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## Fifth Committee

### Summary record of the 16th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 22 November 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Tommo Monthe (Chair) . . . . . (Cameroon)  
*Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative  
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Sene

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

**Agenda item 136: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (continued)**

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

*Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General (A/72/7/Add.11 and A/72/371/Add.1)*

*United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (A/72/7/Add.15 and A/72/371/Add.5)*

*Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its 2017 session (A/72/7/Add.22 and A/72/398)*

1. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the proposed resource requirements for 2018 under thematic cluster I (A/72/371/Add.1), said that the missions grouped under that thematic cluster were global instruments through which the Organization pursued and sustained negotiated political settlements. In 2017, cluster I missions had contributed to conflict prevention and the maintenance of international peace and security through early warning, mediation, preventive diplomacy, support for electoral processes, good offices and peacebuilding. Many of the missions were mandated to promote political solutions in conflict-affected areas.

2. The proposed resources for 2018 for special political missions under cluster I amounted to approximately \$50 million, representing a decrease of approximately \$1.1 million compared with the approved resources for 2017, a difference primarily attributable to reductions in the requirements for operational costs under the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (Burundi) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

3. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the proposed resource requirements for 2018 for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (A/72/371/Add.5), she said that the Security Council, by its resolution 2367 (2017), had extended the Mission's mandate until 31 July 2018. Iraq continued to face significant political, humanitarian, human rights and security challenges, and the security environment was expected to remain volatile, as terrorists and extremist groups, including Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaida, continued to exploit and deepen sectarian, tribal or ethnic divisions. The governorate and

district council elections initially scheduled for 2017 would be postponed and carried over into 2018, while elections to the Council of Representatives would take place in spring of 2018.

4. The proposed resource requirements for UNAMI for 2018 amounted to approximately \$111.1 million, representing a net decrease of \$6.5 million compared with the approved resources for 2017, a difference mainly attributable to a proposed net reduction of 15 civilian positions and decreased requirements for operational costs. A number of organizational changes with implications for the Mission's 2018 budget had been proposed, including the establishment of a women's protection unit under the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and the establishment of a field office in the city of Mosul, which had recently been liberated from ISIL, in order to closely monitor the political and security situation in Ninawa Governorate, of which Mosul was the capital.

5. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its 2017 session (A/72/398), she said that, of the two decisions and one resolution with resource implications, only decision 2017/241, whereby the Council approved the preparations for the sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to be held in 2019, as set out in Commission resolution 60/1, would give rise to additional budgetary requirements under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019. Specifically, the implementation of the Commission's request in its resolution 60/1 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to provide enhanced technical and substantive support for the preparations for its sixty-second session would entail an additional appropriation of \$247,200 under section 16, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, of the proposed programme budget, which would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

6. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed resource requirements for 2018 under thematic cluster I (A/72/7/Add.11), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposed resources, subject to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 25 and 41 of its report, and requested that detailed information on the reductions arising from its recommendations should be provided to the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee reiterated that the continued requirement for posts that had been vacant for two years or longer in cluster I missions should be

reviewed and justification should be provided for their retention or abolishment. In addition, the Advisory Committee made a number of comments on the locations of mission personnel.

7. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the proposed resource requirements for UNAMI for 2018 ([A/72/7/Add.15](#)), he said that, pending the outcome of the ongoing independent, external assessment of, inter alia, the structure and staffing of the Mission in order to ensure that it and the United Nations country team in Iraq were appropriately configured to fulfil their mandates, as called for in Security Council resolution [2367 \(2017\)](#), and pending any decision by the Security Council in that connection, it was uncertain whether the current planning assumptions for the Mission reflected the actual resource requirements for 2018. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that any revised resource requirements for UNAMI should be submitted to the General Assembly at the appropriate time and in accordance with established procedure, and that the Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of up to \$50 million for the Mission for the six-month period from 1 January to 30 June 2018. The Advisory Committee also emphasized the need to refine the overall requirements for UNAMI, including those relating to the establishment of new positions and to operational costs.

8. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its 2017 session ([A/72/7/Add.22](#)), he said that the additional budgetary requirements arising from the relevant resolution and decisions would amount to \$288,700, of which \$2,500 related to the programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017 and \$286,200 to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019. The Advisory Committee did not object to the Secretary-General's proposals to cover the amount of \$2,500 from within the approved appropriation under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017 and to cover \$39,000 of the remaining additional requirement under section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019. The Advisory Committee also recommended approval of the additional appropriation requested under section 16 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019.

9. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the mandates approved by intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations must be supported by adequate funding so that the Organization had the financial and human

resources required to deliver the results expected by Member States.

10. She noted that the additional appropriation requested in connection with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/241 would represent a charge against the contingency fund. As indicated in the report of the Advisory Committee ([A/72/7/Add.22](#)), the approved level of the contingency fund for the biennium 2018–2019 was \$40.5 million; the programme budget implications and revised estimates for that biennium represented charges against the fund of \$25.7 million; and, should the related proposals be approved in full, the remaining balance of the contingency fund for 2018–2019 would be \$14.8 million. The Group would seek further details on that situation during informal consultations.

11. The Secretary-General proposed to cover from within the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 requirements in the amount of \$39,000 arising from the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution [2017/26](#), whereby the Council extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, and to absorb within the programme budget for 2016–2017 the requirement of \$2,500 resulting from Economic and Social Council decision 2017/214 relating to the appointment of an additional member of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. The Group recalled that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group had been extended to enable it to monitor and provide advice on the long-term development strategy of Haiti to promote socioeconomic recovery, reconstruction and stability, with particular attention to the need to ensure coherence and sustainability in international support for Haiti, based on the long-term national development priorities, and building upon the Strategic Plan for the Development of Haiti. The Group recommended approval of the resource requirements arising from Economic and Social Council resolution [2017/26](#) and decision 2017/214.

12. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that the funding of special political missions under the regular budget was unsustainable, particularly given that the majority of them had been created by decisions of the Security Council. Such missions should therefore be funded under the peacekeeping budget, using the applicable scale of assessments.

13. The Secretary-General had proposed a programme budget of \$5.405 billion, before recosting, for the biennium 2018–2019, which represented an increase of only 0.2 per cent compared with the budget outline figure approved in General Assembly resolution [71/274](#), and a decrease of 3.8 per cent compared with the

resources approved for the biennium 2016–2017. In a context in which a minority of delegations were in favour of imposing a zero-growth policy and drastic budget cuts were being proposed, \$1,109.6 million had been earmarked for the financing of special political missions during the biennium 2018–2019, representing 20 per cent of the regular budget, a proportion that reflected an imbalance in the resources allocated to the different priorities established by the General Assembly.

14. With regard to cluster I missions, her delegation was opposed to the inclusion of the responsibility to protect in the estimates for special political missions under the mandate of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. There was no General Assembly resolution establishing the position of Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. Rather, the Secretary-General had stated his intention to create the position in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/721), a decision in which Member States had had no say. Moreover, the establishment of the position represented a departure from the letter and spirit of paragraphs 138 and 139 of General Assembly resolution 60/1. There was no legal basis for carrying out activities and identifying outputs related to the responsibility to protect, as the Assembly, in its resolution 63/308, had decided to continue considering the concept. Indeed, the concept had not been reviewed in intergovernmental forums, and no definition had been approved by the General Assembly.

15. The presentation of the estimates made it impossible to distinguish clearly and transparently between the resources allocated to the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect and those allocated to the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and to differentiate between their respective activities. Such ambiguity made it difficult for Member States to ascertain whether the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide was fulfilling his mandates or pursuing objectives not approved by Member States.

16. The principle of the responsibility to protect was a source of concern for many countries, particularly small and developing countries, owing to the lack of consensus surrounding it, a situation that had been highlighted during the Assembly's general debate at its current session. Moreover, the concept of the responsibility to protect could be easily manipulated for political purposes, as demonstrated by its use throughout history to undermine international law, State sovereignty and the fundamental responsibility of States to ensure the well-being of their citizens.

17. Cuba was the target of an unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo which, by its nature

and scope, qualified as an act of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In that regard, her Government's position on the principle of the responsibility to protect should not be interpreted as a rejection of the work of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. Her delegation would present specific amendments to the Secretary-General's proposals relating to the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide during informal consultations.

18. **Mr. Al-Musawi** (Iraq) said that special political missions played a critical role in helping Governments and societies to sustain peace and build national institutions capable of responding to the needs of citizens. His delegation appreciated the assistance provided by Member States to UNAMI, and his Government would continue to support the Mission in carrying out its mandated tasks.

19. As funding was essential to enabling UNAMI to perform its duties and manage its human resources effectively, the financial resources allocated to the Mission should be scaled up. The proposed resource requirements for 2018 for UNAMI should therefore be reviewed, as they represented a reduction from the approved resources for 2017 and could hamper the Mission's ability to fulfil its mandates. His Government welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation regarding the need to recruit national staff for the Mission and to nationalize positions, where appropriate.

20. The Secretary-General's reports should focus exclusively on financial and administrative matters and should not contain statements with political undertones such as those included in paragraph 18 of his report on UNAMI (A/72/371/Add.5), which inaccurately portrayed the situation in areas liberated from ISIL in which the rule of law had been re-established. The competent Iraqi authorities would review the recommendations emanating from the independent, external assessment of UNAMI that was being conducted in accordance with Security Council resolution 2367 (2017) in the light of the needs of the people of Iraq, as determined by its Government, during the post-ISIL recovery phase.

21. His delegation appreciated the tireless efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq in support of the Government and people of Iraq and wished him success in fulfilling his mandate of providing advice, support and assistance for the advancement of democratic principles; promoting the protection of human rights; facilitating national dialogue and reconciliation; providing assistance for the electoral process and national census planning;

enhancing regional dialogue between Iraq and its neighbours; and implementing judicial and legal reforms. Close coordination between UNAMI and his Government would be required to provide humanitarian relief to Iraqis who had been internally displaced as a result of the atrocities committed by ISIL. In addition, the Mission must collaborate with the United Nations country team in Iraq to scale up the regional response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

22. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, with regard to the estimates in respect of special political missions under thematic cluster I, his Government supported the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, just as it had supported the former Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria and the former Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to Syria. A political solution and the success of the Special Envoy's initiatives required the international community to make concerted efforts to combat terrorism in Syria, the region and the world, and to take a clear position in relation to countries — whose identity was known to all — that supported armed terrorist groups in Syria.

23. He welcomed the inclusion for the first time in the Secretary-General's report ([A/72/371/Add.1](#)) of a reference to the need to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed by ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front, which were included in the list of terrorist organizations compiled by the Security Council. The term "armed groups" was repeatedly used in the Secretary-General's report instead of the legal term "armed terrorist groups" used by the Security Council, an error that should be officially corrected. Moreover, the situation in Syria was described throughout the report as a "conflict," while in previous reports it had been variously described as a "crisis", "war" or "conflict." He called upon the Secretary-General to use only the term "crisis," given the difference in the definitions of the aforementioned terms under international law. His delegation also objected to the references to the League of Arab States, because the Special Envoy was an official of the United Nations with no link to the League; to contact between the Office of the Special Envoy and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as such contact was not provided for under the Special Envoy's mandate; and to cooperation between the Office of the Special Envoy and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), given that the Force's mandate was military in nature, limited to the area of separation defined in the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces ([S/11302/Add.1](#)), and had no connection to Syrian internal affairs.

24. His delegation had reservations about the proposed increase in the number of staff for the Office of the Special Envoy in Geneva, Damascus and New York. The increase in the number of staff in Damascus under all components of the mission was particularly unjustified, in view of the improvement in the security situation in his country resulting from the recent victories achieved by the Syrian Arab Army against terrorist groups in cooperation with its allies in the fight against terrorism and sponsors of terrorism. Given the critical importance of its participation in all political processes relating to Syria, his Government had taken an active part in the negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey, and a number of armed opposition groups in support of the implementation of a nationwide ceasefire in his country, held in Astana, Kazakhstan, which he hoped would lead to the end of combat operations and the effective isolation of ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front from other opposition groups. His Government had also participated in the intra-Syrian talks convened by the Special Envoy in Geneva and called for renewed commitment to that process. It would continue to support the Special Envoy in fulfilling his mandate.

**Agenda item 145: Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services** (*continued*) ([A/C.5/72/L.5](#))

**Agenda item 134: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations** (*continued*) ([A/C.5/72/L.5](#))

*Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.5: Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services*

25. *wDraft resolution A/C.5/72/L.5 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 139: Pattern of conferences** (*continued*) ([A/C.5/72/L.6](#))

*Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.6: Pattern of conferences*

26. *Draft resolution A/C.5/72/L.6 was adopted.*

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*