



General Assembly

Seventy-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
25 October 2024

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 9 October 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. González López (El Salvador)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Bachar Bong

Contents

Agenda item 139: Proposed programme budget for 2025

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General

Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms

Thematic cluster III: regional offices, offices in support of political processes and other missions

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

Financial performance report on the programme budget for 2023

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

24-18453 (E)



Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 139: Proposed programme budget for 2025

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1 and A/79/7/Add.1)

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.2 and A/79/7/Add.2)

Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.3 and A/79/7/Add.3)

Thematic cluster III: regional offices, offices in support of political processes and other missions (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.4 and A/79/7/Add.4)

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.5 and A/79/7/Add.5)

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.6 and A/79/7/Add.6)

1. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2025 (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1), as well as the reports of the Secretary-General on the proposed resource requirements for 2025 for special political missions under thematic cluster I (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.2), thematic cluster II (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.3) and thematic cluster III (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.4), and for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.5) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.6), said that the overall resource requirements proposed for 36 continuing special political missions for 2025 amounted to \$711.3 million, representing a decrease of \$30.7 million compared with the 2024 appropriation. That decrease was the net result of an increase of \$28.9 million under civilian personnel costs; a reduction of \$0.2 million under military personnel costs; a reduction of \$11.8 million under operational costs; and a reduction of \$47.8 million reflecting the discontinuation of two missions, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD). The proposed net decrease of 142 posts and positions, from a total of 4,415 in 2024 to a proposed 4,273 in 2025, reflected both the closure of missions and efforts to streamline the staffing component and strengthen national capacity.

2. By its resolution 2732 (2024), the Security Council had decided to extend the mandate of UNAMI for a final 19-month period until 31 December 2025. The Council had requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with the Government of Iraq, a transition and liquidation plan to be completed by 31 December 2024. As the Mission's mandate had been extended until 31 December 2025, the Secretariat had assessed that a commitment authority for the 12-month period in the amount of \$99.5 million would be appropriate, reflecting a reduction of \$3.7 million, or 3.6 per cent, compared with the initial 2025 budget proposal. Noting that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed \$49.8 million for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2025 (see A/79/7/Add.6, para. 37), the Secretariat wished to emphasize that, given the recurring liquidity challenges facing the Organization, without an assessment for the

second half of the budget period, the Mission would not be able to implement the transition and liquidation plan, which was likely to include increased requirements for separation payments, in a timely fashion.

3. The Advisory Committee had stated that it would consider the resource requirements of \$104.6 million for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) when the revised estimates for the Mission were submitted at the current session of the General Assembly (see [A/79/7/Add.4](#), para. 11). The proposal of the Government of Somalia for a two-year transition plan had been sent to the Security Council on 30 August 2024. The Secretary-General would review the financial implications arising from the Council's decision on the Mission's mandate, which was expected by the end of October 2024, and would revert to the Advisory Committee and the Assembly on the matter.

4. The Secretariat had strengthened the methodology and improved the content, format and presentation of its budget reports and the related supplementary information. In its budgeting for air operations, it had taken into consideration utilization patterns, thereby reducing the budgeted flight hours by 28.4 per cent. The reports contained a new section on building and strengthening a culture of efficiency, similar to that included in the reports of the Secretary-General on the budgets of peacekeeping missions. The savings made and costs avoided through such measures amounted to \$9.3 million in 2025, or 1.3 per cent of the 2024 appropriation for the 36 continuing missions. The Secretariat had enhanced its performance reporting by providing detailed additional information on air operations, mine actions and construction projects. Additional information on the evolution of financial resources over the past five years had also been provided. The reports had been streamlined and, as a result, their total length had been reduced by 13 per cent. Readability had been improved while key information and data had been preserved.

5. **Mr. Bachar Bong** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related reports of the Advisory Committee ([A/79/7/Add.1](#), [A/79/7/Add.2](#), [A/79/7/Add.3](#), [A/79/7/Add.4](#), [A/79/7/Add.5](#) and [A/79/7/Add.6](#)), said that his full statement could be consulted on the website of the Fifth Committee. The Advisory Committee welcomed the fact that, for the third consecutive year, the Fifth Committee was considering the estimates in respect of special political missions early in the main part of the General Assembly session. The Advisory Committee would submit its reports on the budgets of two new missions as soon as possible, and was awaiting the submission of the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates for UNSOM pursuant to Security Council resolution [2741 \(2024\)](#).

6. **Ms. Teo** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, said that special political missions played a vital role in maintaining long-term peace and security, especially amid rising global tensions. The increase in the number, scope and size of those missions demonstrated their importance in responding to security challenges. Given the uncertain state of the world, the Fifth Committee must provide the missions with adequate resources to ensure that they could fulfil their mandates effectively.

7. The Association therefore supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on the need to reform the funding and backstopping arrangements for special political missions; the current financing arrangements had made it difficult for the missions to respond to increasingly complex security challenges. The Association was disappointed by the fact that the Fifth Committee had not acted on the Advisory Committee's recommendations for more than 10 years. The Fifth Committee must therefore implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee

on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions (A/66/7/Add.21), including on the establishment of a separate account that was aligned with the budgetary cycle for peacekeeping operations. The regular-budget cycle was not suited to special political missions, as most backstopping support for those missions was drawn from Secretariat departments funded under the peacekeeping budget. In addition, the establishment of an account aligned with the peacekeeping cycle would shield those missions from the constant liquidity issues that affected the regular budget.

8. The vast majority of special political missions had been established pursuant to decisions of the Security Council. The General Assembly had repeatedly reaffirmed in its resolutions that the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Council for the maintenance of peace and security should be borne in mind in connection with their contributions to the financing of peace and security operations. Those who had greater influence over such operations should bear more responsibility for special political missions, including their funding. The missions should therefore be funded through the budgets for peacekeeping operations rather than the regular budget, to ensure the stability and effectiveness of their peacebuilding activities. The Association was committed to the effective functioning of the missions, expressed gratitude to their staff, who worked in challenging environments around the world, and looked forward to a productive discussion of the ways in which the Fifth Committee could improve the missions' financing arrangements.

9. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group appreciated the introduction of the revised estimates for special political missions early in the main part of the session. The Group acknowledged the role of the special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General in advancing preventive diplomacy and supporting conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery. Africa hosted or had a direct connection with several of the country-specific and region-specific special political missions. The Group therefore attached great importance to the allocation of adequate resources to such missions so that they could implement their mandates efficiently and comprehensively. The Group recognized the unique political and security landscape in which the missions operated, as well as the efforts of host countries and the Organization's staff, especially those personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice in field missions while serving the cause of peace and security. The Group would support the establishment of a safe environment for all United Nations staff.

10. For 2025, the resources requested by the Secretariat for special political missions represented a decrease of 4 per cent compared with the appropriation for 2024. As indicated in the report of the Advisory Committee on estimates in respect of special political missions (A/79/7/Add.1), the Fifth Committee was expected to consider the budget adjustments required as a result of the establishment of two new special political missions, namely, the Office of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan under cluster I, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2715 (2023), and the Focal Point for Delisting under cluster II, pursuant to Council resolution 2744 (2024), as well as the budget adjustments required as a result of the submission of revised estimates for UNSOM pursuant to Council resolution 2741 (2024). The Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee should submit their reports on those matters as soon as possible for consideration by the Fifth Committee.

11. The Group attached particular importance to the relationship between the missions and host countries and regional and subregional organizations; the allocation of resources for quick-impact projects and infrastructure, and capacity-building programmes, in host countries; and equitable geographical representation and the employment of national staff. It was concerned about the low level of African representation in leadership positions, including posts of Under-Secretary-General,

Assistant Secretary-General, and D-1 and D-2 posts, as well as professional posts in the categories from P-1 to P-5. Recalling the pledge made by the Secretary-General to ensure equitable geographical representation in leadership positions, the Group reiterated its commitment to supporting the achievement of that objective.

12. The Group noted that, in the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions (A/79/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1), only one post was proposed for nationalization for 2025, while the number of proposed national staff positions was low and the number of vacant national staff posts was high. The Group also noted the extended period required for the recruitment of national and local staff. The Group underscored the need to ensure optimum levels of involvement of national staff in the work of the missions, and believed that national staff both built the capacities of host countries and enabled the United Nations to sustain gains from the work of its missions. The Secretary-General should establish more national positions, nationalize professional posts, fill vacant national posts as expeditiously as possible, and simplify and shorten the process of recruiting national and local staff.

13. The Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, had proven to be a strategic tool for the Organization and should therefore be paid more attention and provided with more resources. The Organization should consolidate the Centre's role in the global support architecture, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/294.

14. **Ms. Hein** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and, in addition, Monaco, said that the European Union commended the staff of special political missions on their dedication, and recognized the challenges they faced and the volatile environments in which they operated. The European Union and its member States were committed to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and protecting human rights, especially for women and girls. Global challenges such as geopolitical divisions, climate change and ongoing conflicts had aggravated inequality, injustice and uncertainty, interconnected issues that threatened national stability and required the international community to make full use of the available tools to strengthen peace. Special political missions were crucial in that regard, since they were essential to preventing conflict and addressing multifaceted global crises. Their multidimensional approach made them instrumental in tackling complex challenges related to security, development, and human rights. By fostering cross-pillar coordination in accordance with the Secretary-General's vision for reform, those missions eliminated silos and promoted synergies.

15. The significant progress made in recent years towards system-wide coherence and strengthened integration between special political missions and the resident coordinator system had fostered local ownership and long-term partnerships. The European Union and its member States commended the ongoing optimization of resource use and enhancement of efficiency in mandate fulfilment. The improved collaboration between resident coordinator personnel and their counterparts in missions had been essential to mandate fulfilment and had demonstrated the value of such an integrated approach. The development of inclusive strategies to promote the participation of women, young people and marginalized groups was crucial to the effectiveness and sustainability of the missions.

16. Special political missions faced complex challenges in their peacebuilding efforts. It was regrettable that the Committee had been unable to adopt a draft resolution on the budget and administration of the missions for the past four years. As in previous years, the European Union and its member States were committed to negotiating the adoption of such a draft resolution at the current session. Such negotiations were an opportunity for renewed collaboration; the European Union and

its member States would work tirelessly with all partners to achieve a positive, consensus-based outcome in a timely manner on the basis of a realistic, technical approach, in order to ensure that each mission's budget was aligned with the relevant Security Council mandates. The goal of the European Union and its member States was for the Committee to reach agreement on the resources necessary to promote dialogue, support justice and protect rights, while ensuring accountability and the fulfilment of the missions' objectives.

17. The European Union and its member States looked forward to engaging constructively with the States Members of the United Nations to approve a robust 2025 budget for special political missions, whose contributions to global peace and stability were more critical than ever; to engaging with the teams responsible for establishing new special political missions and ensuring the orderly exit of others; and to providing the missions with the resources necessary to meet the needs on the ground and fulfil their mandates.

18. **Mr. Phillip** (Grenada), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that special political missions were essential to advancing peace and security. They strengthened political stability, built technical and operational capacity, and facilitated inclusive dialogue among conflicting entities. The Community was committed to assisting Haiti, a fellow CARICOM country, in its efforts to achieve sustainable security, peace and development.

19. The Community acknowledged the work of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and the Panel of Experts on Haiti, particularly in facilitating inter-Haitian dialogue and monitoring the implementation of the sanctions regime. The Community welcomed the Security Council's unanimous decision, in its resolution [2743 \(2024\)](#), to extend the mandate of BINUH until 15 July 2025; that decision demonstrated the Council's commitment to supporting the Haitian people. The Community also welcomed the Council's unanimous decision, in its resolution [2751 \(2024\)](#), to extend the mandate of the Multinational Security Support Mission for a year. The Community encouraged Member States to contribute resources and personnel to the Mission, whose work complemented the efforts of BINUH to restore stability in the country.

20. Despite the political progress made in Haiti through the establishment of the Transitional Presidential Council and the re-establishment of the Provisional Electoral Council, the security situation remained difficult. Strong support from the United Nations and the international community was therefore critical to consolidating the gains made and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and security in the country. The basis for the allocation of resources to BINUH should, as in the case of other special political missions, be the situation on the ground and the Office's mandate from the Security Council. The resources allocated to BINUH should not, therefore, be arbitrarily reduced, as the Office must be adequately financed in order to fulfil that mandate. The Secretariat should intensify its efforts to fill the vacant posts and positions at BINUH, despite the difficult security situation in the country. Given the challenging conditions under which many special political missions operated, CARICOM welcomed the allocation of adequate resources to ensure that United Nations staff were safe and secure.

21. The Community commended the staff of the United Nations, particularly BINUH, for their dedicated service in challenging circumstances as they supported peace and security in Haiti, as well as the rest of the Caribbean and the Western Hemisphere. CARICOM would engage actively with the Secretariat and Member States to ensure that BINUH was adequately supported with the necessary resources.

22. **Mr. Ishikawa dos Santos** (Brazil), speaking also on behalf of Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico and Uruguay,

said that special political missions, which operated in challenging environments, were essential to the United Nations in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, and must therefore be provided with adequate resources to fulfil their mandates. The States on whose behalf he was speaking witnessed the crucial work of the special political missions through the presence of BINUH, the Panel of Experts on Haiti and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The recognition of those missions by the countries involved was a clear indication of the significance of their work.

23. While the situation in Haiti continued to be a focus of close attention and the Security Council had unanimously voted to extend the mandate of the Multinational Security Support Mission, BINUH and the Panel of Experts were entrusted with mandates that were essential to achieving political stability and good governance in the country, promoting a peaceful and stable environment, and safeguarding human rights. By providing adequate resources to BINUH and the Panel of Experts, the General Assembly would facilitate the implementation of the associated mandates. The Office should provide the Haitian authorities with more support in the implementation of the Government's road map by addressing the multidimensional problems facing the country.

24. Colombia had made substantial progress in establishing a solid foundation for a stable and lasting peace. Consolidating peace required the commitment and courage of all parties involved, and, in that regard, the countries on whose behalf he was speaking reaffirmed their support for the people and Government of Colombia as they engaged in that process, which the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia played an indispensable role in supporting. The countries on whose behalf he was speaking had full confidence that the continued support of the international community would manifest itself in the extension of the mandate established in Security Council resolution [2704 \(2023\)](#). That support should also be reflected in sufficient and comprehensive funding, aligned with the resources requested by the Secretary-General.

25. The number of special political missions had increased significantly; their costs represented around 20 per cent of the proposed programme budget for 2025. The financial challenges arising from that situation had been highlighted in a report submitted by the Secretary-General at the sixty-sixth session ([A/66/340](#)). Thirteen years after the issuance of that report, no response had been provided. Like peacekeeping operations, special political missions were established by the Security Council rather than the entire United Nations membership. Those missions must therefore be funded through a separate account based on a July–June budget year and the peacekeeping scale of assessments.

26. **Ms. Takehana** (Japan) said that, a year after the seventy-fifth anniversary of special political missions, her country wished to reiterate that, at a time of rapid upheavals in the international system, such missions, with their accumulated expertise, were essential to revitalizing multilateral action for peace and security. Japan appreciated the efforts made by the Secretary-General in his budget proposals to rationalize those missions' operational costs and rejuvenate their staff to optimize mandate fulfilment. In order to respond to the various dimensions of conflict, however, and in view of the liquidity situation, the budgets for those missions must be further updated to reflect changes in circumstances on the ground. To that end, Japan and other Member States were committed to discussing the matter constructively to enable the special political missions to fulfil their mandates in the current volatile peace and security context.

27. **Mr. Alsabah** (Kuwait) said that the stability and security of Iraq were essential to the stability and security of the region. UNAMI played a vital role in enhancing

the country's security and political stability, supporting the electoral process, and assisting in reconstruction and development. Kuwait welcomed the recent appointment of Mohamed Al Hassan as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI. The appointment of the national of an Arab country was a long overdue step in the right direction. The Mission provided the Government and people of Iraq with crucial assistance in overcoming obstacles to stability and development. Kuwait commended the United Nations on providing Iraq with technical and logistical support, and on promoting human rights and coordinating humanitarian relief efforts. As a neighbouring country, Kuwait enhanced stability in Iraq through financial contributions and support for humanitarian and development initiatives. In order to work effectively, UNAMI required adequate funding and the resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. The Committee should therefore provide the Mission with the necessary financial support.

28. Cooperation between the United Nations and Iraq was vital. Kuwait would support UNAMI in its efforts to achieve peace and development in Iraq and to follow up on the issues of missing Kuwaiti nationals, the Kuwaiti national archives and other Kuwaiti property. Kuwait attached great value to its current cooperation with the Mission in that regard, and hoped that fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and Member States would continue in the interests of international peace and security.

29. **Ms. Michaelidou** (Cyprus) said that the Committee's deliberations on special political missions should be focused solely on budgetary matters. The Committee's responsibility was to ensure that those missions had adequate resources to implement their mandates, as established by the Security Council. The Committee's decisions on the missions should therefore be in line with the parameters set forth in the relevant Council resolutions. Calling those parameters into question did not fall within the Committee's purview.

30. The mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus was derived from the relevant Security Council resolutions, in which it was stipulated that the basis for the solution of the Cyprus problem and the reunification of the island was that of a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as defined in the relevant Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2723 \(2024\)](#).

31. **Mr. Al-mansour** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, since the beginning of the terrorist war on his country, his Government had dealt responsibly and constructively with all attempts to support its efforts to preserve the country's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, protect its citizens from terrorism, and improve living conditions. His Government participated in the meetings in the Astana format, which had achieved tangible results. It also communicated continuously with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, with whom it cooperated in accordance with the Special Envoy's mandate as a facilitator of a political process led and owned by Syrians, without external interference, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria. His Government looked forward to the success of the Special Envoy's efforts to resume the meetings of the Constitutional Committee as soon as possible.

32. With regard to paragraph 122 of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed resource requirements for 2025 for special political missions under thematic cluster I ([A/79/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.2](#)), the so-called Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic was an illegitimate, non-consensual and politicized mechanism that had been established without a request from or consultation with the State concerned. Cooperation between the Office of the Special Envoy and the Institution would increase politicization and manipulation without furthering the Special Envoy's efforts. With regard to the reference, in paragraph 117

of the report, to the continued presence of foreign armies in the Syrian Arab Republic, there was a fundamental legal distinction between occupying foreign forces that had entered Syrian territory illegally, without a request from the legitimate Government, and friendly forces that were in the country at the request of that Government to help it to fight terrorism and restore security and stability. With respect to the statement, in paragraph 121 (b), that international consensus with regard to the Syrian Arab Republic would continue to be difficult to achieve and sustain, that difficulty resulted from the fact that certain international parties did not respect the sovereignty and independence of Syria, and had interfered in the political process, imposed unilateral sanctions and politicized humanitarian aid. With regard to paragraph 121 (d), accountability was an internal sovereign matter addressed by the Government of Syria.

33. **Mr. Betor** (Haiti) said that the Organization's special political missions and peacekeeping operations were essential to promoting international peace and security, and to helping Member States to restore and consolidate peace, including in Haiti, where a number of United Nations missions had been established since 1996. To exercise their good offices, special political missions needed sufficient financial resources to meet the short-term needs of the States in which they were deployed. His delegation therefore noted the resource requirements of \$395,132,700 proposed by the Secretary-General for the special political missions in cluster III, including \$35,763,000 for BINUH (see [A/79/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.4](#)), and welcomed the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its related report ([A/79/7/Add.4](#))

34. The resources allocated to special political missions must be fully aligned with those missions' mandates and objectives. While his Government recognized the support provided by BINUH to his Government for the restoration of peace in Haiti, it called upon the mission to make more tangible progress in implementing its mandate and to achieve visible results that would satisfy the Haitian people. International solidarity must be enhanced in order to build a more resilient United Nations that could meet the challenges facing humanity.

35. **Mr. Aziz** (Iraq) said that his country, which had hosted one of the largest special political missions for more than 20 years, was fully aware of those missions' importance, working methods and influence. His delegation greatly appreciated the efforts of UNAMI and other institutions operating in Iraq; the cooperative approach taken by Iraq and the United Nations over such a long period would serve as a road map that the country would follow in fostering local work, and regional and international cooperation. His delegation was grateful to the States Members of the United Nations for funding the budgets of special political missions, in particular UNAMI, and would participate constructively in the deliberations on the matter to arrive at a draft resolution that would reflect the aspirations of Iraq for sustainable peace and security.

36. **Mr. Soberón Guzmán** (Cuba) said that, in recent years, the share of resources allocated to special political missions under the regular budget had been consistently high. Although Cuba recognized the contributions made by such missions, it did not agree that they should be funded under the regular budget, of which they accounted for approximately one fourth, when they were established exclusively by the Security Council. Special political missions should therefore be funded through a separate account with criteria that reflected the special role of the permanent members of the Security Council in addressing peace-related matters.

37. With regard to the budget estimates for cluster I missions, Cuba firmly supported the work of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. However, it wished to stress once again its categorical opposition to the inclusion in those

budget estimates of activities and outputs relating to the responsibility to protect. There was no United Nations resolution establishing the position of Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, which was based on a concept that was clearly divisive. In addition, it was not transparent for posts established to support the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to be used in activities related to the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. In the proposed programme budget for 2025, two additional posts were requested for the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and it was not clear whether the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect would have access to them.

38. It was inconceivable that, since October 2023, more than 16,700 Palestinian children had been murdered in the Gaza Strip, but no one, not even the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, had invoked the responsibility to protect Palestine.

39. **Ms. Aras** (Türkiye) said that, since the Turkish Cypriot side had not been given the opportunity to express its rightful concerns, she wished to recall that the root cause of the Cyprus issue was the Greek Cypriots' consistent refusal to treat the Turkish Cypriots, who were the co-owners of the island, as equal partners on the basis of political equality. The Turkish Cypriot side was ready to negotiate a cooperative relationship between the two States on the island once the inherent rights that the Turkish Cypriot people had acquired in 1960, namely, sovereign equality and equal international status, were reaffirmed. Türkiye strongly supported that realistic, results-oriented vision.

40. The Greek Cypriots had rejected all attempts to establish a bizonal, bicomunal federation. The international community should encourage a mutually acceptable solution based on the realities on the ground, rather than insisting on the exhausted bizonal, bicomunal federation model. The unjust and inhumane isolation imposed upon the Turkish Cypriot people should be ended.

41. Every component of the United Nations in Cyprus must treat the two sides equally and impartially. Any United Nations mission should respect the current realities on the ground, namely that in Cyprus there were two equal peoples, as their inherent sovereign equality and equal international status were enshrined in international treaties. The United Nations presence on the island must not be used as any form of leverage to perpetuate the unacceptable and unsustainable status quo and to deprive the Turkish Cypriots of their legitimate rights.

42. **Mr. Ba Qatyan** (Yemen) said that four months had passed since the terrorist Houthi militias had conducted a kidnapping campaign through which they had targeted dozens of United Nations employees, who had joined thousands of innocent women, children, young people and older persons who had been forcibly disappeared and had spent years in Houthi prisons. The kidnappings had been followed by a series of violations and arbitrary measures against United Nations agencies and staff, including the storming of the headquarters of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Sana'a, during which property, including documents and equipment, had been confiscated and many lives had been threatened.

43. There was a widespread belief that the United Nations was responsible for enabling the kidnapping by the militias of such an unprecedented number of humanitarian aid workers, staff of non-governmental organizations, activists and civil society leaders. That belief was based on the fact that the Organization had not responded to his Government's request to move its headquarters in the country from Sana'a to the interim capital, Aden, had failed to defend humanitarian principles, and had disregarded violations and the militias' misuse of life-saving aid as a tool to foster mobilization and recruitment, and to feed their war effort.

44. Despite the support provided by his Government and the Fifth Committee to the two political missions in Yemen, they were unable to fulfil their mandates, as they could not increase their presence in the country. It was rare for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen to conduct visits on the ground because of the great risks faced by staff of the United Nations and civil society organizations in areas controlled by the militias. By not taking the threat of the militias seriously and maintaining its headquarters in the occupied capital, Sana'a, the United Nations had unintentionally enabled the terrorists to use its staff and property as bargaining chips with which to extract completely unacceptable concessions from the international community.

45. The situation could not be justified, because the location of the Organization's headquarters in Houthi-controlled areas encouraged the militias to continue their violations, thereby putting United Nations staff, humanitarian aid workers and human rights defenders at risk. Those policies must be reconsidered and the necessary arrangements must be made immediately to ensure that the resources provided by the Committee were not vulnerable to seizure by the militias as a result of procrastination by the political missions and other United Nations agencies in moving their headquarters away from Houthi-controlled areas.

46. **Mr. Tellez Verbel** (Colombia) said that, since special political missions were essential to conflict prevention and resolution, and to peacebuilding, they must be provided with the tools needed to fulfil their mandates. In Colombia, although considerable progress had been made in implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, concluded in 2016, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia continued to require support in order to meet the remaining challenges. In accordance with its mandate from the Security Council, the Mission was responsible for verifying the implementation by the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army) (FARC-EP) of the sections of the Final Agreement related to the reintegration of FARC-EP members into economic, social and political life; individual and collective protection and security measures for former combatants, and comprehensive security and protection programmes for local communities and organizations; compliance with the penalties imposed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace; the comprehensive rural reform; and the cross-cutting ethnic-based approach.

47. In Security Council resolution [2694 \(2023\)](#), the Mission had also been entrusted with monitoring and verifying the implementation of the Bilateral, National and Temporary Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army). Those tasks were being carried out in parallel with the implementation of the Final Agreement.

48. Without the Mission's active participation in the implementation of those agreements, particularly in the early stages, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which had ended the armed conflict with FARC-EP, would not have been completed. Colombia had not overcome the cycles of violence that plagued its people, but it had dismantled the FARC-EP war machine, an achievement that would have been impossible without the Mission.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

49. **Ms. Hein** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer) said that the European Union wished to recall that the established procedures and working methods of the Committee meant that its deliberations on the budgets of special political missions were based on Security Council resolutions in which a

framework of mandates had been established for those missions and the parameters of the related political processes had been set out. In resolution [541 \(1983\)](#) and resolution [550 \(1984\)](#), in particular, the Council had called upon all States to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment of the Republic of Cyprus, and not to recognize any Cypriot State other than the Republic of Cyprus. Those resolutions were binding on all Member States, which were obliged to adhere to and abide by them. The Committee's role was not to revisit those mandates, but to discuss and adopt the level of resources that would allow their full implementation.

50. **Ms. Demosthenous** (Cyprus) said that the use by the representative of Türkiye of arbitrary, unilaterally coined names was regrettable. She wished to stress the importance of according respect to all delegations present. Cyprus was a member of the United Nations and, under international law and Security Council resolutions, the only recognized State on the island. About that, the international community had no doubts. The remarks of the representative of Türkiye at the current meeting were objectionable both on the grounds of relevance, considering the technical nature of the Committee, and of substance, as they were blatantly at odds with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution [541 \(1983\)](#) and resolution [550 \(1984\)](#). Her delegation rejected those remarks in their entirety. It was also regrettable that the representative of Türkiye had attacked the United Nations system. Respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations was an obligation, and not something subject to the discretion of the Member States. The attempt by the representative of Türkiye to politicize the discussions of a technical body such as the Fifth Committee was also regrettable. In deliberations on budgetary issues, delegations should concentrate on providing adequate resources for the implementation of Council mandates.

51. **Ms. Aras** (Türkiye) said that the European Union had admitted the Greek Cypriot administration as a full member despite the overwhelming Greek Cypriot vote against a comprehensive settlement in 2004. The Union, therefore, had not only imported the issue but also enabled the loss of important leverage. Since then, the Union had been unable to adopt a balanced position on the matter. As long as its positions exclusively reflected the interests of the Greek Cypriots, the Union would disqualify itself from the role of an objective contributor to efforts to find a solution.

52. **Ms. Demosthenous** (Cyprus) said that the continuing politicization of the Committee's deliberations by the representative of Türkiye was regrettable.

53. **Ms. Brash** (Israel) said that the Committee's deliberations must not be politicized; more appropriate forums existed for members to express their political or personal beliefs. The Committee should remain focused on the matter before it.

Financial performance report on the programme budget for 2023 (A/79/83 and A/79/312)

54. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the financial performance report on the programme budget for 2023 ([A/79/83](#)), said that the final expenditure in 2023 had amounted to \$26.1 million less than the appropriation approved by the General Assembly. That underexpenditure comprised \$8.3 million under regular-budget operations, excluding special political missions, and \$17.8 million under special political missions. The underexpenditure of \$8.3 million under regular-budget operations reflected the fact that non-post expenditure had been 2.2 per cent lower than budgeted, a percentage offset in part by overexpenditure of \$18.6 million under post resources, attributable to higher-than-budgeted salaries and common staff costs, mainly for General Service staff, primarily owing to higher-than-budgeted inflation. The underexpenditure of \$17.8 million under special political missions reflected lower-than-budgeted expenditure under operational costs (\$28.8 million) and military

and police personnel costs (\$3.9 million), offset in part by higher-than-budgeted expenditure for civilian personnel costs (\$14.9 million). The final expenditure also included an amount of \$10.9 million incurred in respect of commitment authorities, including subventions.

55. Income in 2023 had been \$37.2 million higher than estimated, owing mainly to higher-than-budgeted income from staff assessment and bank interest. Cumulatively, the higher-than-budgeted income, the underexpenditure and the cancellation of prior-period commitments in an amount of \$25.6 million had resulted in \$88.8 million of credits returnable to Member States.

56. While the Organization had started 2023 with a cash surplus and total cash of nearly \$700 million, including the liquidity reserves, it had ended the year with depleted reserves and a cash deficit of over \$400 million. In July 2023, as the liquidity for regular-budget operations had remained uncertain and unpredictable, the Organization had been forced to suspend hiring temporarily. Restrictions on non-post spending had followed in September. Those restrictions had significantly affected the Organization's pattern of expenditure in the second part of the year.

57. At the beginning of 2024, the Organization had had a large cash deficit and total cash of barely \$67 million in the reserves. The situation at the end of 2024 could be worse than it had been in 2023. Unless the liquidity reserves were fully replenished at the end of 2024, which appeared highly improbable, cash-conservation measures were likely to constrain budget implementation during 2025. Normally, the returnable credits would be offset against the assessment for 2025. Doing so, however, would exacerbate an already fragile liquidity situation. The Secretariat therefore proposed a temporary suspension of the return of credits, which he hoped to discuss in more detail in informal consultations.

58. **Mr. Bachar Bong** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/79/312), said that, with regard to the Secretary-General's proposal for a temporary suspension of the return of credits under the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Advisory Committee had considered such related questions as the cash reserves, the duration of the suspension and the criteria for the release of credits, the root causes of the liquidity situation and the potential measures to be taken, the impact of budget cycles on liquidity management, and the differences between the regular budget and the peacekeeping budget with regard to the return of credits. The Advisory Committee trusted that its observations on the matter would be taken into account in the next report of the Secretary-General on improving the financial situation of the United Nations, to be introduced at the first part of the resumed session. The Advisory Committee was of the view that the matter was within the purview of the General Assembly.

59. In its report (A/79/312), the Advisory Committee made observations on the unliquidated commitments, which had amounted to around \$116 million as at 31 December 2023 and \$75 million as at 30 June 2024, and on overexpenditure. The Advisory Committee noted that the accumulated balance of 10RCR, the cost-recovery fund, had been \$489 million as at 31 December 2023. Neither the financial performance report for 2022 nor the report for 2023, however, provided any information on a review of the fund surplus with a view to maintaining that surplus at a reasonable level, utilizing the resources efficiently and identifying credits for return to Member States, as recommended by the Advisory Committee and endorsed by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on cost recovery at the main part of the eightieth session.

60. The Advisory Committee was concerned about the absence of information on transfers between budget sections in the financial performance reports for 2022 and 2023, and was of the view that the final budget should be determined after the approval by the General Assembly of the transfers between sections in an annual budget cycle. In that regard, the Advisory Committee noted that a review of the potential amendments to the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations was being undertaken in conjunction with a review of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. According to the provisional timeline, the draft amendments were expected to be submitted for consideration by the Assembly at the main part of its eightieth session. The Advisory Committee hoped that detailed information on the draft amendments would be included.

61. **Mr. Ainomuhisha** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the consideration of the financial performance report on the programme budget. The assessment of the performance of the programme budget during the previous year was not only relevant to the calculation of credits for return to Member States but also an opportunity for the Fifth Committee to ensure that mandates were implemented effectively and efficiently, and that the General Assembly's decisions were respected. It was of little use for the Committee to focus on negotiating resources for the following year if it did not assess which areas required further attention.

62. It was regrettable that, because of unpredictability in the pattern of payments of assessed contributions, restrictions had been imposed on hiring from July 2023 and on spending from September 2023. Mandate fulfilment must be the driver of budget implementation. The Group was concerned about the fact that the availability of cash had become a dominant factor that could potentially hinder mandate fulfilment.

63. The Group noted the Secretary-General's proposal for a temporary suspension of the return of credits, which would result in the returnable amount being placed, after apportionment to Member States, in a reserve that would be used if payments of assessed contributions were insufficient for mandate implementation in 2025. The Group wished to emphasize, however, that the most effective response to the Organization's recurrent liquidity problems was for Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions. The Group welcomed the efforts of some Member States to reduce their arrears and help the Secretariat to predict when they would pay their contributions. The Group wished to recall that a single Member State, the only one that benefited from the maximum rate of assessment, or ceiling, was responsible for more than half of the unpaid contributions to the regular budget. The proposed temporary suspension of the return of credits would not fundamentally resolve the problem. Bearing in mind the fact that a report of the Secretary-General on improving the financial situation of the United Nations was expected to be considered at the first part of the resumed session, the Group would seek clarification on the proposal in informal consultations and engage constructively to identify the most appropriate responses to the situation.

64. A better understanding of the surplus in the cost-recovery fund, about which the Group had frequently asked questions in recent years, was required. The Group noted that the balance of the fund had increased to \$489 million in 2023 and recalled section II of General Assembly resolution [78/253](#), in which the Assembly had provided guidance to, and requested further information from, the Secretary-General on the fund. The Fifth Committee should also discuss other matters raised in the report of the Advisory Committee, including transfers between sections and the forward purchasing of currencies.

65. **Ms. Alawadhi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the fulfilment of the mandate of the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza must be at the core of the Committee's deliberations, especially in the light of the war on Gaza and the spread of violence to the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region. The Coordinator, who had been appointed pursuant to Security Council resolution [2720 \(2023\)](#), must be provided with sufficient funding to implement her mandate. In addition, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East must be provided with adequate financial resources for 2025.

66. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) said that the provision of predictable funding for the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator was essential given the situation in the Middle East, particularly the Gaza Strip, with which his country shared a border. His delegation would welcome a briefing by the Secretariat during the session on the current and future funding of the mandate, which would clearly need to be extended by the Security Council.

67. **Mr. Alqudah** (Jordan) said that the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator must be provided with the funding needed to fulfil her mandate from the Security Council. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East must also be provided with the funding necessary to carry out its humanitarian missions, which were of particular importance in the light of the situation in Gaza and the other areas in which it operated.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.
