

**Statement of the Vice-Chairman**

**Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)**

**12 December 2018**

**First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019**

*ACABQ report: A/73/625; Related report: A/73/493*

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

The Advisory Committee notes that the revised requirements under the expenditure sections for the biennium 2018-2019 would be set at the level of \$5, 556.2 million, reflecting an increase of 3.0 per cent over the appropriation level approved by the General Assembly. Revised estimates for the income sections amount to \$554.9 million and reflect an increase of 0.5 per cent over the initial estimates for the biennium.

With respect to the amounts requested under Section 8, Legal Affairs for 2018, relating to the subvention to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the Committee notes that the combined level of voluntary contributions and the amount of the subvention was very close to the level of the approved budget as at 30 September 2018. The Committee trusts that updated information will be provided to the General Assembly and, if necessary, the amount of any excess funding be refunded to Member States.

On the income estimates arising from services to the public which have been repeatedly revised downward in recent bienniums, the Advisory Committee reiterates its observation that a review of the UN Postal Administration to generate revenue may be useful and considers that such a review could be broadened to include the sale of publications and the guided tour operation.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Secretary-General also contains three additional proposals. With respect to the proposed increase of the Working Capital Fund and the request to approve the transfer of unencumbered balances to the Special Account, the Advisory Committee considers that the report does not sufficiently demonstrate a pattern of sustained liquidity challenges and recommends against the proposals. Otherwise, the Committee recommends approval of the adapted recosting process for the International Trade Centre as well as the proposed establishment of the contingency fund level for the 2020 budget period.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Check against delivery

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**12 December 2018**

**Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council**

*(ACABQ report: A/73/498; related report: A/73/352)*

**Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council**

**Thematic cluster III: regional offices, offices in support of political processes and other missions**

*(ACABQ report: A/73/498/Add.3; related report: A/73/352/Add.3)*

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the report of the Advisory Committee on the Secretary-General's overall resource estimates for the special political missions (SPMs) for 2019 and related cross-cutting issues.

The resource requirements for individual missions are submitted by the Secretary-General in addenda 1 to 6 to his main report A/73/352. Accordingly, specific recommendations on resource requirements for the missions are contained in the related reports of the Advisory Committee (A/73/498/Add.1-6). In view of the recent conclusion of the mandate of one mission under thematic

cluster II, the proposed resource for 2019 under consideration now cover requirements for 36 missions, rather than 37 missions included in the main report of the Secretary-General.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the resources for the SPMs for 2019 requested by the Secretary-General, subject to its observations and recommendations set out in its reports (A/73/498/Add.1-6).

Mr. Chairman,

With respect to the biennial provision of \$1,109.6 million for SPMs for 2018-2019, additional appropriation amounting to \$194 million is being requested. Concerning the projected efficiencies envisaged in the proposed programme budget for the biennium, the Advisory Committee notes that no such efficiencies are reported in the proposed SPM budgets for 2019.

The Advisory Committee has recognized that funding for SPMs during a biennium is dependent on decisions of the General Assembly and/or the Security Council with respect to establishment or renewal of mandates. However, the Committee considers that past experience indicates an inability to make accurate predictions about ongoing resource requirements of the missions. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to make further efforts to present more accurate budget estimates of the SPMs with the introduction of the annual programme budget from 2020.

Mr. Chairman,

Now let me turn to the proposed resources for 2019 for the SPMs.

The overall resource level proposed for 2019 amounts to \$663.3 million, representing an increase of \$27.9 million (4.4 per cent), compared with the overall resources approved for 2018. The Advisory Committee notes that, excluding the proposed resources in an amount of \$21.5 million for the recently established mission, UNITAD, the resource requirements for the continuing missions would amount to \$641.8 million, an increase of \$6.4 million (1 per cent).

On staffing requirements, a net increase of 158 positions (4.1 per cent) is proposed for the 36 missions. The Advisory Committee notes that, excluding the proposed 135 positions for UNITAD, there is an increase of 23 positions (0.6 per cent) for the continuing missions.

Concerning temporary assignments of staff to higher-level vacant positions, involving special post allowances, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 September 2018, a total of 38 such assignments were granted at special political missions. The Advisory Committee trusts that all vacant positions will be filled expeditiously. The Committee also recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to complete the recruitment process for those posts presently encumbered by the use of special post allowances promptly.

The Advisory Committee has made comments and recommendations on resource requirements for operational costs for 2019 for individual missions in its related reports, in particular those relating to consultants, official travel, facilities and infrastructure and ground transportation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee has discussed the budgeting for the positions of resident coordinators who are also Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and related support capacity in six special political missions. Considering that the resident coordinator system is newly established, the Committee does not object to the proposed resources for the six missions for 2019. However, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to undertake a review to ensure that the arrangements proposed for the six missions are consistent with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/279. Furthermore, the Committee expects that a consistent approach will also be adopted for those positions in the peacekeeping operations concerned.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General makes two new proposals concerning service provision by and funding arrangements for the Kuwait Joint Support Office and Regional Service Centre in Entebbe for 2019. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposals for the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe are not intended to pre-empt the proposed establishment of global shared service centres in the context of the potential proposals of the Secretary-General relating to the global service

delivery model. The Committee continues to be of the view that the Kuwait Joint Support Office is not a shared service centre approved by the Assembly. The Advisory Committee reiterates that, while it does not object to the proposals for 2019, it recalls that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/248, any changes to the existing and future service delivery model must be approved by the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

I am now pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report (A/73/498/Add.3) on the Secretary General's resource proposals for 2019 for the special political missions under thematic cluster III.

Regarding staffing requirements, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for the nine special political missions in this Cluster. The Advisory Committee trusts that the vacant positions will be filled expeditiously and that the recruitment process for the posts presently encumbered by staff members on Special Post Allowance will be promptly completed.

The Advisory Committee notes the proposal that the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe will support four special political missions based in Africa and reiterates that any changes to the existing and future service delivery models must be approved by the General Assembly.

Turning to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the Secretary-General proposes to establish of a new unit to implement the tasks related to countering drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide further information to the General Assembly with regards to the relationship between the current mandate and the strengthening of the unit on countering drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. The Advisory Committee further trusts that the Secretary-General will inform the General Assembly of decisions taken by the Security Council regarding the assessment of the mission and its financial implications and provide such information to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of his report.

As regards the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the Secretary-General proposes the conversion of the 17 general temporary assistance positions, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of 12 positions and the abolishment of five positions. The Advisory Committee reiterates that, as a matter of overall policy, the continuing requirement for vacant positions should be regularly reviewed and justifications provided for their retention, especially for posts that have been vacant for two years or longer. Similarly, the Advisory Committee recommends the abolishment of two positions in the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

As regards the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, the Advisory Committee recommends reductions in consultants of \$44,600 and \$25,900 and reiterates that, while recognizing that the use of external consultants may be necessary to acquire specialized expertise not readily available in-house, reliance on the use of external consultants should be kept to an absolute minimum.



The Committee recommends reductions in facilities and infrastructure in the amounts of \$506,600 and \$750,000 with respect to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. As regards costs for the rental of premises, the Committee considers that greater efforts should be made to improve the accuracy of the budget proposals and notes that there may be further scope for cost sharing of the Mission's services with those agencies, funds and programmes that would prefer to be hosted by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

With regard to official travel in Cluster III, the Committee is concerned that significant non-compliance with the advance purchase policy has been allowed to continue and expects that the necessary measures will be taken to improve the rate of compliance. The Committee recommends a reduction of \$438,000 of the proposed requirements for the missions in cluster III.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.