

UNITED NATIONS



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Agenda Item 148

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

- **Support account for peacekeeping operations**

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by

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Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to introduce the performance of the support account for peacekeeping operations for 2013/14 (A/69/653 and Add.1), and the proposed budget for 2015/16 (A/69/750). I will highlight a number of overall issues; first about the budget performance and then about the proposed budget.

The General Assembly approved \$327.4 million for the support account for the 2013/14 period, including \$18.7 million for the financing of the enterprise resource planning project UMOJA. Actual expenditure was \$315 million – a budget implementation rate of 96.2 per cent – resulting in an unencumbered balance of \$12.4 million. Of these \$12 million, \$8 million reflect under-expenditure in posts due to vacancies and lower common staff costs. The remaining \$4 million reflect under-expenditure in consultants and general temporary assistance.

With these resources, we were able to backstop peacekeeping operations effectively and support implementation of number of Security Council decisions that had a large impact on operations. Let me give an example of the results achieved through the support account:

- Backstopping the establishment of MINUSCA;
- continuation of the Force Intervention Brigade in MONUSCO;
- further protection of civilians in UNMISS.

Two major events that affected all peacekeeping missions and required intense backstopping support were:

- Umoja Foundation solution that went live for its pilot in UNIFIL; and
- the IPSAS compliant financial statements which were prepared for all active and closed peacekeeping missions, and which received an unqualified opinion from the External Auditor.

Details of all of these are provided in Section III B of the report.

Mr. Chairman,

At the beginning of every budget preparation of the Support Account, the Secretariat carefully reviews the number, size and complexity of peacekeeping missions and related overall level of the support needed to backstop these peacekeeping missions.

The Support Account currently funds 1,458 posts and positions in 14 departments and offices mainly located in New York.

(Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, Department of Management, Office of Internal Oversight Services, Executive Office of the SG, Office of Staff Legal Assistance, Office of the UN Ombudsman and Mediation Services, Ethics Office, Office of Legal Affairs, Department of Public Information, Department of Safety and Security, UN Office to the African Union Secretariat of the ACABQ, and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.)

As in previous years, all posts were fully reviewed to take into account the distribution of workload, responsibilities and functions carried out by Secretariat Departments and Offices, and any changes in the operational requirements of peacekeeping have been included in the document under consideration.

The financial resources required for the support account for 2015/16 are estimated at \$338 million, an increase of \$12 million or 3.7 per cent compared to 2014/15. The combined budget of the support account and the UN Logistical Base (excluding ERP costs), represent less than 5 percent (4.6%) of the total peacekeeping budget, and it remains at the same level as in 2014/15. Further details are presented on page 11 of the report, but allow me to highlight some of the major variances.

- In response to the view expressed by the Advisory Committee, a thorough review was conducted on the long-term nature of the temporary assistance. You will find a proposal to regularize 45 temporary positions which have been continuously approved by the General Assembly for at least 4 years or whose functions have been identified as being of a continuing nature.
- Some of the cost of information technology with projects in peacekeeping missions have been apportioned to mission budgets, resulting in a corresponding decrease in the Support Account.

Staff costs represent more than 75 per cent of the total resources in the support account. The determination of the vacancy rate is therefore key to the accuracy of the budget. Most of the posts are located at Headquarters, and therefore susceptible to similar vacancy patterns for continuing, new and temporary posts. Therefore a vacancy rate of 12 per cent has been used for Professional posts and 6 per cent for General Service posts, regardless of whether they are continuing, new or temporary. The most up to date vacancy rates are provided in the supplementary information package being 9.5% for established Professional and 7% for established General Service posts, 12.9% for Temporary Professionals and 18.5% for temporary General Service positions.

Under non-post resources, I would like to highlight the increased requirements for After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) in the amount of \$0.8 million as compared to the 2014/2015 financial period. This is mainly due to the increase in the cost of health insurance for retired peacekeeping staff and a projected increase in membership by 1.6% per year.

Mr. Chairman,

The support account enables the Secretariat to provide robust and efficient backstopping of peacekeeping operations, especially in a time of new threats and rapidly changing realities on the ground. The Departments and Offices funded by the Support Account provide a wide range of critical services to peacekeeping operations. These activities are of a centralized nature, and therefore ensure standardization, strong internal controls and consistent application of policies and procedures. In other words, the functions funded by the support account ensure that mandates are carried out, and that Member States' resources for peacekeeping are used in the most efficient and effective manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

I look forward to the discussions on this item.

Thank you.