



General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 April 2021

Original: English

Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 166 (b)

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

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 Force in Lebanon

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2019/20	\$480,102,600
Expenditure for 2019/20	\$479,886,100
Unencumbered balance for 2019/20	\$216,500
Appropriation for 2020/21	\$480,649,100
Projected expenditure for 2020/21 ^a	\$480,606,500
Projected underexpenditure for 2020/21 ^a	\$42,600
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2021/22	\$480,427,900
Adjustment recommended by the Advisory Committee for 2021/22	(\$2,785,900)
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2021/22	\$477,642,000

^a Estimates as at 31 March 2021.



I. Introduction

1. During its consideration of the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), 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 73/322, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of \$480,102,600 gross (\$467,052,900 net) for the maintenance of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. Expenditure for the period totalled \$479,886,100 gross (\$465,934,200 net), for a budget implementation rate of 99.95 per cent. The unencumbered balance of \$216,500 represents 0.05 per cent of the total resources and reflects the combined effect of higher-than-budgeted expenditure under civilian personnel (\$2,624,400, or 2.8 per cent) and lower-than-budgeted expenditure under military and police personnel (\$367,400, or 0.1 per cent) and operational costs (\$2,473,500, or 5.8 per cent). A detailed analysis of variances is provided in section IV of the report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 (A/75/612).

3. During 2019/20, a total of \$2,624,000 was redeployed to group II (civilian personnel), comprising \$178,000 from group I (military and police personnel) and \$2,446,000 from group III (operational costs). It is indicated that the redeployment to group II (civilian personnel) was necessary to meet the increased requirements for national staff costs, owing to higher incumbency levels in connection with the initiative of the Force to expedite the recruitment of national personnel and an increase in the national salary scale, effective 1 January 2020. The redeployment from group I was possible because of the lower actual average ceiling person rate for rations compared with the budgeted rates, while the redeployment from group III was possible because of the lower actual average price per litre for diesel fuel for generators and aviation fuel, and the reprioritization of support activities to cover the shortfall under civilian personnel costs (*ibid.*, paras. 38–39).

Unliquidated obligations

4. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that unliquidated obligations for UNIFIL increased from \$54,128,900 in 2018/19 to \$96,276,900 in 2019/20, attributable primarily to the commitments for the reimbursements to troop-contributing countries for standard costs for the 2018/19 period pertaining to two months, May and June 2019, compared with the commitments for the 2019/20 period, which pertained to six months, from January to June 2020.

Matters pertaining to the report of the Board of Auditors

5. In considering the reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of UNIFIL, the Advisory Committee also had before it the report of the Board of Auditors on the accounts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the financial period ended 30 June 2020 (A/75/5 (Vol. II), chap. II). In its report, the Board made observations

and recommendations pertaining to UNIFIL, including on: (a) mine action; (b) air transportation of non-United Nations passengers and cost recovery; and (c) weapons and ammunition management. The Committee recalls the recommendation of the Board that UNIFIL establish and implement a standard operating procedure as prescribed under the weapons and ammunition policy, and that it establish a weapons and ammunition advisory board (*ibid.*, paras. 228–238). The Committee was informed by the Secretariat, upon enquiry, that the advisory board has been established and that three meetings have been conducted. **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on weapons and ammunition management (A/75/829, paras. 15–18), as well as the recommendations on administrative and budgetary matters, and trusts that they will be implemented in a timely manner.**

III. Information on performance for the current period

6. With regard to current and projected expenditure for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that as at 31 March 2021, expenditure amounted to \$383,196,200 (gross). At the end of the current period, the estimated total expenditure would amount to \$480,606,500 (gross), resulting in an unencumbered balance of \$42,600, reflecting expenditure of 0.01 per cent below the approved resources of \$480,649,100.

7. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 1 March 2021, a total of \$10,428,681,000 had been assessed on Member States in respect of UNIFIL since its inception. Payments received amounted to \$10,135,790,000, leaving an outstanding balance of \$292,891,000. As at 1 March 2021, the cash available to the Force amounted to \$151,025,000, which is sufficient to cover the three-month operating reserve of \$45,367,000 (excluding reimbursements to troop- and police-contributing countries). The Committee was also informed that, as at 31 December 2020, the outstanding balance for contingent-owned equipment amounted to \$30,088,900.

8. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 29 March 2021, an amount of \$23,131,000 had been paid to settle 212 death and disability claims since the inception of UNIFIL, and 18 claims were pending. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the outstanding claims will be settled expeditiously.**

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

A. Mandate and planning assumptions

9. The mandate of UNIFIL was established by the Security Council in its resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and extended most recently, until 31 August 2021, in resolution 2539 (2020). The planning assumptions and mission support initiatives of UNIFIL for the 2021/22 period are summarized in section I.B of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget for the Force for that period (A/75/772).

Impact of the explosion in the port of Beirut

10. With respect to the explosion that occurred in the port of Beirut on 4 August 2020, the Secretary-General indicates that UNIFIL, taking into consideration the impact of the explosion on the operations of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the postponement of its advanced maritime interdiction operation integration training,

will continue to provide technical training and other expertise that will contribute to the Lebanese Armed Forces-Navy eventually effectively assuming maritime interdiction responsibilities (ibid., para. 14). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the budgetary impact as a result of the explosion in the port of Beirut is estimated in the amount of \$397,404, as follows: (a) military contingents: \$32,306 for the cost of composite ration packs and bottled water; (b) facilities and infrastructure: \$298,388 for personal protective equipment, diesel fuel for generators, rental and cleaning of chemical toilets, concertina wires, maintenance of the generators and the water piping network, and accommodation supplies; and (c) medical: \$66,710 for medical gases, oxygen and the provision of level IV hospital services to UNIFIL military personnel injured during the blast in Beirut. The Committee was also informed that the total actual expenditure for UNIFIL related to the explosion in the port of Beirut would be reported in the context of the performance for the 2020/21 period. **The Advisory Committee commends the efforts of the Force in providing assistance in the aftermath of the explosion in the port of Beirut.**

B. Resource requirements

Financial resources^a

(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	344 856.6	344 489.2	341 303.5	275 469.0	331 853.6	(9 449.9)	(2.8)
Civilian personnel	92 796.0	95 420.4	95 653.0	74 094.9	99 147.5	3 494.5	3.7
Operational costs	42 450.0	39 976.5	43 692.6	33 632.3	49 426.8	5 734.2	13.1
Gross requirements	480 102.6	479 886.1	480 649.1	383 196.2	480 427.9	(221.2)	0.0

^a Detailed information on the financial resources proposed and an analysis of variances are provided in sections II and IV of the proposed budget (A/75/772).

11. The proposed budget in the amount of \$480,427,900 represents a decrease of \$221,200, or 0.05 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$480,649,100 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 IV of the proposed budget (ibid.).

1. Military and police personnel

Category	Authorized 2020/21 ^a	Proposed 2021/22	Variance
Military contingent personnel	15 000	13 000	(2 000)

^a Represents the highest level of authorized strength.

12. The proposed resources for military contingent personnel for 2021/22 amount to \$331,853,600, reflecting a decrease of \$9,449,900, or 2.8 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. The decrease is attributable primarily to lower costs for major contingent-owned equipment, owing to amendments to the memorandums of understanding with the troop-contributing countries and a lower anticipated average deployment of 10,022 military contingent personnel, compared with 10,155

in 2020/21, offset in part by increased requirements for freight and deployment of contingent-owned equipment, owing to the repatriation of major equipment in connection with the amendments to the memorandum of understanding associated with the internal review, for which a provision was not included in the budget for 2020/21 (*ibid.*, paras. 135–136).

13. The table below provides a summary of the delayed deployment factors for military contingents for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 periods, as well as those proposed for the 2021/22 period.

Delayed deployment factors

(Percentage)

Category	Actual 2019/20	Approved 2020/21	Actual 31 March 2021	Actual average 31 March 2021	Projected 2021/22
Military and police personnel					
Military contingents	32.8	32.3	35.0	33.3	22.9

14. **The Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for military personnel.**

2. Civilian personnel

Category	Approved 2020/21	Proposed 2021/22	Variance
Posts			
International staff	256	254	(2)
National General Service staff	585	544	(41)
National Professional Officers	48	46	(2)
Total	889	844	(45)

15. The proposed resources for civilian personnel for 2021/22 amount to \$99,147,500, reflecting an increase of \$3,494,500, or 3.7 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. The increase is attributable to higher salary rates for international staff and lower vacancy rates of 4.3 per cent for National Professional Officers and of 2.0 per cent for national General Service staff, compared with 10.4 and 7.2 per cent, respectively, in 2020/21, offset in part by reduced requirements resulting from the proposed abolishment of 45 posts (2 Field Service, 2 National Professional Officer and 41 national General Service) (*ibid.*, paras. 137–138).

16. A total of 844 civilian posts and positions are proposed for 2021/22, comprising 254 international posts, 544 national General Service posts and 46 National Professional Officers, compared with 889 approved posts and positions for 2020/21. Details with respect to the staffing proposals are provided in section I.E of the report of the Secretary-General.

Assessment of UNIFIL and civilian staffing review

17. The Secretary-General, in paragraphs 19 to 22 of the budget proposal, states that changes to the staffing establishment are in line with Security Council resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#) and the subsequent assessment of UNIFIL, in which it was recommended, *inter alia*, that the strategic planning capability be consolidated in the Office of the Head of Mission/Force Commander, within existing resources, to strengthen and align integrated strategic and operational business planning in key cross-cutting

programmes, including the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System, results-based budgeting, Umoja strategic management, risk management, organizational resilience, business continuity, contingency planning, gender and environment, and to conduct a civilian staffing review. In that context, UNIFIL proposes the establishment of the Office of the Principal Coordinator (see para. 19 below) and to consolidate therein the existing UNIFIL mission planning capacity through the transfer of the Policy and Best Practices Unit, the Board of Inquiry Unit and the Joint Mission Analysis Centre from the Office of the Head of Mission/Force Commander to the new Office. Furthermore, the Compliance and Monitoring Unit would be renamed the Audit Response Unit and transferred to the Office of the Civilian Administration Representative in Beirut within the Office of the Director of Mission Support. The Secretary-General also indicates that the civilian staffing review recommended the abolishment of 45 posts, the redeployment of 18 posts, the reassignment of 7 posts and the reclassification of 2 posts ([A/75/772](#), paras. 19–23).

18. With respect to the review of posts that are loaned within the approved staffing table, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that a mission may initiate temporary intra-mission loans to meet human resources or operational requirements, with the expectation that the posts be returned to the authorized organizational unit at the end of the period. The Committee was also informed that in instances where the requirement continues beyond the authorized period, the mission is required to propose the redeployment of the post within the budget proposal. As at 25 March 2021, a total of 15 posts were on loan, including some since 2018, to other offices within UNIFIL, with all loans to end at the conclusion of the 2020/21 period, on 30 June 2021. **The Advisory Committee trusts that all temporary intra-mission loans of posts and of staff are conducted in accordance with the applicable financial and staff regulations and rules.**

Recommendations on posts and positions

Establishment of the Office of the Principal Coordinator through reassignment and redeployment

19. In the context of the aforementioned reorganization of the strategic planning capacities, the Secretary-General proposes the establishment of the Office of the Principal Coordinator through the consolidation of the mission planning capacity and by subsuming the Policy and Best Practices Unit, the Board of Inquiry Unit and the Joint Mission Analysis Centre from the Office of the Head of Mission/Force Commander to the new Office, with a proposed staff of 17 through redeployment and reassignment from the aforementioned offices (*ibid.*, paras. 22, 38, 40, 42–44, 50, 59 and 61 and tables 1–4, 7, 10, 11 and 20). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the civilian staffing review also recommended that three posts currently on loan be regularized (see also para. 18 above). The redeployment of posts also includes one post of Principal Coordination Officer (D-1) from the Office of the Force Commander to the new Office. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the function is considered the equivalent of a civilian Chief of Staff but that a distinct title was used in order to differentiate that function from the existing military Chief of Staff function.

20. The proposed establishment of the Office of the Principal Coordinator also includes the proposed redeployment of one post of Senior Civil Affairs Officer (P-5) from the Civil Affairs Section in the Division of Political and Civil Affairs to the Office of the Principal Coordinator, and the reassignment of the post as Senior Mission Planning Officer (P-5) to provide senior planning support for the Force and to lead the new Mission Planning Unit and the Policy and Best Practices Unit, located within the new Office (*ibid.*, para. 43 and tables 3 and 11). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the post has been on loan to the Office of the Head of

Mission/Force Commander since May 2020 from the Civil Affairs Section. The Committee was also informed that the proposed Senior Mission Planning Officer (P-5) will lead the development of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System, which has been under implementation since the end of the pilot phase in July 2020. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that a separate mission planning function is operationally required in the new Office of the Principal Coordinator. The Committee therefore recommends against the redeployment of one post of Senior Civil Affairs Officer (P-5) from the Civil Affairs Section in the Division of Political and Civil Affairs to the Office of the Principal Coordinator and its reassignment as Senior Mission Planning Officer (P-5).** The Advisory Committee discusses the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

Reassignment and reclassification

21. The Secretary-General proposes the reassignment of one post of United Nations Police Adviser (P-4) from the Office of the Deputy Head of Mission and Director of Political and Civil Affairs, Beirut office, and the reclassification of the post as Protocol Officer (P-3) in the Office of the Head of Mission/Force Commander ([A/75/772](#), paras. 41 and 62 and table 2).

22. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the post of Police Adviser had been established in 2007¹ in anticipation of the full withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from northern Ghajar, which remains pending. While the function of Police Adviser had been utilized in other areas, such as helping to build capacity in local municipal institutions, there is no rule of law mandate and no policing requirement at UNIFIL set out in Security Council resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#). The Committee was informed that the post has been encumbered throughout and presently, but was vacant in 2019/20. The Committee was also informed that the post was reviewed in the civilian staffing review, which concluded that there was no operational need for the Police Adviser, as the post had been underutilized and policing functions are not required under the mandate of UNIFIL. The Committee was further informed that, in line with the delegation of authority granted to heads of entities effective 1 January 2019, the Head of Mission has the delegated authority for selection of staff up to and including the D-1 level, and, in accordance with a memorandum dated 5 August 2019, for staff at the D-2 level, for all approved civilian positions. The Committee was informed, however, that the selection, recruitment and rotation of uniformed personnel, which includes the Police Adviser, is not within the delegation of authority but under the purview of the Department of Peace Operations. The Committee was informed that the Department's Police Division had deferred to UNIFIL with respect to the justification for the proposed staffing change to, in effect, abolish the post of Police Adviser.

23. With respect to the proposed reclassification of the post of United Nations Police Adviser (P-4) as Protocol Officer (P-3), the Advisory Committee was informed that the staffing review had concluded that there is a need to strengthen the Protocol Unit of the Office of the Head of Mission/Force Commander, with the following proposed staffing changes: (a) reassignment and reclassification as Protocol Officer (P-3) of the aforementioned post of United Nations Police Adviser (P-4); and (b) reassignment of one Protocol Assistant (national General Service) from the Office of the Deputy Chief of Service Delivery Management (see also [A/75/772](#), paras. 39 and 41 and table 2). The Committee was also informed that the Protocol Unit is

¹ The General Assembly, in its resolution [61/250 C](#), endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee to establish the post of Police Adviser (P-4) (see [A/61/852/Add.16](#), para. 17).

currently led by a military staff officer (Lieutenant-Colonel) and comprises two military staff officers (Major) and one civilian Protocol Assistant (national General Service).

24. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 10 of its resolution [72/299](#), endorsed the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraph 25 of its report ([A/72/789/Add.5](#)), in which the Committee recommended against the proposed reassignment of the post, and in paragraph 10 of its resolution [73/322](#), endorsed the recommendation of the Committee contained in paragraph 22 of its report ([A/73/755/Add.2](#)) against the proposed abolishment of the post. **The Advisory Committee considers that the mandate of UNIFIL and the justification for the establishment, in the 2007/08 period, of the post of Police Adviser (P-4) remain unchanged and that, therefore, the underlying political and operational need for the post has also remained unchanged. Furthermore, the Committee is of the view that the staffing review should have taken into consideration the guidance provided by the General Assembly, and considers that the determination is not accurate that the Protocol Unit should be strengthened by using the post of United Nations Police Adviser (P-4), which has been filled through the recruitment of a seconded active-duty police officer in an unrelated office and by subsequently morphing the function to fit into a different occupational area of responsibility at a lower grade, to be filled through the recruitment of an international civilian individual. The Committee therefore recommends against the redeployment and reassignment of the post of United Nations Police Adviser (P-4) as Protocol Officer (P-3). The Committee recognizes the need for the civilian strengthening of the Protocol Unit and recommends the reassignment of one post of Protocol Assistant (national General Service) from the Office of the Deputy Chief of Service Delivery Management.** The Advisory Committee provides comments on the subject of the simultaneous reassignment and reclassification of posts in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

Vacancy rates

25. 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 during the current period, as at 31 March 2021, as follows: (a) national General Service staff: a vacancy rate of 2.0 per cent is proposed, when the actual average is 9.4 per cent and the actual is 10.1 per cent; and (b) National Professional Officers: a vacancy rate of 4.3 per cent is proposed when the actual average is 10.4 per cent and the actual is 12.5 per cent.

Vacancy rates

(Percentage)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Actual average 2019/20</i>	<i>Approved 2020/21</i>	<i>Actual as at 28 February 2021</i>	<i>Actual as at 31 March 2021</i>	<i>Actual average as at 31 March 2021</i>	<i>Proposed 2021/22</i>
Civilian personnel						
International staff	6.6	5.5	3.5	4.3	5.1	5.1
National General Service staff	7.4	7.2	9.9	10.1	9.4	2.0
National Professional Officers	15.0	10.4	12.5	12.5	10.4	4.3

26. **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.

Vacant posts

27. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that 73 posts were vacant as at 28 February 2021. As at 12 April 2021, 28 posts had been vacant for two years or longer (2 National Professional Officer and 26 national General Service). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that one post of Administrative Assistant (national General Service) is vacant with a lien; one post of Facilities Management Assistant (national General Service) is proposed for regularization; one post of Staff Assistant (national General Service) is proposed for reassignment; and one post of Administrative Assistant (national General Service) is proposed for redeployment. The remaining vacant posts are proposed for abolishment. **The Advisory Committee notes that most of the national General Service posts that are proposed for abolishment are currently vacant and not encumbered. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly 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 (resolution 74/292, para. 22).**

28. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 20 and 24 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for civilian personnel. Any related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.**

3. Operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category	Expenditure (2019/20)	Apportionment (2020/21)	Expenditure as at 31 March 2021	Cost estimates (2021/22)	Variance	
					Amount	Percentage
	(1)	(2)		(3)	(4)=(3)-(2)	(5)=(4)÷(2)
Civilian electoral observers	—	—	—	—	—	—
Consultants and consulting services	77.4	59.5	5.0	109.4	49.9	83.9
Official travel	522.1	712.0	130.1	631.0	(81.0)	(11.4)
Facilities and infrastructure	16 222.5	17 669.7	13 925.7	16 159.1	(1 510.6)	(8.5)
Ground transportation	4 788.6	5 645.4	4 779.6	5 437.7	(207.7)	(3.7)
Air operations	6 287.5	7 003.5	4 489.7	6 834.4	(169.1)	(2.4)
Marine operations	107.8	113.6	167.9	133.8	20.2	17.8
Communications and information technology	5 830.9	7 739.5	6 514.1	13 877.5	6 138.0	79.3
Medical	3 122.4	1 088.5	1 240.0	1 858.4	769.9	70.7
Special equipment	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other supplies, services and equipment	2 517.4	3 160.9	2 152.1	3 885.5	724.6	22.9
Quick-impact projects	499.9	500.0	228.1	500.0	—	—
Total	39 976.5	43 692.6	33 632.3	49 426.8	5 734.2	13.1

29. The proposed increase reflects: (a) increases under consultants and consulting services, marine operations, communications and information technology, medical, and other supplies, services and equipment; (b) decreases under official travel, facilities and infrastructure, ground transportation, and air operations; and (c) no

changes under quick-impact projects ([A/75/772](#), sections II and IV). The Advisory Committee discusses matters concerning the acquisition of sea containers and mine action activities in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

30. While noting the overall reduced level proposed for the operational costs for 2021/22, the Advisory Committee is not convinced that the provided justifications fully support the requirements listed below. Taking also into account underexpenditure and the likely continued impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Committee provides comments and recommends adjustments as follows:

(a) *Official travel*: the proposed resources of \$631,000 reflect a decrease of \$81,000 (11.4 per cent). As at 31 March 2021, total expenditure for 2020/21 amounted to \$130,100 against an apportionment of \$712,000. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the reduced requirements reflect virtual trainings and meetings, where possible, and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, while also including an amount of \$34,400 for training fees, supplies and fees in order to ensure adequate connectivity and infrastructure to support virtual and in-person training. Also, the reduced requirements in 2019/20 and 2020/21 were a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and that, of 64 planned training trips, 25 were cancelled and 2 were replaced with virtual training. **The Advisory Committee emphasizes that travel should be budgeted in full accordance with the provisions of [ST/SGB/2009/9](#) and [ST/AI/2013/3](#). The Committee recommends a reduction of 15 per cent (\$94,700) to the proposed resources under official travel;**

(b) *Facilities and infrastructure*: the proposed resources of \$16,159,100 reflect a decrease of \$1,510,600 (8.5 per cent). As at 31 March 2021, total expenditure for 2020/21 amounted to \$13,925,700 against an apportionment of \$17,669,700. The apportionment for 2019/20 was \$18,146,000, with total expenditure of \$16,222,500. The reduced requirements are primarily attributable to the lower anticipated average cost of fuel for generators and the anticipated completion of two non-recurring construction projects in the 2020/21 period, in line with the third year of the five-year asset replacement plan, offset in part by increased requirements for the acquisition of equipment for the Blue Line monitoring project and the acquisition of generators and electrical equipment to replace two generator sets, in line with the asset replacement plan ([A/75/772](#), paras. 142–143). **Taking into consideration the underexpenditure under certain budget lines, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 5 per cent (\$808,000) to the proposed resources under facilities and infrastructure;**

(c) *Ground transportation*: the proposed resources of \$5,437,700 reflect a decrease of \$207,700 (3.7 per cent). As at 31 March 2021, total expenditure for 2020/21 amounted to \$4,779,600 against an apportionment of \$5,645,400. The apportionment for 2019/20 was \$5,352,600, with total expenditure of \$4,788,600. The reduced requirements are attributable primarily to the lower anticipated average cost of fuel for vehicles compared with 2020/21, offset in part by the acquisition of a higher number of 45 vehicles (39 general purpose vehicles, 5 special purpose vehicles and 1 minibus), scheduled for replacement in line with the third year of the five-year phased asset replacement, compared with 38 vehicles included in the approved budget for the 2020/21 period (*ibid.*, para. 144). **The Advisory Committee recognizes the need to replace vehicles in line with the UNIFIL five-year asset replacement plan, but considers that further efficiency measures can be considered, taking also into account the travel and movement restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lower vehicle utilization rate. The Committee trusts that an update on adjusting the pace of the vehicle replacement programme will be provided in the next budget submission. Also taking into**

consideration the recent underexpenditure, the Committee therefore recommends a reduction of 5 per cent (\$271,900) to the proposed resources under ground transportation;

(d) *Communications and information technology*: the proposed resources of \$13,877,500 reflect an increase of \$6,138,000 (79.3 per cent). As at 31 March 2021, total expenditure for 2020/21 amounted to \$6,514,100 against an apportionment of \$7,739,500. The apportionment for 2019/20 was \$6,507,000, with total expenditure of \$5,830,900. The increased requirements are attributable primarily to the acquisition of communications and information technology equipment in connection with the implementation of the Blue Line monitoring project, as well as a higher number of network service equipment and notebook computers in connection with the implementation of the second year of the five-year asset replacement plan for communications and information technology. **Notwithstanding the resources required for the Blue Line monitoring project, and in view of the recent underexpenditure, the Advisory Committee considers that the proposed resources for communications and information technology are not fully justified, and therefore recommends a reduction of 10 per cent (\$1,387,800) to the proposed resources;**

(e) *Other freight and related costs*: the proposed resources for 2021/22 amount to \$1,281,400, reflecting an increase of \$542,300 (73.4 per cent). As at 31 March 2021, total expenditure for 2020/21 amounted to \$542,000 against an apportionment of \$739,100. The apportionment for 2019/20 was \$723,900, with total expenditure of \$629,600. **In view of the expected impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2021/22 period and its impact on global freight services, and the underexpenditure in 2020/21, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 20 per cent (\$256,300) to the proposed resources under other freight and related costs.**

31. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 28 and 30 (a)–(e) 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

32. The UNIFIL COVID-19 response during the 2019/20 period is described in paragraphs 16 to 18 of the performance report (A/75/612). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed budget for the 2021/22 period captures the requirements for a full 12-month period, intended to support the effective implementation of mandated tasks, with the assumption that the COVID-19-related restrictions, such as those related to travel, movement and access, will no longer apply, taking into account lessons learned from the experience of COVID-19-related risks. The Committee was also informed that the prolonged impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations remains unclear.

33. **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly 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 (resolution 74/292, para. 15). The Committee trusts that updated information will be provided in the next budget submission.

Funding of the Regional Conduct and Discipline Section (Office of the Head of Mission/Force Commander)

34. The Secretary-General indicates that the Regional Conduct and Discipline Section will continue to implement its regional mandated activities, namely, the Organization's strategy for protection against misconduct in the 10 covered entities² (A/75/772, paras. 29, 47 and 48). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that under the operational framework of the Section, substantive services provided to other missions are provided on a non-reimbursable basis. However, direct costs related to the provision of services, such as for training and risk assessments, including official travel costs associated with visiting supported missions, are borne by the missions receiving the services. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that substantive services provided to other missions should be on a cost-reimbursable basis.**

Environmental initiatives

35. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the environmental initiatives and activities include the maintenance of the environmental regulatory framework and environmental assessments; improvements to solid waste management; strategy-compliant wastewater treatment; protection measures such as fuel storage containment basins, generator fuel spill containment and adequate drainage; the generation of resource savings through increasing the renewable proportion, replacing generators with more efficient units and the introduction of rainwater harvesting; and awareness-raising (ibid., para. 25). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the environmental initiatives specifically include the acquisition of air conditioners with direct current inverters to replace and phase out units with outdated technology; the acquisition of light emitting diode elements and lighting to gradually replace conventional lighting; and solar energy usage through the purchase of a solar photovoltaic system to be delivered in May 2021, to result in anticipated savings of \$71,009. **The Advisory Committee notes the environmental initiatives and trusts that detailed information on progress, including the scope, outputs and start and end dates of the activities, will be provided in future budget proposals. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly 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, and guidelines, and to report thereon in the context of the next overview report (resolution 74/292, para. 17).** The Advisory Committee provides its observations on environmental activities in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/75/822).

² The 10 entities covered by the Regional Conduct and Discipline Section are the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, UNIFIL, the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

Quick-impact projects

36. Information on quick-impact projects is provided in paragraphs 131 and 132 of the proposed budget. UNIFIL, together with non-governmental organizations, the United Nations country team and other partners, will continue to work on quick-impact projects aimed at providing immediate tangible benefits for the local population, in three substantive areas: 10 projects for the extension of State authority, civic education and capacity-building; 7 projects for conflict management and confidence-building initiatives; and 8 projects to provide communities with access to basic services. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that UNIFIL has implemented several quick-impact projects with environmental aspects, such as planting native trees, raising environmental awareness among troop-contributing countries and civilian personnel and ensuring inclusion of environmental aspects in their work. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the mission should improve overall planning and conduct regular assessments of the projects.³ The Committee considers that, building on best practices and lessons learned from the assessments, resources should be deployed to 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.**

Gender balance

37. Information provided to the Advisory Committee, upon enquiry, indicates that, as at 31 December 2020, the percentage of female staff at UNIFIL was as follows: 20.8 per cent at the P-5 level and above; 50.8 per cent at the P-1 to P-4 levels; 34.7 per cent in the Field Service category; 50.0 per cent in the National Professional Officer category; and 25.4 per cent in the national General Service category. The Committee was also informed that UNIFIL has issued a mission-specific strategy for gender parity, the UNIFIL gender parity strategy (2018), which is based on the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy for gender parity (2017). **The Advisory Committee commends the parity of women in the National Professional Officer category and at the P-1 to P-4 levels, but notes the underrepresentation in the other categories. The Committee trusts that the mission will continue to pursue its efforts to enhance the representation of female staff, and that information thereon will be provided in future reports.**

Nationalization

38. The General Assembly, in paragraph 21 of its resolution [74/292](#), requested the Secretary-General to consider options for greater nationalization of functions when formulating budget submissions, commensurate with mission mandates and requirements. The Secretary-General indicates that UNIFIL has reviewed the nationalization of posts, and that the ratio of authorized international (256) to national (633) posts is 1:2.5, with a nationalization rate of 71.2 per cent, which was achieved through the implementation of recommendations from the 2014/15 civilian staffing review ([A/75/772](#), sect. VI). **The Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts to build national capacity and trusts that future budget submissions will continue to provide updates thereon.** The Advisory Committee provides further observations on nationalization in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

³ See the guidelines on quick-impact projects, Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support, No. 2017.17.

VI. Conclusion

39. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with regard to the financing of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 are indicated in section V of the performance report ([A/75/612](#)). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of \$216,500 for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, as well as other revenue/adjustments amounting to \$5,592,900 for the period ended 30 June 2020, be credited to Member States.**

40. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with regard to the financing of UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 are indicated in section V of the proposed budget ([A/75/772](#)). **Taking into account its observations and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the proposed resources be reduced by \$2,785,900, from \$480,427,900 to \$477,642,000. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the amount of \$477,642,000 for the maintenance of the Force for the 12-month period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.**
