

Wednesday, 4 March 2015

**Agenda Item 132: Programme budget
for the biennium 2014-2015**

INTRODUCTION

**Report of the Secretary-General on
standards of accommodation for air travel (A/69/643)**

**Mr. Christian Saunders, Director
Office of the Under-Secretary-General
Department of Management**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel (A/69/643), which was prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 42/214, 45/248 A, 53/214, 63/268, 65/268 and 67/254 A and decisions 44/442 and 46/450, as well as decision 57/589, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it on a biennial basis. The present report provides information on standards of accommodation for air travel for the two-year period ended 30 June 2014 and comparative statistics for the two-year period ended 30 June 2012 as well as trend analyses for the past 10 years.

In its resolution 67/254 A, the General Assembly decided that, for official travellers below the level of Assistant Secretary-General, the standard of accommodation for air travel would be business class if a single-leg journey was 9 hours or more and would be business class for a multi-leg journey if the combined

travel time of the journey was 11 hours or more, including a maximum of 2 hours of connection time, provided that the journey to the next destination resumed within 12 hours. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to modify his administrative instructions on standards of accommodation for air travel so that the duration of a journey should be determined based on the most economical route available, provided that the total additional time of the whole journey did not exceed the most direct route by four hours.

The Assembly endorsed, subject to the provisions of its resolution 67/254 A, the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on proposals for more effective and efficient utilization of resources for air travel (A/66/739) and the report of the Advisory Committee on standards of accommodation for air travel (A/67/636). These proposals included establishing economy class as the standard of accommodation for air travel for consultants and individual contractors, unless determined otherwise by the Secretary-General, taking into account the circumstances of the traveller (e.g. health reasons) and the interests of the Organization.

In August 2013, the Under-Secretary-General for Management promulgated a new administrative instruction on official travel (ST/AI/2013/3), which incorporated the decisions of the Assembly. The new administrative instruction also included a change to the travel entitlement of non-United Nations officials travelling on behalf of the Organization, with the exception of those explicitly excluded from the new policy in accordance with section VI, paragraph 20, of Assembly resolution 67/254 A.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, noted the increasing frequency and costs of exceptions to the standards of accommodation for air travel and requested the Secretary-General to take action to limit the use of exceptions and to conduct an analysis of the trends in the use of exceptions. Detailed analyses and explanations of movements in the number of the exceptions and the related additional costs for the different categories are provided in sections II, III and IV of the report of the Secretary-General.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-ninth session on the implementation of all the recommendations contained in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the comprehensive audit of all air travel activities and related practices (A/67/695). It also requested the Secretary-General: (a) to include, in his report on the standards of accommodation for air travel to be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, an analysis of the impact of the implementation of its decision to reduce the provision for determining the travel-related lump-sum payment from 75 per cent to 70 per cent of the least restrictive economy class airfare; and (b) to make further proposals on modifying the lump-sum scheme.

Matters pertaining to the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 67/254 A relating to implementation of OIOS recommendations and the reduction in the percentage rate of lump-sum payments are covered in annex XXII of the report of the Secretary-General. Given the short period that has elapsed since its introduction, the Secretary-General proposes maintaining the lump-sum provision at 70 per cent of the least restrictive economy class fare until the first part of the resumed seventieth session of the General Assembly, when a proposal based on the additional experience gained and an analysis thereof will be submitted.

Mr. Chairman, the Administration is ready to answer any questions from the distinguished Delegates, in respect of the report of the Secretary-General, during the informal consultations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.