

Statement of the Chairman
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

5 May 2017

Budget performance report from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 and proposed budget from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)

(ACABQ report A/71/836/Add.13; related reports: A/71/624, A/71/767)

Budget performance report of the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (UNOCI)

(ACABQ report A/71/886, related reports A/71/732)

Budget performance for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 for the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA) and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 for the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS)

(ACABQ report A/71/836/Add.6, related reports A/71/630 and A/71/788)

Madam Chairperson,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's reports on UNISFA, UNOCI and UNSOA and UNSOS.

With respect to UNISFA, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would entail a reduction of \$3,618,400 to the Secretary-General's proposal contained in the report on UNISFA for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (A/71/767). The recommendations of the Committee include reductions related to: the proposed reassignment of posts; conversions of positions funded under General Temporary Assistance; construction projects; external consultants; and official travel. The Committee also noted that the mission's estimated vehicle holdings are above the standard ratios, and recommends that the mission comply with prescribed standard vehicle ratios.

Madam Chairperson,

Turning now to UNOCI, the Advisory Committee notes an 88 per cent budget implementation rate. The Committee also notes instances of incorrect recording of expenditures, which hindered a proper comparison and analysis of expenditure patterns. Finally, the Committee requested but did not receive sufficient information on the reasons for the 22 per cent overexpenditure under national staff.

Madam Chairperson,

Regarding the 2015/16 performance period, the Advisory Committee noted the potential sale of assets of approximately \$7 million and the projected unencumbered balance of \$3.2 million and was not convinced of the need for the Operation to retain the unencumbered balance of approximately \$48.7 million and other income in the amount of \$16.5 million, as requested in the Secretary-General's report. Instead, the Advisory Committee recommends that these amounts, which total \$65.2 million, be credited to Member States in full and without delay.

Madam Chairperson,

Lastly, I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on UNSOS.

On the proposed budget for 2017/2018, the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of \$40.4 million to the proposal of the Secretary-General.

Under the provisions for military and police personnel, the Advisory Committee notes further increases of \$18.7 million and \$7.4 million for 2017/18, respectively, proposed for reimbursement for self-sustainment and under the ration contract amended during the 2015/16 period. The Committee is concerned that the information provided on the resource increases lacks clarity and justification, and is inconsistent in a number of cases.

Concerning the redeployment and reassignment of 154 posts and positions proposed for 2017/18 (112 for redeployment and 42 for reassignment), the Advisory Committee recalls that UNSOS conducted a comprehensive staffing review during 2015/16 and a reorganization during 2016/17. The General Assembly also approved 112 new posts and positions for 2016/17 for the Office. Recognizing the challenging environment in which UNSOS operates and the need of the Office to adjust to operational requirements, the Committee recommends approval of the proposed redeployment of 112 posts and positions. However, the Committee is not convinced by the reasons provided for the reassignment of the 42 posts and positions and recommends against the proposed reassignments. As the current functions of the 42 posts and positions are no longer required, the Committee recommends the abolishment of the posts and positions.

The Committee has again commented on UNSOS's long-standing dependency on consultants and individual contractors, in conjunction with its significantly strengthened staffing component. The Committee notes the significant increase in the number of consultants to be engaged by UNSOS for 2017/18. The Committee has also commented on the lack of clarity concerning the respective functions and locations of staff, consultants and individual contractors.

The Advisory Committee has made other observations and recommendations under operational costs, including air operations and medical services. Noting that the actual number of passengers per flight was significantly lower during 2016, the Committee questions the need for UNSOS to change to a new fixed-wing aircraft with higher seating capacity, leading to increased resource requirements.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.