

**Observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues
related to United Nations peacekeeping operations**

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

Report of the Advisory Committee: A/67/780

Reports of the Secretary-General: A/67/723, A/67/633, A/67/766

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations (A/67/780). The report also includes observations and recommendations on separate reports submitted by the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/67/633) and implementation of the global field support strategy (A/67/766).

Cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee's report covers the full range of administrative and managerial issues arising in the 15 active peacekeeping missions. Let me touch upon some of the main issues addressed.

Overall, the Advisory Committee commends the improvement in budgetary accuracy along with efforts to achieve sustainable efficiencies across missions. The Committee continues to stress that these efforts should not compromise the safety and security of mission personnel and premises or put at risk the fulfilment of mandated activities.

In terms of the quality of the Secretary-General's overview report, the Advisory Committee recognizes an overall improvement, including in the extent of the analysis provided. The Committee feels, however, that the presentation of efficiency targets established for past, present and future periods could be improved. It believes that clear detail concerning both cross-cutting and mission-specific targets should be consolidated and quantified wherever possible, along with details on the expected timeframe for their achievement and an assessment of their impact. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that future reports distinguish between those variances in mission resource requirements that are attributable to mandate changes and those that are not. This would improve the transparency of the budget proposals and enable a better understanding of the causes and effects of changes over time.

The Advisory Committee notes that UN peacekeeping operations will be preparing IPSAS-compliant financial information as of 1 July 2013, along with the introduction of the pilot project for the Umoja foundation phase in UNIFIL. In view of the imminent implementation of these two projects and the concerns expressed by the Board of Auditors on the readiness of missions to absorb IPSAS, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly be provided with an update on the status of implementation of these projects. The Committee also trusts that programme managers are being adequately trained in the implications of IPSAS for planning programme implementation and the related recording and monitoring of expenditures.

Concerning the budget methodology, the Advisory Committee builds on observations made last year with respect to the use of the standard cost and ratio manual in formulating mission budgets. The Committee shares the view of the Secretary-General that the manual in its current form needs review and recommends that this be completed before the next budgetary cycle so appropriate adjustments can be made. When ratios are adapted or altered between budget cycles leading to significant financial implications, such as in the case of computing devices in July 2012, the Committee recommends that this be properly justified to the General Assembly.

On the proposals for civilian personnel and specifically the ratios of support to substantive staff, the Committee notes that drawing a definitive conclusion on the basis of the information currently available is not possible. It believes that there is merit in formulating a baseline, which clearly defines “support” and “substantive” positions and takes into account the proportion of functions devoted to supporting the uniformed component in missions. With respect to training of personnel, the Committee urges the Secretary-General to finalize the outstanding global peacekeeping training needs assessment as well as to intensify efforts in developing Inspira’s enterprise learning management module so as to improve the monitoring capabilities.

Turning to the observations and recommendations on operational costs, the Advisory Committee highlights the issue of construction in missions as an area requiring enhanced monitoring and oversight. For 2013/14, 16 projects in excess of \$1 million are foreseen, with a forecasted cost of \$59.2 million. The Committee believes that further efforts should be made to improve project planning, budgeting, prioritization and to ensure that lessons learned in project management are properly factored into the implementation of future projects.

The Committee regrets the persistent delays in the development of key performance indicators in the management of UN air operations, given that the proposed requirements for 2013/14 amount to \$911 million and that these operations are vitally important for the effective discharge of peacekeeping mandates. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report to its next session covering different aspects of the management of air operations.

In the area of aviation fuel, the Advisory Committee notes some improvement in the efficiency of fuel consumption across missions. However, it looks forward to the outcome of the ongoing review of the current budgeting methodology. In terms of fuel for other uses in missions, the Advisory Committee notes significant limitations in the existing practices of budgeting for and reporting on fuel usage. An obligation to provide a comprehensive analysis on all aspects of fuel management to the General Assembly is now overdue.

The Committee remains concerned about persistent delays in the implementation of several electronic management systems deemed necessary for the effective management of peacekeeping missions, notably, in the areas of fuel, rations, and air operations. The Committee is of the view that this must be addressed as a matter of priority and expects that all in-house applications under development will be compatible with Umoja processes.

For the first time, the Advisory Committee also highlights the issue of geographic information systems and the related resources assigned to their development and use in missions. Specifically, the Committee recommends that the next overview report should contain proposals for centralizing and consolidating the related infrastructure and staffing requirements.

Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, the Secretary-General's report indicates that this year will mark a decade since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/306. The Advisory Committee notes the continued downward trend in cases, especially in the number of allegations involving military personnel, in 2012. However, it remains concerned about the number of cases involving the most serious forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Committee takes the view that future reports need to demonstrate greater clarity about the types of allegation, their relative gravity as well as the categories and numbers of perpetrators.

In this connection, the Committee notes that the Secretary-General has adopted a policy on human rights screening of all types of personnel to serve at Headquarters and in the field to ensure that anyone nominated to serve has not previously committed criminal offences or violations of international and human rights law. The Committee acknowledges the importance of instituting a rigorous vetting mechanism and trusts that the due process rights of individuals will be properly guaranteed.

Progress in the implementation of the global field support strategy

Mr. Chairman,

Turning now to the implementation of the global field support strategy, the Advisory Committee reiterates its continued support for the broad goals of the strategy – namely, for transforming service delivery to field missions through greater use of shared services and global management of resources; improving timeliness and quality of service; enhancing the safety and living conditions of personnel; and achieving greater efficiency and economies of scale. The Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will submit all the outstanding information on the implementation of each initiative requested by the General Assembly in his next progress report. The Committee also encourages the Secretary-General to continue to develop and refine the end-state vision for the four pillars.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding the finance pillar, the Committee considers that a budget resulting from the application of the standardized funding model methodology is a financing mechanism, rather than a precise presentation of the actual first-year budgetary requirements for a mission. The Committee encourages the Secretary-General to continually revise and improve the model, including its underlying data and assumptions.

The Advisory Committee reiterates its position that use of a standardized funding model should not in any way lessen the requirement for a full justification of the resources proposed for the first year of operation. It therefore recommends, at this stage, against the approval of the Secretary-General's proposal to replace a full staffing table with an initial civilian capacity of general temporary assistance positions. Rather, the Committee recommends, when compiling initial staffing requirements, that a combination of both posts and general temporary assistance be proposed for the first year.

Regarding the Global Service Centre in Brindisi, the Advisory Committee supports the intention of the Secretary-General to implement a comprehensive supply chain strategy and to develop an effective oversight mechanism for global asset management.

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee considers that the economies of scale derived from consolidation of finance and human resources functions in the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe should allow further reductions in the ratio of finance and human resources staffing to overall staffing in the client missions it serves. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to examine the actual requirements for staffing in these areas and to identify further reductions for the next financial period.

The Committee welcomes the savings and efficiencies that the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre in Entebbe has generated for the Organization, including reported savings for the introduction of a long-range, wide-body aircraft, as

well as the improvements in the quality of services provided to troop- and police-contributing countries.

Lastly, the Committee notes the Secretary-General's intention to examine options for the consolidation of the global education grant processing function at the appropriate location. In this regard, the Committee emphasizes the need for a comprehensive analysis of the implications of providing any global support function from a regional service centre. The Committee stresses that such a change would entail a significant shift in the service delivery model underpinning the global field support strategy and would require prior approval of the General Assembly.

Thank you Mr. Chairman

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

Financing of the support account for peacekeeping operations

ACABQ report: A/67/848;

Reports of the Secretary-General: A/67/756 and Add.1, and A/67/635 and Add.1

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report (A/67/848) on the support account for peacekeeping operations. Let me highlight a few points discussed in the report of the Committee.

The first point is related to the current financial period 2012/13. The Advisory Committee notes that overexpenditures, in the amount of some \$15 million, are projected for the current period, due to lower-than-budgeted vacancy rates for posts and positions and higher-than-budgeted common staff costs for both 2011/12 and 2012/13 periods. The Secretary-General is requesting the General Assembly to approve additional requirements in the amount of \$15,050,200 for 2012/13. The Committee is of the view that the Secretary-General should make every effort to absorb the projected overexpenditures. The Committee also requests that the most up-to-date information on current and projected expenditures, as well as on encumbrance rates, be provided to the General Assembly now, to enable the Assembly to decide on additional requirements, if any.

I am going to turn to the budget process review undertaken by the Departments of Management, Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, which is discussed in paragraphs 65 to 82 of the Advisory Committee's report. The proposed new process would see the Peacekeeping Financing Division assuming an expanded role for budget development. In order to perform that role, the Division would be strengthened by the addition of 12 posts, 11 of which would be redeployed from the Field Budget and Finance Division. The latter would continue to fulfil its responsibilities for the strategic management and oversight of resources, consistent with the evolving role of the Department of Field Support at Headquarters in the context of the global field support strategy.

The Advisory Committee has no objection to the Secretary-General's proposals, since it sees merit in the attempt to improve the efficiency of a process that has long been recognized by all stakeholders as sub-optimal. However, the Committee emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the mandated roles and responsibilities, as well as the accountability, of all relevant actors are respected at every stage. In addition, full and close cooperation between the Departments of Management, Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support will be critical. Lastly, the Committee takes the view that, as the new

process unfolds and stabilizes, there will be opportunities for further synergies and efficiencies through reductions in staffing levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Now I would like to talk about the proposed budget for the support account for the period 2013/2014. As a result of the peacekeeping budget process review, the overall resource requirements, which were proposed by the Secretary-General in his report A/67/756, have been adjusted in an addendum. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee would, therefore, entail a reduction of \$5,343,300 to the adjusted budget proposal by the Secretary-General contained in document A/67/756/Add.1. The Committee's recommendations are explained in section V of its report. A summary of the Committee's recommendations is provided in section VI of its report.

Regarding official travel, the Advisory Committee notes that the proposed requirements would increase by some \$1.4 million, or 14.9 per cent, as reflected in the addendum to the Secretary-General's budget proposal. The Committee discussed the issue in paragraphs 59 to 63 of its report. The Committee expects that the measures recently introduced by General Assembly resolution 67/254 will contain costs under air travel and requests that all savings achieved in this regard be reported in the performance report. The Committee reiterates its view that the primary consideration in authorizing official travel should be whether direct face-to-face contact is necessary for mandate implementation, and that the Secretary-General should further prioritize travel requirements. The Committee therefore recommends a total reduction of 10 per cent (\$1,119,460) to the proposed requirements under official travel for the support account for 2013/14.

In addition, in its report on cross-cutting issues related to the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/67/780, para. 144), the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services with the task of keeping official travel in peacekeeping missions under review for the 2013/14 period. In this connection, the Committee recommends that the scope of this review also include official travel under the support account for peacekeeping operations so that the review to be conducted will be comprehensive.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General is proposing to restructure a number of offices in his budget proposal, including the following:

(a) In DPKO, establishment of the Office of the Director, Evaluation of Field Uniformed Personnel;

(b) In DFS, establishment of the Strategic Support Team in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, and establishment of the Operational Support Team in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General; and

(c) In the Investigations Division of OIOS, reorganization of the Division to include the Headquarters Office, the Regional Investigation Offices in Vienna and

Entebbe, and Investigation Offices in 5 peacekeeping missions (MONUSCO, MINUSTAH, UNMIL, UNMISS and UNOCI), following the completion of the pilot project approved by the General Assembly in resolution 63/287 (OIOS report A/67/751). The staffing of the Division, as per the pilot project, comprises 51 general temporary assistance positions and it is proposed to convert the 51 positions to posts for 2013/14.

The Advisory Committee has no objection to the above-mentioned proposals by the Secretary-General. However, the Committee expects that the proposed Office for Evaluation of Field Uniformed Personnel will not impact on existing command and control arrangements for uniformed personnel.

Last, but not the least, I would like to share with you the Advisory Committee's view on the overall resource level of the support account. While the approved resource level for peacekeeping operations and UNSOA decreased from 2011/12 to 2012/13, the combined resources proposed for the support account and UNLB represent 5.5 per cent (\$378.2 million) of the proposed resources for peacekeeping missions and UNSOA for 2013/14, the highest level in the past five budget cycles. Since the establishment of the peacekeeping support account, its resource level has been on an upward trend, with no measurable relation to the number, size and complexity of peacekeeping operations.

In the view of the Advisory Committee, there should be a relationship between the level of backstopping capacity provided through the support account and the overall scale of peacekeeping operation activities. The reporting on the backstopping of peacekeeping operations must also reflect the totality of resources available, including regular budget posts and non-post resources. The Secretary-General should, therefore, review the support account to determine how that relationship should be defined. This determination could thereby assist in the establishment of a baseline, against which future resource requests could be evaluated and the scalability of the support account can be achieved.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.