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## Fifth Committee

### Summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 17 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Tommo Monthe . . . . . (Cameroon)  
*Chair 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 136: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (continued)**

*Proposed United Nations Secretariat contribution to the United Nations Development Group cost-sharing arrangement for the resident coordinator system (A/72/7/Add.5, A/72/337 and A/72/337/Corr.1)*

*International Trade Centre (A/72/6 (Sect. 13), A/72/6 (Sect. 13)/Corr.1, A/72/7/Add.3 and A/72/7/Add.3/Rev.1)*

1. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the proposed United Nations Secretariat contribution to the United Nations Development Group cost-sharing arrangement for the resident coordinator system (A/72/337 and A/72/337/Corr.1), said that the report had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 71/272 B, by which the Assembly had endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions as contained in its related report (A/70/7/Add.48), and had requested the Secretary-General to present to it a refined proposal on the cost-sharing arrangement for the resident coordinator system, and to submit associated costs in the biennial programme plan for the biennium 2018–2019.

2. The amount of \$13,321,574 had been proposed for the Secretariat's contribution to the resident coordinator system under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2018–2019. That amount was provisional and was based on the amount requested by the Secretary-General for the biennium 2016–2017 in his related report (A/70/703), as the analysis to support the refined proposal on the cost-sharing arrangement had not yet been completed. At the same time, in its resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive proposal to further improve the resident coordinator system. The Deputy Secretary-General was currently conducting a review in response to that request, the results of which would be presented to the Assembly in December 2017. As the outcome of the review might have implications for the future funding of the resident coordinator system, the refined proposal on the related cost-sharing arrangement remained under development.

3. In order to ensure the continuity of the resident coordinator system, the Secretary-General was requesting an appropriation of \$13,571,800 under

section 9 of the proposed programme budget for 2018–2019, an increase of \$250,226 over the provisional amount reflected in the original budget proposal (A/72/6 (Sect. 9)). The United Nations' contribution to the resident coordinator system was vital to ensuring the sustainability of the development pillar.

4. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on section 13, International Trade Centre, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (A/72/6 (Sect. 13) and A/72/6 (Sect. 13)/Corr.1), she said that the Centre, the joint development agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, which provided equal shares of the Centre's regular budgets, was responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 6, Operational aspects of trade promotion and export development, and programme 10, Trade and development, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019. The Centre focused on enabling micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries and economies in transition to participate in trade. More than 85 per cent of its activities were concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, least developed countries, small economies, landlocked developing countries, and post-conflict and fragile countries. Guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Centre supported sustainable and inclusive growth through trade, with a particular emphasis on women's employment and job creation for youth and the poor.

5. The overall resource requirements for the Centre for 2018–2019 amounted to 72,972,700 Swiss francs. The proposed United Nations share amounted to 36,486,350 Swiss francs, or half of the overall budget, representing a reduction of \$406,500 in comparison with the corresponding appropriation for 2016–2017. That reduction was in line with General Assembly resolution 71/274 and reflected anticipated efficiency gains in 2018–2019.

6. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the cost-sharing arrangement for the resident coordinator system (A/72/7/Add.5), said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/337) reflected an interim funding arrangement for the resident coordinator system agreed by the member entities of the United Nations Development Group, pending the submission of the comprehensive proposal requested in General Assembly resolution 71/243 for consideration by the Economic and Social Council at the end of 2017 and by the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. As the comprehensive proposal might have an impact on the cost-sharing arrangement, the Advisory Committee was

not in a position to recommend approval of the Secretary-General's corresponding budget proposal. Should the decision of the Economic and Social Council on the comprehensive proposal have financial implications for the biennium 2018–2019, the Secretary-General could submit proposed revised estimates to the proposed programme budget, if necessary.

7. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on section 13 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 ([A/72/7/Add.3](#) and [A/72/7/Add.3/Rev.1](#)), he said that the overall proposed resources for the International Trade Centre amounted to 71,454,400 Swiss francs before recosting, or a reduction of 1.1 per cent compared with the appropriation for 2016–2017. The programme budget proposal under section 13 amounted to \$36,685,300. In the context of its consideration of that proposal, the Advisory Committee had requested, but had not been provided with, a breakdown of the travel requirements for the Centre for 2018–2019. It trusted that the Centre would provide the relevant information to the General Assembly during its consideration of the 2018–2019 budget proposal. The Advisory Committee also encouraged the Centre to continue to broaden its donor base in order to support and sustain its programmes and recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal under section 13 of the proposed programme budget.

8. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted the critical importance of the resident coordinator system to the development pillar of the United Nations. The Group supported the Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations with regard to the proposed Secretariat contribution to the cost-sharing arrangement for the system for 2018–2019 and was disappointed that the Secretary-General had only partially fulfilled the General Assembly's request for a refined proposal on the arrangement. The Group nevertheless acknowledged that the United Nations system was at a critical juncture as it embarked on a period of comprehensive reform designed to create the necessary conditions for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and stressed the need to ensure that such reform was aligned with the Organization's budget cycles and global strategic objectives, in line with General Assembly resolution [67/226](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. She expected that the Secretary-General would fulfil his commitment to carrying out reforms in a transparent and accountable manner. For its part, the Group would continue its efforts to strengthen the development pillar and to address the underlying forces that undermined the enjoyment of human rights and perpetuated inequality and inequity.

9. Turning to the budget proposal for the International Trade Centre, she noted the role of the Centre as a focal point within the United Nations system for technical assistance and cooperation activities for trade and international business development. Member States welcomed the Centre's efforts to collaborate with other intergovernmental organizations, countries and regions in fulfilling its mandates, as such cooperation prevented duplication of work and the perpetuation of a silo mentality, which increased costs and hindered productivity.

10. The Group attached great importance to the work of the Centre in providing global public goods in the form of trade and market intelligence, technical support, and linkages to markets and public and private sector entities, as well as its dedication to improving the international competitiveness of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries and economies in transition. It also appreciated the Centre's focus on least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, sub-Saharan Africa, and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. In addition, the Group welcomed the Centre's plans to operationalize its risk management framework, strengthen its approach to costing and improve its project management systems through enhanced automated tracking of key performance indicators. It also noted with appreciation the Centre's intention to implement its annual evaluation work programmes during the biennium 2018–2019 and to continue to disseminate key lessons learned through an annual evaluation synthesis report. She furthermore commended the Centre's commitment to strengthening accountability and transparency and delivering high-quality results.

11. The Centre's overarching objective, in particular its commitment to ensuring the employment and economic empowerment of women and youth, was directly linked to the 2030 Agenda. The Group would thus closely analyse the proposed reductions in the resource requirements for the Centre, which were related to anticipated efficiencies from the implementation of Umoja during 2018–2019. The Centre must nevertheless be provided with adequate resources to fulfil its mandates and address the priority areas identified in the strategic framework for 2018–2019 ([A/71/6/Rev.1](#)). During informal consultations, the Group would seek further information regarding the low level of compliance by the Centre with the requirement for advance booking and purchase of tickets for official travel, with a view to promoting more efficient and effective use of resources.

12. **Ms. Ravasi** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that the high level of fragmentation across the United Nations system significantly hampered the Organization's ability to promote achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which required system-wide coordination of resources and capacities. An adequately funded resident coordinator system was particularly critical for strengthening coordination and coherence within the Organization. In that regard, the two delegations supported the Secretary-General's efforts to lead inclusive and transparent consultations in order to address the issue of fragmentation.

13. The resident coordinator system had a key role to play in repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. She thus looked forward to the submission of the Secretary-General's second report in response to General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) in December 2017. While the two delegations did not wish to pre-empt the conclusions of that report, they underscored the need to ensure the financing of the resident coordinator system in its current configuration and therefore welcomed the independent review of the corresponding cost-sharing arrangement commissioned by the United Nations Development Group, which had confirmed the validity of the current cost-sharing formula. She noted with concern the review's conclusion that the overall coordination budget for the resident coordinator system was insufficient, emphasizing that failure by the Secretariat to contribute its share of the funding for the system could undermine its efficiency. She therefore urged the General Assembly to approve the proposed Secretariat contribution for the system for 2018–2019.

*The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.*