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Chair: Mr. Taalas (Finland)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 131: Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (continued)

(a) United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/5 (Vol. II), A/68/751 and A/68/843)

1. **Mr. O'Farrell** (Chair of the Audit Operations Committee of the Board of Auditors), introducing the financial report and audited financial statements for the 12-month period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 for United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/5 (Vol. II)), noted that the report had been submitted in accordance with the requirements of General Assembly resolution 64/268. The Board had issued an unqualified opinion for the financial period ending 30 June 2013, the last financial period in which the financial statements for peacekeeping operations were prepared under the United Nations system accounting standards.

2. The Board recognized the progress made by the Administration in addressing its concerns and enhancing financial control and management. Although risks remained, there was increasing confidence in the Administration's ability to produce initial financial statements that complied with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), thanks to improvements in the preparation of opening balances, verification and valuation of assets, monitoring of progress, and accountability for implementation at the mission level. Progress had also been made in the implementation of the global field support strategy with the start-up of operations at service centres, the refinement of the standardized funding model based on experience in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the deployment of modular service packages in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

3. Asset management in peacekeeping operations had improved, partially owing to the implementation of IPSAS. Physical verification rates had increased. There had also been concerted action to reduce the procurement of assets already held in stock and to address the related issue of unused assets held in stock; nevertheless, those areas remained problematic. While more could be done using existing systems, a long-term solution would require integrated supply management; links among acquisition, logistics and

warehousing; and the use of new information and tools provided by IPSAS and the Umoja enterprise resource planning system.

4. The total value of procurement by peacekeeping missions for the year ended 30 June 2013 was \$2.17 billion. The Board considered that the Organization's buying power could be leveraged to achieve greater economies of scale and other savings through better strategic and operational acquisition plans. For example, there was a need for a comprehensive strategy for consolidated procurement; reliable and accurate procurement information, including through the use of commodity coding and item descriptions in requisitions; and a standard operating procedure to guide acquisition planning.

5. Two of the main objectives of the Regional Procurement Office established at Entebbe in 2010 as a pilot project were to improve cross-cutting regional procurement, known as "joint acquisition plan" procurement, and to provide enhanced capability to assist mission-level procurement, including in the start-up phase. Progress had been limited because joint acquisition plan procurement contracts were not compulsory and some of the quoted prices were less competitive than the contracts signed locally by missions. There was also a lack of clarity about the types of procurement that should be performed by the Office and by missions. As a result, internal controls were weak, delegations of authority for procurement had been undermined and accountability for procurement activities was unclear. Those issues must be resolved before the pilot project could be properly assessed.

6. The budget was a fundamental financial management tool that should be based on rigorous and transparent budget formulation and management processes and serve as the cornerstone of financial control and accountability. While peacekeeping budget processes were being improved through such measures as using historical trends in estimating vacancy rates, weaknesses persisted that could lead to inaccurate estimates of future costs. Such weaknesses included inconsistent application of budgeting methodologies and assumptions; failure to consider the "unaccepted factor" in budgeting for contingent-owned/self-sustainment equipment; and insufficient consideration of existing or foreseeable factors as well as historical trends in some missions. The Board highlighted the need for strengthened managerial oversight of budgets in construction projects and better evaluation of actual

expenditure as compared to budget estimates in order to identify the scope for improved cost-effectiveness in air operations. More generally, budget review processes in missions and at Headquarters must be strengthened.

7. With respect to the implementation of the global field support strategy, the Board noted that planning and arrangements for the transfer of functions and posts were insufficient, resulting in functions not being properly performed. There was an urgent need to improve the quality of service delivery by the Regional Service Centre. In addition, significant delays in finalizing the statement of work for enabling capacity and the associated procurement strategy had delayed the modularization project by 18 months. Four years into a major business transformation of that nature, the Administration should be able to demonstrate the improvements being achieved. To that end, the Administration must further define the end-state vision for each pillar of the strategy; enhance performance management by defining targets and baselines for the strategic key performance indicators; and develop a benefits management strategy for the whole global field support strategy.

8. During the period under review, the Administration had initiated a supply chain management project to address such long-standing issues as unused assets. As at October 2013, the project's end-state vision and implementation plan, governance, cost-benefit analysis and progress monitoring arrangements remained undeveloped, and all the initial implementation activities had been delayed. The project should be implemented urgently, as it could address strategic issues in supply management that the Board had highlighted in recent years.

9. In its overall conclusion, the Board emphasized that the progress on the global field support strategy and the implementation of IPSAS and Umoja offered an opportunity to improve the management and backstopping of peacekeeping operations and receive better value for money. To improve accountability, the Administration should elaborate more clearly the new peacekeeping service delivery model that the business transformations and other initiatives would support, and establish how the benefits would be measured and demonstrated.

10. **Ms. Casar** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors

concerning United Nations peacekeeping operations for the financial period ended 30 June 2013 ([A/68/751](#)), said that the report took into account the Assembly's request, in its resolution [67/235 B](#), that the Secretary-General should indicate an expected time frame for the implementation of the Board's recommendations. It also indicated, for both current and outstanding recommendations, the priorities for their implementation, the status of implementation and the Department responsible. As requested by the Assembly, a full explanation was given for delays in the implementation of recommendations from prior periods. As at January 2014, the Administration had implemented 15 of the 28 recommendations highlighted by the Board in annex II to its report ([A/68/5 \(Vol. II\)](#)), out of a total of 69 recommendations from prior periods under implementation.

11. The Board had noted the Administration's continued efforts to address its concerns and enhance financial control and management. It had also noted a major improvement in the rate of implementation of its recommendations, which had risen from 45 per cent in the previous period to 55 per cent for the 2011/12 financial period. The Administration was well aware of the issues raised by the Board and would work relentlessly to implement its recommendations.

12. With regard to prioritization, the 20 main recommendations highlighted by the Board had been assigned high priority, while the remaining 45 recommendations had been assigned medium priority. The Secretariat was committed to the full and timely implementation of the Board's recommendations, which helped to improve the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness.

13. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee ([A/68/843](#)), said that the Advisory Committee took note of the Board's audit opinion and its comments and concerns, particularly with respect to procurement, budgets and the global field support strategy.

14. The Advisory Committee noted the progress in preparation for the implementation of IPSAS and trusted that the outstanding tasks highlighted by the Board would be addressed as a priority. It also noted the improvements observed by the Board in asset management, but was concerned at the reported

deficiencies in the management of sensitive military equipment. Appropriate monitoring from Headquarters should be ensured in the future.

15. In relation to the Board's observation that a significant amount of cash and accounts receivable had been written off, partly as a result of the preparations for IPSAS implementation, the Advisory Committee remained concerned about insufficient follow-up and lack of timely action in recovering outstanding receivable balances. Mission management and Headquarters must make sustained efforts to recover those amounts.

16. In its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/68/782), the Advisory Committee referred to the Board's findings in other areas.

17. **Ms. Rios Requena** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the work of the Board of Auditors as the independent external auditors of the United Nations, and commended the Board on the high quality of its report. Noting that for the 2011/12 reporting period 55 per cent of the Board's recommendations had been fully implemented, 40 per cent had been partially implemented, 1 per cent had not been implemented and 4 per cent had been overtaken by events, she welcomed the improvement in the implementation rate compared to the previous reporting period. Additional efforts should be made to ensure that all the Board's recommendations were fully implemented.

18. The Group took note of the efforts made to address the Board's concerns by enhancing financial control and management, including in respect of IPSAS implementation, and to make progress in the implementation of Umoja and the global field support strategy in order to improve the management and backstopping of peacekeeping operations. She concurred with the Board on the need for further elaboration of the new peacekeeping service delivery model. While some improvement had been made on issues previously identified by the Board, the Organization continued to face problems in such areas as procurement and contract management, budget formulation and management, human resources management, asset management, and the implementation of the global field support strategy. The Group would seek in the informal consultations an explanation of why such issues continued to recur.

19. While the first IPSAS-compliant financial statements for peacekeeping operations were due in a few weeks, a number of challenges remained, including agreement on an inventory accounting policy; validation of the real estate valuations produced by the standard methodology; and better tailoring of IPSAS guidance to each mission's requirements. Efforts should be made to ensure the successful delivery of the statements. The Group would be interested to learn how the related technical problems with enterprise resource planning were being addressed in missions and at the Regional Service Centre.

20. With respect to the global field support strategy, she wondered how the Board's recommendation on the movement of staff from missions to the Regional Service Centre had been implemented, and what the administrative and financial implications had been. The Group would also seek details on the operation of the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy, and the telecommunications base in Valencia, Spain, and would further examine issues related to the standardized funding model.

21. **Mr. Van den Akker** (European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the information provided by the Board of Auditors was indispensable for the Committee's decision-making. The efforts by peacekeeping missions to implement a growing number of the Board's recommendations, including on improved monitoring, were commendable.

22. He acknowledged the Administration's continued efforts to address the Board's concerns and enhance financial control and management. IPSAS, Umoja and the global field support strategy were vital instruments in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of peacekeeping activities. As recommended by the Board, the Administration should formulate the new peacekeeping service delivery model more clearly, including through a benefits realization plan. The European Union concurred with the Board that improved procurement, the functioning of the Regional Procurement Office, improved budget formulation and the review of global field support strategy management should be priorities for the Organization.

23. Asset management was another area of concern. While the Administration had made some progress on an issue that the Board had been raising for several years, the potential for loss and waste remained too high and there was considerable scope for further improvement. IPSAS would enable individual missions to strengthen their oversight and management, but mission management must also be held accountable for ensuring that existing stock was checked before new acquisitions were made, waste was minimized and key performance indicators complied with established asset management policies.

24. Construction projects in the field also posed challenges to the Organization, as projects were insufficiently assessed and there was inadequate control of their execution; increased monitoring of such projects by Headquarters was needed.

Agenda item 148: Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei ([A/68/604](#), [A/68/728](#) and [A/68/782/Add.4](#))

Agenda item 151: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus ([A/68/584](#), [A/68/700](#) and [A/68/782/Add.7](#))

Agenda item 155: Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti ([A/68/626](#), [A/68/737](#) and [A/68/782/Add.10](#))

Agenda item 163: Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara ([A/68/608](#), [A/68/699](#) and [A/68/782/Add.3](#))

Agenda item 147: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy
([A/68/575](#), [A/68/727](#) and [A/68/782/Add.8](#))

25. **Ms. Casar** (Controller) introduced the Secretary-General's budget performance reports for the period 2012/13 and the proposed budgets for the period 2014/15 for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) ([A/68/604](#) and [A/68/728](#)), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) ([A/68/584](#) and [A/68/700](#)), the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) ([A/68/626](#) and [A/68/737](#)), the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) ([A/68/608](#) and [A/68/699](#)) and the United Nations Logistics Base ([A/68/575](#) and [A/68/727](#)).

26. She said that, pursuant to Security Council resolution [2119 \(2013\)](#), the proposed budget for MINUSTAH ([A/68/737](#)) reflected a reduction in the authorized military strength from 6,270 in 2013/14 to 5,021 in 2014/15, the proposed abolishment of 146 civilian posts and positions, and the proposed establishment of four international temporary positions — one Assistant Secretary-General, one D-2 and two P-3 positions — for the Integrated Solutions Support Unit.

27. With respect to MINURSO, the proposed 2014/15 budget ([A/68/699](#)) reflected the addition of six United Nations police officers approved by the Security Council in its resolution [2099 \(2013\)](#), the abolishment of 14 civilian posts and the nationalization of four international posts.

28. The proposed budget for the Logistics Base ([A/68/727](#)) was based on its continued reprofiling as the Global Service Centre under the global field support strategy. The Centre would provide global information and communications technology, logistics, and supply chain operational management, and would enable support services throughout the life cycle of field missions. In that context, it was proposed that the functions of the geospatial information services currently performed in field missions should be centralized at the Centre and that the Communications and Information Technology Service should be restructured.

29. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's related report on UNISFA ([A/68/782/Add.4](#)), said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$1,037,600 to the proposed budget for 2014/15. Under civilian staffing, it recommended the application of vacancy rates of 45 per cent for United Nations Volunteers and a 50 per cent for temporary positions, based on the actual vacancy rates as at 31 March 2014. Under operational costs, the Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed requirements for official travel should be maintained at the current levels, taking into account the increased opportunities for using alternative means of communication, as well as the reductions expected pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [65/268](#) and [67/254](#). It also encouraged the mission to increase its efforts to consolidate meetings taking place at the same

destination and to minimize the number of travellers on any given trip.

30. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNFICYP (A/68/782/Add.7), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposed budget for 2014/15, including the proposed staffing changes. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to present a cost-benefit analysis comparing the acquisition and the rental of vehicles. Regarding the adverse effect of recent exchange rate fluctuations on the proposed budget, the Advisory Committee recommended that information on the impact of the fluctuations should be provided to the Assembly when it considered the budget proposals. The Advisory Committee commended UNFICYP for its efforts to achieve efficiencies and looked forward to receiving information on the gains realized.

31. In its report on MINUSTAH (A/68/782/Add.10), the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$1,029,100 to the proposed budget for 2014/15 to reflect its recommended reduction in travel and staffing resources. The Advisory Committee welcomed the efficiency initiatives undertaken by the Mission in the areas of uniformed personnel, air transportation and communications, and expected that they would be implemented in a manner that did not compromise the safety and security of Mission personnel or put mandated activities at risk.

32. The Advisory Committee had no objection to the Secretary-General's staffing proposals for MINUSTAH, including the abolishment of 146 posts and positions, in line with the reconfiguration and drawdown of the Mission. It reiterated that the continuing requirement for long-vacant posts should be reviewed and posts should be proposed for renewal or abolishment. On the staffing proposals related to the establishment of an Integrated Solutions Support Unit to respond to the cholera epidemic in Haiti, the Advisory Committee did not object to the proposal for a temporary position of Senior Coordinator for Cholera at the Assistant Secretary-General level. However, it recommended against the proposed establishment of three other temporary positions for the Unit, given the existing capacity in the Mission. The Advisory Committee took note of the recommendations of the strategic review of the Santo Domingo Support Office and recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General

to keep the continuing need for the Office under review.

33. Turning to the Advisory Committee's report on MINURSO (A/68/782/Add.3), he said that it recommended a reduction of \$139,700 to the proposed budget for 2014/15. Based on its analysis of the actual and proposed delayed deployment factors and vacancy rates, the Advisory Committee recommended that the vacancy factor applied to national General Service staff should be 5 per cent rather than the proposed 4 per cent and that a delayed deployment rate of 15 per cent should be applied to police personnel. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the proposed requirements for official travel should be maintained at the current levels, taking into account the increased opportunities for using alternative means of communication and the reductions expected pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 65/268 and 67/254.

34. In its report on the Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy (A/68/782/Add.8), the Advisory Committee recommended a net reduction of \$1,147,300 to the proposed budget for the period 2014/15. It noted that the cost-benefit analysis of the consolidation of geographic information system functions in Brindisi was based, inter alia, on the reduction of posts in a number of missions for which significant downsizing was proposed in the 2014/15 period. While the Advisory Committee did not object to the consolidation of those functions in the Global Service Centre, it was of the view that there might be opportunities to further streamline staffing in the proposed Geospatial Information Systems Centre and that the consolidation should be considered a pilot initiative. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Assembly should approve the establishment, on a pilot basis, of seven general temporary assistance positions for the Geospatial Information Systems Centre but recommended against approval of two of the proposed national General Service posts.

35. The Advisory Committee was of the view that the proposal to locate the leadership of the Service for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies in Valencia did not conform to its mandated role to serve as a secondary active telecommunications facility and host the enterprise data centres and applications. It therefore recommended that the Assembly should instead approve the reclassification of the P-5 post of Chief of

the Communications and Information Technology Service in Brindisi to the D-1 level to head the Service.

36. The Advisory Committee recommended against the proposal to remove the global function of education grant processing from the Global Service Centre and to centralize that function in the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe; it therefore recommended against the corresponding abolishment of two General Service posts for those functions in Brindisi. The Advisory Committee considered that the provision of global functions in the Regional Service Centre was a significant departure from the initial vision for the global field support strategy and recommended that the Global Service Centre should continue to process education grant claims for missions that were not clients of the Regional Service Centre.

37. Lastly, the Advisory Committee emphasized the need for detailed and transparent accounting and reporting on the costs of the operations of the enterprise data centres. Specifically, future budget submissions and performance reports for the Logistics Base should reflect the total resources made available to the Logistics Base in Brindisi and the facility in Valencia for hosting and providing Umoja support services, including cost-recovery income received from peacekeeping operations and other user departments, offices and entities.

38. **Ms. Rios Requena** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was committed to working with all stakeholders to help the Secretariat ensure that the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi fulfilled its mandate. Noting that the Secretary-General continued to refer to the facility in Valencia as part of the Global Service Centre, she reiterated the prerogatives of the General Assembly concerning the management of the Centre and expressed the Group's support for all the Advisory Committee's recommendations in that regard. Any proposal to change the functions of the facility in Valencia must be submitted to the Assembly for its approval. The Group was concerned at the lack of transparency in the allocation of resources for hosting and providing Umoja support services; it would seek further clarification of the matter in informal consultations.

39. **Ms. Coto-Ramirez** (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), reiterated the

Community's support for the people and Government of Haiti and acknowledged the international efforts made to assist the country, with full respect for its national priorities and sovereignty. MINUSTAH had played an important role in rebuilding the country following the 2010 earthquake, strengthening stability and the rule of law, and achieving progress in economic and social development. Despite the progress, many challenges remained. CELAC countries had contributed military and police personnel to the Mission and had provided bilateral and regional support in order to help Haiti achieve stabilization, sustainable peace and development.

40. The Community opposed any arbitrary reductions in the resources allocated to the Mission, whose budget should be based on the situation on the ground and the mandate approved by the Security Council rather than on an artificial budgetary ceiling. The proposed budget for MINUSTAH for 2014/15 represented a reduction of \$64,577,600, or 11.2 per cent, compared to the appropriation for 2013/14. CELAC would consider the Secretary-General's proposals carefully with a view to ensuring that the Mission had the necessary capacity to support the Haitian Government in the areas of security, rule of law, human rights, and humanitarian activities, including efforts to combat cholera.

41. MINUSTAH should make every effort, within the framework of its mandate, to support the country's reconstruction and development efforts. CELAC welcomed the deeper integration of community violence reduction programmes into the Mission's rule-of-law activities. Quick-impact projects, which helped improve relations between the Mission and the local population, should continue to be implemented in line with government priorities. CELAC would continue working with the Government to establish long-term development strategies and, if necessary, would continue contributing to peacekeeping activities.

42. **Mr. Shek** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that the progress made by Haiti in recovery and reconstruction since the 2010 earthquake, with the assistance of MINUSTAH and other partners, was reflected in various ways in the reports before the Committee; the most notable was the reduction in the authorized strength of the Mission's uniformed personnel, which had reached 7,622. That reduction was accompanied by proposed reductions in the civilian component and other requirements, resulting in a budget proposal of just over \$512 million, which

was 11.2 per cent lower than the 2013/14 appropriation. The three delegations would scrutinize the proposals and the Advisory Committee's recommendations; their initial view was that the reductions reflected a commitment by senior management in MINUSTAH and at Headquarters to achieve efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the fulfilment of mandates and to implement the Mission's consolidation plan.

43. While the Mission had made steady progress in accomplishing its core tasks, the most important benchmark for overall success would be confidence that improvements in security, rule of law and governance were on a solid, sustainable foundation. Cognizant of the current number of active peacekeeping missions and increasing resource pressures, the three delegations for which he spoke shared the concerns of other Member States at the growth in the overall peacekeeping budget level and awareness of the need to ensure that efficiency and cost-effectiveness remained priorities in the establishment, maintenance and liquidation of missions. The consolidation plan and reconfiguration of MINUSTAH had served the Mission and Haiti well; he welcomed the options for future United Nations involvement in Haiti presented in the Secretary-General's most recent report to the Security Council (S/2014/162) and looked forward to seeing the outcome of the planned strategic assessment of conditions on the ground.

44. The Advisory Committee had recommended only a limited reduction to the proposed budget for MINUSTAH. A number of other recommendations concerned issues relating to air assets, the use of consultants and the functioning of the Santo Domingo Support Office that had already been raised in previous reports; that was perhaps inevitable, given the maturity of the Mission and the need to respond to changes in its mandate. The three delegations agreed that a system-wide response to cholera in Haiti was needed, that resource mobilization for that purpose should be strengthened and that action to combat cholera must be coordinated. In informal consultations, they would seek further information concerning the Advisory Committee's related recommendations on staffing.

45. He noted the concern expressed by the Advisory Committee that, in his budget proposals for 2014/15, the Secretary-General had failed to comply with General Assembly resolution 66/264 by rejustifying posts that had been vacant for two years or longer. Such posts should be reviewed and their retention or

abolishment should be included in budget proposals. He would seek details from the Secretariat on how that principle would apply to MINUSTAH. Much work remained to be done in Haiti and the Committee should be guided in its decision-making by its commitment to ensuring that the Mission had to resources it needed to fulfil its mandate.

46. **Ms. Pacunega Manano** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, saluted all uniformed and civilian personnel who worked in difficult and often dangerous environments under the United Nations flag; she paid special tribute to those who had lost their lives in the service of humanity and peace. The allocation of adequate resources was a key factor in ensuring that peacekeeping missions were able to deliver on their mandates in full and on time. Field trips conducted by the Committee, including the most recent in February 2014, had confirmed that missions deserved the full support of Member States, not arbitrary budget cuts that negatively affected their operations.

47. Strict compliance with the Assembly's resolutions regarding the cross-borrowing of funds from active peacekeeping missions was required; the Group had concerns about the new form of cross-borrowing taking place in the context of inter-mission cooperation and cautioned against any attempt to consider peacekeeping budgets a compact.

48. The budget of each mission should be approved individually, taking into account its specific mandate and circumstances. The Group would examine how that principle was applied in a number of missions, including UNMISS. Despite the steady or expanded mandates of peacekeeping missions and the increased complexity of circumstances on the ground, the overall peacekeeping budget level proposed for 2014/15 was substantially lower, by about \$404 million or 5.2 per cent, than the level for the previous year. Consideration of peacekeeping budgets should not be a cost-saving exercise but rather an exercise driven by the allocation of the resources needed to implement mandates. Unjustified reductions or across-the-board cuts could adversely affect mission operations or endanger the fulfilment of mandates. The Group would therefore seek details in informal consultations concerning budget proposals, mission performance and such issues as the implementation of quick-impact projects, which were a vital part of mission activities. It would also examine emerging issues such as arbitrary decisions to

cancel flights, delays in the disbursement of funds and budgetary reductions that disregarded mandates approved by intergovernmental bodies.

49. She looked forward to receiving the budget proposals for the new United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and expected that the Mission would be provided with adequate and timely resources and logistical support, particularly in the start-up phase. It was to be hoped that the related reports would be made available with due diligence and in ample time. She emphasized that Secretariat officials should facilitate the Committee's deliberations by providing accurate and consistent information during the informal consultations.

50. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan), expressing appreciation for the work of UNISFA, reaffirmed his Government's commitment to enabling the mission to carry out its mandate under Security Council resolutions 1990 (2011) and 2126 (2013). With respect to the budget proposal for UNISFA for 2014/15, his delegation would seek specific information on vacancies for national staff in the Professional and General Service categories and the methods used to fill those vacancies. He encouraged the Secretary-General to hire more Arabic-speaking national staff.

51. The proposed increase in resources allocated to quick-impact projects was welcome, as such projects helped extend resources to communities and build confidence. It was important for the mission to coordinate with local authorities when selecting and implementing projects in order to maximize the positive effect on people's lives. There was also a need to address the mission's environmental impact on local populations, resources and land. Solid and permanent materials should be used in the construction of mission headquarters and premises, greening efforts and tree-planting should be carried out in camps, and treated wastewater should be used for irrigation. The mission should hire local contractors for such projects and for the construction of facilities in order to improve local capacities, and the procurement and contracting process should be transparent.

52. **Mr. Gaspard** (Haiti) said that, as the Secretary-General had reported to the Security Council in March 2014 (S/2014/162), under its new Government, Haiti had made tangible progress in humanitarian affairs, the rule of law, the strengthening of democratic

institutions, security, and reconstruction. The implementation of a plan for the professionalization of the national police would culminate in 2016 with a police force of 15,000 officers. The Ministry of Public Health and Population had a plan in place to address the cholera epidemic; funding remained a major problem, however, and his delegation therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to establish an Integrated Solutions Support Unit that would strengthen capacity and mitigate the destabilizing effects of the epidemic.

53. He expressed gratitude to troop- and police-contributing countries for their efforts to assist Haiti and to MINUSTAH for improving the country's sociopolitical and institutional climate. Despite the progress achieved, many challenges remained, and the proposed budget for the Mission was fully justified. The continued funding for quick-impact projects was especially welcome, as such projects had positive effects on local populations and lent visibility to the Mission. The legislative and municipal elections scheduled for later in 2014 would represent an important milestone in the country's political and institutional life. MINUSTAH must have a well-calibrated budget that would enable it to meet the challenges on the ground while taking the Government's priorities into account.

54. **Mr. Dos Santos** (Brazil) welcomed the consolidation plan setting out the conditions for a sustainable drawdown of MINUSTAH forces. The pace of the transition should be guided by the security situation in Haiti and the Government's capacity to assume increasing responsibilities. Financial imperatives, the need for additional resources in other peacekeeping missions or an overall arbitrary target for peacekeeping expenditures should not be the overriding concerns. The Committee's decision-making on all peacekeeping budgets should focus on the unique mandates, complexities and operational conditions of missions so that they received the resources required to carry out those mandates.

55. His delegation would seek to ensure that adequate resources were provided to pursue key MINUSTAH objectives, such as support for the electoral process and political national dialogue, development of the Haitian national police, and the strengthening of rule-of-law institutions and local administrations. As MINUSTAH withdrew its military presence from remote areas, it must retain its rapid-response

capability in order to support the national police in those areas.

56. Noting that community violence reduction programmes and quick-impact projects had been effective tools to foster sustainable peace and security, he welcomed the deeper integration of violence reduction programmes within the Mission's rule-of-law activities. Such programmes and projects would be an integral part of a sustainable consolidation strategy as the Mission's military scope was reduced and security responsibilities were transferred to the national police.

57. Brazil strongly opposed the adoption of efficiency measures at the expense of the safety and security of the personnel in MINUSTAH or any peacekeeping mission. In informal consultations, his delegation would seek information on the arrangements in place for medical evacuations.

58. **Mr. Bame** (Ethiopia) said that, in 2012/13, UNISFA had facilitated the return of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees and had made every effort to maintain a stable security situation and protect civilians. A joint border verification and monitoring mechanism had become operational. He noted with concern that the proposed budget for UNISFA for 2014/15 represented a reduction of \$898,000, mainly owing to reduced requirements for construction and for acquisition of facilities and infrastructure equipment. In his delegation's view, the budget proposal might not have fully taken into account the problems faced by the mission. Little progress had been made in implementing the Assembly's many requests for the timely completion of construction projects, as evidenced by the Advisory Committee's observation that expenditure on construction amounted to only \$5,550,417, compared to an apportionment of \$23,471,050. Rather than complete the construction projects, the Secretary-General had opted to produce a revised construction programme that had not been approved by the Assembly.

59. He concurred with the Advisory Committee that the project on staff living accommodation, including a two-storey building to serve as a force headquarters, should have been completed. His delegation would seek clarification as to why the Assembly's instructions had not been followed and why the proposal had been changed. Given the logistical and other challenges faced by the mission, it was unwise to reduce the resources for construction; the 2014/15 budget should be adjusted to reinstate the funding for facilities so as

to improve the mission's infrastructure and facilitate the implementation of its mandate.

60. **Mr. Castañeda Solares** (Guatemala) said that the drawdown of MINUSTAH must be gradual and responsible. The Secretary-General's most recent report on Haiti ([S/2014/162](#)) indicated the need for ongoing operational support to the Mission. Noting that the budget proposal for the 2014/15 period represented an 11.2 per cent reduction compared to the previous budget, he emphasized that the Mission must be given the resources necessary to fulfil its mandate effectively. According to the current timing, the budget was approved in May and the mandate was renewed in October; logically, the Mission's mandate should determine its budget, not vice versa. Given that the consolidation plan for MINUSTAH was being developed at a time when the logistical support requirements for the elections were still unknown, it was to be hoped that no unjustified budget reductions would be imposed. His delegation would revert to the matter when the Mission's mandate came up for renewal in October 2014.

61. **Ms. Colín Ortega** (Mexico) said that her delegation would make it a priority to ensure that MINUSTAH had all the resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. The Mission's optimal functioning must be ensured in a manner that responded to the situation on the ground.

62. **Mr. Karaçay** (Turkey) said that, in the Secretary-General's report on the budget performance of UNFICYP for 2012/13 ([A/68/584](#)), under expected accomplishment 1.2, an increase in residential construction was listed among the planned indicators of achievement for progress towards normal living conditions. Unlike agricultural projects, which did not have long-term consequences, commercial and residential buildings were permanent in nature and thus threatened the status quo in the United Nations buffer zone. For that reason, such construction should not be considered an indicator of progress towards normal living conditions in that zone. The report also indicated that 131 humanitarian visits had been made to Greek Cypriot and Maronite communities in the north, while only 6 such visits had been conducted to address humanitarian issues affecting Turkish Cypriots in the south. That discrepancy might explain why long-standing issues such as the lack of a Turkish-language school in Limassol remained unresolved.

63. Drawing attention to the assertion, in the Secretary-General's proposed budget for UNFICYP for 2014/15 (A/68/700), that the Force would continue to take measures against the unauthorized use of the buffer zone, he recalled that no measures had yet been taken to address the issue of the unauthorized construction of a university campus in the village of Pile/Pyla, which was in the buffer zone. As the Secretary-General had indicated in a report to the Security Council (S/2013/7), the construction threatened to create a fait accompli that would jeopardize the delicate demographic balance in the village. The Turkish Cypriot side had never consented to the construction of the campus; on the contrary, it had strongly protested the unilateral action by the Greek Cypriot side, which was challenging the status quo in the buffer zone. Given that the zone was controlled by the United Nations, he wondered how construction of that magnitude could have taken place without the consent of the Turkish Cypriot leadership and why the university was operational despite the fact that it was unauthorized.

64. The budget proposal also mentioned a programme to upgrade the Force's fire safety standards in accordance with those of the host country. Experience showed that firefighting in the buffer zone required the collaboration of both sides with the United Nations. The reference to the programme did not reflect the reality on the ground, where an existing bi-communal technical committee already addressed the issue and could serve as a model for cooperation in the matter.

65. He wondered whether, 50 years after the deployment of UNFICYP, a review of its mandate was envisaged.

66. Lastly, he inquired as to the total numbers of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots hired as local staff by UNFICYP and wondered what remedies were being considered to correct the large discrepancy in the ratio between them. UNFICYP could discharge its duties successfully only if it cooperated with both sides on an equal footing.

67. **Mr. Menelaou** (Cyprus) said that, as long as the abnormal situation in Cyprus lasted, the budgetary allocation for UNFICYP should be maintained at the level required for the efficient implementation of its mandate.

68. He was compelled to respond to the statement made by the representative of Turkey, although the

issue under discussion was a technical one that did not merit politicization. Noting that until 2013 Turkey had not raised such issues during the Committee's deliberations, he said that his Government had hoped that Turkey would abandon its adversarial position and adopt a new spirit of cooperation and partnership; he invited the Turkish representative to reconsider his stance accordingly. Modernization and adaptation to current needs could be achieved by withdrawing troops and entering a new phase of normal relations with the Republic of Cyprus.

69. The Turkish position was particularly regrettable when taken by a country that was seeking membership in the Security Council, apparently in order to pursue its national aims rather than the principles of the Organization.

The meeting rose at noon.