – 2026. This publication will have a specific mandate, per definition of the mandate in ST/SGB/2012/2. The specific mandate for this publication will be provided by the thirtieth session of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), that will take place in July 2024 and reflected in its report (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2024/2) along with its UN/CEFACT Programme of Work 2025 – 2026.	Print and electronic		40	E, F, R		200E, 100F, 50R

Annex II

Legislative mandates

A. Overall ECE legislative mandates

1. Resolutions of the General Assembly

- 66/288 The future we want
- 67/10 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Eurasian Economic Community
- 69/137 Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024
- 69/213 Role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development
- 69/277 Political declaration on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations
- 69/283 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030
- 67/290 Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development
- 69/313 Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development
- 70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- 70/217 Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked
- 73/243 Developing Countries
- 76/217
- 77/246
- 78/163
- 71/16 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization
- 71/256 New Urban Agenda
- 72/279 Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
- 73/10 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative
- 73/195 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
- 74/4 Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly
- 74/15 Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024
- 74/122 Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly
- 74/128 Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly
- 74/144 Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto: accessibility

- 74/216 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
- 74/231, 78/162 Development cooperation with middle-income countries
- 77/181 Women in development
- 74/271 Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat
- 74/297 Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
- 75/8, 77/15 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM
- 75/9, 77/16 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States
- 75/12 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization
- 75/216; 76/204 Disaster risk reduction
- 75/221 Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- 75/233 Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
- 75/290 A Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council
Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and 70/299 on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level
Economic and Social Council
- 75/290 B High-level political forum on sustainable development
- 75/324 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization
- 77/21 Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- 75/213, 76/202, 77/162 Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Agenda 21
- 78/166 Operational activities for development of the United Nations system
- 78/167 South-South cooperation

2. Economic and Social Council resolutions

- [36 \(IV\)](#) Economic Commission for Europe
- 1998/46 Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields
- 2006/38 Workplan on reform of the Economic Commission for Europe and revised terms of reference of the Commission
- 2013/1 Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of the Economic Commission for Europe
- [2023/4](#) Science, technology and innovation for development

- 2023/11 Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system
- 2023/31 Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

3. Economic Commission for Europe decisions

- A (64) The work of the Economic Commission for Europe
- A (65) Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE
- A (66) Endorsement of the High-level statement on the post-2015 development agenda and expected sustainable development goals in the ECE region
- A (70) Economic and social effects of Russia's aggression against Ukraine
- B (70) Digital and green transformations in support of the sustainable development in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe
- C (70) Promotion of Circular Economy and the sustainable use of natural resources
- D (70) Extension of the mandate of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

B. Legislative mandates specific to the subprogramme

1. Resolutions of the General Assembly

- 75/211 Entrepreneurship for development
- 75/231 Industrial development cooperation
- 76/200 Agricultural technology for sustainable development
- 76/222 Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

2. Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

- 1991/76 Promotion of interregional cooperation in the area of international trade facilitation
 - 1997/225 Economic Commission for Europe Recommendation 25, entitled "Use of the UN/EDIFACT Standard"
-