



THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Check against delivery

S T A T E M E N T

by

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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Controller B. Tucci Bartsiotas, for introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 under agenda item 158. I would also like to thank the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for presenting this body's related report.

At the outset, let me reiterate that the Republic of Serbia strongly supports the important role of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and Metohija and its active engagement in creating conditions for peaceful life together of the residents of the Province, security of all local communities and the respect of their human rights. Its status-neutral approach remains the only acceptable framework within which all of us can work together in order to improve the lives of ordinary people in Kosovo and Metohija. My country firmly believes that the presence of the United Nations Mission is of paramount importance for stability in the Province and for the creation of conditions that should lead to a lasting and sustainable solution of the question of Kosovo and Metohija.

In his report related to UNMIK budget proposal, the Secretary-General clearly emphasizes that the strategic objective of the Mission remains to strengthen and consolidate peace, security and stability in Kosovo and the region, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) (doc. A/69/729, paragraph 6). Furthermore, Serbia attaches great importance and fully supports the objective noted in the Report that UNMIK will continue to contribute, by providing technical assistance and support, to the implementation of the political and technical agreements reached between Belgrade and Pristina in the framework of the European Union-facilitated dialogue, in particular the "First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations" of 19 April 2013. In that regard, it is of particular importance to us that UNMIK will have an active role in the establishment of the Community of Serbian Municipalities, return of internally displaced persons, determination of the faith of missing persons, protection and preservation of cultural and religious heritage sites, monitoring of the situation in the special protective zones and the facilitation, whenever necessary and by agreement, of Kosovo's participation in international meetings.

Mr. Chairman,

To accomplish these goals and objectives, UNMIK needs adequate staffing and financing. As the sufficient number of personnel is the key precondition for successful implementation of the UNMIK mandate, the tendency of downsizing the Mission and reducing the number of international personnel, in the substantive, as well as the support component, has been the concern of my country over years. We have always been of the opinion that, with a smaller number of personnel, the Mission can hardly carry out the tasks envisaged in its mandate. Let me stress once again the fact that successful implementation of the Mission's mandate is of paramount importance for all concerned, primarily the Serbian and non-Albanian population in Kosovo and Metohija, whose rights continue to be violated and whose freedom of movement and security are threatened. Therefore, although we do understand that the scope and deployment of the UN peacekeeping missions are conditioned by financial restrictions, we consider that UNMIK's staff should not be downsized and that its

activities should be reinforced. While my country expresses satisfaction that the proposed UNMIK budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 does not project any reduction of international substantive posts within the Mission, we note, at the same time, that their number will not be increased, either.

The Republic of Serbia regrets that, the second budgetary year in a row, the P-4 post of Conduct and Discipline Officer within the Mission's support component, has been proposed for abolishment by the Secretary-General (A/68/701, paragraph 62 and A/69/729, paragraph 48). The proposal to abolish the P-4 post of Conduct and Discipline Officer in the Conduct and Discipline Team cannot be justified either by the fact that the declining number of personnel in the Mission results in a decreased need for prevention-related activities and a reduced caseload of allegations of misconduct to be handled by the Team or by an explanation that support for the exercise of the Mission's conduct and discipline functions can be ensured through designation of a focal point within UNMIK. We also raise doubt that case-handling and misconduct prevention functions for UNMIK could be handled effectively and in a timely manner from a non-Mission location. In this context, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, too, does not concur with this proposal and has recommended against the proposed abolishment of the P-4 post of Conduct and Discipline Officer.

The Republic of Serbia welcomes the fact that the proposed budget includes a provision of \$414,000 for the implementation of 20 quick-impact projects, aimed at enhancing inter-municipal and inter-ethnic cooperation, community reconciliation and economic, social and cultural issues at the local level. We fully support and attach great importance to every effort that helps promote inter-ethnic confidence and reconciliation. However, we are of the opinion that financial resources proposed for implementation of quick-impact projects do not correspond to their ambitious aims.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me once again point out that it is of high importance for Serbia that the process of attrition of UNMIK through abolishing posts is not continued any further. We are rightly concerned that even a minor downsizing of the Mission will have a negative effect on its mandate. Equally, all the vacant posts, especially those that have been vacant for a longer period of time, should urgently be filled.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.