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Proposed programme budget for 2022

Prevention of an arms race in outer space: reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours

Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours

Programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.1/76/L.52](#)

Twenty-sixth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for 2022

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General ([A/C.5/76/11](#)), in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.1/76/L.52](#) on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours. During its consideration of the statement, the Committee was provided with additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 1 December 2021.

2. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 5, 6, and 7 of draft resolution [A/C.1/76/L.52](#), the General Assembly would:

- (a) Decide to convene, beginning in 2022, an open-ended working group to:
 - (i) Take stock of the existing international legal and other normative frameworks concerning threats arising from State behaviours with respect to outer space;
 - (ii) Consider current and future threats by States to space systems, and actions, activities and omissions that could be considered irresponsible;



(iii) Make recommendations on possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours relating to threats by States to space systems, including, as appropriate, how they would contribute to the negotiation of legally binding instruments, including on the prevention of an arms race in outer space;

(iv) Submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session;

(b) Also decide that the open-ended working group shall work on the basis of consensus, hold its organizational session in Geneva for two days and meet in Geneva for two sessions of five days each in both 2022 and 2023, with the participation of intergovernmental organizations and other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the work of the General Assembly, as well as organizations and bodies of the United Nations, and with the attendance of other international organizations, commercial actors and civil society representatives, in accordance with established practice, and further decide that the Chair may also hold intersessional consultative meetings with interested parties to exchange views on the issues within the mandate of the open-ended working group;

(c) Request the Secretary-General to provide all necessary assistance to the open-ended working group and its Chair and to transmit its report to the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission.

3. In his statement, the Secretary-General provides information on: (a) the relationship between the proposed requests and the programme budget for 2022 ([A/C.5/76/11](#), para. 3); (b) the activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented (*ibid.*, paras. 4–8); (c) the financial implications of the proposals (*ibid.*, paras. 9–14); and (d) the potential for absorption during 2022 (*ibid.*, para. 15).

II. Resource requirements

4. For 2022, the implementation of one 2-day organizational session and two 5-day sessions of the open-ended working group in Geneva would entail additional resource requirements totalling \$658,400. These resources would include the following requirements: \$595,000 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, for interpretation (\$204,000) and documentation (\$391,000); \$45,100 under section 4, Disarmament, for travel of staff (\$12,900) and consultant fees (\$32,200); \$5,900 under section 28, Global communications, for webcasting services; and \$12,400 under section 29E, Administration, Geneva, for contractual services requirements to provide sound and recording services (\$8,400) and online services (\$4,000).

5. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the \$4,000 requirement for online services would provide for virtual online service (WebEx) connectivity in order to facilitate, *inter alia*, the wider participation of intergovernmental organizations and other entities with a standing invitation to participate as observers in the work of the General Assembly, as indicated in the draft resolution (see [A/C.1/76/L.52](#), para. 6), at a cost of \$400 per meeting. **In view of the limited amount of the resource requirement for online services, the Advisory Committee considers that the Secretariat should be able to absorb this requirement within the resources of the proposed programme budget for 2022. The Committee therefore recommends against the proposed requirement of \$4,000 for contractual services (online services) under section 29E, Administration, Geneva.**

6. In his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that the implementation of the draft resolution would require the travel of one staff member from the Office for Disarmament Affairs to support the first and second sessions of the open-ended

working group, to be held in 2022, as well as the third and fourth sessions to be held in 2023 (A/C.5/76/11, para. 6). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that travel of the staff member was required, as the responsibility for substantive aspects of issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space resided with the staff of the Office who are based in New York. The Committee was further informed, upon enquiry, that no significant savings could be obtained by holding the organizational session and the first substantive session back-to-back, and that the dates of the sessions were selected on the basis of the availability of suitable meeting rooms. **The Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 10 per cent (\$1,300) to the proposed provision for travel of staff under section 4, Disarmament, and encourages the Secretary-General to find opportunities to further reduce the requirement, including, inter alia, through efficient scheduling and the use of videoconferencing technologies.**

7. With regard to the resource requirement of \$5,900 for contractual services under section 28, Global communications, the statement indicates that the implementation of the mandate would require webcasting services for the 20 meetings to be held in 2022 (ibid., para. 7). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the webcasting of all public meetings of open-ended working groups was being sought in the light of: (a) the increased availability of webcasting capabilities in meeting rooms; (b) increased demand by Member States with regard to following meetings remotely; and (c) its ability to reach a wider group of participants. The Committee was also informed that webcasting services have been provided previously for various meetings, including in other contexts, such as open-ended working group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025 (see A/C.5/75/13). **While acknowledging the absence of a specific provision to cover the cost of webcasting services for an open-ended working group, the Advisory Committee considers that the Secretariat should be able to absorb the requirement for webcasting services within the resources of the proposed programme budget for 2022. Therefore, the Committee recommends against the proposed requirement of \$5,900 for contractual services (webcasting) under section 28, Global communications.**

8. For 2023, the implementation of two 5-day sessions of the open-ended working group in Geneva would entail additional resource requirements totalling \$527,700. These resources would include the following requirements: \$468,600 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management for interpretation (\$170,000) and documentation (\$298,600); \$45,700 under section 4, Disarmament, for travel of staff (\$10,000), consultant fees (\$32,200) and venue costs (\$3,500); \$5,900 under section 28, Global communications, for webcasting services; and \$7,500 under section 29E, Administration, Geneva, for sound and recording services (\$3,500) and online services (\$4,000).

III. Conclusion

9. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly are contained in paragraphs 16 to 18 of the statement (A/C.5/76/11). **Subject to its recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.52, additional resource requirements in the amount of \$647,200 would arise under the following sections of the proposed programme budget for 2022:**

(a) **Additional resource requirements in the amount of \$595,000 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management;**

(b) Additional resource requirements in the amount of \$43,800 under section 4, Disarmament;

(c) Additional resource requirements in the amount of \$8,400 under section 29E, Administration, Geneva.

10. The amount of \$647,200 would require an additional appropriation for 2022 to be approved by the Assembly and, as such, would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

11. Additional resource requirements in the amount of \$71,400 would arise under section 36, Staff assessment, of the proposed programme budget for 2022, and would require an additional appropriation by the General Assembly, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.
