



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 April 2021

Original: English

Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 155

Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2019/20	\$260,177,000
Expenditure for 2019/20	\$259,010,300
Unencumbered balance for 2019/20	\$1,166,700
Appropriation for 2020/21	\$263,783,900
Projected expenditure for 2020/21 ^a	\$253,499,400
Projected underexpenditure for 2020/21 ^a	\$10,284,500
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2021/22	\$270,472,200
Adjustment recommended by the Advisory Committee for 2021/22	(\$8,126,900)
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2021/22	\$262,345,300

^a Estimates as at 31 March 2021.



I. Introduction

1. During its consideration of the financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions met online with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 8 April 2021. The comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations are contained in its report ([A/75/822](#)), and those pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 can be found in its related report ([A/75/829](#)).

II. Budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

2. By its resolution [73/311](#), the General Assembly appropriated an amount of \$260,177,000 gross (\$257,312,300 net) for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. Expenditure for the period totalled \$259,010,300 gross (\$255,857,900 net), for a budget implementation rate of 99.6 per cent. The resulting unencumbered balance of \$1,166,700, in gross terms, represents 0.4 per cent of the overall level of resources approved for the period.

3. The unencumbered balance of \$1,166,700 reflects the effect of lower-than-budgeted expenditure under military and police personnel (\$5,173,400, or 3.8 per cent) and higher-than-budgeted expenditure under civilian personnel (\$3,735,000, or 10.3 per cent) and operational costs (\$271,700, or 0.3 per cent). Summary information on the redeployments (\$4,007,300, or 1.5 per cent) from group I to groups II and III, as a result of the reprioritization of resources, is provided in section III.B of the report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the Force for 2019/20 ([A/75/595](#)). The Advisory Committee makes a general comment on redeployments between groups in its report on cross-cutting issues in peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

Matters pertaining to the report of the Board of Auditors

4. In considering the reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of UNISFA, the Advisory Committee also had before it the report of the Board on the accounts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the financial period ended 30 June 2020 ([A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), paras. 130–133, 187–191, 199–202, 229–236 and 272 (d)). In its report, the Board had made observations and recommendations pertaining to the Force, including with regard to: (a) underperforming helicopters; (b) the management of vacancy rates and vacant posts (see paras. 21–23 below); (c) the extension of temporary positions; (d) fuel consumption and management (see para. 28 below); and (e) the lack of a standard operating procedure on weapons and ammunition management. **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and trusts that they will be implemented in a timely manner.**

III. Information on performance for the current period

5. With regard to current and projected expenditure for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 March 2021, expenditure amounted to \$191,891,300, or 72.7 per cent, of the apportionment of \$263,783,900. At the end of the financial period, the estimated total expenditure would amount to \$253,499,400, resulting in an estimated unencumbered balance of \$10,284,500.

6. The Advisory Committee was informed that claims for the reimbursement of troop costs had been settled up to September 2020, leaving an outstanding balance of \$14,567,000 as at 31 December 2020. Contingent-owned equipment had been paid up to September 2020, leaving an outstanding balance of \$9,470,000 as at 31 December 2020. With regard to death and disability compensation, as at 16 March 2021, an amount of \$2,727,612 had been paid to settle 75 claims since the inception of the Force, and there were 7 pending cases. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the outstanding claims will be settled expeditiously.**

7. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the unliquidated obligations amounted to \$61,998,000 for the 2018/2019 period, as at 30 June 2019, and to \$41,064,000 for the 2019/20 period, as at 30 June 2020.

8. The Advisory Committee was further informed that, as at 18 February 2021, a total of \$2,727,612,000 had been assessed on Member States in respect of the Force since its inception. Payments received as at the same date amounted to \$2,596,614,000, for an outstanding balance of \$130,998,000. The Committee was further informed that, as at 29 March 2021, the cash available to the Force amounted to \$72,275,000, which was sufficient to cover the three-month operating reserve of \$43,855,000. **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has repeatedly urged all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations, on time, in full and without conditions.**

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

A. Mandate and planning assumptions

9. The mandate of the Force was established by the Security Council in its resolution [1990 \(2011\)](#) and extended most recently, until 15 May 2021, in its resolution [2550 \(2020\)](#). The planning assumptions and mission support initiatives of the Force for the 2021/22 period are summarized in paragraphs 8 to 22 of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget for the Force for that period ([A/75/737](#)).

10. In its resolution [2550 \(2020\)](#), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to hold a joint consultation with the Governments of the Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia, and relevant stakeholders, to discuss the exit strategy for the Force and develop options for its responsible drawdown and exit. In addition, the Council expressed its intention to request an independent review of the Force in the context of recent political developments between and within Sudan and South Sudan and based on the outcomes of the above-mentioned joint consultation. The Secretary-General adds that this the review is expected to trace the way and the practical steps towards the responsible drawdown and exit of the mission (*ibid.*, para. 1).

B. Resource requirements

Financial resources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category	Apportionment (2019/20)	Expenditure (2019/20)	Apportionment (2020/21)	Expenditure (31 March 2021)	Cost estimates (2021/22)	Variance	
						Amount	Percentage
Military and police personnel	137 372.8	132 199.4	131 539.4	95 103.9	125 665.2	(5 874.2)	(4.5)
Civilian personnel	36 394.4	40 129.4	45 205.0	33 900.9	52 080.6	6 875.6	15.2
Operational costs	86 409.8	86 681.5	87 039.5	62 886.5	92 726.4	5 686.9	6.5
Gross requirements	260 177.0	259 010.3	263 783.9	191 891.3	270 472.2	6 688.3	2.5

11. The proposed budget in the amount of \$270,472,200 represents an increase of \$6,688,300, or 2.5 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$263,783,900 for the 2020/21 period. Information on variances between the apportionment for 2020/21 and the proposed resources for 2021/22 is contained in section III of the proposed budget ([A/75/737](#)) (see paras. 12 and 17 below).

1. Military and police personnel

Category	Authorized 2020/21 ^a	Proposed 2021/22	Variance
Military observers	225	168	(57)
Military contingent personnel	3 325	3 382	57
United Nations police officers	148	148	—
Formed police unit personnel	492	492	—

^a Represents the highest level of authorized strength.

12. The proposed resources for military and police personnel for 2021/22 amount to \$125,665,200, reflecting a decrease of \$5,874,200, or 4.5 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. The decrease reflects reductions due to the expected delays in the deployment of the three formed police units (\$8,863,500) and a decrease in the maximum strengthen of military observers (\$2,012,400). The reductions would be offset in part by increases attributable mainly to the revised strength of existing military units and to the increased compliance of the troop-contributing country with the accepted standards for major equipment serviceability and self-sustainment (\$5,099,900) (*ibid.*, paras. 59–62).

Delayed deployment factors

13. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the delayed deployment factors for military and police personnel for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 periods, as well those proposed for the 201/22 period, as follows:

(Percentage)

Category	Actual 2019/20	Approved 2020/21	Actual 28 February 2021	Actual 31 March 2021	Actual average 31 March 2021	Projected 2021/22
Military and police personnel						
Military observers	36.0	40.0	41.8	36.9	44.8	25.0
Military contingents	(3.5)	4.0	1.4	1.4	(18.4)	3.0
United Nations police	81.1	25.0	68.2	68.2	76.1	25.0
Formed police units	100.0	44.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	91.6

14. The Secretary-General indicates that the deployment of formed police units in the mission, in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2497 \(2019\)](#) and [2519 \(2020\)](#), did not take place during the reporting period, owing mainly to the non-issuance of entry visas and travel permits to the Sudan, and that the delayed deployment of the formed police units has hindered the implementation of the mandate ([A/75/595](#), para. 21). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the visa challenges affected the police component, in particular because the current low deployment rate of individual police officers is also attributable to the non-issuance of visas. **The Advisory Committee expresses concern about the high vacancy rates of UNISFA police personnel and encourages the Secretary-General to renew his efforts to improve the deployment rate of police personnel and limit its impact on the implementation of the mandate.**

15. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the projected vacancy rate of 91.6 per cent for formed police units personnel in 2021/22 reflected the budgetary planning assumption that the deployment of the three formed police units was unlikely to occur before June 2022. The Committee was also informed that, should the second and third units deploy, they would be generated from police-contributing countries located farther from the mission area than originally planned. The Committee was further informed that UNISFA was nevertheless prepared to make the necessary adjustments to its pattern of expenditure should one or all three formed police units deploy earlier than June 2022. The Force will be prepared, in terms of accommodations and camp logistics, to host them and will make all efforts to support an earlier deployment within existing resources. **The Advisory Committee trusts that all efforts will be made to remedy this situation and absorb any deployment of formed police units earlier than June 2022 within the proposed resources.**

16. **Subject to its observations above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for military and police personnel.**

2. Civilian personnel

Category	Approved 2020/21	Proposed 2021/22	Variance
Posts			
International staff	174	175	1
National Professional Officers	6	7	1
National General Service	82	83	1
Temporary positions ^a	2	2	–
United Nations Volunteers	36	36	–
Total	300	303	3

^a Funded under general temporary assistance.

17. The proposed resources for civilian personnel for 2021/22 amount to \$52,080,600, reflecting an increase of \$6,875,600, or 15.2 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. These resources would provide for 303 posts and positions, which represents an increase of 3 posts (1 P-4, 1 National Professional Officer and 1 National General Service) compared with the previous period. The Secretary-General indicates that the overall increase is attributable to the following: (a) international staff: an increase of \$6,187,500 due to an increase in the post adjustment multiplier, the proposed establishment of one international post (P-4) and the reclassification of one international post (FS-6 to P-4); (b) national staff: an increase of \$365,200, reflecting mainly increases in the salary scale and danger pay; (c) general temporary assistance: an increase of \$219,300 due mostly to the elimination of the delayed deployment factor and the application of the most recent salary scale; and (d) United Nations Volunteers: an increase of \$103,600 due to an increase in programme support costs (A/75/737, paras. 63–66). The Advisory Committee's observations on the programme support costs for United Nations Volunteers are contained in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/75/822).

Recommendations on posts and positions

Establishment

18. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of a post of Facilities Management Officer (P-4) to oversee the Facilities and Environmental Management Unit, which is responsible for the management of waste, energy supply, sewage, water and camps in the mission area. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Facilities Management Officer would ensure effective monitoring and management of facilities, the implementation of phase two of the field remote infrastructure monitoring project and other sustainable initiatives, and the identification of risks associated with facilities management operations (A/75/737, para. 42). **The Advisory Committee notes that the Environmental Management Unit, which is supported by a third-party contractor, belongs to the broader Engineering Unit comprising 35 posts. The Committee considers that the existing staffing complement of the Engineering Unit should be able to handle the requirements for facility management. Therefore, the Committee recommends against the proposed establishment of a post of Facilities Management Officer (P-4).**

Vacancy rates

19. The table below provides a summary of the vacancy rates for civilian personnel for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 periods, as well as those proposed for the 2021/22 period. The Advisory Committee notes the lack of justification for the application of rates that differ from the actual vacancy rates experienced during the current period, as follows: (a) international staff: a vacancy rate of 10 per cent is projected, when the actual average from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 was 11.5 per cent and the actual as at 31 March 2021 was 16.1 per cent; (b) National Professional Officers: zero per cent is projected, when the actual average from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 was 51.8 per cent and the actual as at 31 March 2021 was 50 per cent; (c) United Nations Volunteers: 3 per cent is projected, when the actual average from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 was 7.4 per cent and the actual as at 31 March 2021 was 5.6 per cent; and (d) temporary positions: 10 per cent is projected, when the actual average from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021 and the actual as at 31 March 2021 were 50 per cent.

(Percentage)

Category	Actual 2019/20	Budgeted 2020/21	Actual 31 January 2021	Actual 28 February 2021	Actual 31 March 2021	Actual average 1 July 2020– 31 March 2021	Projected 2021/22
Civilian personnel							
International staff	7.9	8.0	10.9	12.6	16.1	11.5	10.0
National staff							
National Professional Officers	0.0	0.0	50.0	66.7	50.0	51.8	0.0
National General Service staff	9.6	10.0	6.1	4.9	4.9	8.0	10.0
United Nations Volunteers	11.8	3.0	5.6	5.6	5.6	7.4	3.0
Temporary positions							
International staff	100.0	10.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	10.0

20. The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that proposed vacancy rates should be based, as much as possible, on actual rates. In cases in which the proposed rates differ from the actual rates, clear justification should be provided systematically in the proposed budget and related documents (A/74/737/Add.2, para. 23).

Vacant posts

21. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that 28 posts were vacant as at 28 February 2021, including 1 post vacant for more than two years (National General Service). The Committee was also informed that the recruitment of five vacant posts was delayed owing to political considerations or the non-issuance of visas. The Committee notes that the recruitment for the post of Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (D-2), which was established at the beginning of the current period, is in progress, together with the recruitment of seven political affairs posts located in his/her office (5 P-4 and 2 P-3).

22. While acknowledging the issues affecting the Force, the Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 24 of its resolution 74/283, reiterated its concern about the high number of vacancies in civilian staffing and further reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that vacant posts are filled expeditiously. The Committee trusts that the Force will prioritize the recruitment of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and that an update will be provided in the context of the report on UNISFA (see also *ibid.*, paras. 15–17).

23. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 27 of its resolution 74/283, requested the Secretary-General to review the posts that had been vacant for 24 months or longer and to propose, in the budget submission, either their retention, with clear justification of need, or their abolishment.

Danger pay

24. The proposed resources for international staff for 2021/22 include an amount of \$2,779,700 for danger pay. From the information provided to it, the Advisory Committee notes an underexpenditure of \$490,600, or 18.1 per cent, in relation to the apportionment for 2019/20. The Committee also notes that, of an apportionment of \$2,914,600 for 2020/21, only \$831,300 had been incurred as at 31 January 2021. **In view of this expenditure pattern and the continued impact of the coronavirus**

disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 20 per cent, or \$555,900, to the proposed resources.

25. Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 18 and 24 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for civilian personnel. Any operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.

3. Operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category	Apportionment (2019/20)	Expenditure (2019/20)	Apportionment (2020/21)	Expenditure (31 March 2021)	Cost estimates (2021/22)	Variance	
						Amount	Percentage
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)=(5)-(3)	(7)=(6)÷(3)
Operational costs							
Consultants and consulting services	461.9	621.6	383.7	914.7	621.6	237.9	62.0
Official travel	924.3	734.5	839.7	498.8	869.5	29.8	3.5
Facilities and infrastructure	31 390.4	34 035.4	34 561.3	22 886.8	38 613.3	4 052.0	11.7
Ground transportation	2 451.9	4 339.2	1 959.3	1 192.6	2 324.8	365.5	18.7
Air operations	22 237.6	15 557.9	20 970.4	12 814.8	20 803.4	(167.0)	(0.8)
Marine operations	—	1 058.9	—	613.2	611.2	611.2	—
Communications and information technology	8 991.6	10 341.5	9 238.1	8 868.3	10 341.5	1 103.4	11.9
Medical	347.8	1 172.7	341.4	443.3	462.9	121.5	35.6
Other supplies, services and equipment	19 104.3	18 319.9	18 245.6	14 154.0	17 578.2	(667.4)	(3.7)
Quick-impact projects	500.0	499.9	500.0	500.0	500.0	—	—
Total	86 409.8	86 681.5	87 039.5	62 886.5	92 726.4	5 686.9	6.5

26. The proposed increase of \$5,686,900, or 6.5 per cent, for 2021/22 for operational costs reflects higher requirements under facilities and infrastructure, communications and information technology, marine operations, ground transportation, consultants and consulting services, official travel and medical. These increases are offset in part by lower requirements for other supplies, services and equipment, and air operations (A/75/737, paras. 67–74). **The Advisory Committee notes the overall increased level of operational costs proposed for 2021/22 and is not convinced that the provided justifications fully support the requirements listed below. Taking into account underexpenditure and the likely continued impact of COVID-19, the Committee therefore makes comments and recommends adjustments below.**

Official travel

27. The proposed resources for official travel for 2021/22 amount to \$869,500, which reflect an increase of \$29,800, or 3.5 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. **The Advisory Committee reiterates that greater use should be made of virtual meetings and online training tools and that travel for workshops, conferences or meetings should be kept to a minimum and, if proposed, that detailed justifications should be provided. The Committee also emphasizes that travel should be budgeted in full accordance with the provisions of ST/SGB/2009/9 and ST/AI/2013/3. Furthermore, the Committee considers that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to continue to have an impact on travel in the**

2021/22 period. The Committee therefore recommends a 20 per cent reduction, or \$173,900, to the proposed requirement for official travel.

Petrol, oil and lubricants

28. The proposed resources for petrol, oil and lubricants (under facility and infrastructure, ground transportation and air operations) for 2021/22 amount to \$14,674,300, which represents an increase of \$1,240,000, or 9.2 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. According to the Secretary-General, the increase in the quantity of petrol, from 10.7 million litres in 2020/21 to 12.8 million litres in 2021/22, is aligned with historical consumption. In its report on the 2019/20, period, the Board found 1,899 UNISFA records that indicated 17 different generators with an indicator reading zero that consumed 3,758,284 litres of fuel. Six of the generators were refuelled more than 100 times each during the financial year, accounting for 42.6 per cent of the total fuel consumed by generators at the mission ([A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), para. 272 (d)). **The Advisory Committee expects that UNISFA will strengthen its fuel management and take proper action, as required. The Committee recommends a reduction of 15 per cent (\$2,201,100) to the total provision of \$14,674,300 proposed for petrol, oil and lubricants under facilities and infrastructure (\$10,828,600), ground transportation (\$797,000) and air operations (\$3,048,700).** The Advisory Committee makes further comments on energy consumption in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

Facilities and infrastructure

29. The proposed requirements for facilities and infrastructure for 2021/22 amount to \$38,613,300, which represent an increase of \$4,052,000, or 11.7 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. From the information provided, the Advisory Committee notes significant expenditure in the 2019/20 period for the acquisition of prefabricated facilities, accommodation and refrigerated equipment, and water treatment and fuel distribution equipment, which were not precisely budgeted. **The Advisory Committee considers that the Force should develop multi-year plans for the acquisition of these items, which would, notably, help to justify the requirements for each reporting period. In view of the above, the Committee is not convinced that the proposed increased requirements for facilities and infrastructure are fully justified and recommends a 10 per cent reduction, or \$2,778,600, to the proposed resources for facilities and infrastructure (excluding the proposed provision for petrol, oil and lubricants of \$10,828,600) (see para. 28 above).**

Air operations

30. The proposed resources for air operations for 2021/22 include an amount of \$7,390,200 for the rental and operation of fixed-wing aircraft, which represents an increase of \$767,200, or 11.6 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. The information provided to the Advisory Committee shows underexpenditure of \$3,841,500, or 49.5 per cent, under this budget line in 2019/20. The Committee notes that, in the current period, only \$3,376,200 had been incurred against an apportionment of \$6,623,000 as at 31 January 2021, which could reflect the impact of restrictions in connection with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that the increase in the requirement for the rental and operation of fixed-wing aircraft for 2021/22 compared with the apportionment for 2020/21 is justified and recommends a reduction of \$767,200 to the proposed resources for air operations.**

Communications and information technology

31. The proposed resources for communications and information technology for 2021/22, in the amount of \$10,341,500, represent an increase of \$1,103,400, or 11.9 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. The information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that this increase reflects mostly an increase under maintenance of communications and information technology equipment and support services for the implementation of the field remote infrastructure monitoring project, which is aimed at converging sensing devices and information technology to optimize the consumption of energy and water. Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with information showing that, in the past and current periods, the requirements for communications and information technology maintenance and support services, including for the implementation of the field remote infrastructure monitoring project, were not precisely budgeted. **The Advisory Committee considers that the Force should have developed a multi-year plan for this project and that the proposed increase in the resources for communications and information technology is not fully justified. Therefore, the Committee recommends a 10 per cent reduction, or \$1,034,200, to the proposed resources for communications and information technology.**

Other freight and related costs

32. The proposed resources under other supplies, services and equipment include a requirement of \$4,720,400 for other freight and related costs. From the information provided, the Advisory Committee notes underexpenditure of \$547,400, or 10.8 per cent, under this budget line in 2019/20. The Committee also notes that, in the current period, only \$1,904,900 had been incurred as at 31 January 2021 against an apportionment of \$5,203,200. **In view of this underexpenditure pattern, the Advisory Committee recommends a 10 per cent reduction, or \$472,000, to the proposed resources for other freight and related costs.**

Mine detection and mine-clearing services

33. The Secretary-General indicates that the estimated resource requirements for mine detection and mine-clearing services, which amount to \$10,777,400 in 2021/22, include the following elements: (a) international and national staff (\$3,112,500); (b) official travel (\$125,900); (c) implementing partners (\$6,616,200); (d) equipment (\$33,500); (e) operating expenses (\$78,200); and (f) support and management fees for the Mine Action Service implementing partner, the United Nations Office for Project Service (UNOPS), amounting to \$298,578 and \$512,560, respectively (A/75/737, paras. 53–54). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Mine Action Service delivers the UNISFA mine action mandate in accordance with Security Council resolution 1990 (2011). The Mine Action Service, through UNOPS, has been the only provider for survey and clearance activities in Abyei. The military contingents have not conducted any mine clearance over the past five reporting periods. The Committee was also informed that, for 2021/22, the 12 international staff and 4 national staff for the Mine Action Service programme at UNISFA had been recruited through UNOPS. They are not considered UNISFA personnel and have no relationship with the UNOPS sub-contractors, apart from tasking, monitoring and ensuring quality assurance. The Committee was further informed that the mission had recovered only the costs for accommodation and medical services provided by UNISFA to UNOPS staff based in the mission area. The Committee makes comments and recommendations on cost recovery in its report pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June

2020 (see [A/75/829](#), paras. 25–32) and in its report on cross-cutting issues related to the United Nations peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

34. Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 26–32 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for operational costs.

V. Other matters

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

35. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 6 April 2021, UNISFA had had a moderate outbreak of COVID-19 cases. The Committee was also informed that overexpenditure under medical in the past and current periods (\$824,900 in 2019/20 and \$101,900 as at 31 March 2021) were attributable in part to the pandemic. To date, there have been 34 evacuations in 2020/21, including 4 related to COVID-19. The Committee was further informed that the impact of the pandemic had been far-reaching and profound. The main consequences were: (a) loss of lives, with three deaths recorded that were related to COVID-19; (b) loss of manpower, with a significant number of symptomatic and asymptomatic staff forced to quarantine; (c) a decline in productivity due to psychological trauma; (d) travel disruptions with movement restrictions; and (e) unplanned financial expenditure, including those for the containment of the pandemic and urgent investment in technology in support of telecommuting.

36. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 15 of its resolution 74/283, noted with grave concern the threat to life, health, safety and security caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of ensuring the safety, security and health of peacekeeping personnel, maintaining the continuity of critical mandate delivery, including protection of civilians, minimizing the risk of mission activities causing the virus to spread and, where appropriate and within mandates, supporting national authorities, upon their request, in their response to COVID-19, in collaboration with the resident coordinator and other United Nations entities in the country. The Committee trusts that updated information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lessons learned will be provided in the context of the next report on the performance of the mission.

Cost recovery

37. The Advisory Committee was provided with different information regarding the costs recovered at UNISFA during the 2019/20 period. A set of information indicated that a total of \$1,257,330 had been recovered, including \$319,480 from United Nations agencies and \$937,850 from non-United Nations entities, while another set of information indicated a total of \$1,361,354. The Committee was also provided with conflicting information as to whether the recovered costs were allotted to the mission or credited to the peacekeeping cost recovery fund. The Committee is not in a position to determine the exact amount recovered and its use. **The Committee trusts that precise information on the costs recovered at UNISFA will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

Environmental initiatives

38. The Secretary-General indicates that, during the 2021/22 period, the mission will continue to implement the three-year programme to reduce the mission's environmental footprint by installing solar lighting systems, constructing five solar

farms and six waste management yards, and improving generator stations. In addition, the mission will continue its greening campaign by planting 26,908 trees across all sites in the mission area (A/75/737, para. 28). **The Advisory Committee notes the environmental initiatives undertaken by UNISFA and trusts that more detailed information on progress, including scopes, outputs, and start and end dates of the activities, will continue to be provided in future budget proposals. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 17 of its resolution 74/283, noted the progress made in the implementation of the multi-year environmental strategy to reduce the footprint of peacekeeping operations and requested the Secretary-General to enhance measures for the implementation of the strategy in all peacekeeping missions, in line with the five pillars of the strategy, in accordance with particular conditions on the ground and in full compliance with the relevant rules and regulations.** The Advisory Committee makes further observations on environmental activities in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping (A/75/822).

Quick-impact projects

39. Information on quick-impact projects is provided in paragraphs 57 and 58 of the proposed budget (A/75/737). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that UNISFA cooperated with the agencies, funds and programmes on the selection, planning and implementation of quick-impact projects to avoid redundancies and foster complementarity. For example, UNISFA is the only operation capable of implementing quick-impact projects in the northern region of Abyei. Conversely, a number of UNISFA quick-impact projects are implemented by agencies, funds and programmes, given their level of expertise and resources. For example, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is one of the mission's key implementing partners, given its experience and expertise with respect to migrant and displaced populations. Examples of synergies include the construction of a basic health unit at Amiet market by UNISFA, while agencies, funds and programmes supported the mission through the provision of materials. Similarly, IOM constructed the Abyei referral hospital, while UNISFA renovated the small blocks around the main building in support of the hospital.

40. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the most impactful quick-impact projects over the previous years had been: (a) water projects, including water hand pumps and solar water yards; (b) livelihood projects, including vegetable gardens, and grinding and oil press mills; (c) the rule of law, including the construction and renovation of detention centres, community protection centres, community peace committee office equipment; (d) health facilities, including the construction of new and renovation of existing clinics; and (e) social and peace development projects, including the construction of community halls, latrines, the UNISFA meeting hall and a youth centre.

41. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the mission should improve overall planning and conduct assessments of the projects regularly.¹ The Committee considers that, in building on best practices and lessons learned of the assessments, resources should be deployed on the most impactful projects. The Committee trusts that updated and detailed information on the project planning and assessment of the implemented projects will be presented in the context of the next budget submission (see also General Assembly resolution 74/283, para. 22).**

¹ See the guidelines on quick-impact projects, Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support (ref. no. 2017.17).

Programmatic activities

42. In paragraph 19 of its resolution [74/283](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Force was responsible and accountable for the use of its programmatic funds, in line with relevant guidance and bearing in mind the specific context in which the Force operates, and to include, in his next budget submission and performance report, detailed information on the programmatic activities of the Force. The Advisory Committee was informed that, in relation to [A/75/595](#), the redeployments had been made consistent with and in the context of the Action for Peacekeeping framework, especially as it pertains to supporting programmatic activities in support of the women and peace and security agenda.²

43. The Advisory Committee was informed that, according to the guidelines for mandated programmatic activities funded through peacekeeping assessed budgets, expenditure on programmatic activities should be tracked with Umoja project system functionalities. The Committee was also informed that UNISFA had developed a protection of civilian strategy with forward-looking tasks to be implemented with programme funds complemented by quick-impact projects.

44. The Committee notes that proposed budget for the 2021/22 period includes a provision in the amount of \$286,900 for the implementation of a range of programmatic activities, focusing on community policing initiatives, crime awareness, enhancing the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, promoting civic participation, in particular of women and young people, and promoting peace during the migration period, to enhance the mission's ability to deliver its mandate. **Taking into consideration that the mission is beginning to implement programmatic activities, the Advisory Committee is of the view that an implementation plan with medium- to long-term projects should be developed. The Committee also considers that the projects should be assessed regularly and, on the basis of best practices and lessons learned, that resources should be deployed to the most impactful projects. The Committee trusts that detailed information of the projects assessment and lessons learned will be presented in the context of the next budget submission.**

Gender balance

45. With regard to gender balance, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table showing that, as at 16 March 2021, there was no female representation at the D-1 and above levels and among national staff, except at the G-4 and G-3 levels, where the percentages were 9 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. The information provided to the Committee showed that, in the Professional categories, at the P-1 to P-4 levels, the percentage of female staff had increased from 17 per cent as at 30 June 2019 to 22 per cent as at 30 June 2020. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that slow progress in female representation in UNISFA was due primarily to the mission's low vacancy rate, which limited opportunities to increase the number of female candidates who could be recruited. In addition, the mission continues to experience a low rate of interest from qualified female applicants to job openings, in particular in mission support areas. **The Advisory Committee notes the underrepresentation of women among UNISFA staff, in particular among senior**

² Under the 2019/20 results-based-budgeting framework, programmatic funds were introduced for the first time as a tool to effectively pursue political progress and widen the scope of UNISFA mandate delivery, in particular in relation to Security Council resolutions [2445 \(2018\)](#) and [2469 \(2019\)](#), which place specific weight on engagement with the Sudan and South Sudan on the final status of Abyei Area in line with the 20 June 2011 Agreement.

international staff members and national staff members, and encourages the mission to pursue its efforts to improve the gender balance.

Nationalization

46. The Secretary-General indicates that the mission has not identified any function that can be nationalized during the 2021/22 period (see [A/75/737](#), sect. V). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the mission's unique environment and remote location limited the possibility of the nationalization of posts. The mission continues to see major shortfalls in the local labour market, making it difficult to recruit support-level national staff and to consider the nationalization of more technical posts, which require a higher level of educational and significant experience. **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 23 of its resolution 74/283, requested the Secretary-General to consider options for greater nationalization of functions and encourages the mission to renew its effort to increase the representation of national staff members, including through increased outreach activities.** The Committee makes further comments in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

VI. Conclusion

47. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with regard to the financing of the Force for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 are indicated in section V of the performance report ([A/75/595](#)). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of \$1,166,700 for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, as well as other income/adjustments amounting to \$6,390,800 for the period ended 30 June 2020, be credited to Member States.**

48. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with regard to the financing of the Force for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 are indicated in section IV of the proposed budget ([A/75/737](#)). **Taking into account its observations and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the proposed resources be reduced by \$8,126,900, from \$270,472,200, to \$262,345,300. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the amount of \$262,345,300 for the maintenance of the Force for the 12-month period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.**