

Statement by the Chairman

Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

8 May 2019

**Observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues
related to United Nations peacekeeping operations**

(ACABQ report A/73/755; Related report: A/73/776)

Madam Chair,

I am pleased to introduce the Advisory Committee's report on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations (A/73/755).

In this report, the Committee provides an analysis of the overall trends in the financing and resource requirements for peacekeeping operations. In addition, the Committee makes observations and recommendations concerning: planning, budgeting and financial management; delivery of support to missions; and several other cross-cutting matters.

The Committee continues the practice of including its observations on the latest report of the Board of Auditors on peacekeeping operations in the context of this report. Specifically, the Committee comments on the Board's observations relating to asset management, cases of fraud and presumptive fraud, and cost recovery and disclosure of costs for services provided by peacekeeping missions to each other and/or to external clients. The Committee stresses that every effort should be made to improve the rate and timeliness of the implementation of the accepted recommendations of the Board. Certain

matters included in the latest report of the Board are considered by the Committee to be policy matters under the purview of the Member States.

Madam Chair,

For 2019/20, the resource requirements proposed by the Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations amount to \$6.64 billion, representing a decrease of \$382 million, or 5.4 per cent when compared to the approved resources for 2018/19. The Advisory Committee notes that the overall resource level has been decreasing every year since 2014/15 along with the number of uniformed personnel, while the number of civilian personnel has progressively decreased each year since 2012/13.

The Committee points out that while the proposed budgetary level for the 12 peacekeeping missions plus UNSOS represents an overall decrease of \$425.3 million or 6.5 per cent compared with the apportionment for 2018/19, the proposed requirements for the support elements (UNLB, RSCE and the support account) are estimated to increase by \$43.1 million or 6.9 per cent over the same period. The Committee also considers that further efforts should be made to provide a comparable baseline to facilitate a comparative assessment of trends in resource requirements over time, given the recent pattern of increased requests to enter into financial commitments in addition to the mission resource levels initially approved by the Assembly.

In connection with the delivery of support, the Committee notes with concern the persistent increases in the support ratios since 2014/15 and the absence of adequate analysis in the overview report and recommends that the General Assembly request the

Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive analysis thereon. The Committee also reiterates its view that the implementation of various efficiency initiatives should now be having a positive impact on the support ratios.

As regards the support structures in peacekeeping missions, the Committee notes that multiple restructuring exercises of the support components in missions have been undertaken in recent years and considers that there is a need for a period of stabilization and an assessment of the effectiveness of the reorganized structures.

On the implementation of a supply chain management initiative, the Committee notes that no detail pertaining to the costs and benefits of this initiative have been provided and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to carry out such an analysis.

Madam Chair,

The comments of the Advisory Committee on other cross-cutting matters include a number of observations with respect to programmatic activities; the deployment, use and oversight of unmanned aerial systems; and issues arising in missions that are downsizing, closing or transitioning.

On programmatic activities, the Committee notes that the report continues to lack detailed information relating to the scope of activities included in peacekeeping mission budget proposals and the criteria for their inclusion and recommends that the Secretary-General provides detailed information in future overview reports on these matters, as well as on the contractual arrangements in place with implementing partners.

Regarding unmanned aerial systems deployed in peacekeeping missions, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide more detailed information on the lessons learned from their deployment, the rationale and justification for their inclusion in the mission budgets, along with measures to improve utilization.

Finally, Madam Chair,

With respect to closing or transitioning missions, the Advisory Committee trusts that the lessons learned from the closure of three different peacekeeping missions since 2017 will be fully integrated into the upcoming transition processes for MINUJUSTH and UNAMID, including risk mitigation measures to limit loss or theft of assets and the smooth-handling of staff-related issues.

Thank you, Madam Chair.