

Statement of the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

16 November 2016

Revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 70/290, entitled “High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants”

(ACABQ report: A/71/597; Secretary-General’s report: A/71/345)

**Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council
Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General**

(ACABQ report A/71/595/Add.1 related report A/71/365/Add.1)

**Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council
Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels**

(ACABQ report A/71/595/Add.2 related report A/71/365/Add. 2)

Report on the use of the commitment authority and request for a subvention to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone

(ACABQ report: A/71/613; Secretary-General’s report: A/71/386)

Madam Chairperson,

With regard to the report on the revised estimates resulting from the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 70/290, regarding the High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, the Secretary-General seeks the Assembly’s approval of an additional appropriation in the amount of \$305,000.

In view of the concerns raised by the Committee relating to the cost estimates and the costing methodology as well as the fact that it was not possible to report on the actual expenditure for the activities undertaken, the Committee is recommending that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to absorb the additional requirements in the amount of \$305,000 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

On a separate matter, the Committee notes that rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly was not observed and that, in light of the availability of standard cost parameters for meeting servicing, information on the cost of meeting services could have been made available to the General Assembly in a more timely manner.

Madam Chairperson,

I now turn to special political missions , Thematic cluster I, the Advisory Committee is recommending adjustments to the staffing proposals of two missions.

As regards the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, the Advisory Committee recommends against approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for the establishment of one P-3 Political Affairs Officer position and one Administrative Assistant Field Service position. In view of the fluid nature of the on-going negotiation process and the need for specialized expertise, the Committee considers that the Office should continue with the current arrangements and recruit temporary staff as and when required, rather than establish new positions. The Committee trusts that the Office will also take full advantage of existing arrangements with UNFICYP to obtain additional support, as required.

As regards the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, the Advisory Committee is recommending against approval of 4 of the 58 positions proposed. The positions in question are proposed for planning, finance and human resources functions in Geneva and New York.

In addition, the Advisory Committee recommends against approval of the redeployment of two Local level positions from Mission Support in Damascus to the Kuwait Joint Support Office. It considers that the utilization of the Kuwait Joint Support Office needs to be revisited in light of the Secretariat-wide deployment of Umoja and the future global service delivery model.

In view of the current vacancy situation, and recognizing that the extraordinary operational and security challenges faced by the Office have an impact on the pace of recruitment, the Advisory Committee recommends that vacancy rates of 60 and 40 per cent respectively be applied in estimating the requirements of the new international and national staff positions proposed for 2017.

Madam Chairperson,

Concerning, Cluster II, the Advisory Committee is recommending adjustments to the proposed vacancy rates for two missions.

First, as regards the Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231, the Advisory Committee considers the proposed vacancy rate of zero per cent for international positions in 2017 to be unrealistic, given that an actual vacancy rate of 58 per cent is projected for 2016. The Committee therefore recommends that the 2017 requirements for international positions be estimated on the basis of a vacancy factor of 30 per cent.

Secondly, for the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), the Advisory Committee recommends application of a vacancy rate of 10 per cent for international positions in 2017 instead of the proposed zero per cent. The projected actual average vacancy rate for international positions in 2016 is 22 per cent.

Madam Chairperson,

With regard to the report (A/71/613) on the use of the commitment authority and request for a subvention to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The report of the Secretary-General contains an estimated budget for 2017 and a request for a subvention for the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone in the amount of \$2.9 million which represents the full 2017 budget, given that no voluntary contributions are anticipated. The Secretary-General's report also contains information on the use in 2016 of the commitment authority authorised by the General Assembly.

With regard to the financial position of the Court in 2016, the Advisory Committee notes that expenditures totalling \$1.4 million are expected for 2016 against the authorized commitment authority of \$2.4 million.

The Committee is of the view that a decision to appropriate the entire amount of the budget of the international component for 2017 would undermine the voluntary nature of the current funding arrangements and related fundraising efforts. However, given the current funding challenges faced by the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone and the need to ensure stable funding for the Court, the Advisory Committee recommends an authority to spend not to exceed \$2.8 million to supplement any voluntary financial resources of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The Advisory Committee recalls that, in accordance with article 3 of the Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone on the establishment of a Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, the expenses of the Court shall be borne by voluntary contributions from the international community.

The Advisory Committee notes that a sustainable long-term financing solution for the Court is needed in view of the nature of its activities in the years to come.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson