



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
24 November 2017

Original: English

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## Seventy-second session

Agenda item 136

### Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

## **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 II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms\*\***

### **Thirteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019**

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2018 for thematic cluster II ([A/72/371/Add.2](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 22 November 2017.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General ([A/72/371](#)) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2018 for special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. As in previous years, five addenda to the main report cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).<sup>1</sup> The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions

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\* Reissued for technical reasons on 30 November 2017.

\*\* The Advisory Committee was informed that the title of the report of the Secretary-General, which in previous years had read "sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels", had been amended to reflect developments in recent years.

<sup>1</sup> [A/72/371/Add.1](#), [A/72/371/Add.2](#), [A/72/371/Add.3](#), [A/72/371/Add.4](#) and [A/72/371/Add.5](#).



are contained in its main report ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)), while the budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI are covered in its related reports.<sup>2</sup>

3. The budget proposals of the Secretary-General for the Panel of Experts on Mali (cluster II), the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (both under cluster III) are contained in separate addenda,<sup>3</sup> and the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee are contained in its related reports.<sup>4</sup>

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that a biennial provision of \$1,109.6 million for special political missions was included in section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2018–2019, representing a reduction of \$14.8 million compared with the amount of \$1,124.4 million provided for in the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2018–2019 (see General Assembly resolution [71/274](#)). The Secretary-General attributes the reduction of \$14.8 million to planned efficiency gains across all special political missions, as part of the reductions of \$58.9 million under “other changes” in the proposed programme budget. The Committee recalls that it requested, but was not provided with, a consolidated list of the reductions categorized under other resource changes across all budget sections, along with an explanation of how they were to be achieved and the extent to which they could be considered efficiencies. The Committee made comments in this regard in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (see [A/72/7](#), chap. I). In this connection, the Committee notes that no reductions pertaining to Umoja or other efficiencies are reported for the special political missions for 2018, except for an amount of \$698,900 for UNAMA (see [A/72/371](#), para. 111). The comments and recommendations of the Committee on the level of the biennial provision proposed by the Secretary-General are included in its main report ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).

## II. Budget performance for 2016–2017 and resource requirements for 2018

5. Table 1 provides information on the proposed resources for 2018 for the 12 continuing special political missions under cluster II<sup>5</sup> (see also para. 3 above), compared with the approved resources and projected expenditures for 2017.

<sup>2</sup> [A/72/7/Add.11](#), [A/72/7/Add.12](#), [A/72/7/Add.13](#), [A/72/7/Add.14](#) and [A/72/7/Add.15](#).

<sup>3</sup> [A/72/371/Add.6](#), [A/72/371/Add.7](#) and [A/72/371/Add.8](#).

<sup>4</sup> [A/72/7/Add.16](#), [A/72/7/Add.17](#) and [A/72/7/Add.18](#).

<sup>5</sup> The Secretary-General proposes resource requirements for 2018 for 13 missions under cluster II in his report ([A/72/371/Add.2](#)). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the mandate of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism ended on 17 November 2017 and that the overall requirements under cluster II for 2018 have been adjusted to reflect the change.

Table 1  
**Summary of resource requirements for thematic cluster II**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	1 January 2016–31 December 2017			Requirements for 1 January–31 December 2018		Variance analysis (2017–2018)	
	Appropriation	Estimated expenditures	Estimated variance	Total	Non-recurrent	Approved budget (2017)	Increase/(decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(2)–(1)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(4)–(6)
Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea	4 477.8	4 230.6	(247.2)	2 203.9	–	2 247.2	(43.3)
Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo	2 469.3	2 525.7	56.4	1 301.5	–	1 231.3	70.2
Panel of Experts on the Sudan	1 968.1	1 591.3	(376.8)	988.3	–	1 101.6	(113.3)
Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	5 401.1	5 678.6	277.5	3 370.1	–	2 886.6	483.5
Panel of Experts on Libya	2 598.9	2 231.1	(367.8)	1 261.8	–	1 327.4	(65.6)
Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic	2 319.0	2 232.5	(86.5)	1 136.2	–	1 172.0	(35.8)
Panel of Experts on Yemen	5 656.8	3 983.5	(1 673.3)	2 164.2	–	2 685.4	(521.2)
Panel of Experts on South Sudan	2 517.6	2 331.8	(185.8)	1 360.9	–	1 319.3	41.6
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities; and the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009)	12 374.0	12 012.7	(361.3)	7 049.2	–	6 454.0	595.2
Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)	2 626.2	1 306.0	(1 320.2)	2 034.3	–	1 591.0	443.3
Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction	6 003.8	6 004.3	0.5	2 790.6	–	2 875.7	(85.1)
Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate	18 422.4	18 122.1	(300.3)	10 016.0	6.0	9 513.4	502.6
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism	7 381.4	7 742.3	360.9	–	–	3 185.8	(3 185.8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>74 216.4</b>	<b>69 992.5</b>	<b>(4 223.9)</b>	<b>35 677.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>37 590.7</b>	<b>(1 913.7)</b>

Note: Table excludes requirements for the Panel of Experts on Mali.

#### 2016–2017 performance

6. For the biennium 2016–2017, expenditures through 31 December 2017 are projected at \$69,992,500 for the missions under thematic cluster II, compared with the appropriation of \$74,216,400 for the biennium, leading to a projected unencumbered balance of \$4,223,900. A summary of significant variances between the 2016–2017 appropriation and projected expenditures for the missions continuing

into 2018 is provided in table 4 in the main report of the Secretary-General (A/72/371).

7. With regard to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, the General Assembly had approved the appropriation until 31 October 2017 (resolution 71/272 B, sect. VII, para. 3). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the additional requirements for 2017 (mandated period: 1–17 November; and liquidation period: 18 November to 31 December) for the mission would be met within the overall appropriation for the biennium 2016–2017 for cluster II, owing to projected underexpenditures under other missions in the same cluster. **The Advisory Committee trusts that information on the additional resources required by the mission beyond 31 October 2017 will be provided to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for 2018 for the special political missions.**

#### *Overall requirements for 2018*

8. As shown in table 1, the resource requirements proposed for 2018 for the 12 continuing missions under thematic cluster II amount to \$35,677,000 (net),<sup>5</sup> representing a decrease of \$1,913,700 (5 per cent) compared with the resources approved for 2017. A summary of the main factors contributing to the variances between the approved resources for 2017 and the proposed resources for 2018 for continuing missions is provided in table 6 in the main report of the Secretary-General (A/72/371).

### **A. Comments and recommendations on staffing requirements**

9. Table 2 presents positions approved for 2017, vacant positions as at 30 September 2017 and the proposed staffing requirements for 2018 for the 12 continuing missions under cluster II.<sup>5</sup> The Advisory Committee was informed that no positions had been vacant for two years or longer under cluster II.

Table 2  
**Thematic cluster II: staffing requirements**

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Approved for 2017</i>	<i>Vacant positions as at 30 September</i>		<i>New positions</i>
		<i>Proposed for 2018</i>		
Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea	7 (1 P-3, 1 GS (OL), 5 LL)	1 GS (OL)	7 (1 P-3, 1 GS (OL), 5 LL)	–
Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo	1 P-3	–	1 P-3	
Panel of Experts on the Sudan	1 P-3	–	1 P-3	
Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	6 (1 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 GS (OL))	1 GS (OL)	6 (1 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 GS (OL))	
Panel of Experts on Libya	2 (1 P-3, 1 GS (OL))	1 P-3	2 (1 P-3, 1 GS (OL))	
Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic	2 (1 P-3, 1 GS (OL))	–	2 (1 P-3, 1 GS (OL))	
Panel of Experts on Yemen	8 (1 P-3, 5 FS, 2 LL)	2 FS	8 (1 P-3, 5 FS, 2 LL)	
Panel of Experts on South Sudan	3 (1 P-3, 2 GS (OL))	–	3 (1 P-3, 2 GS (OL))	

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Approved for 2017</i>	<i>Vacant positions as at 30 September</i>	<i>Proposed for 2018</i>	<i>New positions</i>
Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution <a href="#">1526 (2004)</a> concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities; and the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1904 (2009)</a>	21 (1 P-5, 5 P-4, 6 P-3, 9 GS (OL))	1 P-3, 1 GS (OL)	21 (1 P-5, 5 P-4, 6 P-3, 9 GS (OL))	
Implementation of Security Council resolution <a href="#">2231 (2015)</a>	11 (1 P-5, 5 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 GS (OL))	1 P-4	11 (1 P-5, 5 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 GS (OL))	
Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1540 (2004)</a>	5 (1 P-5, 2 P-3, 2 GS (OL))	–	5 (1 P-5, 2 P-3, 2 GS (OL))	
Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate	44 (1 ASG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 9 P-5, 14 P-4, 6 P-3, 3 P-2, 8 GS (OL))	1 ASG, 2 P-4	50 (1 ASG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 9 P-5, 19 P-4, 7 P-3, 3 P-2, 8 GS (OL))	6 (5 P-4, 1 P-3)
Panel of Experts on Mali <sup>a</sup>			3 (1 P-5, 1 P-3, 1 GS (OL))	

*Note:* There are no proposals for abolishment or for reclassifications for 2018.

*Abbreviations:* ASG, Assistant Secretary-General; FS, Field Service; GS (OL), General Service (Other level); LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer; USG, Under-Secretary-General; UNV, United Nations Volunteer.

<sup>a</sup> Included for information only.

#### *Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate*

10. The Secretary-General indicates that six new positions are requested to cover additional tasks and new areas of expertise that the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate will have to undertake pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2322 \(2016\)](#) and [2354 \(2017\)](#) (A/72/371/Add.2, para. 211). The proposed designations of the six positions are as follows:

(a) Three Legal Officers (P-4), in accordance with resolution [2322 \(2016\)](#), to cover, respectively, law enforcement cooperation with an in-depth analysis of specific elements on the use of biometric data; intelligence work, in particular experience in downgrading intelligence; and international judicial cooperation with a focus on information and communications technology;

(b) One Legal Officer (P-4), one Communication Officer (P-4) and one Political Affairs Officer (P-3), in accordance with resolution [2354 \(2017\)](#), to implement the new mandate on countering terrorist narratives with regard to the legal, communications, political and research components.

11. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, while the two resolutions set out requirements for Member States, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, respectively, the new requirements for Member States implied new areas of work for the Executive Directorate since it is required to monitor, promote, analyse and identify gaps and challenges vis-à-vis these requirements.

12. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Security Council, in paragraphs 1 and 2 of its resolution [2354 \(2017\)](#), had welcomed the document entitled “Comprehensive international framework to counter terrorist narratives” (S/2017/375, annex), and the recommended guidelines and good practices set out therein, and had stressed that

Member States and all relevant United Nations entities should follow the subsequent guidelines while implementing the framework. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the framework document had been developed by a consultant at the Executive Directorate and that, in accordance with the resolution, the Executive Directorate would be required to implement the relevant requirements on a continuous basis, thus requiring staff rather than a series of short-term consultancies. The Committee notes from the information provided to it that no resources for consultants have been requested for 2018 by the Executive Directorate, compared with the approved requirement of \$261,000 for 2017.

13. With regard to the rationale for the proposed new position of a Political Affairs Officer (P-3), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed new Political Affairs Officer would be in charge of the political and research components of Security Council resolution 2354 (2017) and that this new area of work was related to countering terrorist narratives. The new tasks would include developing a relationship with the Global Counter-Terrorism Research Network, which would require the new P-3 to be knowledgeable about how to assess the impact of countering terrorist narratives, as required under the resolution. The Committee notes that the Executive Directorate currently has a total of five Political Affairs Officers (1 P-4, 3 P-3 and 1 P-2) in its Political Analysis and Research Cluster. **Taking into account the existing capacity for political analysis and research at the Executive Directorate, the Committee is of the view that the additional workload should be absorbed by the current staff of the Executive Directorate, and it therefore recommends against the proposed establishment of a new position of Political Affairs Officer (P-3). Related operational costs should be reduced accordingly.**

#### Vacancy rates

14. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the budgeted and actual vacancy rates for 2017 and proposed vacancy rates for 2018 for the continuing 12 missions under cluster II<sup>5</sup> (see table 3 ).

Table 3  
**Comparison of vacancy rates**

(Percentages have been rounded)

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Somalia</i>	<i>DRC</i>	<i>Sudan</i>	<i>DPRK</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>CAR</i>	<i>Yemen</i>	<i>South Sudan</i>	<i>Analytical and Support Monitoring Team</i>	<i>Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)</i>	<i>1540 (2004) Committee</i>	<i>CTED</i>
<b>International staff</b>												
2017 approved number of positions	2	1	1	6	2	2	6	3	21	11	5	44
2017 budgeted vacancy rate (percentage)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	30	0	0; new: 50
Actual average vacancy rate for the period from January to July 2017 (percentage)	0	0	0	20	0	0	33	0	19	55	0	9
Actual vacancy rate as at 31 July 2017 (percentage)	0	0	0	33	50	0	33	0	14	27	0	0
Projected average vacancy rate for 2017 (January to December) (percentage)	0	0	0	33	0	0	33	0	14	27	0	5

Mission	Somalia	DRC	Sudan	DPRK	Libya	CAR	Yemen	South Sudan	Analytical and Support Monitoring Team	Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)	1540 (2004) Committee	CTED
2018 proposed number of positions	2	1	1	6	2	2	6	3	21	11	5	50
Proposed vacancy rate for 2018 (percentage)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5; new: 50

*Abbreviations:* DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo; DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea; CAR: Central African Republic; Analytical and Support Monitoring Team: Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities; and the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution 1904 (2009); Security Council resolutions 2231 (2015); Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015); 1540 (2004) Committee: Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004); CTED: Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

15. The Advisory Committee notes that for international staff, a standard vacancy rate of 5 per cent is applied to the estimates of all exiting positions for 2018, compared with the 2017 rates of zero per cent applied for 10 of the missions, and 10 and 30 per cent, respectively, for the other two missions (see table 3). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, in general, the proposed vacancy rate for 2018 reflected the actual average vacancy rates for the period from January to July 2017 and that in cases in which the actual average vacancy rate was zero per cent for the period, a vacancy rate of 5 per cent was proposed for 2018, considering a possible turnover of existing staff. **While the Committee is not against the application of a standard vacancy rate for the existing positions for most of the missions under cluster II, it notes that none of the actual average vacancy rates for the period from January to July 2017 were 5 per cent for any mission on the basis of the information presented in table 3.**

16. The Advisory Committee further notes that for international staff of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and international staff supporting the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), the actual average vacancy rates were 19 and 55 per cent and actual vacancy rates were 14 and 27 per cent, respectively, as at 31 July 2017. **Taking into account the higher actual vacancy rates experienced in 2017, the Committee is of the view that the proposed vacancy rate of 5 per cent for 2018 for their international staff does not seem to be realistic and therefore recommends that vacancy rates of 14 and 27 per cent be applied, respectively, to the estimates for 2018 for international staff of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and international staff supporting the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).**

17. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 13 and 16 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the staffing proposals of the Secretary-General for 2018 be approved.**

## B. Comments and recommendations on operational costs

18. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the operational costs for cluster II<sup>5</sup>, which is shown in table 4, including the appropriation and estimated expenditure for the biennium 2016–2017 and the projected requirements for 2018.

Table 4  
**Thematic cluster II: operational costs**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1 January 2016–31 December 2017			Requirements for 1 January to 31 December 2018		Variance analysis 2017–2018	
	Appropriation	Estimated expenditures	Estimated variance	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	Approved budget 2017	Variance increase/ (decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(2)–(1)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(4)–(6)
1. Experts	25 740.1	24 052.4	(1 687.7)	12 925.5	–	13 056.4	(130.9)
2. Consultants	261.0	216.0	(45.0)	0	–	261.0	(261.0)
3. Official travel	3 944.6	3 332.9	(611.7)	1 969.3	–	1 945.7	23.6
4. Facilities and infrastructure	5 378.6	5 244.6	(134.0)	2 470.2	–	2 671.6	(201.4)
5. Ground transportation	841.0	412.4	(428.6)	193.6	–	295.5	(101.9)
6. Communications	847.7	652.5	(195.2)	307.9	1.5	434.8	(126.9)
7. Information technology	2 007.0	2 005.0	(2.0)	1 526.5	4.5	1 004.5	522.0
8. Other supplies, services and equipment	504.5	500.3	(4.2)	285.4	–	286.6	(1.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>39 524.5</b>	<b>36 416.1</b>	<b>(3 108.4)</b>	<b>19 678.4</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>19 956.1</b>	<b>(277.7)</b>

Note: Excludes requirements for the Panel of Experts on Mali.

19. The proposed resources for the operational costs for the 12 continuing missions under thematic cluster II for 2018 amount to \$19,678,400, reflecting a decrease of \$277,700, or 1.4 per cent, compared with the appropriation of \$19,956,100 for 2017. An increase of \$522,000 is proposed under information technology, which mainly reflects increased requirements for two missions, namely, the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (\$274,800) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team (\$376,300), in addition to a higher single rate for the Office of Information and Communications Technology service-level agreement for 2018 (see paras. 31–33 below).

### Experts

20. With regard to the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is indicated that the anticipated overexpenditure for the biennium 2016–2017 and the variance between the 2018 requirements and the 2017 approved budget is attributable mainly to an increase in the average fees of the experts resulting from a change in the terms of reference for the experts, according to which at least 10 years of experience, instead of 7, are required (A/72/371/Add.2, paras. 27 and 30). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the increase in the minimum number of years of experience required for experts, had been recommended by the United Nations Security Management System Board of Inquiry concerning the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and that the Secretariat had concurred with the recommendation (see S/2017/713).

21. The Advisory Committee notes that for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Panel of Experts on South Sudan, the proposed increase in resources also reflect the new terms of reference for the experts (see A/72/371/Add.2, para. 121). With respect to the number of expert panels under cluster II that have applied the new terms of reference requiring 10 years of experience, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the contracts of the experts of the panels on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea



and South Sudan had been renewed in 2017 and that the increase in resources was therefore available for reflection in the budget proposal for 2018. The contracts and appointments of the experts of the other panels under cluster II would be up for renewal in 2018; at that time, the terms of references for each of them would be reassessed. The Committee also requested information on the fees and corresponding years of experience of experts, including the differences between 7 and 10 years of experience, under cluster II.

**22. The Advisory Committee is not convinced of the asserted correlation between increased years of service and the potential for reduced security risks to the experts of the panels, and therefore requests that more justification be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for 2018 for special political missions.**

#### **Official travel**

23. The proposed resources for official travel for 2018 amount to \$1,969,300, representing an increase of \$23,600, compared with the approved resources for 2017 under cluster II. The proposed increase reflects higher requirements of \$362,800 for the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (see para. 24 below), offset in part by reductions proposed under a total of nine missions, mainly, with regard to the Panel of Experts on Yemen (\$182,400) and to support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) (\$71,700).

#### *Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate*

24. The proposed resource requirements for official travel amount to \$1,235,800 for 2018, representing an increase of \$362,800, or 42 per cent, compared with the approved budget for 2017. It is indicated that the increase is attributable mainly to the newly mandated annual open meetings and the official travel required with regard to creating the annual workplan, in accordance with paragraph 5 (a) and (c) of Security Council resolution [2354 \(2017\)](#).<sup>6</sup> Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the requested provisions amounted to \$339,990 for two annual open meetings (\$4,857, for a total of 70 individuals per trip) and \$22,185 for travel to create the annual workplan (\$4,437, for a total of five individuals per trip). As for why official travel would be required to create the annual workplan, the Committee was informed that extensive consultations with research network members of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate would be necessary to establish a feasible annual workplan as a result of the ever-changing counter-terrorism environment.

#### *Utilization of videoconferencing and other means of communication*

25. The Advisory Committee notes that, with regard to support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, a reduction of \$71,700 is proposed under official travel for 2018 due mainly to a planned reduction in travel, with videoconferencing taken into consideration whenever possible (see [A/72/371/Add.2](#), para. 183).

26. With regard to the impact of the increased use of videoconferencing and other means of communication on travel requirements, the Advisory Committee was

<sup>6</sup> In paragraph 5 (a) and (c), the Security Council directed the Counter-Terrorism Committee, with the support of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, to: (a) organize at least one open meeting annually to review developments globally in countering terrorist narratives; and (c) use the existing Executive Directorate research network and create an annual workplan to provide advice and support the work of the Committee and the Executive Directorate on various matters related to countering terrorist narratives.

informed, upon enquiry, that other missions under cluster II<sup>7</sup> used other means of communication that had resulted in overall lower travel requirements since experts did not travel to meetings, although such savings could not be attributed to particular trips, nor was it feasible to indicate which particular trips had been forgone owing to the use of advanced technology. The Committee provides comments on official travel requirements in its main report (A/72/7/Add.10).

*Cost estimates for official travel*

27. The Advisory Committee requested a detailed breakdown of official travel undertaken during the biennium 2016–2017, including the number of trips and expenditures incurred. The Committee was informed that details of actual travel undertaken as of August 2017 were processed and extracted from the Umoja travel module. For field operations, however, information on travel by military personnel and national staff was not readily available owing to the fact that the related information continued to be captured in legacy systems and not in the Umoja travel module, which had not been rolled out in the field for these categories of personnel. Upon request, the Committee was also provided with a detailed breakdown of planned trips and cost estimates for 2018.

28. The Advisory Committee notes, from the partial travel expenditures for 2016–2017 and the planned trips for 2018 it had received upon request, that the actual air ticket fares paid by the missions during 2016–2017 were considerably lower than the standard estimates presented in the budget proposal when such comparisons were possible for some destinations. For example, while costs for round trips from New York to Nairobi, to Entebbe, Uganda, and to Paris are estimated at \$9,583, \$9,616 and \$5,020 for 2018, respectively, actual air fares to the three destinations amounted to \$6,270, \$6,971 and \$1,971 during 2016–2017. The Committee makes comments and recommendations on official travel, including cost parameters in its main report (A/72/7/10).

*Standard of accommodation for air travel of experts*

29. The Advisory Committee has reiterated its comments on the standard of accommodation for air travel for the experts of sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels (see A/71/822, para. 7). In this connection, the Committee notes that the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on standards of accommodation for air travel for consideration by the Assembly at the first part of its resumed seventy-second session (see resolution 71/272 B, sect. VI). **The Committee reiterates that the nature of the work of the experts under the sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels is distinct from that performed under other consultancy contracts. The Committee therefore recommends that the Assembly affirm their entitlement to the same standard of accommodation as staff members of the Secretariat.**

**Facilities and infrastructure**

30. With regard to the provisions proposed for the rental of office premises for 2018, the Advisory Committee notes a discrepancy between the costs budgeted for the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (\$14,764 per person) and the rest of the missions under cluster II (\$15,900 per person). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that no vacancy rate had been factored into the rental costs for the Panel. Reductions had been applied, however, to the estimates for 2018 under

<sup>7</sup> The Advisory Committee was informed that this excludes the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, whose mandate involves a significant amount of travel, which cannot be replaced with other means of communications.

the facilities and infrastructure class (comprising mostly rental costs) on the basis of projected expenditures for 2016–2017, which provided for an average of 13 experts and staff positions per year (12 in 2016 and 14 in 2017). Consequently, the provision for the rental of office premises for 2018 was made inadvertently for 13 instead of 14 experts and staff positions.

### **Information technology**

#### *Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

31. With regard to the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the proposed increase of \$274,800 relates mainly to the requirement for additional subscriptions to global databases to provide analytical resources to the Panel of Experts, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2371 \(2017\)](#) ([A/72/371/Add.2](#), paras. 65 and 68). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, with the introduction of new sanctions measures in Security Council resolution [2270 \(2016\)](#) and the subsequent expansions of these measures, in accordance with resolutions [2321 \(2016\)](#) and [2371 \(2017\)](#), the Panel would be required to monitor trade in a large number of prohibited export commodities from the country. The Panel therefore relies upon statistics on the customs data of specific Member States, which are only available commercially. The database identified for the Panel is the only one that provides detailed trade data statistics at the global level, by country and by commodity.

#### *Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions [1526 \(2004\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities; and the Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution [1904 \(2009\)](#)*

32. With regard to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, the proposed increase of \$376,300 is attributable mainly to the additional resources needed for extending the enhanced data model to all six United Nations official languages ([A/72/371/Add.2](#), para. 147). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the enhanced data model had been first conceptualized in 2011 and that its creation had been mandated by the Security Council in 2015 in resolution [2253 \(2015\)](#). For the biennium 2016–2017, an amount of \$560,000 was proposed for the model in six languages; by June 2017, however, it had been completed in English only, at a total cost of \$380,000. It had therefore become clear that additional time and resources would be required for the development of the data model to capture and produce reports in the other official languages. In consultation with the Office of Information and Communications Technology, it was estimated that a total of \$1,000,000 over two years would now be required and that an amount of \$500,000 was included in the 2018 budget.

#### *Application of standard rates for centrally managed information technology services*

33. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed increase for 2018 under information technology also reflected a higher rate in the service-level agreement of the Office of Information and Communications Technology. For cluster II entities based in New York or in home countries, a single and standard rate of \$1,624 was applied for 2018–2019, compared with the rate of \$1,135 for service level C for 2016–2017. The Committee notes, from the information it was provided upon request, that in a number of missions, different amounts, rather than the standard rate, had been applied to the estimates for 2018.

34. With regard to ratios of information technology equipment holdings, the Advisory Committee notes from the main report of the Secretary-General that the

ratios had been proposed on the basis of the proposed personnel incumbency levels planned for 2018, rather than on the full authorized level of personnel (A/72/371, para. 88). The Committee notes, however, that this is not the case for such holdings for the missions under cluster II (ibid., table 2). The Committee discusses the provisions of information and communications technology services to special political missions and related rates applied, as well as ratios of the holdings of computing devices, in its main report on the proposed budget for 2018 for special political missions (A/72/7/Add.10).

**35. Subject to its recommendation in paragraph 13 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for operational costs for 2018.**

### **III. Recommendation**

**36. The Secretary-General's budgetary proposals for the special political missions for 2018, which require action to be taken by the General Assembly, are set out in paragraph 120 of his main report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/72/371).**

**37. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2018 for the 12 special political missions under thematic cluster II, subject to the comments and recommendations above, as well as those contained in its main report (A/72/7/Add.10).**

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