

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

9 May 2016

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, financing for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July to 30 June 2017 of the support account for peacekeeping operations

(ACABQ report: A/70/837; related reports: A/70/612 and Add.1, and A/70/751)

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report (A/70/837) on the support account for peacekeeping operations. In the interest of time, allow me to highlight a few points contained in the report of the Committee.

With respect to the proposed budget for the support account for 2016/17, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would entail a reduction of \$4,761,300 to the proposals of the Secretary-General contained in document A/70/751. The recommendations of the Committee are explained in section V of its report (A/70/837).

The Advisory Committee takes note of the progress made by the Secretary-General in the presentation of the resource proposals in the support account budget report, including tables that provide a better understanding of the human and financial resource changes. The Committee encourages the Secretary-General to continue exploring ways of refining the presentation of such data.

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has repeatedly emphasized that support functions should be scalable to the size and scope of peacekeeping operations. From the level of resources proposed for the support account for 2016/17, the Advisory Committee continues to observe increases in the number of proposed posts and positions even as the levels of both uniformed and civilian personnel in peacekeeping missions are decreasing. The total number of posts and positions under the support account would increase from 1,461 in 2015/16 to 1,481 requested for 2016/17, against decreases of both uniformed personnel (141,549 to 137,859) and civilian staff (20,917 to 20,029) of peacekeeping operations and UNSOS for the same period.

Similarly, the Committee notes the proposed increase in the total number of posts and positions proposed at the D-1 and D-2 levels under the support account from 37 for the current period to 43 for 2016/17. The Committee does not believe that the increasing demands on the Organization should translate into more high-level posts and positions and in this regard, expects that greater efforts will be undertaken to review existing functions and structures before such proposals are presented.

The Advisory Committee notes that it has been five years since the last review of the support account. The Committee is concerned that, over this period, the efficiencies and economies expected from organizational transformation initiatives such as the Global Field Support Strategy and the rollout of Umoja, have not had a discernible impact on the level of the support account budget, which has continued to increase. The Committee considers that the current trend needs to be reviewed in order to determine its underlying factors. For this reason, the Committee recommends a follow-up review to determine, among other things, the optimal level of the support account.

Mr. Chairman,

Coming to the other resource categories, the Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to continue reducing the dependence on consultants while building in-house capacity. As for official travel, the Committee continues to observe that insufficient attention is being given to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/254 A in respect of standards of air travel, particularly, the 16-day advance ticket purchase policy, and other cost-saving measures. The Committee also recommends that in order to improve planning and monitoring, resource proposals for ground transportation should be included in the main budgets of the respective offices and not in the support account. Finally, let me turn to the 2014/15 financial period. The Advisory Committee requests the Assembly to apply the unencumbered balance of \$1,880,700 and the other income and adjustments amounting to \$2,328,300 to the support account requirements for 2016/17.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.