

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

19 November 2015

Seventh progress report on the enterprise resource planning project

(ACABQ report A/70/7/Add.19, related report A/70/369)

Mr Chairman,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on the seventh progress report on the ERP project contained in document A/70/7/Add.19

The Advisory Committee notes that the Umoja Integration solution was deployed in cluster 3 entities in June 2015, and that deployment to cluster 4 entities is underway, in accordance with the target dates set out in the sixth progress report. The Committee welcomes the achievement of an important milestone in the implementation of an ERP solution at the United Nations.

Notwithstanding that achievement, the Advisory Committee is concerned that the significant problems encountered during the implementation of Umoja Integration to cluster 3 and cluster 4 entities may have an impact on the project's plans and the cost projections. The Committee notes that the Secretary-General's proposals for the next phases of the project will be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly at the first resumed part of its seventieth session.

In its current report the Committee has commented and made recommendations on 4 main issues.

First, the Advisory Committee reiterates its view regarding the need for implementation of the full scope of the project as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/246. This includes, in particular, Umoja Extension 2 which comprises 133 processes for budget formulation, supply chain management, grant management, programme management, force management and conference and event management. The Committee stresses that it is for the General Assembly to decide on the course of action it may wish to take regarding the implementation of the Umoja Extension 2 solution, and that the Secretary-General should be requested to submit proposals for the implementation of the full scope of the Umoja solution for consideration by the General Assembly.

Second, with regard to the Umoja mainstreaming plan, the Advisory Committee notes that Umoja has now shifted from the project phase to a live production system with ongoing preparations, in parallel, for the design and development of new functionalities. The Committee emphasizes the need for transition plans pending transfer of responsibility to the CITO, planned for January 2017 under the current mainstreaming plan. In this regard, the Advisory Committee is of the view that it is essential that the Umoja Integration solution is maintained and updated centrally in a well-coordinated manner for the entire Secretariat, and that effective controls are in place to avoid establishment of ad-hoc departmental groups/teams for supporting, maintaining, upgrading, or further enhancing the Umoja Integration solution. The Advisory Committee recommends that in the future, any major proposals related to Umoja maintenance, upgrade and enhancements be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly in a consolidated manner in the context of the Umoja progress reports, after central review.

Third, with regard to the preparation of benefits realization plans, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that further delays are avoided, and to include information on the plans in his next progress report.

Fourth, with regard to project staffing, the Advisory Committee is concerned by the information provided to it regarding the on-going loss of skilled personnel. Given that the lack of availability of such skills poses one of the highest risks to the successful completion of the project, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to develop and submit in his forthcoming report, a detailed action plan for ensuring that the knowledge base acquired is maintained within the Organization. Pending consideration of that action plan by the General Assembly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorise the Secretary-General, as an exceptional, temporary measure, to postpone the downsizing of the Umoja project team planned for 2016.

In addition, the Committee has reiterated, once again, the need to provide the General Assembly with information on the indirect costs of preparatory activities borne by the implementing offices. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that, for the next phases of the project, a detailed accounting of such indirect costs is maintained, and that fully transparent information on those costs is provided to the Assembly in the Secretary-General's future progress reports on Umoja.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.