



Agenda item 154
Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations
peacekeeping operations

Budget performance of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period
from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 (A/75/656)

Budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period
from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 (A/75/785)

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by
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14 May 2021

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I have the honour to introduce the reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of the support account for peacekeeping operations, the budget performance report for 2019/20 (A/75/656) and the proposed budget for 2021/22 (A/75/785), under agenda item 154.
2. The support account encompasses 15 offices and departments throughout the United Nations Secretariat that backstop about 120,000 military, police and civilian personnel in peacekeeping operations.

2019/20 Budget Performance

Mr. Chairman,

3. The budget implementation rate was 100 per cent of the approved \$348.9 million, as in the two prior budget periods. The Secretariat continued building on key goals achieved during the 2018/19 period such as those in the areas of management and peace and security reforms, implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the new delegation of authority

framework. While the departments and offices at Headquarters provided continued backstopping support to client missions in the field, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on programme implementation, especially in areas where travel and direct interaction were required, including investigations and evaluations. Despite the challenges faced with the pandemic, innovative and proactive measures aimed at ensuring an effective response and continuity of operations were put in place. Please allow me to highlight some of these measures:

- Business continuity plans were activated across the United Nations Secretariat. To assist peacekeeping operations, a field support group has been developing solutions to enable missions to address the health crisis while delivering on their mandates. In addition, a newly established team focusing on staff well-being has been assisting staff.
- DMSPC and DOS have guided missions through unforeseen changes, including through issuing approximately 50 policy guidance documents.
- DOS conducted a COVID-19 supply chain impact analysis to guide missions with the early ordering of goods and services to mitigate the potential impacts of airspace and border closures. As a result, required medical supplies and equipment were successfully sourced and delivered.
- DMSPC introduced measures to facilitate cash movements to address banking restrictions and ensure all missions have the necessary cash.
- The Secretariat continued to support the intergovernmental processes by virtual means, which led to the successful adoption of peacekeeping financing resolutions in the 74th session of the General Assembly.

4. As in the prior financial period, an over-expenditure was recorded under staff costs, arising from lower-than-budgeted actual vacancy rates, post adjustment multiplier changes, and higher common staff costs. The overall increased requirements under post resources were offset by lower expenditures in non-post resources, mainly owing to the cost saving measures implemented, COVID-19 related travel restrictions, and unutilized resources for corporate costs under peacekeeping capability readiness. As a result of these lower expenditures, the peacekeeping share of after-service health insurance costs carried forward from the 2018/19 period in the amount of \$2.5 million was fully absorbed during the 2019/20 period within the overall approved level of resources.

2021/22 Budget Proposals

Mr. Chairman,

5. Allow me now to turn to the proposal for the 2021/22 period. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 71/295 as well as the recommendations of the Advisory Committee endorsed in the Assembly resolution 74/280, the presentation of the budget report continues to be enhanced to explain key performance results and highlight strategic and changing elements.

6. The budget report presents proposals for a total amount of \$361.7 million, including peacekeeping contributions to Secretariat-wide initiatives, reflecting an increase of \$6.0 million or 1.7 per cent compared with authorized resources for the 2020/21 period. The proposed budget provides for 1,416 posts and general temporary assistance positions, a net decrease of 6 posts and positions in respect of changes proposed by DPO and DOS, of which two DOS posts are proposed to be transferred to RSCE. 37 general temporary assistance positions, which have been undertaking continuing functions are proposed to be converted to posts. The main factors contributing to the increase in financial resource requirements for 2020/21 are presented in table 4 (page 14) of the budget report, and can be summarised as follows:

7. Proposed resources for core requirements, excluding Secretariat-wide-initiatives, are estimated at \$323.0 million, representing an increase of \$3.5 million (1.1 per cent).

(a) The increase principally results from higher staff costs by \$5.4 million, due to technical adjustments to budgetary salary parameters and application of lower average vacancy factors.

(b) Proposed post actions including the abolishment and transfer of 6 posts as well as 10 reassignments, offset in part by the conversion of 37 positions to posts, result in a reduction of \$2.0 million.

(c) A periodic provision of \$0.3 million for the second quadrennial troop cost survey is included, which represents a reduction of \$0.2 million from the approved level for the previous survey in the 2017/18 period.

(d) Under operational costs, excluding provision for the troop-cost survey, a reduction of \$0.3 million is proposed, owing primarily to a reduction in the peacekeeping share of administration of justice, a decrease in ICT provisions and a reduction in official travel, partly offset by increased requirements in facilities and infrastructure reflecting higher rates for facility costs.

8. Proposed resources for Secretariat-wide initiatives are estimated at \$38.8 million, representing an increase of \$2.6 million (7.1 per cent), compared with the approved resources for 2020/21. The increased requirements are explained in detail in pages 22-24 of the budget report, and can be summarized as follows:

- (e) Increased requirements for the peacekeeping operations' share of the enterprise resource planning project (Umoja), as noted by the General Assembly in its resolution 75/253, by \$2.4 million, mainly due to the provision in the 2021/22 period covering 12 months while the provision in the 2020/21 covered only 6 months ; and
- (f) Slightly increased requirements for the peacekeeping share of Umoja maintenance and support costs, by \$0.2 million.

9. Finally, I am pleased to draw your attention to annex II of the budget report, which includes the findings of the review of the scalability of resources in the support account since the 2014/15 period, in response to the Advisory Committee's observations contained in paragraph 10 of its report A/74/809 endorsed by General Assembly resolution 74/280.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The Secretariat is mindful of the level of the support account and proposed requirements were carefully scrutinised. The budget proposal before you for the support account reflects a reduction in resources for continuing functions, based on the general trend in the peacekeeping budget. The net increase in resource requirements is attributable mainly to changes in technical parameters and an increase in the peacekeeping share of Umoja and its maintenance and support costs, primarily due to the inclusion of a provision for 12 months compared to only 6 months in the previous budget period.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, I look forward to the discussions on this item.