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Fifth Committee**Summary record of the 27th meeting**

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Chair: Ms. Bird (Australia)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Terzi

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expressions of sympathy in connection with the victims of the crash of Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 on 10 March 2019

1. **The Chair**, on behalf of all members of the Committee, together with **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, **Mr. Muhammad Bande** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America), **Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico), **Mr. Na Sang Deok** (Republic of Korea), **Mr. Fu Daopeng** (China) and **Mr. Kalugin** (Russian Federation), expressed sympathy to the families and friends of those who had perished in the recent crash of Ethiopian Airlines flight 302, and to the Governments of Ethiopia, Kenya and other countries that had lost nationals in the accident.

Organization of work (A/C.5/73/L.23)

2. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the proposed tentative and provisional programme of work for the first part of the resumed seventy-third session, prepared on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/73/L.23).

3. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group trusted that the Bureau would review and update the provisional programme of work on the basis of developments in the availability of the pending reports. The programme of work included consideration of the Secretary-General's proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules, and the Group reiterated its position that human resources management proposals should be considered holistically, as a package rather than in a piecemeal way, to reach concrete outcomes related to gender parity, equitable geographical representation, performance management and deficiencies in the staff selection process. Since the Committee had deferred its consideration of the other proposals related to human resources management to the main part of the seventy-fourth session, it should also defer its consideration of the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules to the main part of the seventy-fourth session.

4. At the current part of the resumed session, the Group would examine the Secretary-General's proposal on the global service delivery model and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and would explore the ways in which the proposal would improve service delivery. Increased efficiency, transparency and cost-effectiveness were essential to the achievement of cross-cutting results in the procurement system. The Group looked forward to examining ways of increasing procurement opportunities for and ensuring equal, fair and non-discriminatory access to vendors from developing countries and economies in transition at headquarters and field offices. The Group would actively participate in the Committee's deliberations on such matters as the construction of the new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in Arusha, Tanzania, standards of accommodation for air travel and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

5. The Group looked forward to the timely issuance of reports of the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee in all languages, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Despite recent progress in addressing the chronic problem of late issuance of documents, further improvement was needed. The timely availability of documents was crucial to the Committee's work.

6. **Mr. Muhammad Bande** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group took note of the provisional programme of work and gave a high priority to special political missions, procurement, the construction work in Arusha, the global service delivery model and the reports of JIU. The Group would examine the Secretary-General's proposals regarding the global service delivery model, which was likely to be one of the most contentious matters before the Committee, on the basis of technical principles, with a view to strengthening the role of Africa in the global shared services structure, given that the majority of Secretariat staff were based or delivered services there. The Committee had before it the Secretary-General's proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules, but human resources management should in fact be considered as a package, since the policies concerned were interrelated. Gender parity policies, for example, could not be streamlined without addressing the question of geographical representation. The Group looked forward to considering the Secretary-General's proposals to increase procurement from developing countries and the use of local content and materials in construction work for Secretariat entities. The Secretary-General should

strengthen outreach to and affirmative action in favour of vendors from developing countries, in order to involve them in procurement. The Group hoped that the Secretary-General's proposal would increase transparency in procurement and provide more guidance on the exercise of delegated authority and accountability under the reforms. It looked forward to the Committee's consideration of the reports of JIU, particularly the review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations. Such policies and practices would need to be strengthened in an era of delegated authority to prevent the abuse of office and the penalization of whistle-blowers.

7. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that 2018 had been a crucial year for the Committee, and the implementation of United Nations reform had begun on 1 January 2019. The European Union thanked the Secretary-General for engaging with Member States on the reform and congratulated him on the progress of the implementation. The matters before the Committee at the current part of the resumed session were essential to the functioning of the United Nations. The Organization's complex service and support processes hindered it from responding efficiently and flexibly to contemporary challenges. His delegation looked forward to transparent discussion of the global service delivery model, which, as part of the Secretary-General's reform agenda, was essential to better service delivery. He supported the establishment of a truly global Secretariat that was fit for purpose, could fulfil its mandates and was supported by shared administrative services through which what was needed was provided in the right place and in a timely fashion.

8. Resources for official travel should be used carefully, and his delegation was concerned that costs related to air travel had increased year after year. To make the United Nations more efficient, managers must be held accountable for the use of air travel funds. The accountability of staff and managers was essential to the Secretary-General's reforms. The Organization should uphold the highest standards and should prevent and address misconduct; his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report on progress in accountability. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity and looked forward to discussing the matter at the current part of the resumed session. The Secretariat should provide procurement services across the Organization

more efficiently, cost-effectively and transparently, on the basis of competition and by obtaining the best value for money through a new procurement management strategy. United Nations procurement activities should reflect a global sustainable development policy that supported the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. His delegation would comment in detail on those matters and on others, including special political missions, when the related reports were introduced before the Committee. The Committee's working methods, which, together with the timely consideration of matters before the Committee, were the responsibility of the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee and the Committee members, should be improved.

9. He was grateful for the Secretary-General's recent briefing of the General Assembly on the financial situation of the United Nations. Budgetary reform, including results-oriented budgeting within fixed envelopes and with fewer variables such as add-ons, programme budget implications and recosting, would increase predictability for Member States and flexibility for the Secretary-General in managing for results. His delegation looked forward to receiving and discussing comprehensive proposals on the matter.

10. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) said that Member States had an important opportunity at the current part of the resumed session to ensure the continued success of the reform initiatives that Member States had endorsed and to which the Organization was committed. The shifting of the management paradigm, the restructuring of the peace and security architecture and the repositioning of the United Nations development system would make the Organization more effective, accountable and responsive. The Committee must not forget the overarching goal of ensuring that the United Nations fulfilled its mandates more effectively. Before the Committee were such matters as the global service delivery model, procurement, accountability, the information and communications technology (ICT) strategy and standards of accommodation for air travel, whose consideration would, if successfully concluded, advance the Secretary-General's reforms and ensure that the Organization was fit for purpose and fiscally responsible. Her delegation would strive to ensure that the resources allocated to the Panel of Experts on Somalia and the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement corresponded to those bodies' mandates, and that any proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations and Rules and the Staff Regulations and Rules were reasonable and met the Organization's evolving needs.

11. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico) said that the Committee had before it at the current part of the resumed session proposals related to the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, human resources management, the report of JIU for 2018 and programme of work for 2019, and the construction of a new facility for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Arusha branch. The global service delivery model was of particular interest to Mexico because it would allow progress in the management reform, which was intended to make the Organization more agile, efficient, effective, transparent, rational and committed to making good use of the funds entrusted to the Secretary-General by the Member States. The Committee's decision on the matter should leave no doubt as to the importance of the Secretary-General's proposal in providing the Organization with systematic, timely support for service provision worldwide. In particular, the soundness of the selection criteria for the global shared service centres proposed by the Secretary-General must be confirmed. In the case of the Americas, his delegation requested an explanation regarding the removal of Mexico from the Secretary-General's proposal; for precisely the geographical, technical and logistical reasons that had justified the original proposal, Mexico City met the conditions required to host the centre for the region.

12. The Secretariat should ensure effectiveness and transparency in relation to the accountability system and the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations and Rules, with a view to building confidence in the implementation of the new management paradigm, which must improve the system of delegation of authority and strengthen results-based management. The amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules should comply with the mandate that the Member States had given to the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to achieve gender parity in the Secretariat. An organization that promoted gender equality and women's empowerment must aspire to gender balance among its staff, in particular management.

13. The Committee should make recommendations on standards of accommodation for air travel with a view to streamlining ticket purchasing, maximizing the use of communications technologies and generating savings. In line with the austerity policies followed by Governments, and in a gesture of responsible budgeting and accountability to taxpayers, the entitlement to first-class travel should be removed in all cases. ICT strategies had strategic potential and should be used to catalyse innovative solutions to support management

reform. The Committee should authorize the resources requested for the Panel of Experts on Somalia and the United Nations Mission to Support the Hedaydah Agreement, which were essential to peace and security in the region. Mexico was committed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization and to improving institutional coordination, inter-agency collaboration, results-based management, transparency and accountability.

14. **Mr. Na Sang Deok** (Republic of Korea) said that the Secretary-General's recent briefing on the financial situation of the United Nations had been a reminder of the importance of efficient budget management, to which the Committee must give the highest priority in its deliberations. The Committee's consideration of the global service delivery model should result in the provision of high-quality services at minimum cost. Transparency was essential to decisions regarding the location of the global shared service centres. His delegation hoped that the Committee would reach consensus on measures to reduce unnecessary spending on air travel and would make progress in its consideration of the utilization of the contingency fund, which had been deferred from previous sessions, before the Organization changed to an annual budget period on a trial basis in 2020.

15. **Mr. Fu Daopeng** (China) said that the implementation of the reform had begun, but the financial situation of the United Nations, which left no room for optimism, jeopardized the Organization's ability to carry out its functions and serve as the central platform of global governance. Financial resources were the foundation of the governance of the United Nations. His delegation expected the Committee, which the General Assembly had entrusted with responsibilities for financial and budgetary matters, to play a more positive role and hoped that all parties would cooperate to ensure the success of the current session.

16. Although the allotted time was limited, the matters before the Committee were important. All parties should help the Secretary-General improve cost-efficiency and the quality of administrative services by adopting the proposed global service delivery model, which was an integral part of the management reform. His delegation would seek further information regarding standards of accommodation for air travel and hoped that the Secretary-General would strictly adhere to the advance ticket purchase policy to ensure cost-effectiveness. The Secretariat should promote direct procurement from developing countries. His delegation hoped that the establishment of the Business Transformation and Accountability Division would improve the accountability system. The timely issuance of

documents was essential to the Committee's deliberations. Regrettably, however, the Committee was yet again confronted by late issuance at the current part of the resumed session; the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee should strengthen their coordination and resolve the problem so that documents were available well in advance of the Committee's deliberations.

17. **Mr. Kalugin** (Russian Federation) said that the Committee should consider the Secretary-General's proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules at the same time as the other reports on human resources management, consideration of which had been deferred to the main part of the seventy-fourth session.

18. **The Chair** recalled the Committee's decision, at the main part of the current session, to defer its consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals on human resources management to the main part of the seventy-fourth session. She understood delegations' concerns about the inclusion of the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules in the provisional programme of work of the current part of the resumed session, and such inclusion had been discussed by the Bureau. The Secretary-General had decided, as was his prerogative, to bring forward the consideration of his report on the matter. The Bureau would discuss the introduction of that report when it had a clearer idea of when the related report of the Advisory Committee would be issued. For the time being, the matter was included in the programme of work as a placeholder.

19. She took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that it would be adjusted as necessary as the first part of the resumed session progressed.

20. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 117: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions (*continued*) ([A/73/102/Add.2](#))

21. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to a note by the Secretary-General ([A/73/102/Add.2](#)) informing the General Assembly of the resignation of Mr. Kalugin (Russian Federation) from the Committee on Contributions, effective 7 February 2019. The Government of the Russian Federation had nominated Mr. Laputin, whose candidature had been endorsed by the Group of Eastern European States, to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office, which would expire on 31 December 2020.

22. **Mr. Laputin** (Russian Federation) was recommended by acclamation for appointment to the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on the date of appointment by the General Assembly and expiring on 31 December 2020.

Agenda item 142: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*) ([A/73/34](#) and [A/73/727](#))

23. **Ms. Prom-Jackson** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of JIU for 2018 and programme of work for 2019 ([A/73/34](#)), said that in 2018 JIU had issued one single-organization report and six system-wide reports. Eight reports that had been started in 2018 would be completed in 2019. The Unit's management and administration review of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), planned for 2018, had been suspended in view of reviews initiated by other bodies, and had been resumed in 2019. The report on whistle-blower policies and practices would be brought before the Committee at the current part of the resumed session, while consideration of the report on internships had been deferred until the seventy-fourth session.

24. The Unit's programme of work for 2019 comprised six new system-wide reviews and two new single-organization reviews, in addition to the projects carried over from 2018. The programme of work, in particular the reviews of outsourcing, inter-agency mobility, learning policies and strategies, and common premises, not only responded to the expectation that JIU contribute to the efficient use of resources and effective management practices but also reflected the link between improved management practices and efficiency and the achievement of substantive objectives. The planned review of enterprise risk management in the United Nations system would build on the Unit's long-standing contribution in that area, at the nexus of management and accountability. JIU would conduct a review of progress in the mainstreaming of multilingualism, which the General Assembly had recognized as a core value of the Organization. In 2019, the Unit would initiate two single-organization reviews. Input from organizations and coordination with other oversight bodies had helped ensure that the Unit's programme of work was relevant. To strengthen the dialogue with organizations, several meetings had been held in 2018 with heads of organizations and departments, and more were planned for 2019. The Unit's biennial meeting with its focal points in the organizations, held three weeks previously, had helped align the programme of work with the organizations' priorities and had strengthened working relationships.

25. The value of JIU reports and notes depended on the effective use of the Unit's products, mainly through the implementation by the participating organizations of the recommendations made. The rate of implementation of accepted recommendations had increased over the years to 85 per cent, a satisfactory result given that the organizations included in system-wide reviews varied greatly in terms of size and organizational model. The improvement had resulted from, inter alia, the increased responsiveness of JIU to stakeholders' demands, the relevance and quality of the Unit's products, the focused efforts of the leadership of organizations, and General Assembly resolutions emphasizing the need for the organizations' legislative organs and governing bodies to fully consider the Unit's reports and recommendations. The high average rate, however, hid variations among the organizations; although consideration and use of the Unit's reports and recommendations had improved in many organizations, room for improvement remained in others. To increase the implementation rate across the system, the Assembly might wish to reiterate its request to all executive heads and its invitation to the legislative bodies of organizations to fully consider JIU reports and recommendations. In accordance with article 5 (4) of its Statute, the Unit would support the organizations' evaluation function and engage in the dialogue on the independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development in line with General Assembly resolution [72/279](#).

26. The ongoing preparation of the Unit's strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029 and a medium-term plan for the period from 2020 to 2024 was a significant activity that would allow JIU to reflect on the ways in which it could add value within its mandate, to assess and draw lessons from its performance under the strategic framework for the period for 2010 to 2019 and to align its work more systematically with system-wide priorities related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ongoing reforms. The Unit was receiving input from stakeholders on strategic priorities and delivery modalities, and would welcome input from the Committee on those matters. The strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029 would be brought before the Committee in 2020. JIU was committed to providing system-wide insights from its unique position in the oversight arrangements of the United Nations and to meeting the expectations of Member States.

27. **Ms. Pietracci** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the report of JIU for 2018 ([A/73/727](#)), said that, in accordance with the

statute of JIU, the Secretary-General, through the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), performed functions that supported the Unit's work, mainly in connection with the preparation of reports that concerned more than one organization. Throughout 2018, the secretariats of CEB and JIU had worked together to ensure the timely preparation of notes by the Secretary-General containing responses to reports addressing system-wide concerns. They had engaged in dialogue to ensure a smooth report preparation process as JIU maintained its focus on system-wide issues. The Secretary-General, in consultation with members of CEB and in accordance with the statute of JIU, had reviewed the qualifications of an inspector whose term had been due to expire in 2019 and whose reappointment had been proposed. The Secretary-General was committed to maintaining a close working relationship with JIU and encouraged all organizations to respond in a timely manner to its requests.

28. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group commended JIU on its work as the sole independent, external oversight body mandated to conduct system-wide inspections, evaluations and investigations. The Group welcomed the Unit's finalization of seven projects in 2018. Of particular interest were the progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2011/3](#)) ([JIU/REP/2018/2](#)) and the report on strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([JIU/REP/2018/7](#)). The Group looked forward to the results of the eight pending projects and the projects scheduled to begin in 2019, and welcomed the fact that six of the reports concluded in 2018 were of a system-wide nature, which would promote coordination among system organizations. The Group would seek information regarding the frequency with which systematic reviews of participating organizations were conducted. The establishment of a minimum standard duration would ensure appropriate coverage of all such organizations.

29. The Group welcomed efforts to coordinate among the system's oversight bodies, namely JIU, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Board of Auditors. Such coordination must be enhanced, particularly with regard to those bodies' programmes of work and the avoidance of overlap. The Unit, however, should continue to fulfil its mandate, which set it apart from OIOS and the Board. The filling of all posts in the Unit's secretariat had helped it discharge that mandate.

The provision of Junior Professional Officers from countries of the South would enhance diversity and knowledge exchange in JIU.

30. The Group looked forward to examining the review of the acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations. The legislative organs of participating organizations should fully consider and discuss JIU reports, and the organizations' secretariats should fully implement accepted recommendations. The Group would seek clarification regarding the low rate of acceptance and implementation by and the lack of input from some organizations. It welcomed the progress in the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions related to the web-based system for tracking the implementation of recommendations and would request further information regarding the migration of that system and the Unit's website to platforms managed by the Secretariat in 2018, and regarding the plans of the Office of Information and Communications Technology to enhance the system as requested by the Unit. The Group welcomed the diversity of the projects envisaged for 2019 and looked forward to the completion of the pending projects. In developing the strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029, JIU should take into account the system-wide commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the increased need for accountability and transparency at a changing United Nations.

31. **Ms. Duncan** (United States of America) expressed gratitude to JIU for its work in 2018, including the feedback and recommendations contained in its review of whistle-blower policies and practices. Staff members, interns, United Nations Volunteers and individual contractors and consultants should be protected against retaliation when they reported misconduct, and she looked forward to full discussion of the JIU recommendations during the Committee's consideration of the matter. She also looked forward to reviewing the reports included in the Unit's programme of work in 2019, including those related to enterprise risk management, the outsourcing of services, and inter-agency mobility, pending the issuance of the Secretary-General's updated report on the mobility framework. As an important independent external oversight body mandated to conduct system-wide evaluations, inspections and investigations, JIU was uniquely positioned to provide Member States with critical views of programme effectiveness and administrative policies. Her delegation welcomed the increase in the rate of implementation of JIU recommendations and encouraged the Organization to make best use of them. The Unit should collaborate with

CEB, executive heads and Member States to make system organizations more effective.

32. **Mr. Moraru** (Republic of Moldova) said that his delegation fully supported JIU and its unique role as an independent external oversight body mandated to conduct system-wide evaluations, inspections and investigations. He welcomed the filling of all authorized posts in the Unit's secretariat, as a result of which JIU was operating at full capacity, and the Unit's focus on improving its outputs by refining its working methods. The system for following up on recommendations and the improved web-based tracking system would help JIU enhance the effectiveness of the participating organizations.

33. His delegation supported the General Assembly's requests for the participating organizations to make more use of JIU reports and acknowledged the efforts of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to ensure effective consideration and improve the implementation rate of the Unit's recommendations. He expressed gratitude to JIU for its work on 15 projects and its issuance of seven reports in 2018. A balance had been struck between system-wide and single-organization reviews among the projects, which responded to the participating organizations' requirements in the context of the reforms. By completing the first system-wide review of policy research uptake and through its ongoing reviews of oversight committees and the investigation function in the United Nations system, the Unit was assessing options for improving system-wide coherence and cooperation, organizational effectiveness, accountability and integrity. His delegation looked forward to the reports to be issued in 2019, which would be the last under the current strategic framework. In developing the strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029, JIU should build on the lessons learned from the current framework and take into account the new challenges faced by the Organization. His delegation welcomed the Unit's undertaking that the framework for the period from 2020 to 2029 would take into account the system-wide commitment to support the 2030 Agenda and other global agreements, organizational reforms and other changes and challenges. JIU should respond to the needs of Member States and work closely with the legislative bodies and executive heads of the participating organizations to oversee the United Nations system more effectively.

34. **Ms. Frolova** (Russian Federation) said that her delegation attached great importance to the work of JIU and highly valued the Unit's capacity to provide external oversight of the activities of the United Nations system and conduct independent inspections,

evaluations and investigations. In establishing the Unit's programme of work, the inspectors had duly taken into account the requirements of the governing bodies, and her delegation supported the preparation by JIU of a strategic framework for the period from 2020 to 2029 and a medium-term plan for the period from 2020 to 2024. The Unit's recommendations on strengthening accountability and improving the functioning of participating organizations were of particular importance. JIU should cooperate closely with other United Nations oversight bodies and with the governing bodies and secretariats of international organizations.

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (continued)

Status of implementation of the information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations (A/73/160, A/73/384 and A/73/759)

35. **Ms. Riazi** (Chief Information Technology Officer), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the ICT strategy for the United Nations (A/73/384), said that, since the endorsement of the strategy by the General Assembly in 2015, significant progress had been made in its implementation, resulting in the modernization of the ICT landscape throughout the Secretariat and the promotion of an environment conducive to innovation.

36. The Office of Information and Communications Technology had facilitated the deployment of Umoja through global network harmonization, integration access and production support, and the enterprise application centres had reduced the number of legacy applications from 2,340 in July 2014 to 988 in March 2018. In addition, the regional technology centres were harmonizing ICT services across regions, institutionalizing governance, ensuring compliance with global standards and policies, and implementing the ICT strategy, and the enterprise data centres were fully operational, enhancing the Organization's data-hosting capacity. Moreover, 594 locations at Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters, regional commissions, peacekeeping missions and special political missions were now connected through the global "One United Nations" network, and enterprise systems and applications serving the Secretariat were more secure.

37. The Information and Communications Technology Division of the former Department of Field Support and the Office of Information and Communications Technology had been consolidated, with the Chief Information Technology Officer now reporting to the

Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support and the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. The change, which marked a paradigm shift in the Organization's approach to ICT, had enhanced the Office's capacity and would allow the work of the Office and of the Division to be harmonized. The consolidation had improved the range and timeliness of the services provided to the Secretariat and would help the Office leverage field technology, geographic information capacity, information security, and innovation and frontier technologies, as well as manage information. The previous close collaboration between the Office and the Division had contributed to their effective and efficient integration.

38. Efforts to strengthen information security continued in an environment of growing risks. In 2017, the Office had blocked almost 1 million emails containing malicious code, while, in 2018, it had blocked more than twice that volume. Similarly, the number of information security incidents had grown by 10 per cent between 2017 and 2018, while the level of the related resources had not changed. While the Organization was primarily focused on protecting itself from information security threats directly targeting it, the launch of the Digital Blue Helmets programme, underpinned by a team of highly trained information security analysts, had been critical in addressing broader information security threats that had a significant impact on mandate fulfilment and on Member States.

39. Efforts to implement the digital agenda were focused on harnessing innovative solutions and analytics to address the decision of the General Assembly to strengthen the role of ICT in facilitating the work of the Organization in the areas of peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, social and economic development and humanitarian affairs. The sustainable capacity of the United Service Desk was also being built through the consolidation of 131 service desks into one virtual hub.

40. The ICT strategy had been established on the basis of a common vision for ICT delivery through modernization, transformation and innovation, founded on a framework of improved governance and an effective balance between central leadership and operational freedom. Guided by the Secretary-General's management reforms, the Office of Information and Communications Technology was developing a new strategy for the next five years that would focus on strengthening ICT throughout the Secretariat in support of mandate fulfilment.

41. **Mr. Korn** (Chair of the Audit Operations Committee), introducing the second annual progress

report of the Board of Auditors on the implementation of the ICT strategy (A/73/160), said that the report, which had been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/238 B, examined the implementation of the strategy in 2017.

42. The Board was of the view that, while governance aids had been established, practices were not in line with the prescribed framework. For instance, the Information and Communication Technology Executive Committee, the highest-level decision-making body, had not held any meetings in 2017, despite being expected to meet twice per year. Similarly, the Information and Communications Technology Board, the governance body at the next level, had met only once, in March 2017, despite being mandated to meet every six weeks. Furthermore, although 29 ICT performance management metrics had been drawn up, covering strategic, management and operational areas, the performance management framework had not been implemented, owing to a lack of resources. In addition, policy gaps in areas of emerging concern, such as the outsourcing of ICT services, end-user device usage, information-sharing, open data and the reuse and safe disposal of decommissioned ICT equipment, had not been identified and addressed.

43. Multiple systems were being used to track security incidents, and the coverage of the managed intrusion detection service, established to centrally collect, correlate and analyse internally generated alerts, notifications and system log information, was limited to specific networks. Such fragmentation made it difficult to identify common issues and apply global solutions.

44. During the first phase of the project to consolidate applications, completed in July 2015, the number of applications had been reduced from 2,340 to 1,652, and the goal was to further reduce the number to 1,000 by 2020. While the number of applications had already been reduced to 1,220 by 2017, duplication between applications catering to a single functional area remained, and further consolidation below the target of 1,000 applications by 2020 was possible.

45. Plans had been developed to establish five United Nations Technology Innovation Labs, focused on the use of cutting-edge technology such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and the Internet of things, in Egypt, Finland, Germany, Hungary and Malaysia. While budgetary resources and space had been committed for the two laboratories scheduled to be launched in 2017, no budgetary resources had been committed for the other three laboratories, scheduled to be launched by the end of 2018. The Board further noted that successive progress reports of the Secretary-General had included

no information on how many global sourcing opportunities had been identified, and that the target completion date for the global sourcing strategy project had been extended from March 2017 to February 2019.

46. Of the 35 pending recommendations from the Board's previous reports, 8 had been fully implemented, 25 were under implementation, 1 had not been implemented and 1 had been overtaken by events.

47. **Mr. Terzi** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/73/759), said that the Advisory Committee welcomed the progress made in implementing the ICT strategy. It recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in his next progress report, which would mark the end of the strategy's five-year implementation period, a detailed update on the implementation status of each of the 20 projects under the strategy; and to conduct an inventory of the ICT capacities and expenditures of each Secretariat entity in order to establish a baseline at the end of the five-year period. As 2020 would also mark the end of the first year of operations of the reorganized Office of Information and Communications Technology under the Secretary-General's management reforms, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide preliminary analysis of the new structures and of the dual reporting arrangements of the Office, as well as information on the ICT activities planned for the subsequent five-year period.

48. The Advisory Committee was concerned at the remaining gaps in the design and implementation of the ICT governance framework and trusted that the Secretary-General would update his bulletin on the organization of the Office of Information and Communications Technology (ST/SGB/2016/11) to reflect the changes made under the management reforms. The mainstreaming of the Umoja project team into the Secretariat must be completed by the projected finish date of 31 December 2019 in order to avoid a gap between the completion of the Umoja project, which the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to achieve by December 2019, and the mainstreaming of the project team.

49. The Advisory Committee was also concerned at the slow progress in reducing fragmentation in information security, which prevented the Office from addressing information security issues comprehensively. The Advisory Committee therefore reiterated its recommendations on the need for central control over information security Secretariat-wide, in

compliance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and other administrative issuances. It also reiterated its recommendation on the need for further analysis and comparisons of the cost savings and economies of scale achieved as a result of the procurement of equipment and services through global systems contracts.

50. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group appreciated the importance of ICT in strengthening oversight and accountability within the Organization, in accordance with ongoing reforms, and in facilitating the deliberations of intergovernmental bodies. The Group welcomed the progress made under the strategy in the areas of ICT infrastructure and architecture; ICT operations and service delivery; support for the deployment of Umoja; the security of other enterprise systems; reductions in the number of legacy applications; the global “One United Nations” network; and the deployment of solutions to advance the Organization’s substantive work and of critical systems to support peacekeeping operations.

51. The Group welcomed the report of the Board of Auditors (A/73/160) and underscored the need for the Secretariat to implement all the Board’s recommendations as a matter of priority, including the six new recommendations relating to governance, performance management, policy gaps, global sourcing, the technological innovation laboratories and Umoja mainstreaming. Any deviation from the scope and timeline established under the road map for the strategy should be addressed in order to prevent waste and inefficiency. The Secretary-General must also draw on previous experiences and lessons learned to address fragmentation in ICT, which undermined interoperability, simplicity and resilience, resulting in increased inefficiency and costs. The reduction of fragmentation would allow the Office of Information and Communications Technology to comprehensively address information security issues.

52. In his next progress report, the Secretary-General must provide responses to the requests of the General Assembly in its resolution 71/272 B for information on specified objectives, benchmarks and indicators in order to assess progress and qualitative and quantitative benefits for each project; on efforts to strengthen coordination of ICT activities among all Secretariat entities; and on the possible harmonization and sharing of services, as well as the related costs of ICT, as appropriate, in particular at field locations. Pending the submission of that report, the Group would seek to understand why the response to those requests had been slow and, in some cases, non-existent. The Group was

committed to the implementation of the ICT strategy, given that the potential of ICT must be harnessed to support the Organization’s work in the areas of peace and security; development, including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; human rights; and international law.

53. **Ms. Strainic** (United States of America) said that her delegation welcomed the progress made in improving centralized monitoring, reducing the number of legacy applications and supporting the deployment of Umoja, which had promoted the optimization of resources and increased transparency and accountability with regard to their use. However, the continued fragmentation of information security, data centres and application management prevented the mainstreaming of innovative practices and increased the risk of cyberattacks. As recommended by the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General should include in his next progress report information on planned milestones, concluded activities, costs incurred and benefits realized under the strategy, as well as on outstanding issues, in order to enable the Committee to take appropriate decisions following the completion of the strategy.

54. Her delegation looked forward to discussing the progress made in establishing the newly integrated Office of Information and Communications Technology, as well as the impact of that integration on delivery of services to clients in the field and in the Secretariat. The ICT strategy must support the Secretary-General’s efforts to mainstream his reforms and achieve a cultural shift within the United Nations system by ensuring that business intelligence and innovation guided decision-making and that ICT was leveraged to help mandate fulfilment.

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

Panel of Experts on Somalia (A/73/352/Add.7 and A/73/498/Add.7)

55. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing 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 under thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms, for the Panel of Experts on Somalia (A/73/352/Add.7), said that, by its

resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council had decided to establish the Panel of Experts on Somalia, consisting of six members and based in Nairobi, for the period from 14 November 2018 until 15 December 2019. The estimated requirements for 2019 for the Panel amounted to \$1,867,600, covering salaries and common staff costs for one P-3 position, one General Service position and four Local level positions; the cost of security services and security escorts for the experts; and operational costs. The initial requirements for the Panel for the period from 14 November to 31 December 2018 had been funded under the authority granted to the Secretary-General in General Assembly resolution [72/264](#), relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2018–2019. An appropriation in that amount was requested in the Secretary-General's report.

56. **Mr. Terzi** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee ([A/73/498/Add.7](#)), said that the Advisory Committee expected the Panel to increase the rate of compliance with the 16-day advance booking policy for official travel, given that the compliance rate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, whose mandate had been terminated in accordance with Security Council resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#), had been only 20 per cent. Moreover, as the proposed requirements for the travel of the Panel were not always fully justified, the Advisory Committee recommended a 5 per cent reduction in those requirements for 2019. In addition, considering that two drivers and six experts were required for the Panel, compared with three drivers and eight experts for the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, the Advisory Committee recommended a commensurate reduction of \$3,000 in the proposed requirements for ground transportation for the Panel. Subject to the recommendations and observations made in its report, the Advisory Committee recommended the approval of the Secretary-General's proposals.

57. **Ms. Nalwanga** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Panel should focus on fulfilling its approved mandate, which included monitoring and investigating the implementation of the sanctions measures imposed on Somalia. Noting the comments of the Advisory Committee, the Group would seek to ensure that the staff of the Panel were recruited in line with the Organization's established policies and practices. The Group was concerned that the compliance rate of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea with the 16-day advance booking policy for official travel had been only 20 per cent. Given that the work of the Panel could be planned and was not urgent, the

Group would seek to reduce the proposed requirements for official travel by the experts in 2019.

58. By its resolution [2036 \(2012\)](#), the Security Council had authorized reimbursement in respect of contingent-owned equipment deployed by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which had begun operations in 2007. In 2016, the Security Council had further authorized the reimbursement of basic supplies and services required in order for the contingents to sustain themselves. Troop costs were reimbursed on an entirely voluntary basis, primarily by the European Union, at a monthly rate of \$800 per soldier, compared with the United Nations monthly rate of \$1,420 per soldier. The peace and security situation in Somalia remained precarious, notwithstanding the significant progress made. The United Nations must therefore give a high priority to the financing of AMISOM and the provision of support to the Somali National Army; reconsider its multipronged approach to restoring stability in Somalia; and consolidate its efforts related to AMISOM.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.