

**Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations**

**Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and / or the Security Council**

**Statement by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the Fifth Committee**

*(ACABQ report A/66/7/Add.12)*

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the report of the Advisory Committee (A/66/581) which contains its comments and recommendations on the Secretary-General's proposals for special political missions for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2011 (A/66/354 and Addendums 1-5). The Committee's comments on the proposals of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya will be issued shortly in a separate report.

The Advisory Committee notes that provision of \$617.6 million is sought for 2012 for the requirements of 30 special political missions. The Committee recalls that the Secretary-General had included an estimate for the biennium 2012-2013 of some \$1.08 billion for special political missions. In its first report on the proposed programme budget (A/66/7) the Committee expressed the view that the projections of the Secretary-General could prove optimistic. The Committee considers that the estimates proposed for 2012 validate that position.

Mr Chairman,

The Committee's comments and recommendation with regard to the resources requested for special political missions in the three thematic clusters, as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), are contained in section III of its report.

As regards Cluster I, the Committee is recommending approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General, with the exception of the proposal for a new post at General Service level in the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.

Turning to Cluster II, the Committee notes the increase in the overall provision for the cluster of some \$844,000, primarily due to the fact that the funding for the Panel of Experts on Libya is for a full 12 months whereas the budget in 2011 was based on 7 months. The Committee has recommended approval of two of the

three new positions requested in this cluster, but does not recommend the establishment of the proposed position in the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate. Adjustments are also recommended to the non-post resources proposed for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire and the Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

With respect to Cluster III, the Advisory Committee notes that the provision for 2012 reflects a reduction of some \$3.75 million when compared to the approved budget for 2011. This reduction is mainly due to the combined effect of end of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Nepal and reduced requirements for the United Nations Office in Burundi, partly offset by increases in a number of other missions (UNOWA, BINUCA, UNPOS, UNIPSIL and UNOCA).

The Advisory Committee has recommended reductions in the level of resources proposed for five special political missions (UNOWA, UNPOS, CNMC, UNRCCA, and UNOC) which are explained in paragraphs 71 to 167 of its report.

The Committee has not recommended approval of the two additional Political Officers requested for UNOWA, nor the additional National Officer position requested for UNOCA. With regard to proposed reclassification of the position of Chief of Staff in UNPOS, to D-1, the Committee has no objection to the reclassification of this position but recommends that it only be implemented after the planned redeployment of the Deputy Representative of the Secretary-General to Mogadishu takes place.

Mr. Chairman,

With respect to UNAMA, the Advisory Committee is recommending approval of the Secretary-General's estimates for 2012, which should decrease by some \$16 million as compared to the current period. The Committee is also recommending approval of the Secretary-General's proposal to abolish 26 international positions in order to accommodate the implementation of the decision by the General Assembly on the harmonization of conditions of service.

The proposed budget of UNAMA reflects reductions under operational costs, mainly owing to the completion of one-time infrastructure projects in 2011 for which there are no further requirements in 2012. The reductions would be partially offset by significant increases for salary costs, owing to higher salary entitlements as well as the improved vacancy situation for both international and national staff. During the current period several unforeseen security projects were implemented to meet new security requirements at the Mission's premises in Kabul and field offices.

Turning finally to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the total estimated requirements for 2012 amount to approximately \$172.8 million, representing a decrease of \$27.3 million, compared with the approved budget for 2011. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposed resource requirements for 2012.

With regard to staffing, a total of 41 new positions are proposed, while 136 positions are proposed for abolition in a phased manner during 2012. The Committee notes that the vacancy rate at UNAMI remains high, with 238 positions being vacant as of 31 October 2011. In light of the persistent high vacancy rates, the Committee is of the view that the Mission should further review its staffing requirements and reflect the results of the review in the next budget submission.

With regard to operational costs, the Advisory Committee notes that \$23.5 million is proposed under facilities and infrastructure for 2012, an increase of \$1.5 million compared to 2011, with the requirements stated to be mainly due to maintenance, utilities, alterations and renovation required for Kirkuk, Basra and the new integrated compound in Baghdad. However, with respect to the Mission's premises in Kirkuk and Basra, the Advisory Committee notes that the construction and renovation planned for 2011 have been changed to rented accommodation for 2012, but no explanation is provided in the budget document. It was therefore unclear as to factors that contributed to the proposed requirements for 2012.

As for the planned construction project for an integrated compound in Baghdad, the Committee notes that the selected architectural firm lacked in-house expertise and failed to complete the design phase. The Mission has therefore chosen an alternative, namely, to consolidate a compound adjacent to the Mission's existing compound into a single integrated compound. However, the Committee notes that the proposed budget for 2012 does not provide a clear and comprehensive plan with respect to the short- and long-term requirements for the envisaged consolidation and the renovation works involved.

The Advisory Committee emphasizes the need for close monitoring and oversight of all construction and renovation projects being undertaken by the mission. The Committee recommends that detailed information regarding UNAMI's plan for its premises in Iraq, including the scope of renovation and construction and the related resource requirements, be provided directly to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the estimates in respect of special political missions.

Mr. Chairman,

While the present format of presentation was recommended by the Advisory Committee, it notes that the present system of thematic clusters for presenting the budgetary proposals for special political missions has been in place for five years. The Committee is of the view that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to make an assessment as to whether that system requires any adjustment.

The Committee has also expressed the view that future budget proposals for special political missions would benefit from more systematic inclusion of information on cross-cutting issues which have impact on the budgetary requirements being put forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

