

Check against delivery

**Statement of the Chairman
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)**

2 December 2013

**Strengthening the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (A/68/506); and
the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for the International
Trade Centre (A/68/6 (Sect. 13)/Add. 1)**

ACABQ reports: A/68/7/Add.8 and A/68/7/Add.6);

Reports of the Secretary-General: A/68/506 and A/68/6 (Sect. 13)/Add. 1

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report (A/68/7/Add.8) on the strengthening of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in its resolution 66/293, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to identify and reallocate resources, as appropriate, within the regular budget of the United Nations to enable the Office of the Special Adviser to fulfil its mandate effectively regarding the monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development needs. In this regard, the Committee regrets that no action was taken to reallocate resources within the regular budget for this purpose during the 2012-2013 biennium.

Mr. Chairman, the Advisory Committee has no objection to the new posts proposed by the Secretary-General, with the exception of 1 post of Senior Staff Assistant (General Service (Principal level)), whose functions, the Committee believes, can be performed within the existing staffing capacity of the Office of the Special Adviser.

With respect to the meetings proposed for the purpose of consultation with various stakeholders, the Advisory Committee expects that every effort will be made to contain the costs of these meetings, including examining the possibility of holding them at the ECA conference centre in Addis Ababa. In addition, the Committee recommends a five per cent reduction in the requirements for travel of staff in line with its recommendation for all other budget sections in 2014-2015

Finally, the Advisory Committee is of the view that new performance measures should have been included in the Secretary-General's proposals to reflect the additional tasks to be performed in connection with the monitoring mechanism.

Mr. Chairman, turning to the proposed programme budget for 2014-2015 for the International Trade Centre (A/68/6 (Sect. 13)/Add. 1), the Advisory Committee commends the efficiency measures which have enabled a reduction in the staffing

requirements of the Centre by two administrative posts at the General Service level. As for the P-5 post which is being proposed for transfer from extrabudgetary funding to regular budget funding, the Committee recommends that the pertinent recruitment, rules and regulations be applied as if it were a new post, given that it has not been previously approved under the regular budget. Furthermore, regarding the two temporary positions now being discontinued, the Advisory Committee is of the view that should any temporary assistance be required to undertake their functions, such assistance should be funded from the regular budget and be reported accordingly in the budget performance report.

As for the travel of staff, the Advisory Committee notes the cost reduction measures that have been put in place and expects that their impact will be reflected in future budgetary estimates. The Committee also recommends a five per cent reduction in the requirements for travel of staff in line with its recommendation for all other budget sections.

Coming to the requirements for furniture and equipment, the Advisory Committee welcomes the proposed cost-saving measure to extend the replacement cycle for ITC desktop and laptop computers from 4 to 4.5 years and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to apply the same measure to the entire regular budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

Finally, the Advisory Committee believes that more could be done to further simplify the existing administrative arrangements under which the Committee currently reviews the ITC budget twice in the year preceding the financial period. In this regard, the Advisory Committee urges the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to further simplify the arrangements so as to require only one review by the Committee in the year preceding the financial period.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.