

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

25 November 2015

**Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions on operational arrangements and conditions of service of the
Advisory Committee**

(Report A/70/544, Part one)

Mr Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the report on the operational arrangements and conditions of service of the Advisory Committee, contained in Part one of document A/70/544, which was requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/274A. I submit this under my authority as Chair of the Advisory Committee and as the designated representative of the Committee.

Mr Chairman,

The matter of the Committee's existing operational arrangements first arose three years ago. In subsequent comments and observations, the Secretary-General indicated that the workload of the Committee had progressively increased since its establishment, reflecting changes in the scope and volume of work of the Organization. He also pointed out the potential benefits of establishing the Committee as a standing full-time Committee. In this connection, the Secretary-General proposed that the General Assembly consider establishing the annual net compensation for members other than the Chair at the level equivalent to those of UN staff members at the D-2 level, step IV.

The Assembly, in its resolution, recognized the increasing workload and complexity of issues coming before the Committee and considered that its current operational arrangements should be improved. It also acknowledged the importance of the need for the Committee's functions to be performed in full independence and for the Committee to provide the technical expertise required for its deliberations. The Assembly therefore requested the Committee to formulate recommendations for improving its current conditions of service and to propose measures to strengthen the efficiency of its working practices, including through the establishment of a code of conduct.

Mr. Chairman,

In my report, I point out that the payment of travel and daily subsistence allowance to those members on travel status, as if they were temporarily based in New York, is not suited to the current operational requirements, which now requires full-time presence in New York. In line with the conditions of service currently in place for the Chair of the ACABQ and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ICSC, I support the view that the remuneration level for Committee members should be governed by a scale separate and distinct from that governing the remuneration of UN staff members, while reflecting the principle of general equivalency. The General Assembly may wish to consider establishing the annual net remuneration of the members within a range equivalent to the levels below that at which the salary of the Chair of the ACABQ has been pegged. I am also of the view that it would be beneficial for all members of the Committee to be on an equal footing in terms of their remuneration and related legal status. They would therefore be accorded those privileges, immunities and facilities accorded to diplomatic envoys, in accordance with international law.

Mr. Chairman,

As far as the Committee's working practices are concerned, some of the efficiency measures recently introduced are outlined in the report, including efforts to improve the timeliness of documentation. I also point out that although the proposals envisage the establishment of the Committee as a full-time standing body, the Committee intends to limit its meeting servicing requirements to the current biennial allocation of 78 weeks. In addition, a draft code of conduct has been formulated to supplement the regulations and duties already applicable to non-Secretariat United Nations officials and is contained in Annex II of the first part of the report. The General Assembly may also wish to consider introducing some "stand-down" provisions that would prescribe a minimum lapse of time between the end of a member's term on the Committee and any possible candidacy for a vacant position or consultancy assignment with the UN Secretariat.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, to ensure a smooth and workable transition to the new set of operational arrangements, the introduction of a transitional regime is envisaged under which current Committee members would have the option to serve out their present terms of office under the existing conditions applicable to each of them, should they so wish.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman