



**Introductory remarks of Mr. Atul Khare
Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support**

Fifth Committee – 2020 Contingent-Owned Equipment Working Group

Monday, 4 May 2020

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Members of the Committee,

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the “*Triennial review of the rates and standards for reimbursement to Member States for contingent owned equipment*” also known as the COE Working Group.

I wish to start by taking note of the fact that this meeting is convened in extraordinary times due to COVID-19, and I would like to thank the Committee for its support to the United Nations’ work and contribution to support its peacekeeping operations, despite of the pressures posed by this time of global crisis. I wish you all continuous good health and safety.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

As you are aware, the contingent-owned equipment (COE) system was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/222 of 11 April 1996 to simplify the reimbursement mechanism for countries providing equipment and self-sustainment support services to formed military or police contingents in field missions. The rates of reimbursement and the procedures and standards are reviewed every three years by a working group of Member States which makes recommendations to the General Assembly. Once approved, the recommendations are reflected in the Manual on “*Policies and Procedures Concerning the Reimbursement and Control of COE of Troop/Police Contributors Participating in Peacekeeping Missions*” (or what is known as the COE Manual).

This year, the COE Working Group held its meetings in New York from 20 to 31 January, where more than 200 delegates from 56 countries participated and discussed 111 issue papers both from Member States and the Secretariat, along with national cost data submitted by 33 Member States. This was preceded, for the first time ever, by a one-day pre-session organizational meeting.

The 2020 COE Working Group was able to agree on 48 recommendations, which are included in the report of the Working Group. This is the highest number of recommendations ever agreed in the Working Group since the inception of the system in 1996 and almost double the number of recommendations agreed in the 2017 COE Working Group. The total financial implications of the agreed recommendations amount to a net estimated cost of \$6.03 million based on current deployments. The Member States, however, were not able to agree on a net increase in

rates of reimbursement of both major equipment and self-sustainment. Therefore, the current reimbursement rates in the COE Manual (included in document A/72/288) will continue to apply.

Aside from the high number of agreed recommendations, substantively, the recommendations will enable the modernization of COE requirements of military and police units. Key examples of this include:

- Inclusion of life-saving measures to enhance medical support, such as cardiac troponin for early diagnosis of myocardial infarction kits, buddy first aid and field medical assistance kits as well as new mobile surgical modules. Measures also include the establishment of strengthened requirements for clearance of all medical personnel in line with the *Medical Support Manual for United Nations Field Missions*;
- Enhanced environmental practices through amending the responsibilities related to minor engineering during the development and maintenance of the camp area with a view to supporting environmentally sensitive approaches as well as through strengthening standards for waste management;
- Alignment of the COE Manual with the *United Nations Manual on Ammunition Management* with due regard for quantities, shelf-life, and storage containers, to ensure consistency and safety of handling ammunition in the missions;
- Introduction of helicopter landing site kits as a standard package for deployed units, especially to support landing under limited vision conditions;
- Establishment of reimbursement rates for key capabilities such as (unarmed) unmanned aircraft systems and explosive ordinance disposal systems deployed to UN missions;
- Expansion of the eligibility for UN compensation for equipment lost or damaged in hostile action to cover those lost or damaged due to such actions during transit, including self-sustainment categories;
- Expansion of the categories of aging equipment that can be rotated with replacements at UN expense to include police vehicles and reduction in the eligibility requirement from seven years of deployment to five years in exceptional circumstances;
- Modification of the rates of reimbursement based on the cease of operations date; and
- Introduction of a premium to support the self-sustainment burden resulting from extended deployments to multiple temporary operating bases.

It is apparent from these recommendations that the Working Group and the general membership of the peacekeeping community are cognizant of the need to move from a “number-focused” approach to one that focuses on capability, quality, performance and safety in line with A4P commitments adopted by 152 Member States and 4 international/regional organizations. Key aspects of the recommendations include compliance with the internationally recognized environmental and health standards, improved ability to deploy more mobile operations and

striking a balance between the equitability of the reimbursement system and the affordability of United Nations peacekeeping.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw your attention to the proposal made by the Chairman of the Working Group in his transferal letter of the report to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. The Chairman of the Working Group recommended continuing the practice of having a pre-session organizational meeting, similar to the one held on 19 November 2019, for the election of the Bureau and the adoption of the agenda.

As the Working Group continues to review an increasingly large number of proposals, the pre-session meeting has allowed more time for thorough deliberations of items on the agenda. Continuing to convene an organizational meeting in advance would maximize the time available for a detailed review of the COE system that underpins the effectiveness of contingents in undertaking the mandated tasks entrusted to peacekeeping operations. The ACABQ in its report A/74/754 recommended the approval of this proposal.

My colleagues stand ready to respond to any questions that you may have regarding this report, during the informal sessions.

I thank you.