

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)

14 May 2015

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, financing for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July to 30 June 2016 of the support account for peacekeeping operations

(ACABQ report: A/69/860; related reports: A/69/653 and Add.1, and A/69/750)

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report (A/69/860) on the support account for peacekeeping operations. Allow me to highlight a few points contained in the report of the Committee.

With respect to the proposed budget for the support account for 2015/16, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would entail a reduction of \$3,245,800 to the proposals of the Secretary-General contained in document A/69/750. The recommendations of the Committee are explained in section VI of its report (A/69/860).

The Advisory Committee considers that, given the different funding arrangements and operational mandates of the peacekeeping entities, as well as the variations in presentation, it has become a challenge to present clear, comprehensive and comparable summary data on the financial and human resources dedicated to peacekeeping. The Committee encourages the Secretary-General devise a more suitable way to present such data.

As for the level of resources proposed for 2015/16 under the support account, the Advisory Committee notes the increase in the number of proposed posts and positions even as the number of uniformed and civilian personnel in peacekeeping missions are projected to decrease. The total number of posts and positions under the support account and UNLB would increase from 1,882 for 2014/15 to 1,919 for 2015/16, against decreases of both uniformed personnel (127,138 to 120,684) and civilian staff (22,542 to 21,475) of peacekeeping operations for the same period. Similarly, the Committee notes the proposed increase in the total number of posts proposed at the D-1 and D-2 levels under the support account and UNLB from 30 and 10 for 2014/15 to 32 and 9 for 2015/16, respectively. In this regard, the Committee recalls that the General Assembly has repeatedly emphasized that the support account should correspond to the mandate and size of peacekeeping operations.

The Advisory Committee notes that uniform vacancy rates have been applied to the 2015/16 estimates for both new and continuing posts and positions, in order to align the budgetary process for the support account with that of the regular budget, resulting in a combined \$1.1 million increase in these resource categories. The Committee recommends against this departure from the established practice of applying higher vacancy rates to new posts and positions, which more accurately reflects the time taken to fill them.

Mr. Chairman,

For 2015/16, some costs for the development of IT applications and for the supply chain management initiative, which were previously budgeted under the support account, have been included in the budgets of peacekeeping missions. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the Secretary-General has not properly justified this cost apportionment, given the understanding that projects still under development should be budgeted under the support account. Therefore, the Committee recommends that these costs be re-included in the support account and the budgets of the respective peacekeeping missions be adjusted accordingly.

Coming to general temporary assistance, the Advisory Committee notes that 45 temporary positions, which have been deemed to be of a continuing nature, have been proposed for conversion to posts. However, the Committee notes a lack of coherence in the criteria for proposing the conversions. As for the provision for temporary assistance to cover leave replacement, the Committee is of the view that the proposals for 2015/16 are not supported by recent trends and therefore recommends that the resources under this category be maintained at 2014/15 levels.

The Advisory Committee acknowledges the efforts made to reduce the resources under consultants and encourages the Secretary-General to continue reducing the dependence on consultants while building in-house capacity. With regard to the proposed increase in resources for official travel, the Committee is of the view that insufficient attention has been given to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/254 on the standards of air travel, particularly the 16-day advance booking of tickets, and other cost saving measures. The Committee therefore recommends an overall 10 per cent reduction in the resources proposed for official travel.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn to the 2013/14 financial period. The Advisory Committee requests the Assembly to reduce the appropriation of \$327,425,800 by the amount of \$2,273,100, to the amount of \$325,152,700, equal to the amount assessed on Member States. The Committee also recommends that the General Assembly decide to apply the unencumbered balance of \$10,143,700 with respect to the 2013/14 period to the support account requirements for 2015/16.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.