

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

9 May 2017

**Observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues
related to United Nations peacekeeping operations
(ACABQ report A/71/836; related report: A/71/809)**

Madame Chairperson,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations (A/71/836). Let me start by highlighting that the Secretary-General's overview report continues to reflect a more focussed approach, emphasizing new developments, policy changes and management challenges across peacekeeping operations, which the Advisory Committee welcomes. The Committee encourages further improvements and looks forward to the provision of increased analytical information in future reports.

In its latest report on cross-cutting issues, the Committee discusses several key themes, where, in its view, there have been significant developments since the issuance its previous report.

Madame Chairperson,

The first theme addressed in the report relates to the planning, budgeting and financial management practices in UN peacekeeping. Based on its review of budgetary redeployments between expenditure groups and classes within the financial period, which are now reported to the Advisory Committee every six months, the Committee stresses that funds should be redeployed only on the basis of mandate changes or urgent and newly arising operational circumstances. The Committee recommends a number of additional measures required to ensure better budgetary control.

A second theme discussed in the Advisory Committee's report concerns the matter of delivering support to peacekeeping missions, which it has addressed extensively in previous reports. In the current report, the Committee recognizes the positive development of standardized indicators of achievement which focus upon the delivery of support to missions and trusts that effort will continue to refine these indicators.

The Committee also makes observations on the backstopping ratio, which has increased in recent years, despite the significant reductions in uniformed and civilian

components within missions, as well as the implementation of various global and regional efficiency initiatives. The Committee also expresses its concern that the Secretary-General does not provide detailed information on the progress in developing scalability models for the UN Logistics Base and the support account for peacekeeping operations, trusting that all related reviews and analysis will be finalized prior to the 72nd session with any resource implications reflected in the budget proposals for the 2018/19 period.

The Committee makes a number of observations concerning specific efficiency initiatives, including the ongoing implementation of Umoja in peacekeeping operations, the consolidation of payroll functions, the decommissioning of the Galileo asset management system, use of the Regional Procurement Office and the implementation of a supply chain management strategy. On the latter, the Committee notes with concern that a comprehensive description of project costs and benefits relating to the supply chain management strategy have still not been provided to the General Assembly, despite a significant increase in resources requested for 2017/18 and extensive related structural changes, reflected in individual budget proposals.

Madame Chairperson,

In the third area of focus, - human resources issues arising in peacekeeping operations - the Committee notes that the budget proposals for 2017/18 include large numbers of redeployments and reassignments within and between mission components. The Committee considers that repeated changes to mission structures each year is destabilizing and impacts upon the transparency of related resource requirements. It recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the practice of reassigning and redeploying posts within missions. It also stresses that all such movements of posts and positions should be fully justified in terms of responsibilities and workload.

The management of air operations is the fourth area of focus in the cross-cutting report. The Committee comments on the need for: 1) a consistent methodology for measuring air asset utilization; 2) the completion of the long-overdue assessment of management and oversight roles and responsibilities between the different offices in peacekeeping operations; 3) optimization of the number and types of unmanned aerial systems deployed, as well as improved utilization and transparent cost comparisons; and 4) the finalization and application of a consistent policy on cost recovery from third-party passengers. Overall, in view of the magnitude of resources allocated to air operations and the persistent difficulties in obtaining clear and comprehensive information on their management, the Advisory Committee has requested the Board to conduct an audit of all air operations in field missions, covering all performance-related and compliance aspects.

With regard to programmatic activities, the fifth area of focus, the Committee notes the expansion of such activities funded from peacekeeping mission budgets, and

though it is not proposing adjustments to any particular proposals at this stage, it is of the view that there is an urgent need for clarity on a range of different aspects. These include the need for: a clear distinction between different types of activities (including those that have been part of mission budget proposals for years); justifications that they support implementation of mandated tasks; and clarification of each mission's comparative advantage in the delivery of specific activities, as well as those of the partners selected to implement them. The Committee also seeks more information with respect to the management and oversight arrangements relating to the mine-action components within missions.

Finally, Madame Chairperson,

The Advisory Committee makes a number of observations with respect to environmental management issues within peacekeeping operations including on related plans and policies, alternative energy projects and on the partnership with UNEP for the provision of technical assistance.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.