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Chair: Mr. Amorín (Uruguay)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Bachar Bong

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.5/75/L.29)

1. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the proposed tentative and provisional programme of work for the second part of the resumed seventy-fifth session, established on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/75/L.29).

2. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, paid tribute to the women and men who had served in peacekeeping operations, in particular those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of peace. He welcomed the fact that the majority of the reports to be considered by the Fifth Committee, in particular those of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, had been issued, and trusted that the Bureau would update the provisional programme of work as required, including on the basis of developments related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Since the situation in New York was improving as a result of widespread vaccination, the Group looked forward to the end of the temporary working methods established in response to the pandemic and a return to the Fifth Committee's traditional working methods, in accordance with the health and safety advice of the United Nations and the city authorities.

3. With regard to the inclusion in the programme of work of matters unrelated to peacekeeping, he reiterated the Group's view that the Committee should focus, at the second part of the resumed session, on the financing of peacekeeping operations. The Committee must conclude its deliberations in a timely manner to ensure that those operations were provided with the necessary resources to fulfil their mandates. The Group would do its utmost to prevent the Committee from following the precedent, set at previous sessions, of informal consultations lasting beyond the current fiscal year.

4. The Group attached great importance to the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of peacekeeping operations, in particular cross-cutting issues, closed peacekeeping missions, the peacekeeping support account, and the budgets of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, and the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy. At the current part of the resumed session, the Group would focus on ensuring that peacekeeping budgets were based on mission mandates and the real situation on the ground rather than being approached as an arbitrary, across-the-board cost-cutting exercise; building on the previous year's resolution on closed peacekeeping missions to

find a fair solution to the issue of unpaid assessments, accounts payable and other liabilities; and continuing the discussions, deferred from the first part of the resumed session, on seconded active-duty military and police personnel, with a view to reaching a balanced agreement on the matter.

5. **Mr. Chanfi** (Comoros), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group trusted that the Bureau would adjust the provisional programme of work at the current part of the resumed session to reflect progress made. At the second part of the resumed session, the Committee traditionally considered matters related to peacekeeping operations, in particular the approval of those operations' budgets. While efforts had been made to bring before the Committee fewer matters that were unrelated to such operations, more progress would be needed at future sessions. The Group of African States echoed the appeal made by the Group of 77 and China regarding the inclusion, in the provisional programme of work, of the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters.

6. The Committee needed sufficient time to consider the reports before it. The Group of African States commended the progress made in the timely issuance of reports and trusted that the remaining reports would also be issued in a timely fashion. Supplementary information requested by Member States should be provided early enough to ease the process of informal consultations, and the Group welcomed the communication to Member States of supplementary information provided to the Advisory Committee; such communication reduced the number of questions from Fifth Committee members.

7. To improve its working methods, the Committee should curb its tendency to delay the critical stages of the informal consultations until the end of June or early July. The Group would engage fully and in good faith to achieve a consensual and mutually beneficial outcome in that regard, without undue rush or pressure. The Group reiterated its concern about the unavailability of simultaneous interpretation, particularly during the introduction of reports. The situation, which hampered the engagement of many members of the Group in the deliberations of the Committee, must be corrected. He paid tribute to the personnel of the United Nations who had lost their lives in the pursuit of peace and security.

8. With regard to the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, peacekeeping mandates included the protection of civilians, the safety and security of personnel, the protection of the environment, and the reimbursement of troop- and police-contributing countries. The challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic should be taken into

account in order to maintain the balance between the provision of appropriate resources and the achievement of expected results. The Secretary-General estimated the financial resources for the 12 peacekeeping operations at \$6.466 billion for the 2021/22 period, \$310 million lower than the level approved for the 2020/21 period and \$344.3 million lower than that approved for the 2019/20 period.

9. The Group attached great importance to the allocation of adequate resources to peacekeeping operations, particularly those in Africa, taking into account the complexity of their mandates from the Security Council and the unique challenges they faced. Programmatic activities and quick-impact projects, which were important in supporting the fulfilment of mandates, should be implemented in a timely, responsible and accountable manner.

10. Given the exceptional situation regarding the closure of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the Group called on delegations to reach a consensual decision, ideally before the end of May 2021, on the Secretary-General's request for authority to enter into the related commitments.

11. **Mr. Camelli** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Andorra, Georgia, Monaco, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, paid tribute to United Nations personnel for their dedication and adaptability during the pandemic. The European Union and its member States strongly supported United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and would strengthen their commitments in accordance with the priorities of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, issued as part of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, namely, political solutions; women, peace and security; protection; safety and security; performance and accountability; peacebuilding and sustaining peace; partnerships; and conduct. Acutely aware of the shared responsibility that peacekeeping entailed, the European Union and its member States worked closely with the United Nations and the African Union on issues related to peace and security. They provided peacekeeping with uniformed personnel, equipment and other capabilities, and commended all Member States that participated actively in peacekeeping missions. More than ever, the Committee should be aware of the demanding conditions under which peacekeepers worked, and the importance of safety and security in peacekeeping. The

European Union and its member States commended United Nations peacekeepers on their hard work, bravery, and commitment, and paid tribute to those who had sacrificed their lives for peace.

12. In an increasingly complex environment, it was the Committee's responsibility to ensure that peacekeeping was fit for purpose. The States members of the European Union would ensure that peacekeeping operations were adequately financed and equipped. As the second-largest collective contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping budget, those States were concerned about the Organization's financial situation and ability to fulfil its mandates. They stood ready to examine ways of improving liquidity in addition to the measures taken by the Committee two years previously. They called upon all Member States to pay their contributions to peacekeeping missions in full, on time and without conditions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It was the Committee's responsibility to enable long-term planning, for the missions and for the peacekeepers themselves.

13. The difficult circumstances in peacekeeping had been exacerbated by COVID-19, but the reform of the peace and security pillar had fostered the resilience and adaptability necessary to face the pandemic. The future impact of the pandemic was difficult to predict in the diverse environments in which the United Nations peacekeeping missions operated, and he welcomed the lessons learned from the crisis. He called upon the Committee to fully exercise its oversight function while ensuring that missions had adequate resources – including the necessary information technology and investments to adapt and build resilience – to implement their mandates with enough flexibility to cope with uncertainty.

14. Peacekeeping resources could not be considered in isolation from administrative and budgetary policies, and it was the Committee's responsibility to provide the Secretariat with the necessary guidance on the matter. The European Union would comment later in the session on the cross-cutting aspects of peacekeeping, in particular women and peace and security, gender parity, the environmental footprint of missions, human rights, and the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse. It attached great importance to the link between performance management and the adequate financing and cost-efficiency of missions.

15. He was confident that solutions would be found to the challenges related to remote working conditions. The Committee must adhere to deadlines that allowed the Secretariat to implement General Assembly resolutions in a timely manner. Delegations must have the political will to adopt adequate, sustainable budgets

that allowed effective mandate implementation. The Committee should send a positive message to staff and to troops in the field by concluding its work in the allotted time and achieving consensus on the matters before it.

16. **Mr. Velázquez Castillo** (Mexico) said that, as a contributor of financial and human resources, his Government was committed to peacekeeping operations, which were essential to international peace and security. He paid tribute to the civil, military and police personnel working in those operations, often under complex and dangerous circumstances. The most important matter before the Committee was the approval, in good time, of the resources required by the operations so that they could fulfil their mandates and meet the pandemic-related challenges to sustainable peace and the safety of staff. His delegation would pay particular attention to the discussions on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), which were of particular interest to the Latin American and Caribbean region, and whose efficient closure would provide opportunities for learning, innovation and replication in other peacekeeping operations. In addition to the budget performance reports, Mexico would pay special attention to the questions of transparency and accountability addressed in the reports and recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

17. Cases of sexual exploitation and abuse must be properly addressed and the United Nations zero-tolerance policy must be strictly applied, including in peacekeeping operations. One substantiated case of such abuse was too many. The General Assembly had not reached agreement on a resolution on cross-cutting issues at its seventy-fourth session. A resolution on the matter must be adopted to uphold victims' rights, fight impunity, promote the inclusion of civil society and external partners, and strengthen strategic communications to enhance awareness and transparency, particularly at a time when the pandemic had deepened inequalities and increased the risk to people who were already vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.

18. Mexico would give careful consideration to the report of the Secretary-General on improving the financial situation of the United Nations (A/75/387/Add.1). The Organization's financial situation was crucial to fulfilling mandates and honouring commitments resulting from the operation, management and development of peacekeeping activities. It was also essential to the ongoing reform process and to the strengthening of the Secretary-General's commitment to

making the Organization more effective, agile and modern. The proposal should also be analysed in the light of the economic and financial effects of the pandemic.

19. Mexico would pay particular attention to the discussion of the budgetary consequences of fulfilling the mandate received from the General Assembly in its resolution 75/245 B on the United Nations common system. It was essential to the common system and the decisions of the International Civil Service Commission that the Secretary-General have the resources required to produce a detailed report containing proposed options for resolving the divergences in the jurisprudence of the tribunals of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations on matters relating to the Commission.

20. **Mr. Kennedy** (United States of America) paid tribute, in particular during the COVID-19 crisis, to United Nations peacekeepers, many of whom had made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace. Peacekeeping operations were essential to finding political solutions to threats to international peace and security, and must have the resources to implement Security Council mandates, including by protecting civilians, promoting human rights, supporting rule-of-law institutions and defending their personnel. His delegation would work with other Member States to ensure that peacekeeping operations had the political and financial support that they needed to be effective.

21. The United States was carefully examining the Secretary-General's estimate of financial resources for peacekeeping operations for 2021/22. The agility of the response of the Secretariat and the missions to the pandemic in 2020 had been enabled by the Secretary-General's management reforms, and the United States urged the Secretariat to make further improvements in effectiveness and efficiency through the implementation of those reforms.

22. The Committee must consider its role in the administrative and budgetary policies that guided peacekeeping. Its inability, at the previous four sessions, to reach consensus on a draft resolution on cross-cutting issues, was an abdication of its responsibility to missions and the Secretariat. It must take action to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers, combat sexual exploitation and abuse, enhance performance measurement and accountability, improve service provision to missions and troop- and police-contributing countries, and implement environmental safeguards. His delegation looked forward to receiving more detailed information about the plan, mandated by the Committee in 2020, for the implementation, in all missions, of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System. His delegation hoped that, in 2021, the

Committee would reach consensus on a draft resolution on cross-cutting issues to address the challenges to peacekeeping operations.

23. **Mr. Dai Bing** (China) said that financial resources were the foundation of the Organization's governance, and the peacekeeping budget was the basis for ensuring that peacekeeping operations could execute their mandates. The Committee should review the peacekeeping budget in an evidence-based, scientific and prudent manner, approve it within the allotted time and provide peacekeeping operations with the necessary resources. The Secretariat should strengthen comprehensive budget performance management, improve internal control and rigorously enforce financial discipline so that every penny spent enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. China supported the role of the Board of Auditors as an external audit and oversight body that made valuable recommendations on budget management.

24. United Nations peacekeeping operations had made outstanding contributions to international peace and security, and China paid tribute to all peacekeepers. The progress made in the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative marked a fresh start for peacekeeping operations. At the same time, as peacekeepers operated in increasingly complex and dangerous environments, their safety and security must be improved. China and other States had established the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers in order to advance the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and initiatives. The procedures for the donation by China of 300,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to United Nations peacekeepers, with priority given to those deployed in Africa, were under way.

25. The financial situation of the United Nations left no room for optimism and the peacekeeping budget faced major challenges. Liquidity problems had made it difficult for missions to implement their mandates, and delays in reimbursement had exacerbated the financial burden on troop- and police-contributing countries. All Member States should respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for the payment of contributions, and those with the capacity to do so, in particular major contributors in arrears, should fulfil their financial obligations to the Organization in full and on time. The United Nations should reimburse troop- and police-contributing countries as soon as possible.

26. The year 2021 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the restoration of the lawful rights of China at the United Nations. As the largest developing country, a permanent member of the Security Council, and the second-largest

contributor to the regular and peacekeeping budgets, China strongly supported the Organization's work and had paid its contributions in full, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing financial constraints at home. It would continue to uphold multilateralism and the United Nations-centred international system.

27. **Ms. Kinyungu** (Kenya) said that her delegation would closely follow the Committee's discussions on the administrative and budgetary aspects of peacekeeping operations, and the oversight-related aspects addressed by the Board of Auditors, JIU and OIOS. Kenya had not wavered in its commitment to peace and security since the deployment, in 1948, of the first United Nations peacekeeping mission. Peacekeeping remained essential to the Organization's efforts to advance global peace and security. Her delegation paid tribute to peacekeepers, in particular those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, and to the peacekeeping support staff at Headquarters.

28. The increasingly violent and unpredictable peacekeeping environment exposed peacekeepers to unprecedented safety and security threats. Kenya and other countries that contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), one of the most difficult peacekeeping missions, had lost soldiers, in particular as a result of improvised explosive devices laid by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. The threat was replicated in missions in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and elsewhere. Under those conditions, peacekeeping mandates had been realigned to include tasks not traditionally assigned to peacekeepers. Fragile and post-conflict contexts had demanded that clear links be established between, on the one hand, cross-border efforts and regional peace and security and, on the other, peace operations and peacebuilding. Peacekeeping operations needed to incorporate elements of peacebuilding to reinforce resilience, mitigate cycles of relapse, and enhance the capacity of host countries' governance and security institutions. A focus on the safety, protection and security of peacekeeping operations and peacekeepers was needed; her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and emphasized the need for peacekeepers to be well-trained, properly equipped and sufficiently facilitated.

29. Despite the constraints resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, peace operations, including those – such as AMISOM – that were conducted under regional arrangements, should be sustainably financed. Unfortunately, peacekeeping operations were allocated inadequate resources to fulfil their mandates, and yet Member States demanded high performance and

accountability from peacekeepers. Member States should allocate adequate resources to ensure that peacekeepers were safe and secure, and that mandates were fulfilled efficiently.

30. The Secretariat should ensure that the Peace Fund of the African Union was well-funded. United Nations peace operations should enhance their partnerships with such regional and subregional mechanisms as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in order to strengthen the links between peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development.

31. **Mr. Kimura** (Japan) paid tribute to the dedication of United Nations peacekeepers, especially under the current circumstances, and to their sacrifices in the cause of peace. United Nations peacekeeping operations were essential to international peace and security, and must be adequately funded to fulfil their mandates. However, resources must be used effectively and efficiently, and his delegation would focus, at the current part of the resumed session, on accountability and the impact of operations, and on each mission's performance. With regard to activities that were undertaken by non-mission entities and funded through the peacekeeping budget, his delegation would carefully examine whether the level of accountability requested by the General Assembly was being achieved, and the rationale for the sources of financing.

32. No resolution on cross-cutting policies had been adopted at the preceding four sessions. His delegation aimed to uphold the responsibility of Member States to provide United Nations peacekeeping operations with guidance on a wide range of administrative and budgetary policies.

33. Seconded active-duty military and police personnel contributed valuable expertise to the Organization and played a significant role in mandate fulfilment. The Committee must decide on a solution that enabled all Member States to second such personnel to Headquarters and the field.

34. **Mr. Ugarelli** (Peru) said that Peru had contributed troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1958, and hoped to increase the number of Peruvian peacekeepers. The Committee should take a collaborative approach to its discussions on peacekeeping, in order to achieve consensus. Because of the complexity and insecurity of the conflict scenarios in which they operated, peacekeeping missions must be adequately funded so that they could fulfil their mandates and protect their personnel. The Secretary-General had affirmed the need for such funding by launching the latest stage of his Action for Peacekeeping initiative, known as Action for Peacekeeping Plus, through which

he aimed to consolidate the progress made and renew momentum. The financial resources required to strengthen peacekeeping operations through the initiative were minimal compared with the ravages of war, and were therefore entirely justified. Peacekeeping operations must nevertheless continuously strive to improve efficiency. That responsibility was shared by the operations, the troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and the Security Council, which established the mandates.

35. **Ms. Valles** (Philippines) paid tribute to the sacrifices made by United Nations peacekeeping personnel in maintaining global peace and security, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of the improving health situation, her delegation looked forward to the updating of the Committee's working methods on the basis of advice from the United Nations and relevant authorities. As a result of the pandemic, peacekeeping missions had suspended troop patrols and restricted the movement of personnel and equipment; in certain missions, the effectiveness of forces had been reduced and mandate implementation had been impaired. Nevertheless, missions had continued to carry out their mandates and had assisted countries in their pandemic response. As highlighted in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/75/19), missions had adapted their working practices by facilitating humanitarian access, combating disinformation and using the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on mandate fulfilment.

36. As contact was likely among United Nations peacekeepers, and between them and local populations, peacekeepers should be vaccinated against COVID-19 to mitigate the adverse effects of potential outbreaks and protect civilians. Her delegation would welcome updates from the Secretariat on its vaccination programmes in various peacekeeping operations.

37. In the current uncertain times, the accountability of uniformed and civilian personnel contributed to the safety and security of peacekeepers and civilians, and should be continuously improved.

38. Appropriate budgetary funds must be made available to meet the requirements of personnel. The approved peacekeeping budget for 2020/21 had decreased by 3.4 per cent compared with the 2019/20 budget, which in turn had decreased by 4.9 per cent compared with the 2018/19 budget. The reduced budget might not be commensurate with mandated tasks or with operational requirements. The budgets of several peacekeeping missions had been limited, owing mainly to Member State budget cuts and late payments, which

had resulted in cash shortages and delays in reimbursements. Although the financial strain had been alleviated in part through the management of the cash balances of all active peacekeeping operations as a pool since the latter part of 2019 and the issuance of assessment letters for the full budget period, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/307, the liquidity crisis and financial pressure remained, and had been exacerbated by the economic consequences of COVID-19. Peacekeeping operations protected civilians, prevented conflict, reduced violence, strengthened security and empowered national authorities; sufficient funds must therefore be allocated to meet missions' needs and ensure that peacekeepers were safe and secure.

39. **Mr. Mmalane** (Botswana) said that his delegation commended the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee on the timely issuance of the majority of the reports before the Fifth Committee, a long-standing request of the General Assembly. That timeliness would enable the Fifth Committee to examine the Secretary-General's peacekeeping budget estimate effectively. His delegation looked forward, in particular, to discussing procurement; the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse; other cross-cutting issues, including the safety and well-being of peacekeeping personnel and the support provided to host countries in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic; the increasing number of long-vacant posts, their impact on critical functions in peacekeeping missions and the reasons for which they had not been filled expeditiously, as requested by the Assembly; and the impact on mandate fulfilment of programmatic activities and quick-impact projects, long hailed for saving lives, helping the Organization to gain trust among local populations, and preventing and resolving conflicts. His delegation looked forward to receiving information on the response to the Assembly's request for the Organization to deepen its partnership, cooperation and coordination with regional and subregional entities on peace and security issues, in accordance with relevant mandates, especially in Africa. The United Nations should work closely with those organizations to avoid duplication of effort while maximizing the gains.

40. Botswana commended the Secretary-General on ensuring business continuity for the Secretariat and intergovernmental processes, and in the field, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It hoped that the lessons learned were being adequately captured. In informal consultations, Botswana would seek further information on collaboration between the Secretariat and United Nations agencies and programmes to tackle the pandemic. It would seek further clarification on the issues raised by the bodies that reported to the Fifth

Committee, including the Advisory Committee, JIU, OIOS and the Board of Auditors.

41. **Ms. Jun Ji Sun** (Republic of Korea) said that her Government strongly supported United Nations peacekeeping operations and was honoured to host the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference in Seoul in December 2021. Peacekeeping operations should be funded appropriately for mandate implementation, and should also be effective and efficient, and accountable for their budgets.

42. The current part of the resumed session was the second time that the Committee had discussed the peacekeeping budget since the outbreak of the pandemic. Her delegation paid tribute to all peacekeepers, who had been striving to fulfil their mandates while meeting the additional challenges resulting from COVID-19. The relevant areas should be adequately funded to minimize the pandemic's adverse effect on the implementation of peacekeeping mandates. In tandem, areas in which effectiveness and efficiency could be increased should be identified. Practices observed during the pandemic could help the Organization to adjust to new challenges. Technology could also enhance peace operations, and her delegation took note of the lessons learned from the remote auditing of peacekeeping operations and the use of the Umoja enterprise resource planning system by the Board of Auditors.

43. Her delegation was concerned that a resolution on cross-cutting issues, which were essential to the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of peacekeeping operations, had been deferred for several years. The Republic of Korea looked forward to reaching consensus and providing the Secretariat with clear guidelines on the matter. In particular, given the General Assembly's commitment to the system-wide zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to combat such abuse in peacekeeping missions, efforts that were critical to the credibility of peacekeeping activities. Her delegation also welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to increase the proportion of the electricity consumed by the Secretariat that was generated from renewable energy sources to 80 per cent by 2030. The use of renewable energy would reduce not only the environmental impact of missions but also their high energy costs.

44. **Mr. Croker** (United Kingdom) paid tribute to the sacrifices of peacekeepers and those who supported them, particularly in the current challenging circumstances. The provision of adequate, cost-effective resources, and of troops, personnel and training, was

essential to mandate fulfilment in peacekeeping. Missions should be well-run and operationally effective. They should manage resources efficiently, in accordance with the management reforms, and take evidence-based decisions in order to support the fulfilment of mandates, including those related to safety and security, performance, accountability, human rights protection, effective transitions and environmental impact. Given that peacekeeping was the largest contributor to climate change in the United Nations system, he welcomed the improved reporting on the environmental impact of peacekeeping, which he urged the Secretariat to reduce further, including in mission transitions. His delegation looked forward to discussing such matters with a view to achieving consensus on a draft resolution on cross-cutting issues.

45. The United Kingdom welcomed the reports of bodies such as OIOS and the Board of Auditors, which were essential to a culture of accountability and continuous improvement at the Organization, and with whose recommendations the Secretariat and peacekeeping operations should engage fully. Despite efforts to take a system-wide, victim-centred, zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse, the number of cases remained high. Delegations must work together so that the Committee could speak with one voice to ensure that the United Nations was mandated and equipped to eradicate such abuse. The United Kingdom was the largest contributor to the trust fund in support of victims of such abuse, and he encouraged other Member States to contribute to the fund. He also looked forward to resolving the long-standing issue of seconded personnel, building on the efforts made at the first part of the resumed session. The Committee should show its support for peacekeeping operations by completing its work within the allotted time.

46. **Mr. Abdurrohman** (Indonesia) paid tribute to United Nations peacekeepers worldwide, particularly given the uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia was a long-standing contributor to peacekeeping operations; some 2,800 Indonesian personnel, including 185 women, were currently serving in eight missions. As a major troop- and police-contributing country, Indonesia was committed to making peacekeeping more effective.

47. Despite global achievements in combating the pandemic, COVID-19 remained a threat. In discussions related to peacekeeping, delegations should bear in mind that the pandemic had made the missions' work more challenging and posed a risk to peacekeepers' safety and security.

48. The resources allocated should be commensurate with mission mandates, which could not be fulfilled without adequate financial resources. A lack of resources would affect performance and jeopardize peacekeepers' safety and security.

49. The Secretariat must reimburse troop- and police-contributing countries in a timely fashion so that they could maintain their operational capabilities and their long-term contribution to peacekeeping operations. The rate of reimbursement should also be raised to take into account the increasing cost of deploying troops and equipment to the missions. Troop- and police-contributing countries should be better represented, including in leadership positions, at Headquarters and in the missions. Staff should be selected and appointed to leadership positions in the missions on the basis of merit, with due regard to their long-standing contribution. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [70/305](#), the Secretariat should end any monopoly on leadership positions in peacekeeping missions and make conscious efforts to diversify the leadership.

50. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that, at the second part of the resumed session, the Committee's work was focused on the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Given the tight schedule of the consultations and the importance of concluding the session in a timely fashion, documentation must be submitted to the Committee as soon as possible and within the established deadlines. Although the COVID-19 pandemic greatly complicated the Member States' discussions, the extraordinary conditions should not affect the quality of the decisions taken.

51. His delegation attached great importance to the administrative and budgetary aspects of peacekeeping, accurate budget planning, the rational use of resources and the effective management of peacekeeping operations. It was regrettable that the General Assembly had not adopted a resolution on cross-cutting issues for four years. At the same time, his delegation welcomed the Assembly's approval of various instructions addressed to the Secretary-General in resolutions on the financing of each peacekeeping operation. It was convinced that the formulations agreed upon in the summer of 2020 could form the basis of a resolution on cross-cutting issues. A pragmatic approach to the resolution would allow the Committee to reach a consensus. His delegation also expected that, for the first time in many years, Member States would at last be able to take a decision on closed peacekeeping operations.

52. The Secretary-General proposed to allocate \$6.5 billion to peacekeeping operations and their supporting bodies, an amount approximately \$350 million,

or 4.6 per cent, lower than the combined appropriations for the previous fiscal year. His delegation was puzzled by the fact that, despite the gradual drawdown of operations in accordance with Security Council resolutions adopted in recent years, expenditure under the support account for peacekeeping operations was increasing annually. For example, for 2021/22, the Secretary-General proposed that the resources for the support account be increased by \$6 million, or 1.7 per cent, from \$355.7 to \$361.7 million.

53. The search for additional savings should be aimed at improving the efficiency and accountability of the Secretariat. Expenditure under the support account should be reduced first, followed by the expenses of missions in the field. Above all, cuts in peacekeeping budgets should enhance effectiveness without undermining the fulfilment of Security Council mandates. When the appropriations for each peacekeeping operation were approved, all the specific characteristics of the operation's activities should be taken into account. With regard to seconded military and police personnel, the Committee should find a solution that took into account the interests of all Member States without violating the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

54. **Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh) said that, as the leading troop- and police-contributing country, Bangladesh attached particular importance to the second part of the resumed session. Bangladesh was a long-standing contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, with nearly 7,000 peacekeepers serving in seven missions. She paid tribute to all peacekeepers, in particular the 4,000 – including 150 Bangladeshis – who had made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

55. Peacekeeping operations were central to the Organization's efforts to promote international peace and security. Sufficient, sustained budgetary resources were critical in order for peacekeeping missions to carry out their mandates. Missions must therefore be sufficiently funded, while also being effective, efficient and accountable for their budgets. Allocations for missions must be made rationally and prudently, on the basis of requirements, facts and data, and the tendency to make cuts for the sake of cuts must be avoided. While peacekeepers put their lives on the line, it was the Member States' duty to ensure that logistics supply, equipment support, training and capacity-building were adequately funded. She thanked the United Nations for reimbursing the troop- and police-contributing countries in a timely fashion, and for training and capacity-building initiatives. To ease the peacekeeping budgetary situation, Member States must pay their assessed contributions in a timely fashion. She urged all Member

States to pay their peacekeeping assessments in full and on time.

56. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, peacekeepers had continued to maintain peace, stability and security in conflict-prone countries and regions. They had also supported the pandemic response efforts of their host Governments and communities by distributing essential drugs and protective equipment, and raising community awareness. In the process, many had been exposed to the virus and some had lost their lives. Her Government was trying to ensure that all its peacekeepers were fully vaccinated before they left Bangladesh for peace missions. Peacekeepers must be prioritized for vaccination everywhere. Their safety and security while on duty was paramount. She thanked the United Nations departments that had addressed the pandemic-related challenges to the health and safety of peacekeepers. In considering the peacekeeping budget, Member States should take into account the impact of COVID-19 on peacekeeping operations, which should be allocated sufficient resources to cope with those challenges, including medical needs and medical evacuation. One lesson of the pandemic was that all missions must be better prepared for future pandemics and emergencies.

57. More effort was needed to ensure that women participated fully in peacekeeping in all positions. While the Organization had introduced targeted initiatives and made some progress, the representation of women was low, especially in senior leadership positions. Her delegation welcomed the call, in Security Council resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#), for the allocation of more resources to create an enabling environment for women in peacekeeping. Women's roles should be diversified through targeted training and capacity-building. Greater participation of women in peacekeeping was a key objective of her country's action plan on women and peace and security. Bangladesh stood ready to provide more women peacekeepers at all levels, including in command positions, and in diversified roles.

58. She hoped that, at the current part of the resumed session, the Committee would uphold its long-standing tradition of consensus-based decision-making. All delegations must demonstrate the utmost flexibility and engage constructively in discussions to ensure that peacekeeping missions were appropriately funded for mandate fulfilment.

59. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that adjustments would be made as necessary during the course of the session.

60. *It was so decided.*

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

Cross-cutting issues (A/75/121, A/75/301 (Part II), A/75/719, A/75/719/Add.1, A/75/754, A/75/803, A/75/820 and A/75/847; JIU/REP/2020/1)

61. **The Chair** drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/75/754) and to the related introductory statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources, to be made available on the Committee's website.

62. **Mr. Bachar Bong** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/75/847), said that the proposals put forward in the Secretary-General's report on the matter (A/75/754) did not entail additional budgetary implications.

63. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the efforts being made to strengthen the United Nations system-wide response to sexual exploitation and abuse. It was of the view that introducing the Secretary-General's progress reports during the main part of the session of the General Assembly could further underscore the holistic, cross-pillar and cross-cutting nature of matters related to such abuse. Bearing in mind the extensive measures taken thus far, the Advisory Committee remained convinced that the Secretary-General should take a more analytical approach in his future reports on the matter. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to assess the impact of the initiatives implemented and establish measurable parameters to monitor progress and identify shortcomings, including those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

64. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide a full account of the system-wide resources dedicated to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, in order to identify optimum administrative arrangements and ensure adequate and sustainable funding. In its report, the Advisory Committee made specific observations, including on risk management, services provided to victims, the timely completion of investigations and the implementation of effective accountability measures. The Advisory Committee was concerned at the overall increase in the number of allegations, in particular those involving implementing partners, and recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to perform a detailed analysis of

the factors underpinning that increase. One substantiated case of sexual exploitation and abuse was too many, and the Advisory Committee remained committed to the Organization's zero-tolerance policy.

65. **Ms. Ndiaye** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), introducing the report of OIOS on its activities on peace operations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020 (A/75/301 (Part II)), said that OIOS had issued 244 oversight reports relating to peace operations in 2020. They had included 361 recommendations, all of which had been accepted by programme managers. Three of the recommendations had been classified as critical, as they addressed risks that required the immediate attention of management. One of the critical recommendations was related to safety and security in ammunition storage facilities in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and the other two were related to the oversight, by the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, of strategic planning and risk management in the context of mission drawdown and transition.

66. In its workplan for 2020, the Office had given priority to the implementation of the Secretariat reforms, organizational culture, procurement and the supply chain, and missions in transition. It had also focused on strengthening the centralized, business-enabling functions that supported mandate implementation by peace operations – the second line of defence in the Secretariat's risk management and control system. The onset of COVID-19 had posed such challenges for the delivery of results as reduced availability of mission and Headquarters staff and longer lead times for obtaining information. Moreover, the shift to remote working arrangements had made it impossible to conduct physical verifications of some assets or to observe the ethical climate directly. Nevertheless, OIOS had repurposed its workplans to ensure that its resources were effectively utilized to cover those areas that added the most value to the Organization's performance, and to address the risks arising from the pandemic. OIOS had also strengthened its use of data analytics and reporting and its remote oversight techniques, including by implementing remote interviewing of victims and witnesses in the Investigations Division. In addition, the Office had supported the Organization during the pandemic by providing advice on missions' initial responses to COVID-19 in order to ensure the continuity of critical functions and staff safety, and on the measures taken by missions to manage the recently increased delegation of authority. OIOS had also cooperated effectively with management and staff in entities covered by its oversight activities, and had coordinated

with the Board of Auditors and JIU in order to enhance synergies and efficiencies in the discharge of the three bodies' mandates.

67. Introducing the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the prevention, response and victim support efforts against sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations Secretariat staff and related personnel (A/75/820), she said that the objective of the evaluation had been to determine the relevance and effectiveness of prevention, response and victim support efforts under the Secretary-General's new approach to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, as set out in his report on that topic (A/71/818). The evaluation had revealed that the Organization had made visible progress in bringing together different parts of the United Nations system to combat such abuse. Although every step of the processing of allegations had taken longer than stipulated, prevention and response measures had been found to be relevant and effective.

68. The imposition of administrative sanctions by the Organization for substantiated allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse had demonstrated the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy. However, efforts to hold officials and experts on mission criminally accountable for crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse through referral by the United Nations had mostly been unsuccessful. More robust support for victims was also required. Overall, despite the significant progress made, long-standing and systemic issues remained, requiring the highest level of attention and stakeholder cooperation. To address those issues, OIOS had made 17 recommendations, 16 of which had been accepted by the relevant Secretariat entities.

69. Introducing the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the organizational culture in peacekeeping operations (A/75/803), she said that the purpose of the evaluation had been to assess the extent to which the organizational culture in 14 peacekeeping operations was aligned with the normative framework of the United Nations and supported the effective functioning of the missions. The evaluation had focused primarily on the perceptions and experiences of mission personnel in relation to selected dimensions of organizational culture, including leadership and management; accountability, ethics and integrity; teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing; risk appetite; sensitive issues; and gender. It was important for mission leaders to understand those perceptions and experiences, as they influenced the actions of mission personnel.

70. The evaluation had shown that perceptions of organizational culture differed from mission to mission, as well as within missions. Uniformed personnel had

generally been more positive than civilian staff about the organizational culture in their missions. Female international civilian staff had consistently expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction. In part owing to the difficult operating environments and internal diversity of missions, the perceptions of organizational culture were often not fully aligned with the high standards adopted by the Organization and needed to be improved. OIOS had made two critical and nine important recommendations; the two critical recommendations were related to the need to improve trust in the handling of misconduct and to address the causes of low morale and dissatisfaction, particularly among female personnel.

71. **Ms. Roscher** (Joint Inspection Unit), speaking via video link to introduce the report of JIU entitled "Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function" (JIU/REP/2020/1), transmitted to the General Assembly by means of a note by the Secretary-General (A/75/719), said that the purpose of the review had been to examine the current state of the investigation function in United Nations system organizations and the progress made since 2011. JIU had previously reviewed the investigation function in 2000 and 2011. The objectives of the 2020 review had been to assess the adequacy of the organizational, structural and operational arrangements for the investigation function; identify gaps, good practices and lessons learned; and explore opportunities for improved cooperation and coordination.

72. The review had revealed that, while considerable progress had been made, a number of previously observed shortcomings and weaknesses persisted, and new challenges had emerged. An investigation function that was strong, independent and underpinned by appropriate resources was essential for combating misconduct, mitigating reputational and financial risks, ensuring individual and organizational integrity and accountability, and maintaining confidence in the Organization. The findings demonstrated the need to strengthen the investigation function in order to maintain the expected levels of accountability and integrity within United Nations system organizations.

73. In the report, JIU had made 10 formal recommendations, 9 of which were addressed to the legislative bodies and 1 to the executive heads of the participating organizations. It had also made 27 informal recommendations addressed to the legislative bodies and executive heads. The purpose of the recommendations was to enhance the independence and capability of the investigation function and to achieve greater system-wide coherence and cooperation. The findings and recommendations contained in the report were designed

to help legislative bodies to take decisions that would strengthen the investigation function, accountability and integrity, and thereby to assist them in fulfilling their governance responsibilities.

74. JIU had found that fragmentation of responsibility for investigations, including pre-investigation activities, remained widespread and unacceptably high. In many organizations, investigations and related work were carried out by functions and bodies other than the investigation function, such as human resources management or investigative panels composed of staff members who were not professional investigators. That situation jeopardized the independence, impartiality and objectivity of investigations and related activities, resulted in the inconsistent application of criteria and standards and in conflicts of interest, and adversely affected quality, accountability and trust.

75. The investigation function continued to lack structural autonomy and operational independence, and was thus inadequately protected against interference by management. Independence was a prerequisite for the effective and unbiased fulfilment of investigation mandates. JIU had assessed the degree of independence of the investigation function against 14 indicators, including the existence of term limits and post-employment restrictions for heads of internal oversight offices, the existence of unrestricted access to legislative bodies for heads of internal oversight offices and the authority of heads of internal oversight offices to open investigations without the prior approval of executive heads. The results of the assessment had shown that, in many organizations, the independence of the investigation function still needed to be strengthened.

76. Despite the remedial measures taken by some organizations, investigation capacity and resources had not kept pace with the rising demands for investigation services and the significant increases in caseloads in most organizations. That situation had resulted in a growing case backlog and an increase in the average duration of investigations. It had also prevented organizations from taking swift action to hold perpetrators accountable, had contributed to negative perceptions, such as the perception that misconduct was not being properly addressed, and had adversely affected organizations' reputations. Such perceptions made it challenging to maintain a culture of ethics and integrity within organizations.

77. Overarching organizational policy frameworks, which guided the operation of the investigation function in conjunction with more investigation-specific policies and procedures, needed to be updated in order to strengthen their coherence, promote an enabling

environment for the operation of the function and mitigate the risks resulting from incongruity and incoherence. The function was facing new challenges, in particular related to complaints of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, which received a great deal of attention and required adequate investigation capacity and investigators with a special skill set. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System had developed a model policy on sexual harassment that had been adopted by a number of organizations. A subgroup of the Task Force focused on sexual-harassment-related investigations. JIU stressed the need for organizations to implement the outcomes of the work of the Task Force and its subgroups in order to improve investigations of sexual harassment, strengthen accountability and integrity, and promote system-wide coherence.

78. Although the Secretariat and the United Nations funds and programmes had clear policies on the investigation of allegations against executive heads, the specialized agencies often did not. JIU therefore suggested that organizations should follow the draft guidance of the United Nations Representatives of Investigative Services on the development of policies and arrangements for the investigation of such allegations. In addition, a number of organizations needed to update their policies on the handling of allegations against heads and personnel of internal oversight offices, including by establishing formal procedures with respect thereto. Organizations should also cooperate and exchange good practices in order to harmonize investigation terminology, case categorization systems, and practices related to the generation of statistics, record-keeping and reporting.

79. With regard to the responses of participating organizations to the report, as summarized in the related comments of the Secretary-General and CEB, contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the review ([A/75/719/Add.1](#)), JIU noted that organizations welcomed the report, which would help to guide decision-making by governing bodies and contained suggestions that could be tailored to the needs of individual entities depending on their exposure to the risks associated with the various types of wrongdoing. Those needs varied in accordance with the entities' business model, culture, type of work and field environment, and the geographical scope of their activities. Organizations therefore supported some recommendations only in part. In that regard, JIU pointed out that the recommendations had been formulated to address specific shortcomings identified

in the course of the review and acknowledged that a one-size-fits-all approach might not be feasible. However, that should not prevent participating organizations from finding ways to strengthen their investigation function on the basis of the findings and recommendations contained in the review, in particular those related to the fragmentation of investigation responsibilities and the independence of the function.

80. **Ms. Pietracci** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), speaking via video link to introduce the comments of the Secretary-General and CEB on the report of JIU, as contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the matter ([A/75/719/Add.1](#)), said that United Nations system organizations welcomed the report of JIU and appreciated the fact that the suggestions contained therein could be tailored to address the needs of individual entities depending on their exposure to the risks associated with the various types of wrongdoing, needs that varied in accordance with the entities' business model, culture, type of work and field environment, and the geographical scope of their activities. Organizations also acknowledged that the report could play a valuable role in informing decision-making by governing bodies.

81. **The Chair** drew attention to the letter dated 31 August 2020 from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly, transmitting the 2020 edition of the Manual on Policies and Procedures concerning the Reimbursement and Control of Contingent-Owned Equipment of Troop/Police Contributors Participating in Peacekeeping Missions ([A/75/121](#)).

82. **Ms. Kaba Saleh** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, paid tribute to all United Nations peacekeepers, in particular those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of global peace and security. She said that the overall proposed requirements of \$6.46 billion for peacekeeping operations for the 2021/22 period were \$310 million lower than the level approved for the 2020/21 period, which had itself been lower than that approved for the 2019/20 period. While the efficiency gains achieved were welcome, the Committee must not lose sight of the need to ensure appropriate mandate fulfilment. Levels of approved resources must be commensurate with mandated activities and operational environments.

83. Peacekeeping operations were one of the most effective multilateral tools for preventing the outbreak of or relapse into conflict and for paving the way to sustainable peace. However, those operations faced many challenges, including wide-ranging mandates, increasingly complex political and security environments, and threats targeted at United Nations personnel, while

transnational threats continued to affect stability in some host countries. In addition, peacekeeping operations had been operating under special circumstances for more than a year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given those challenges, Member States must renew their collective commitment to supporting the Organization's peace efforts.

84. The progress made in consolidating the new system of delegation of authority was welcome. However, accountability and transparency in all United Nations activities remained of paramount importance, and should therefore be evaluated and improved on an ongoing basis. Quick-impact projects and programmatic activities were crucial for successful mandate implementation. The Organization should continue to design quick-impact projects on a case-by-case basis, drawing on previous experiences and lessons learned, in order to build confidence in missions, their mandates, and political and peace processes, taking into account the ability of such projects to generate support for the military and police components of missions, a matter of concern to troop- and police-contributing countries. Although they accounted for a small share of mission budgets, programmatic activities were essential to advancing political processes and ensuring wider mandate implementation. In recent years, the Security Council had increased the number of programmatic activities in peacekeeping missions with a view to preventing and resolving conflicts and building lasting peace.

85. The Group supported the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and welcomed the Organization's commitment to ensuring that it did not remain silent or passive in response to reported incidents, to protecting and supporting victims through a victim-centred approach and to establishing effective preventive measures and policies. The Group looked forward to examining the progress made in adopting a more unified, system-wide approach to sexual exploitation and abuse. It was also interested to learn more about the efforts made to strengthen accountability for such abuse, noting the Advisory Committee's suggestion that a thorough review of the impact and efficiency of such efforts be conducted. In addition, the Group looked forward to receiving more information on the results of the launch of the electronic form for the reporting of incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse, and on the related financial arrangements. The Secretary-General should continue to take a victim-centred approach and establish effective preventive policies and measures, in particular in relation to implementing partners.

86. The Group looked forward to learning more about the plan to implement the Comprehensive Planning and

Performance Assessment System in missions not included in the System's initial roll-out in 2018. The Group welcomed initiatives to harness technology in order to enhance results and achieve efficiencies, and believed that information was essential to improving responses to the daily challenges faced by peacekeeping operations. It therefore welcomed the improvements in peacekeeping data standards and looked forward to learning more about how they would enhance analysis and reporting capabilities. Performance in peacekeeping operations was a collective endeavour involving Member States, the Secretariat and all components of missions, and any attempt to use performance assessment as a basis for making further arbitrary cuts to the peacekeeping budget could undermine mandate implementation in the future and even erode the hard-earned progress already made.

87. The Group would seek further information on the ways in which specific programmes and initiatives and relevant aspects of senior managers' compacts would increase the representation of troop- and police-contributing countries, in particular developing countries, which had made immeasurable contributions to peacekeeping, in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/262 C](#). The Group noted the increase in the demand for environmental technical support services for peacekeeping missions in recent years, as demonstrated by the many related initiatives being implemented in such missions, and acknowledged the progress made in the implementation of the five pillars of the multi-year environment strategy for peace operations. The Group would be interested to learn how the Secretariat planned to leverage the comparative advantage of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the leading global environmental authority in the United Nations system in order to implement the strategy.

88. The second part of the resumed session should focus on the financing of peacekeeping operations. The Committee must conclude its deliberations in a timely manner to ensure that peacekeeping operations were provided with the necessary resources to fulfil their mandates. Matters unrelated to peacekeeping should therefore not be allocated for consideration at the second part of the resumed session unless their consideration was deemed urgent. Notwithstanding the importance of the JIU report ([JIU/REP/2020/1](#)), the report's scope was not limited to cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations.

89. The Group attached great importance to the provision of adequate health care to peacekeepers, and welcomed the implementation of the policy on United

Nations standards for health-care quality and patient safety, and the introduction of clinical pathways and clinical audit methodologies to ensure consistent standards of medical care, as well as governance and monitoring. The Group also welcomed initiatives aimed at improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. During the first two years of its implementation, the Secretariat's action plan to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers had proven effective in decreasing fatalities caused by acts of violence. The Group would consider peacekeeping proposals with the aim of limiting the level of casualties to the bare minimum.

90. The Group would carefully review the performance of peacekeeping budgets for 2019/2020 and proposed peacekeeping budgets for 2021/2022, bearing in mind that mandates must be adequately funded. Mandates must be fulfilled responsibly, through financial discipline, in accordance with the relevant resolutions. It was not for the Secretariat to decide which mandates should be given priority; mandates were the prerogative of Member States. The only way to address the perennially difficult financial situation of peacekeeping operations was for Member States to pay their assessments in full, on time and without conditions.

91. **Mr. Camelli** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Andorra, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Secretary-General, in his report on the overview of the financing of peacekeeping operations: budget performance for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 and budget for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 ([A/75/786](#)), highlighted key developments and challenges for United Nations peacekeeping. The European Union welcomed the progress made in improving accountability, transparency, cost-efficiency and performance management as a result of United Nations reforms, in particular in the peace and security pillar. The reforms were enhancing the overall effectiveness of peace operations, and had proven essential in ensuring business continuity and the adaptability of missions. The European Union therefore supported the conclusion of OIOS that the perceptions of organizational culture in missions were not in line with the high standards adopted by the Organization. That situation must be addressed in order to support the effective operation of missions.

92. Uniformed personnel were vital to peacekeeping. Peacekeeping operations should make use of the best technology available to improve the safety and security of United Nations troops and personnel. If properly

applied and integrated into peace operations, modern technologies, such as drones, could help missions to detect threats, identify targets and improve situational awareness. In line with the independent report on improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers prepared by Lieutenant General (retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, the European Union stood ready to consider ways to better protect troops and United Nations personnel.

93. The States members of the European Union attached great importance to the capabilities and performance of troops and to the provision of operational equipment, as agreed in the memorandums of understanding between troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat. The United Nations must continue to adapt to emerging challenges in the areas of signal intelligence, cyberdefence, big data and technology for force protection.

94. The progress made in the area of environmental management was essential to ensuring the Organization's responsible and sustainable field presence and to fulfilling mandates. Therefore, the European Union welcomed the transition to the second phase of the environment strategy for peace operations, and the continued efforts to develop global environmental management systems and tools to improve the environmental performance of missions and reduce their environmental footprint.

95. Peacekeepers played a critical role in ensuring respect for human rights, including by monitoring compliance, reporting violations and offering assistance to victims. They also played a crucial role in protecting vulnerable people, in particular women and children, in situations of armed conflict. A gender perspective must be mainstreamed throughout peacekeeping work. The European Union welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and supported the continued deployment of gender advisers. There was also a need to designate well-trained child protection focal points, whose cooperation with civilian child protection advisers was crucial to the monitoring and reporting of violations.

96. The European Union and its member States continued to support a policy of zero impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse by civilian, military and police personnel. Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and ensuring that vulnerable groups were not harmed by those responsible for protecting them must remain priorities of the Secretary-General and the entire United Nations leadership. The European Union welcomed the progress made in those areas and continued to support efforts to integrate and institutionalize a victim-centred

approach across the United Nations. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's determination to strengthen accountability and risk management frameworks. The European Union would fully support the Organization's efforts to address the remaining challenges, including by improving its engagement with implementing partners.

97. The States members of the European Union appreciated the work of the Board of Auditors, in particular its analysis of many critical aspects of United Nations peacekeeping, despite the challenges posed by the shift to remote working arrangements. The Board's findings regarding the Mine Action Service were especially important. Mines remained a global threat, in particular to the most vulnerable, namely, children and other civilians in conflict zones. The Organization's mine action work was therefore critical, and any impediments to the efficient and successful implementation of the related mandates must be addressed. The European Union thus fully supported the Board's recommendations concerning the relationship between the Mine Action Service and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

98. The current session provided a new opportunity for Member States to reach a comprehensive agreement on a number of cross-cutting issues related to United Nations peacekeeping and to advise the Secretariat on how to address them. The current challenging circumstances should remind the Committee of the importance of providing missions with the tools necessary to fulfil their mandates and of engaging in pragmatic discussions in order to reach specific and consensual outcomes.

99. **Mr. Traore** (Mali), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the General Assembly had repeatedly indicated that peacekeeping budget proposals must be based on Security Council mandates. The overall budget for peacekeeping operations must therefore be commensurate with those mandates. The Group would carefully consider the performance and implementation of peacekeeping budgets, bearing in mind the continued annual reductions in resource requirements. It would also examine the areas that were being affected by those reductions, which had been made for every period since 2018/19, potentially leaving essential peacekeeping activities on the ground without the necessary support.

100. The threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic remained of great concern, and additional resources should be allocated to all peacekeeping operations in order to ensure the safety and well-being of personnel. The impact of the pandemic should be incorporated into the budget proposal on the basis of sufficient analysis of the specific circumstances of peacekeeping missions.

The Group was concerned at proposals to indiscriminately reduce budgets for programmatic and operational activities, on the basis of suggested alternative approaches that were not always practical for the optimal discharge of peacekeeping functions, especially in Africa. The Secretary-General should pursue partnerships in order to prepare the international community for future pandemics and epidemics.

101. Quick-impact projects and programmatic activities were crucial for successful mandate implementation. Quick-impact projects built confidence in missions and contributed to force protection by generating support for military and police components. The lack of support for such projects was a matter of concern for missions and for troop- and police-contributing countries. It was also perplexing that the budgetary allocations for quick-impact projects had either been reduced or had remained unchanged in recent years, even as the number of projects had increased. Security Council decisions to deploy military and police personnel must be fully implemented in order to ensure the safety and security of peacekeeping missions.

102. The Group supported the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, but noted that the number of reported allegations had continued to increase. The zero-tolerance policy must apply equally to all alleged perpetrators, including uniformed and civilian personnel of the United Nations and of the Organization's humanitarian and development partners.

103. The Group would seek further information on the ways in which the Secretary-General had enhanced the implementation of the five pillars of the multi-year environment strategy in compliance with agreed rules and regulations. The Group would also seek to learn more about the Organization's collaboration with UNEP, the technical body that had taken the lead in setting and coordinating the global environmental agenda within the United Nations system.

104. As a matter of policy, the Secretary-General should promote the use of local materials, contractors, knowledge and expertise in construction projects for peacekeeping operations. The Group would request an update on the specific steps taken to do so.

105. Noting that 7 of the 12 active peacekeeping missions were located in Africa and that the Secretary-General had signed a memorandum of understanding to promote partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in peacebuilding, the Group recognized the crucial role played by regional and subregional actors in peacekeeping operations and appreciated the steps taken to deepen the partnership between such

actors and the United Nations. Given the importance of ensuring that all peacekeeping operations had the resources necessary to fully implement their mandates, the Group would not support any approach to peacekeeping budgets that involved prejudging any peacekeeping mandate.

106. **Mr. Ammann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that he commended the hard work and dedication of United Nations peacekeeping personnel and paid tribute to those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of peace. Prevention was the most effective and least costly way of addressing conflicts. Ensuring that peace was sustainable was as important as achieving it in the first place. Liechtenstein and Switzerland favoured the continued implementation of a whole-of-system approach to transitions. Peacekeeping missions should work closely with other United Nations system entities, the international community and national authorities to develop coherent transition strategies in order to sustain peace and prevent the recurrence of conflict. The two delegations also welcomed the ongoing efforts to implement the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

107. The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in field missions should remain a priority of all Member States, and all the necessary steps should be taken to combat such acts. The Group therefore emphasized the importance of the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy and welcomed his efforts to institutionalize a victim-centred approach in order to provide proper support for victims. Given the cross-cutting nature of matters pertaining to sexual exploitation and abuse, synergies and harmonization must be promoted as part of a system-wide approach to combating such acts.

108. Liechtenstein and Switzerland welcomed the empowerment of peacekeeping operations through the decentralization of administrative authority to managers in the field. In the current environment, in which peacekeepers were required to adapt quickly to local circumstances such as those related to COVID-19, a strong system of delegation of authority was essential. He therefore called for continued investment in the development and maintenance of the relevant governance capacities of senior leadership teams.

109. OIOS played an essential role in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of peace operations. Liechtenstein and Switzerland welcomed the findings set out in the OIOS reports relating to peace operations and encouraged the Secretary-General to implement the Office's recommendations in a timely manner in order to foster accountability.

110. **Mr. Kennedy** (United States of America) said that the United States greatly valued and would continue to support United Nations peacekeeping operations, which played an indispensable role in promoting international peace and security. Financial support was essential to the success of those operations, and his delegation would work with other delegations in the Committee to ensure that missions had the necessary financial resources. However, resources alone would not be sufficient to overcome the challenges facing peacekeeping operations. The Committee was responsible for ensuring not only that resources were allocated appropriately, but that the Organization's administrative and budgetary policies and procedures enabled, rather than hampered, mission success. It was not difficult to recall examples of United Nations policies that had caused delays in hiring crucial staff, deploying troops, procuring critical assets or, in the worst cases, protecting civilians or United Nations personnel from violence.

111. The Secretary-General had made significant progress in many of those areas, as outlined in his overview report (A/75/786). The United States looked forward to further discussing, in particular, his efforts to mitigate threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers, increase gender parity, ensure the alignment of aviation procurement with industry best practices and standardize support functions. His delegation fully supported the implementation of the Secretariat's environment strategy, including the improvement of data collection and the use of key performance indicators to measure progress. The United States would request more information on the steps taken by the Secretariat to enhance performance measurement and accountability in peacekeeping operations, including through the development and implementation of a plan for the roll-out of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System across all missions, as mandated by the Committee.

112. The United States strongly supported the Secretary-General's efforts to implement the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and appreciated the contributions of the Conduct and Discipline Service, the Victims' Rights Advocate, the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and all field-based personnel who had worked tirelessly to support victims, ensure accountability for perpetrators and strengthen prevention measures. The United States also welcomed the progress set out in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/75/754), in particular the system-wide efforts to improve service provision and protection for victims.

Victim support was essential to combating sexual exploitation and abuse. He looked forward to a more in-depth discussion of the system-wide gaps in victim support and of the steps that the Committee could take to address them.

113. Despite the progress achieved, sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment persisted across the United Nations system. Many of the challenges in eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations were also present in United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and in humanitarian entities. The United States was concerned at the increase in the number of allegations against implementing partners, which demonstrated the need to combat sexual exploitation and abuse in a system-wide manner. Although such abuse was clearly not confined to peacekeeping, the Committee's sphere of competence was limited to the administrative aspects of the Secretariat and United Nations field operations. The Committee must continue to support the Secretariat's efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse by the uniformed and civilian personnel within the Committee's purview, and all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes must address such abuse by their personnel. As the head of the Organization, the Secretary-General should lead by example and encourage coordination among those entities. Troop- and police-contributing countries and countries of nationality of civilian personnel should also ensure that perpetrators were held accountable.

114. His delegation appreciated the contributions of OIOS to peacekeeping. As an independent oversight entity, OIOS provided Member States and the Organization with a unique perspective through its evaluations, audits and investigations, thereby improving decision-making. The United States fully supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to address the challenges facing peacekeeping operations. Although his delegation acknowledged the challenges posed by remote informal consultations, it believed that consensus could be reached on many of the proposals before the Committee, and would engage constructively with all delegations to achieve that objective.

Updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions as at 30 June 2020 (A/75/619 and A/75/838)

115. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions as at 30 June 2020 (A/75/619), said that the report provided information on the financial position of 29 missions. As at 30 June 2020, 24 missions had had net cash surpluses,

totalling \$149.7 million, and 5 had had net cash deficits, totalling \$85.5 million. Troop-contributing countries were owed \$62.9 million, pending the receipt of outstanding assessed contributions.

116. Temporary loans from closed peacekeeping missions with cash surpluses had been issued to cover occasional shortfalls in some active peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), MINUJUSTH, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda. In addition, as a result of the severe liquidity challenges that they had faced towards the end of the financial period ending 31 December 2019 owing to outstanding assessments, regular budget operations had received loans from closed peacekeeping operations, enabling the Organization to meet its payroll obligations and its commitments to vendors. During the 2019/20 period, peak levels of cross-borrowing from closed missions had reached \$190 million in November and December 2019, primarily as a result of such loans.

117. The Secretary-General's proposal to allow temporary cross-borrowing between active missions had been approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [73/307](#). In accordance with that resolution, a mechanism had been established, during the 2019/20 period, to meet the liquidity requirements of active peacekeeping operations through the management of all those operations' cash balances as a pool, on the understanding that the balances would be maintained in separate funds for each mission. As a result, in October 2019, MINURSO and UNMIK had repaid their loans to closed peacekeeping operations and had obtained new loans from an active peacekeeping operation. However, the cross-borrowing mechanism had not been extended to MINUJUSTH, as its irregular collection of assessments had suggested that it might not be able to repay the loan. Consequently, after October 2019, MINUJUSTH had been the only active peacekeeping mission with outstanding loans from closed peacekeeping operations. MINUJUSTH had repaid its loans in March 2020. As at 30 June 2020, therefore, no active missions had had outstanding loans from closed peacekeeping operations.

118. Since 30 June 2020, no loans from closed peacekeeping missions had been issued to active peacekeeping missions. However, MINURSO and UNMIK had not yet repaid the loans that they had received from an active peacekeeping operation in order to meet ongoing operational cash requirements. Moreover,

at the beginning of December 2020, the regular budget had received loans of \$100 million from closed peacekeeping missions, which had been repaid before the end of the year. As the liquidity challenges affecting both regular budget and peacekeeping operations were expected to continue, the General Assembly was requested to allow the retention of the net cash balance in 24 closed peacekeeping missions as at 30 June 2020 until the liquidity situation of both peacekeeping and regular budget operations had improved.

119. **Mr. Bachar Bong** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee ([A/75/838](#)), said that, pending the conclusion of the three-year trial period of the cash-pooling mechanism for active peacekeeping operations, the Advisory Committee recommended that the net cash balance proposed for retention in closed peacekeeping missions with cash surpluses be reduced to \$49,800,000, the highest level of borrowing in the five calendar years prior to the adoption of General Assembly resolution [73/307](#), and that any available cash surplus over that amount be returned to Member States. The Advisory Committee reiterated the importance of settling claims by troop- and police-contributing countries in connection with closed peacekeeping missions in a timely manner.

120. **Ms. Kaba Saleh** (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the cash deficits in five closed peacekeeping operations, essentially caused by arrears in the payment of assessed contributions by Member States, were a matter of great concern, as they prevented those missions from fulfilling their obligations to vendors, third parties, Member States, and troop- and police-contributing countries. Some of the liabilities incurred had been outstanding for many years. As at 30 June 2020, the total level of payments owed by Member States in respect of closed peacekeeping missions had been \$376.6 million. Member States had an obligation to pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

121. In its resolution [73/307](#), the General Assembly had authorized, on a three-year trial basis, cross-borrowing between active peacekeeping operations in order to facilitate cash flow management and enable the Secretary-General to ensure the continuous operation of missions with cash shortfalls. That decision had been met with positive feedback; for example, it had drastically reduced the pressure on closed peacekeeping operations to fulfil the borrowing needs of the Organization. However, the practice of borrowing from closed peacekeeping operations in order to alleviate cash shortages under the regular budget had not been

approved by the General Assembly, and the Group would seek further information on the negative impact of that practice on such operations. The Group nevertheless noted with satisfaction that 24 closed missions had a positive cash balance and was grateful to the Secretary-General for judiciously investing the resources concerned.

122. **Mr. Eboa Ebongue** (Cameroon), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, prior to adopting its resolution [74/278](#), the General Assembly had deferred consideration of the reports of the Secretary-General on the updated financial position of closed peacekeeping missions since its sixty-sixth session. The Group trusted that, at the current session, the Committee would once again use its ingenuity to achieve a positive outcome in its deliberations on the matter.

123. The Group was concerned at the insignificant improvement in the cash deficits in five closed peacekeeping missions, which had remained essentially unchanged compared with the previous financial year, mainly as a result of unpaid assessed contributions from Member States in a total amount of \$152.4 million at 30 June 2020. That situation had hindered the payment of those missions' liabilities, in particular the long-outstanding amounts owed to troop- and police-contributing countries in respect of closed peacekeeping missions, which, at 30 June 2020, had stood at \$81 million.

124. In its resolution [74/278](#), the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to continue to take every measure necessary to reimburse troop- and police-contributing countries before the closure of any peacekeeping mission, and to avoid the current practice of delaying reimbursements to those countries. The Group noted with appreciation that the three most recently closed peacekeeping operations, namely, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and MINUJUSTH, had paid all their dues to troop- and police-contributing countries, and trusted that that momentum would be maintained in future.

125. The Secretary-General had borrowed from closed peacekeeping missions with cash surpluses in order to fund both peacekeeping and regular budget operations, and would continue to do so, given that the liquidity situation had worsened. A sustainable solution to the liquidity constraints facing the Organization must be found.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.