

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

10 December 2013

Progress on the implementation of recommendations related to strengthening information and systems security across the Secretariat

ACABQ report: A/68/7/Add.11;

Related report of the Secretary-General: A/68/552

Limited budgetary discretion,

ACABQ report: A/68/7/Add.9;

Related report of the Secretary-General: A/68/490

Revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 67/290, entitled "Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development"

ACABQ report: A/68/7/Add.14;

Related report of the Secretary-General A/68/365 & Add.1

Request for a subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia

ACABQ report: A/68/7/Add.12;

Related report of the Secretary-General: A/68/532

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

ACABQ report: A/68/7/Add.13;

Related report of the Secretary-General: A/C.5/68/14

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the reports of the Advisory Committee on the five subjects under consideration today, namely. (a) Progress on the implementation of recommendations related to strengthening information and systems security across the Secretariat; (b) Limited budgetary discretion; (c) Revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 67/290, entitled "Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development"; (d) Request for a subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia; and (e) Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. The Advisory Committee's reports are contained in addenda 11, 14, 9, 12 and 13 respectively to its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, A/68/7.

1. Progress on the implementation of recommendations related to strengthening information and systems security across the Secretariat

The Advisory Committee's report on the first subject, progress on the implementation of recommendations related to strengthening information and systems security across the Secretariat is contained in document A/68/7/Add.11. The Advisory Committee notes the progress made in the implementation of the action plan for addressing information security issues, in particular, the issuance of a common, Secretariat-wide security directive.

The Advisory Committee also notes the statements of the Secretary-General that the fragmented ICT network of the Organization makes it more difficult and costly to ensure information security, that an attack or intrusion anywhere in the United Nations network could lead to a compromise everywhere, and that security measures need to be implemented at all duty stations. The Committee emphasizes the need for a common, enterprise-wide approach for information and systems security across the Secretariat, which ensures that there is no duplication of efforts or dual spending in this area.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that the medium- and long-term strategy for information security, which is to be presented in the context of the new ICT strategy at its 69th session, should be based on common policies and tools and also address the current state of fragmentation of the information security environment in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible. The Committee reiterates that the Secretary-General should take prompt remedial action to address any hindrances that may arise to the effective promulgation and enforcement of common information security policies throughout the Secretariat.

The Advisory Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to apportion the resource requirements for information security on the basis of the same cost-sharing arrangement applied for the financing of the enterprise resource planning project. The Committee also encourages the Secretary-General to continue to pursue system-wide collaboration and seek all options for further cooperation and sharing of solutions for information security among the organizations of the United Nations system.

With regard to the additional resources requested for the upcoming biennium, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to accommodate any additional requirements for temporary assistance and travel of staff from within the resources provided for in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, and to report in the relevant performance report on any additional expenditures required under contractual services or under furniture and equipment.

2. Limited budgetary discretion,

Mr. Chairman,

Concerning the report of the Secretary-General on limited budgetary discretion, I am pleased to introduce the related report of the Advisory Committee, A/68/7/Add.9. The report

of the Secretary-General proposes to continue this mechanism under current arrangements, on the basis of the experience gained during the last four biennia.

In its consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals, the Committee notes that the limited discretion, set at \$20 million per biennium, has never been fully utilized since the General Assembly first granted the Secretary-General this authority on an experimental basis, in its resolution 60/283. In addition, the Committee emphasizes that the limited budgetary discretion authority must be exercised in accordance with the nine principles laid out by the General Assembly in that resolution. The Committee is of the view that a better definition of those circumstances in which the use of this discretion would be most appropriate is needed. It also recalls its prior view that clearer criteria would ensure a more consistent approach to the usage of the limited budgetary discretion.

Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee has no objection to the continuation of the authority on an experimental basis under the current arrangements and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive report on the implementation of the experiment for its consideration at its seventieth session.

3. Revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 67/290, entitled "Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development"

Mr. Chairman,

I now refer to the third subject, revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 67/290, entitled "Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development", contained in document A/68/7/Add.14. I wish to state that the Advisory Committee has no objection to the Secretary-General's request for additional resources in the amount of \$0.7 million for implementing the recommendations contained in the General Assembly resolution.

However, the Advisory Committee is concerned that the Secretary-General followed an exceptional procedure in presenting the statement on programme budget implications of the draft resolution that preceded the General Assembly resolution 67/90. It must be noted that the relevant statement on the programme budget implications was presented to the General Assembly, without it being considered by the Fifth Committee in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly. The Advisory Committee was informed that subsequent to the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 67/290 on 9 July 2013, the statement on the programme budget implications was reformatted into the present revised estimates report of the Secretary-General.

The Advisory Committee trusts the Secretary-General to ensure in the future, that all statements on the programme budget implications are presented to the Fifth Committee, in accordance with the procedure established under rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

4. Request for a subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia

Turning now to the fourth subject, the Secretary-General's request for a subvention of up to \$51.1 million from the UN regular budget to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia to cover the activities of the Chambers for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015, I have the pleasure to introduce the report of the Advisory Committee, A/68/7/Add.12.

Given that both international and national components of the Extraordinary Chambers have been funded from voluntary sources to date, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/228B, the Advisory Committee has never previously expressed any observations on the level of its proposed budget or related staffing levels. The Committee also notes that the report of the Secretary-General contains a request for a subvention, rather than a full-fledged budget proposal. The Committee has not therefore pronounced upon the resource requirements of the Chambers during its review.

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee notes with concern the adverse cash position of the Extraordinary Chambers and the steadily worsening financial situation over the course of the past 18 months. The Committee is also concerned that the severity of the funding shortfall is only now being brought to the attention of the Fifth Committee. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to intensify efforts to obtain additional voluntary contributions, including by broadening the donor base.

The Committee also expects that the Chambers will intensify their efforts to identify savings. In addition, the Committee recommends that a funding plan beyond 2014-2015 be developed, based on a rigorous workload forecast for the timely completion of the three remaining cases and a disciplined case-management methodology.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly comprehensively examine the matter of the future financing of the Chambers for 2015 and beyond, recognizing that it would be for the Assembly to decide, as a matter of policy, whether to finance the future activities of the Chambers through a different source of funding. As a bridging financing arrangement for 2014 and so that the operations of the Extraordinary Chambers can continue, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not to exceed \$12.4 million, pending the Assembly's consideration of the Chambers' future financing arrangements. Should voluntary contributions be received in excess of the Chambers' remaining requirements for 2014, regular budget funds should be refunded to the Organization.

More broadly, the Committee recalls its previous comments concerning the difficulties in sustaining voluntary contributions to finance judicial proceedings of this nature and that lessons should be derived from these experiences for application in future international tribunals and courts.

5. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of the General Assembly draft resolution A/C.1/68/L.37, contained in document A/68/7/Add.13. The programme budget implication states the additional resource requirements for a group of governmental experts to be established in 2014 to continue to study how international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States and other related issues specified in the draft resolution. The expert group is required to report the results of this study to the General Assembly at its 70th session. The Advisory Committee has no objection to the additional resource requirements amounting to \$ 1.4 million indicated by the Secretary-General in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for your attention.