

**Observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues related to United Nations peacekeeping operations**

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

*Report of the Advisory Committee: A/66/718*

*Reports of the Secretary-General: A/66/679, A/66/591 & Add.1*

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/66/718). The report also includes observations and recommendations on separate reports submitted by the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/66/699) and implementation of the global field support strategy (A/66/591 & Add.1)

*Cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations*

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee's report is fairly detailed. In the interest of brevity, I will just highlight some of the main issues addressed in the Committee's report.

With regard to the proposals for the 2012/13 financial period, the Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts made to identify cross-cutting targets for resource reductions and to critically examine capital expenditures, as well as the assurance given that the particular circumstances of each mission were taken into account during budget preparation.

The Committee notes that the proposed budgets reflect some positive results from these efforts, although it is of the view that more information should have been provided on how the measures would be applied in each mission, including any mitigating measures to ensure that there is no adverse impact on mandate implementation.

The Advisory Committee also notes that the proposals reflect, in part, a deferral of capital expenditures which may need to be restored in the next financial period. The Committee encourages the Secretary-General to continue efforts to identify sustainable efficiencies in peacekeeping operations, without undermining operational requirements of mission or mandate implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

On human resources management, the Committee welcomes the initial positive effect reported by the Secretary-General resulting from implementation of the reform measures approved by the General Assembly. The Committee expects that a full analysis of the ongoing impact of the reforms will be provided in future reports to the Assembly.

The Advisory Committee notes that, amongst the reported impact of the reforms, is a reduction of vacancy rates in field missions. The Committee urges continued efforts to ensure the sustainability of that positive development. It further notes, however, that long-vacant posts exist in some missions, and recommends that the continued requirement for posts which have been vacant for two years or longer should be re-justified.

The Committee also makes a number of observations and recommendations on training, for which some \$28 million is proposed for 2012/13. In particular, the Committee is concerned about the lack of data on training activities and the high proportion of training resources proposed for training-related travel.

With respect to operational costs, from its review of the proposed holdings by missions of passenger vehicles and computing devices, the Advisory Committee notes that they are significantly higher than the allocation that would result from the application of the standard ratios established by the Department of Field Support. The Committee recommends that the holdings of both categories of equipment be reviewed to align them with standard ratios. The Committee also recognizes, however, that there may be circumstances in which mission-specific operational requirements could justify exceeding the established ratios. In such cases, it expects that justification will be clearly outlined in the budget proposals.

The Committee is also concerned about persistent delays in the implementation of a number of electronic management systems deemed necessary for the effective management of peacekeeping operations, notably, in the areas of fuel, rations and air operations management. The Committee is of the view that the consistent pattern of delays highlights systemic weaknesses in the planning and oversight of such initiatives, and that these issues must be addressed as a matter of priority.

In the area of aviation fuel, the Committee notes that the 2012/13 requirements for each mission are calculated using a standard rate of fuel consumption for each aircraft type, based on 10-year consumption rates for peacekeeping as a whole. The Committee is of the view that further consideration should be given to the standard rate, and whether the rate represents the best method of determining the requirements for each mission. The Committee considers that this issue should be reviewed by the Board of Auditors.

*Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse*

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, the Advisory Committee notes the general downward trend in the numbers of allegations involving peacekeeping personnel, but remains concerned about the number of reported allegations, particularly the most egregious forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Committee emphasizes the need for sustained joint efforts by the Secretary-General and troop- and police-contributing countries in this area.

The Committee is also concerned at the lack of progress reported with regard to assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Given the importance of system-wide effort to implement the strategy approved by the General Assembly, the Committee expects that the Secretary-General will exert his leadership as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board to ensure coordinated action.

#### *Progress in the implementation of the global field support strategy*

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee's report on the Secretary-General's second annual progress report on the global field support strategy is contained in section IV of the cross-cutting report. The Secretary-General has also submitted an addendum to the progress report, in response to the General Assembly's request for consolidated information on the financial and human resources provided by client missions to the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe.

A number of other reports currently before you contain related proposals, in particular: (a) the proposed budgets for UNLB and the support account for the re-profiling of UNLB as the Global Service Centre and the transfer of functions from Headquarters to Brindisi; and (b) the proposed budgets for MONUSCO, UNMISS, UNAMID, UNISFA and UNSOA for the transfer of functions from the missions to the Regional Service Centre. These proposals, along with the Committee's related reports, should be considered in conjunction with the Secretary-General's progress report and its addendum. The Board of Auditors has also assessed the planning, development and early roll-out of the global field support strategy, and identified risks to its successful delivery.

#### *General observations and comments*

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee continues to support the broad goals of the global field support strategy for transforming service delivery to field missions through greater use of common and shared services and global management of resources; improving timeliness and quality of service; enhancing the safety and living conditions of personnel; and achieving greater efficiency and economies of scale.

However, the Advisory Committee experienced difficulties in assessing progress achieved thus far in the implementation of the global field support strategy, mainly owing to the timing and lack of detail in the progress report, which resulted in a piecemeal and incomplete reporting process. The Secretary-General's report was issued on 7 December 2011, and covers only a few months of implementation activity. The Committee requests that the Secretary-General improve the reporting process in order to ensure better consideration of the annual progress report.

The report also continues to lack much of the specific information requested by the Advisory Committee in its earlier reports, which were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 64/269 and 65/289. The Committee continues to emphasize the need for a comprehensive plan and end-state vision for the implementation of the four pillars of the strategy over the five-year period, cost-benefit analyses to support decision-making, and a performance management framework, as well as an assessment of completed initiatives and lessons learned during the initial implementation phases.

The Committee also emphasizes the importance of collecting accurate and reliable data for baseline and performance measures. It recommends that, in future reporting on benefits and cost savings, relevant supporting information should be provided to clearly demonstrate the cause and effect relationships between the actions undertaken and the resulting benefits/savings. The Committee has further stressed the need to ensure coherence and complementarity, as well as a coordinated implementation approach between the global field support strategy and other management reform initiatives currently underway, including Umoja and IPSAS.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General's progress report covers governance and management arrangements; the financial framework; predefined modules and service packages; the reprofiling of UNLB as the Global Service Centre; further development of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe; and the human resources framework.

#### *Governance and management arrangements*

In its report, the Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the governance framework and management arrangements for the implementation of the global field support strategy, as well as accountability mechanisms, so as to ensure that the various components of the framework can effectively exercise their respective roles.

#### *Financial framework*

With regard to the financial framework, the Advisory Committee recommends against the Secretary-General's proposal to develop funding models for the drawdown and liquidation phases of missions. In its view, the constraints and conditions pertaining to peacekeeping operations at start-up are not applicable to those phases. Further, the development of additional standardized funding models should take into account the outcome of the evaluation of the first application of the model to the initial budget for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Pending

completion of any study, the Committee also recommends against application of the standardized funding model to start-up of new missions.

#### *Predefined modules and service packages (modularization)*

Concerning predefined modules and service packages, the Advisory Committee was informed that a five-year modularization plan in three phases had been developed in close consultation with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and field missions. While noting effort made to present information on the implementation of the first module for a 200-person camp and a set of performance indicators for the modularization pillar, the Committee stresses the need for further refinement of the performance management framework and collection of accurate and reliable data for baselines and performance measures. It also notes that the progress report does not reflect the full costs related to the modularization programme and requests that the Secretary-General provide, in the next progress report, a comprehensive analysis of costs and benefits of the various projects implemented under the modularization pillar, including the cost of materials and equipment sourced from existing SDS inventories to produce the modular camps.

#### *Global Service Centre*

As regards the re-profiling of UNLB as the Global Service Centre, the Advisory Committee reiterates its earlier recommendations that the Secretary-General should provide a comprehensive plan and end-state vision of the Global Service Centre, as well as information on the envisaged organizational structure and staffing of the Department of Field Support at the end of the re-profiling process, including clarification of the division of roles between Headquarters, the Global Service Centre, the Regional Service Centre and field missions. The Committee also requests that the Secretary-General provide information on the criteria for determining the optimal location from which functions and services could be provided, with details on expected improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery through the relocation of functions.

The Secretary-General states that the Global Service Centre is a unified concept that would be deployed in two locations: Brindisi, Italy for the service expertise in the delivery of logistics and ICT services; and Valencia, Spain for service expertise in the areas of field personnel management, budget and finance. The Advisory Committee considers that, notwithstanding the evolutionary nature of the global field support strategy, the proposed modified concept for the deployment of the Global Service Centre in two geographically distinct locations constitutes a major change from the initial proposals for the global field support strategy, with potentially significant organizational and financial implications. It finds information in the progress report insufficient to allow for a fully considered and informed decision on the merits of such a proposal and considers that any shift in the concept of the Centre should be based on in-depth analysis of the requirement for a new site and a thorough cost-benefit analysis, including consideration of other alternative options.

The Committee also points out that, subsequent to its approval of the Secretary-General's proposal to host a secondary active telecommunications facility at Valencia to support

peacekeeping activities, (resolution 63/262 of 24 December 2008) the General Assembly has not taken any other action on that facility. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that, absent the requisite policy decision by the Assembly, it is premature for the Secretary-General to present proposals for deployment of resources to the Global Service Centre based on a concept of two locations.

Concerning the Secretary-General's proposal to transfer additional four functions from the Logistics Support Division at Headquarters to the Global Service Centre, the Advisory Committee recognizes the merits of integrating logistics functions and providing centralized services to field missions in areas such as strategic deployment stocks, centralized warehousing and global asset and material management. It is therefore recommending approval of the proposed transfer of four functions from the Logistics Support Division, together with the related 23 posts and positions.

As regards field personnel management, the Committee is recommending against the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Field Human Resources Management Section in Valencia and the relocation from Brindisi to Valencia of the Field Central Review Board Unit, the Reference Verification Unit, and the Education Grant Unit and the associated 13 posts. It is also recommending against the transfer of the Roster Management Unit with 27 related posts and positions from Headquarters to the Global Service Centre. The Committee is of the view that further analysis is required to determine whether the roster management function meets the Secretary-General's criteria for the relocation of functions to the Global Service Centre.

An update on the status of the transfer of four functions and 8 related posts approved for transfer from Headquarters to the Global Service Centre effective 1 July 2011 (General Assembly resolution 65/289) is provided in the Advisory Committee's report on the 2012/13 proposed budget for UNLB (A/66/718/Add.15).

### *Regional Service Centre at Entebbe*

With regard the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, the Advisory Committee notes the efforts made to report on performance and realization of savings through the implementation of the four pilot projects of the first phase. However, it has pointed to the need for further improvement in the presentation of the performance data and formulation of the performance indicators, as well as for a clear demonstration of the cause and effect relationships between the measures undertaken and the resulting benefits/savings. In addition, given that this is the first time the Secretary-General is reporting on the performance of the Regional Service Centre, the Advisory Committee would have expected information on the experience acquired with the establishment of the Centre and the lessons learned, in particular on such relocation of posts and functions from peacekeeping operations to the Centre, and how the relocation had led, or should lead, to achievement of economies of scale and/or improved quality of service.

With regard to Phase II of the Centre, the Advisory Committee notes that implementation was initiated on 1 July 2011 and is ongoing, focused on the transfer of 160 new posts from the client missions to the Centre to perform financial and human resources management functions. The Committee also notes the Secretary-General's intention to re-engineer the related processes,

practices and systems, and to align them with Umoja. The Committee expects that the re-engineering of functions will result in streamlined processes, productivity gains and cost-efficiencies, including a greater reduction in the number of posts dedicated to the provision of administrative and finance functions. The Committee also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a high quality in service delivery, as well as responsiveness to the needs of the military, police and civilian components of field missions.

Concerning the 2012/13 period, the Advisory Committee notes that the proposed share of the estimated resource requirements for the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe provided in the budgets of individual missions amounts to \$28.6 million, some \$870,000 less than the amount of \$29.5 million reflected in the addendum to the progress report. The variance reflects the combined effect of an increase of \$1.3 million under civilian personnel for UNMISS, offset in part by a decrease of \$444,000 under operational costs. The Committee was informed that the estimates reflected in the addendum had been revised subsequent to the finalization of the proposed 2012/13 budgets of the client missions to reflect the most accurate information available. This situation illustrates the timing issues discussed earlier, and the Committee emphasizes once again the need to improve the reporting process.

Given that the staffing of the Regional Service Centre is to be achieved through redeployments from field missions, and that an average deployment rate of 36 per cent is projected for the current period for all categories of personnel, the Advisory Committee recommends that the resources provided by participating missions in 2012/13 for civilian personnel assigned to the Centre should not exceed the amounts presented in their respective budgets. Furthermore, taking into account the Secretary-General's statement that the operational costs reflected in the addendum to the progress report reflect the most accurate information available, the Committee also recommends that the requirements for operational costs in the 2012/13 proposed budgets of the participating missions should be aligned with the amounts indicated in the addendum to the progress report, and reduced accordingly.

Due to timing issues, the Advisory Committee's reports on the 2012/13 proposed budgets of the participating missions were finalised before the present report, and do not therefore reflect its recommendation in the context of the Regional Service Centre. The Committee recommends that updated totals for the 2012/13 budget proposals for MONUSCO, UNAMID, UNMISS, UNISFA and UNSOA be provided to this Committee at the time of its consideration of the budgets of these missions.

### *New Regional Service Centres*

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion,

The Secretary-General is requesting that the General Assembly endorse the concept of regional service centres to serve missions in West Africa and the Middle East. The Advisory Committee considers that proposals for the establishment of additional regional service centres must be based on a thorough evaluation of the requirement for such centres. Should the Secretary-General decide to bring forward proposals for new service centres for consideration by the General

Assembly, he should submit a well justified study clarifying the rationale for the establishment of such centres, with alternative options and their related costs and benefits, as well details on the site selection criteria and the factors taken into account in the recommended site choices.

The Secretary-General should also provide a comparative analysis vis-à-vis the existing arrangements for inter-mission cooperation in West Africa and in the Middle East. He should also assess whether the model of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, which serves several large and complex missions, is applicable to missions in other regions with different profiles and operating environments, and, in particular, whether it is well suited to meet the requirements of the missions in West Africa or the Middle East.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.