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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 4 October 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Mahmoud. (Egypt)
later: Mr. Alnasr (Vice-Chair) (Qatar)
*Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Chmielewski

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 134: Proposed programme budget for 2024 (continued)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/78/6 (Sect.3)/Add.1)

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1. **Ms. Costa** (Director, Finance Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2024 (A/78/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1), as well as the reports of the Secretary-General on the proposed resource requirements for 2024 for special political missions under thematic cluster I (A/78/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.2) and thematic cluster II (A/78/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.3), and for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (A/78/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.5) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (A/78/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.6), said that the overall resource requirements of special political missions, derived from the estimated resource needs of individual missions, continued to be included under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget.

2. The total proposed resources for special political missions for 2024 amounted to \$775.3 million, representing an increase of \$7 million compared with the appropriation for 2023. That increase was the net effect of: an increase of \$8.1 million under civilian personnel costs, due to the application of the latest salary scales and standard costs, as well as latest vacancy rates, along with the proposed changes in the staffing component for some missions, for a net increase of 25 posts and 10 United Nations Volunteer positions; a reduction of \$1.1 million under military personnel costs, primarily due to the application of the latest vacancy rates; and a maintenance level of resources

under operational costs, as the net result of increases under air operations, ground transportation, experts, official travel, other supplies, services and equipment, and quick impact projects, all offset by decreases in medical, facilities and infrastructure, marine operations and communications and information technology. The total proposed net increase of 25 posts and 10 United Nations Volunteer positions, from the total of 4,648 in 2023 to 4,683 in 2024, reflected conscious efforts to optimize the staffing component, contributing to rejuvenation and streamlining in the staffing structure as well as nationalization of posts and strengthening of national capacity.

3. She wished to draw the attention of the Committee to the recent Security Council decision to not extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Mali beyond 30 September 2023. As the Panel would not be continuing into 2024, the resources contained in the proposals for 2024 relating to the Panel, in the amount of \$1.16 million, would not be required.

4. Separately, by its resolution 2697 (2023), the Security Council had taken note of the request from the Government of Iraq for a non-extendable one-year extension of the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), and had accordingly decided to extend the mandate of the Team until 17 September 2024 only. The Security Council had also requested the Special Adviser heading the Investigative Team to submit by 15 March 2024, in consultation with the Government of Iraq, a roadmap for the completion of the Team's mandate and the necessary steps for the Team's closure. Give that that resolution had been adopted on 15 September 2023, and that the requested consultations and development of the roadmap had yet to take place, the Secretariat would need to assess the implications for the proposed resources for 2024 for UNITAD, and would keep the Committee duly informed, provided that sufficient clarity on the matter emerged in the next few months.

5. The eruption of conflict in April 2023 had dramatically affected the security situation and the operating environment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). The Mission had been forced to reconfigure its presence temporarily and reprioritize its immediate actions. The proposed resources for UNITAMS for 2024 were thus being kept at a maintenance level, with adjustments to staffing costs to reflect the latest standard costs and vacancy rates, as well as to include one proposal for the appointment of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Noting that the Advisory Committee had recommended a commitment authority of \$63.1 million for 12 months, the Secretariat wished to emphasize that, given the recurring liquidity challenges, it would not be able to implement the Mission's mandate if a commitment authority of that magnitude was not accompanied by assessment in January 2024.

6. In producing its budget reports and the related supplementary information, the Secretariat continued to be guided by the recommendations of the legislative bodies. It had taken concrete steps to further improve the content, format and presentation of those materials, by means including: consistent application of budgetary methodologies, with the latest standard rates for staff and operational costs being reflected; improving the accuracy and consistency of the vacancy rates applied, to ensure that proposed rates were based, as much as possible, on actual rates; making the chapeau report richer, with the inclusion of new annexes and tables to provide greater granularity and a more holistic view on post resources; adding new annexes in the supplementary information, in recognition of the importance of gender parity and equitable geographical representation, to provide details on geographical and gender representation for every mission; acknowledging the appeal for greater transparency regarding extrabudgetary resources by including additional annexes to report on projected extrabudgetary funding, differentiating between cost recovery and voluntary contributions; and including in the supplementary information new annexes to provide detailed analyses of the financial performance of each mission in 2022 and of budget implementation in 2023, in order to support informed consideration by legislative bodies.

7. **Mr. Chmielewski** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related reports of the Advisory Committee ([A/78/7/Add.1](#), [A/78/7/Add.2](#), [A/78/7/Add.3](#), [A/78/7/Add.5](#) and [A/78/7/Add.6](#)), said that the total expenditure for 2022 for the 41 special political missions, including 39 continuing missions and 2 discontinued missions, had amounted to \$728,097,800, or 98.9 per cent of the approved resources. Underexpenditure had amounted to \$8,435,000, or 1.1 per cent. The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations relating to the budget proposal for thematic cluster III missions were presented in a separate related report ([A/78/7/Add.4](#)).

8. The overall net resource requirements proposed for 39 missions for 2024 were an estimated \$773,197,400, representing an increase of \$7,003,500, or 0.9 per cent, compared with the resources of \$766,193,900 approved for those missions for 2023.

The Advisory Committee noted that the overall level of appropriation for the missions for 2024, along with any analysis of the level of resources between those approved for 2023 and those proposed for 2024, was subject to change due to two factors. First, the expanded mandates of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2692 \(2023\)](#) and [2694 \(2023\)](#), would require additional resources for 2024. The Committee had been informed that a report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates for 2024 for the two missions would be submitted to the General Assembly during the main part of its seventy-eighth session, along with information on the additional resources for the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) following the closure of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Second, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the estimates for 2024 contained in its reports ([A/78/7/Add.2-6](#)) would be affected by any mandate extensions established by governing bodies. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Assembly would be provided with an update covering the associated financial impact.

9. The proposed overall resources for 2024 included an estimated provision of \$2,128,800 for the share of special political missions in the budget of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe for the 2023/24 peacekeeping financial period. The Advisory Committee noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution [77/306](#), had decided that the share for 2024 of the special political missions that were clients of the Regional Service Centre amounted to \$2,128,800, which was the same as the amount proposed by the Secretary-General.

10. The number of civilian personnel proposed for 2024 reflected an overall increase of 35 positions (from 4,648 for 2023 to 4,683 for 2024), representing a total reduction of 13 positions (2 in cluster I missions, 3 in cluster II missions, 7 in UNAMA and 1 in UNAMI), offset in part by a total increase of 48 positions (3 in cluster I missions, 8 in cluster II missions, 33 in cluster III missions, 2 in UNAMA and 2 in UNAMI). In terms of changes by staff category, the abolishment of 13 positions included 11 international and 2 national positions, while the 48 new positions reflected 24 international, 14 national and 10 United Nations Volunteer (7 international and 3 national) positions. The proposed resources under operational costs amounted to \$264,899,200 for 2024 for 39 missions, representing a decrease of \$4,100 compared with the provision for 2023.

11. In connection with the format and presentation of the budget proposal, the Advisory Committee had noted the efforts made by the Secretariat to improve the budget formulation for the special political missions for 2024, and acknowledged the further improvements to the presentation of the reports of the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee trusted that continued efforts would be made in future budget submissions.

12. The Advisory Committee recalled that, in its resolution [77/278](#), the General Assembly had decided to widen the range of posts subject to the desirable ranges system to encompass all posts funded by the regular budget in the professional and higher categories, including posts in special political missions. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the Secretariat would conduct an assessment of the approximately 1,200 posts in the 39 special political missions and the two peacekeeping operations (the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) funded under the programme budget. The Advisory Committee trusted that information on the assessment would be provided to the General Assembly

13. While acknowledging the diverse mandates, scopes and operational modalities of the special political missions, the Advisory Committee considered that there was a need to enhance the performance information for field-based missions under thematic cluster III. The Committee therefore recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to explore ways to enhance performance reporting for field-based special political missions in line with that of peacekeeping operations.

14. The Advisory Committee had discussed potential alternative groupings of special political missions for future budget submissions. The current grouping of missions had remained unchanged since 2006. It recalled that, while UNAMA and UNAMI were thematically part of cluster III (field-based missions), the budgets for the two largest missions at that time were presented in separate addenda ([A/61/525/Add.4](#) and [A/61/525/Add.5](#)), due to the fact that the resources for UNAMA and UNAMI then accounted for 61 per cent of the total resources for all special political missions.

15. The Advisory Committee had noted that the combined resources for 2024 for UNAMA (17.1 per cent) and UNAMI (12.7 per cent) accounted for only 29.8 per cent, while the resources for UNSOM, currently the second-largest mission in terms of resource requirements, represented 13.1 per cent of the total resources requested. Taking into account the changes

over the years, the Advisory Committee saw merit in a review to update the current grouping of the special political missions, with possible steps, such as a grouping by region, to facilitate the consideration of the budget submissions and to provide an opportunity to explore more efficiencies and economies of scale, while combining the thematic and cross-cutting missions into one cluster, including groups of experts relating to Security Council sanctions and monitoring; and to reflect changes in the size of the missions with a potential threshold for separate budget submissions. The Advisory Committee trusted that more information and options on a review would be provided to the General Assembly for guidance.

16. The total resource requirements of the 39 special political missions were included within the overall resource level proposed by the Secretary-General for the proposed programme budget for 2024. The Advisory Committee therefore noted that its recommendations pertaining to the budget proposals for 2024 for the missions would represent a reduction of \$10,180,000 to the overall resource level proposed for the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to mandate extensions.

17. The proposed requirements for the 10 missions grouped under thematic cluster I for 2024 amounted to \$47,873,300, reflecting a decrease of \$1,730,700, or 3.5 per cent, compared with the resources approved for 2023.

18. With regard to specific staffing proposals, the Advisory Committee recommended against the establishment of one P-5 Senior Human Rights Officer position in Geneva in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, and against the redeployment of one P-4 Political Affairs Officer position from Addis Ababa to Khartoum in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa.

19. With regard to operational costs, the Advisory Committee recommended reductions under consultants and consulting services; official travel; facilities and infrastructure; ground transportation and other supplies; and services and equipment.

20. The proposed requirements for the 16 continuing missions grouped under thematic cluster II (sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms) for 2024 amounted to \$66,470,400 (net), representing an increase of \$2,400,500, or 3.7 per cent, compared with the 2023 appropriation.

21. With respect to support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution

1540 (2004), the Advisory Committee recommended against the proposed establishment of the Senior Meetings Services Assistant position (General Service, Principal level). With respect to the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Advisory Committee recommended against the proposed establishment of one Legal Officer (P-4) position. With regard to the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Committee recommended against the establishment of one Field Security Assistant position (Local Level).

22. With regard to the budget proposal for 2024 for UNAMA, the proposed requirements for 2024 amounted to \$132,479,400 (net), representing an increase of \$200 compared with the 2023 appropriation. In respect of the staffing requirements for UNAMA for 2024, the Advisory Committee recommended against the establishment of the position of Public Information Officer (P-4) in the proposed Strategic Communications Section, in view of the already existing staffing complement and given the absence of detailed workload information for the present arrangement. With regard to proposed reassignments, the Advisory Committee was also not convinced of the justifications provided for the reassignment of the position of Judicial Affairs Officer (P-4), and recommended its abolishment.

23. In its previous report, the Advisory Committee had recommended the establishment of the general temporary position of Coordination Officer (P-4) in the Front Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and its cost-sharing with the resident coordinator system (see [A/77/7/Add.5](#), para. 18). In the course of its review of the present proposal, the Advisory Committee had been informed that cost-sharing of the position with the resident coordinator system was not feasible in 2023 and that it would remain unchanged for 2024. The Advisory Committee trusted that further clarification of the respective reasons would be provided to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.

24. Under operational costs, the Advisory Committee recommended reductions under facilities and infrastructure, air operations, communications and information technology, and other supplies, services and equipment. Regarding the deployment of a second fixed-wing air asset, the Advisory Committee was not fully convinced of the necessity of the requirement at present in view of the existing trend for underutilization of flight hours, and recommended that the Assembly request UNAMA instead to make use of alternative

arrangements through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS).

25. With regard to the budget proposal for 2024 for UNAMI, the proposal of the Secretary-General for 2024 amounted to \$98,462,400, reflecting an increase of \$1,551,800, or 1.6 per cent, compared to the appropriation for 2023. With respect to the proposed new posts, the Advisory Committee considered that the Mission should be able to identify suitable local candidates for a Senior Nurse position and therefore recommended the establishment of a position of Senior Nurse as a National Professional Officer (NPO) instead of a staff member in the Field Service (FS) category. In addition, the Advisory Committee recommended against the establishment of an Assistant Data Analyst (NPO) position in Erbil.

26. In addition, the Advisory Committee recommended against the reassignment of a Close protection Officer (FS) as Administrative Assistant (FS); of an Assistant Coordination Officer (NPO) as an Assistant Public Information Officer (NPO); and of a Claims Assistant (FS) as Data Analyst (FS), recommending instead that the position of Claims Assistant (FS) be reassigned as Data Analyst (NPO).

27. The Advisory Committee trusted that information on the status of construction of the new UNAMI building in Kuwait, as well as efficiencies related to maintenance of the new premises, would be provided in the next budget report. With respect to the transition and independent strategy review of the Mission, the Advisory Committee noted that UNAMI, in cooperation with the United Nations country team, was supporting the host country to transition from a humanitarian-oriented focus towards a development-oriented focus, and trusted that related updates would be included in the next budget report. The Advisory Committee also trusted that the proposed budget for UNAMI for 2025 would reflect the results of the independent strategic review, any impact on the transition strategy, as well as implications for the Kuwait Joint Support Office.

28. **Mr. Seah** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN was a strong supporter of the vital role played by special political missions in maintaining international peace and security, particularly amid the current global backdrop of war and tension. Accordingly, ASEAN had consistently supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations to reform the funding and backstopping arrangements for special political missions. The current financing arrangements had made it difficult for them to function

effectively and keep up with new and complex challenges. ASEAN therefore urged the Fifth Committee to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions (A/66/7/Add.21), including on the establishment of a separate account that was aligned with the budgetary cycle for peacekeeping operations. Such an account would provide a buffer between the funding of special political missions and the persistent liquidity issues affecting the regular budget. The regular-budget cycle was not suited to special political missions, as most backstopping support for those missions was drawn from Secretariat departments funded under the peacekeeping budget.

29. The vast majority of special political missions, including large field missions similar to peacekeeping operations, had been established pursuant to decisions of the Security Council. The General Assembly had reaffirmed in its resolution 55/235 that the “special responsibilities of the Permanent Members in the Security Council for the maintenance of peace and security should be borne in mind in connection with their contributions to the financing of peace and security operations”. Those with larger influence over peace operations, including special political missions, should shoulder a larger responsibility for their funding. ASEAN therefore saw every reason for special political missions to be funded through the peacekeeping operations budget, and no reason why special political missions should continue to be funded through the regular budget. ASEAN remained committed to the effective functioning of special political missions, expressed gratitude to their staff working in challenging environments around the world, and looked forward to constructive discussion of how the Fifth Committee could better support their work.

30. **Mr. Castillo** (Mexico), speaking also on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay, said that, for the United Nations, special political missions were a vital tool in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts worldwide. In fulfilling their diverse mandates, each of the missions made a substantial contribution to the Organization’s core purpose of maintaining international peace and security. As they operated in challenging environments often characterized by precarious instability, those missions needed adequate human and financial resources to enable them to fulfil their multifaceted mandates efficiently and effectively. The States on whose behalf he was speaking witnessed the crucial

work of the special political missions through the presence of United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the Panel of Experts established by Security Council resolution 2653 (2022), and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The recognition of those missions by the countries involved was a clear indication of their significant work to address complex situations.

31. The extension and reinforcement of the mandate of BINUH until 15 July 2024, in fulfilment of Security Council resolution 2692 (2023), was welcome. The adoption of the resolution by unanimity underscored the international community’s support for the Haitian people and the commendable work carried out by BINUH. While the situation in Haiti continued to be a focus of close attention, and while the Security Council had authorized the deployment of a new Multinational Security Support mission to Haiti, BINUH and the Panel of Experts were entrusted with critically important mandates to help the country achieve political stability and good governance, promoting a peaceful and stable environment, and safeguarding human rights. By providing adequate resources to BINUH and the Panel of Experts, in line with the Secretary-General’s request, the Assembly would facilitate the effective implementation of the associated mandates; the Multinational Security Support mission to Haiti, BINUH and the Panel of Experts were essential to creating the conditions for the Haitian Government and civil society to address and overcome the social, economic, and political root causes of the worrying multidimensional crisis in their country and finally steer Haiti toward lasting peace and sustainable development.

32. Colombia had made substantial progress in establishing a solid foundation for a stable and lasting peace. Consolidating peace required the commitment and courage of all parties involved, and in that regard, the countries on whose behalf he was speaking reaffirmed their support for the people and Government of Colombia as they engaged in that process. The Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace signed on 24 September 2016 continued to serve as a model for peace negotiations globally; its effective implementation was pivotal for sustainable peace. The United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, initially tasked with verifying the implementation of points 3.2 and 3.4 of the Final Agreement, had seen its mandate expanded, first, in order to include the additional task of verifying compliance with and implementation of sanctions imposed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace on individuals who had fully acknowledged truth and responsibility within the framework of point 5.1.2 of the

Final Agreement; second, in order to monitor the implementation of the sections of the Final Peace Agreement relating to comprehensive rural reform and to matters related to ethnic considerations; and, third, in order to monitor and verify the implementation of the ceasefire as outlined in the Second Cuba Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN).

33. That represented substantial support for the transitional justice system's efforts towards reconciliation and peace; for addressing deep-rooted patterns of inequality and exclusion of rural regions and ethnic people that had both perpetuated and exacerbated the armed conflict, in order to consolidate peace; for improvement of the humanitarian situation in conflict-affected areas; and for the purpose of encouraging the parties to continue strengthening the protection of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law. The Verification Mission in Colombia played an indispensable role in supporting that historic process. The countries on whose behalf he was speaking therefore had full confidence that the continued support of the international community would manifest itself in the extension of the mandate established by Security Council Resolution 2655 (2022), effective until October 31, 2023. That support should also be reflected in sufficient and comprehensive funding, aligned with the resources requested by the Secretary-General.

34. The maintenance of international peace and security was a fundamental pillar of the United Nations. Special political missions must therefore receive adequate funding. The number of such missions had nevertheless grown significantly and they were funded under the regular budget, of which they represented more than 20 per cent. A timely discussion of the financial difficulties resulting from that situation had been included in the report of the Secretary-General on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions (A/66/340). Twelve years since the issuance of that report, during which the missions' share of the regular budget had increased considerably, no reasonable response to those difficulties had yet been provided. Special political missions were established by the Security Council rather than the entire United Nations membership; they must have clear and realistic mandates that enabled the evaluation of their progress. Special political missions must therefore be funded through a separate account based on a July – June budget year and using the peacekeeping scale of assessments.

35. **Ms. Minale** (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that her Group acknowledged the role played by the special and

personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General in advancing preventive diplomacy and supporting conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery efforts. Apart from the missions with crosscutting mandates, Africa hosted or had a direct connection with 40 per cent of the country-specific and region-specific offices and missions covered by the current agenda item. Her Group therefore attached great importance to the allocation of adequate resources, to enable implementation of their mandates. The Group also recognized the unique political and security circumstances in which those missions operated, and therefore wished to recognize the efforts of host countries, and the Organization's staff, especially the military and civilian personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice in field missions while serving the cause of peace and security, and pledged its support for the establishment of a suitable and safe environment for the work of all United Nations staff.

36. The Group noted that, for 2024, the amount of funding requested by the Secretariat for the missions in question represented an increase of only 0.9 percent over the 2023 appropriation. As the Advisory Committee had indicated in its reports, the Fifth Committee was also expected to consider required budget adjustments based on the latest global fuel price. Considering the modest change in the proposed budget, despite the lack of change in the mandates of the missions, the Group hoped for timely conclusion of the consultations on resources for those missions. The Group paid particular attention to the lasting impacts and contributions of those special political missions that were established with mandates to support conflict resolution and lasting peace. It therefore attached particular significance to the relationship between the missions and host countries and regional and subregional organizations; and to the allocation of resources for quick impact projects, infrastructure and capacity-building programmes in host countries.

37. The Group wished to stress the matter of equitable geographical representation in staffing, and to stress the need to employ national staff. In that connection, it was grateful to the Secretary General for including in his report data on the composition of the staff by nationality. It wished to express its concern at the low level of African representation in leadership positions, including those of Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, and D1 and D2 posts, as well as professional posts ranging from P1 to P5. Recalling the pledge made by the Secretary General to ensure equitable geographical representation in leadership positions, the Group reiterated its commitment to supporting the realization of that objective.

38. With regard to national staff, the Group had noted the combination of a low number of proposed national staff positions and a high level of vacant national staff posts in the budget submission, as well as the extended recruitment lead time for national and local staff. The Group underscored the need to ensure optimum levels of involvement of national staff in the work of the missions, and believed that national staff both built the capacities of host countries and enabled the United Nations to sustain gains from the work of its missions. Furthermore, national staff supported confidence-building and effective relations with host governments. The Group called on the Secretary General to create a larger number of national positions, to nationalize professional posts, to fill vacant national posts as expeditiously as possible and to continue making efforts to simplify and shorten the process of recruitment of national and local staff.

39. The fact that the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe had proven to be a strategic tool for the Organization justified it being given closer attention and more resources, to enable it to expand and improve its activities. The Group trusted that the consolidation of the Centre would be one of the Organization's priorities in the coming months.

40. **Mr. Chen Yuanhang** (China) said that the level of resources allocated under the proposed programme budget for 2024 to special political missions, numbering almost 40, was significant. The process of planning the budgets for special political missions was important, and the process of formulating those budgets should be made more scientific, rational and accurate in order to remain in line with the mandates established in resolutions and enhance the efficiency of resource utilization. His delegation welcomed the Secretariat's prompt reflection, in the revised estimates, of the programme budget implications of the extension or termination of the mandates of special political missions.

41. Ensuring equitable geographical representation was a requirement under the Charter and a priority of Member States, particularly the developing countries. The resolution on human resources management adopted by the Committee at the first part of the resumed session in March 2023 had established additional requirements in that connection. China attached great importance to improving such representation in special political missions and hoped that steps would be taken to increase the number of staff from underrepresented countries, particularly at senior levels. His delegation called for attention to be devoted to proper management of special political missions' relations with the countries hosting them, as the role of

the missions was one of political diplomacy. Their roles must not deviate from the overall direction of mediation and conflict-prevention, and they must – in implementing their mandates – heed the views of host governments and relevant parties, pursue public understanding and support, and provide constructive assistance aimed at preventing a deficit of trust, promoting dialogue and peace talks on the basis of the situation and concerns on the ground. China was also concerned about issues such as the apportionment of costs, the streamlining of the support structure for special political missions, the presentation of the budgets of such missions and special post allowances, and would explore those issues further at the current session.

42. Turning to the proposed budget allocations for individual missions, his delegation believed that an objective assessment of the financial and human resource needs of UNAMA should be made, recalling that it was the largest special political mission and accounted for nearly 17 per cent of the total proposed budget for special political missions for 2024. China supported UNAMA, and called for it to fulfil its mandate actively, addressing economic, humanitarian and social development challenges. UNAMA should make budget adjustments in a timely manner to reflect staff vacancies, improve the representation of its staffing structure, recruit more professional staff from the countries of the region, and promote the nationalization of posts. The Committee should objectively assess the specific needs of UNAMA in terms of resources and personnel in relation to the latest developments on the ground.

43. A holistic assessment should be made of the effectiveness of the work of UNSOM as a basis for its budget. The resource allocation proposed for 2024 represented the largest increase for a single mission, and accounted for two thirds of the total budget increase. In implementing its mandate, UNSOM should improve rational resource allocation and the efficiency of resource use.

44. The allocation of resources to BINUH should be based on its core mandate, and the mission should not overextend itself. Recalling that the Security Council, by its resolution [2699 \(2023\)](#), had authorized the deployment of a multinational security support mission to curb gang violence, he said that BINUH should fulfil its unique role by focusing its resources on the implementation of political and judicial mandates and by avoiding duplication of inputs with the multinational security support mission.

45. **Ms. Abo** (Japan) said that Japan greatly valued, and would continue to support, special political

missions, which had played, and would continue to play, a critical role in sustaining peace and stability by preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. The Member States bore the responsibility of ensuring that those missions received the necessary resources, and made efficient and effective use of the finite means available to fulfil their mandates. In that connection, Japan appreciated the improvements made to the Secretary-General's budget proposals for special political missions, including the use of accurate vacancy rates based on actual data and the intention to rejuvenate some positions. Building upon the Secretary-General's efforts, there should be further enhancements in the budget proposals, including by addressing the persistently high number of long-vacant positions within the missions, so that resources could be allocated more effectively.

46. **Mr. Farhan** (Bangladesh) said that special political missions played a significant role in preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding by responding to current and emerging global security challenges; they must therefore be provided with adequate resources to fulfil their mandates. Better coordination between special political missions, peacekeeping operations and other peacebuilding activities was also necessary to further increase the missions' efficiency. Bangladesh supported the Secretary-General's enhanced budget proposal for special political missions for 2024, which would help to scale up the operational activities of missions and improve their ability to implement their mandates. Bangladesh had been contributing to special political missions by supporting capacity-building, sharing information, preparing control lists and providing judicial expertise.

47. Since August 2017, Bangladesh had been hosting the 1.1 million Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Myanmar, but there was still no progress towards ensuring their safe, dignified, sustainable and voluntary repatriation to that country. The role of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar was critical to that process, and it required funding adequate for that purpose. Nevertheless, in the current year, the allocation to the Office of the Special Envoy had been curtailed owing to the application of a vacancy rate of 41.7 per cent for the single local level position in the Office. That vacancy must be filled at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that the Office of the Envoy could function effectively to achieve the repatriation of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

48. His delegation wished to highlight several specific issues connected with the proposed budget for the special political missions. First, full, equal and

meaningful participation of women at all staff levels, and especially in key positions, had a critical role to play in supporting gender-responsive conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. Innovative measures must be implemented to ensure equal representation of women and the equitable geographical representation of the Member States in all special political missions. His delegation hoped that the Organization's revised geographical diversity strategy would soon be published, and that it would help to achieve those goals. Second, implementation of the delegation of authority had the potential to be an important strategic tool to enable the special political missions to deliver their mandates efficiently and effectively. Lastly, his delegation commended the countries hosting the special political missions, which could not be successful without the unwavering support of those host countries.

49. **Mr. Al Mansour** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Syrian Arab Republic had responded positively to all political initiatives and efforts undertaken in the context of the political path, supporting the approach of local settlement and national reconciliation as a way to return life to normality in the different parts of the country and to promote the integrity and national unity of Syrian society. It had taken part in the meetings held under the Astana process, welcoming their outcome and remaining in touch with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria. He wished to reaffirm the commitment of his Government to a Syrian-owned and Syrian-led process with no foreign intervention and with a basis in respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country.

50. With respect to the reference to the "continued presence of foreign armies in the Syrian Arab Republic" contained in paragraph 140 of the report of the Secretary-General relating to Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General (A/78/6 (Sect.3)/Add.2), he wished to note the difference between the foreign occupying forces that had entered the Syrian Arab Republic illegally and the friendly forces that had entered the country at the request of the legitimate Government in order to assist it in combating terrorism.

51. In connection with the assertion, in paragraph 144 (b) of the report, that "International consensus with regard to the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be difficult to achieve and sustain", his delegation wished to emphasize that the lack of international consensus was the result of the failure of some Western States to undertake to respect Syrian sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and the purposes and Charter of the United Nations, and the result of a number

of factors: passive intervention in the political process; the imposition of unilateral coercive measures; the politicization of humanitarian efforts; and the obstruction of a transition by the United Nations from relief to sustainable development.

52. With respect to paragraph 144 (d) of the report, accountability was a domestic issue within States' sovereign authority and thus fell within the purview of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, which had not requested legal and technical assistance from the United Nations in that regard. The Syrian Arab Republic had a legal system that was capable of carrying out the relevant responsibilities. Furthermore, ensuring accountability, as described in paragraph 144 (d), was not part of the mandate entrusted to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria under Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#).

53. *Mr. Alnasr (Qatar), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

54. **Ms. Demosthenous** (Cyprus) said that, as it always had, her delegation wished to emphasize that the Committee's deliberations on special political missions should be focused solely on budgetary matters. The responsibility of the Committee was to ensure that special political missions had adequate resources to implement their mandates, as established by the Security Council. The Committee's decisions concerning such missions should therefore be in line with the parameters set forth in the relevant Security Council resolutions, and the reports of the Secretary-General should be fully consistent with the wording of those resolutions. The mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus was derived from the relevant Security Council resolutions, in which it was stipulated that the sole basis for the settlement of the Cyprus issue was that of a bicomunal, bizonal federation, as defined in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

55. The established parameters for the reunification of Cyprus had been consistently reaffirmed by the Council in its relevant resolutions, including resolution [2674 \(2023\)](#). The Security Council had made explicit reference to the agreed basis for settlement of the issue, not least in its statements to the press of 12 July and 21 August 2023. Such explicit references, as described in the relevant resolutions, could not be considered discretionary. It was regrettable that the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed resource requirements for cluster I missions ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.2](#)) lacked explicit references to the basis for the solution to the Cyprus issue. She hoped that that oversight would be rectified and that the Secretariat would continue to be guided by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

56. **Ms. Aras** (Türkiye) said that special political missions played a critical role in advancing the Organization's peacebuilding efforts. Unfortunately, the Committee was yet again convening in an incomplete setting, without the Turkish Cypriot side being present and being given the opportunity to express its rightful concerns. She wished to recall that negotiations between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots had failed repeatedly because of the failure of the Greek Cypriot side, for more than 50 years, to share political power and welfare with the Turkish Cypriots. Meanwhile, negotiation of the bicomunal, bizonal federation model had been tried and exhausted. The only realistic and sustainable solution on the island was therefore one based on the sovereign equality and equal international status of the Turkish Cypriots. Accordingly, the proposal to recruit experts as consultants was unwarranted and unjustified, given the lack of common ground between the two sides in Cyprus to enable a formal negotiation process to begin. The topics referred to in that connection created the wrong impression, namely that the efforts in Cyprus would continue on a "business as usual" basis.

57. Furthermore, the reference made to the so-called "Republic of Cyprus" was factually incorrect and misleading, as there was no single administration on the island capable of representing, either legally or factually, both the Turkish Cypriot people and the Greek Cypriot people, or the island as a whole. It was obvious that every component of the United Nations on the island was expected to treat the two sides equally and impartially. As familiarity with the history of the island would dictate, any United Nations mission should respect the current realities on the ground, namely that in Cyprus there were two equal peoples, as their inherent sovereign equality and equal international status were enshrined in international treaties. The United Nations presence on the island could not be used as any form of leverage to perpetuate the unacceptable and unsustainable status quo and to deprive the Turkish Cypriots of their legitimate rights.

58. **Mr. Amrollahi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation fully recognized the pivotal role played by special political missions, good offices, and other political initiatives in the Organization's pursuit of sustainable peace, and believed that the provision of adequate resources for those missions was critical to the efficient and effective fulfilment of their multifaceted mandates. The resources approved by the General Assembly should be in alignment with all mandated programmes and activities to ensure seamless and effective implementation. Simultaneously, financial discipline must be upheld, and the efficiency of the utilization of resources must be improved.

59. Against that backdrop, his delegation welcomed the review of the staffing structure and resource requirements for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), emphasizing the need to take full account of the nature and scope of legislative mandates, staffing, material resources and budgetary allocations. It appears that excessive human and financial resources were being directed towards implementation of the resolution. The Advisory Committee had concluded in its report (A/78/7/Add.3) that information on the workload of the staff was lacking, and recalled that the mission's mandated activities would cease on 18 October 2025, with termination of all the provisions of resolution 2231 (2015). Given the transitional nature of the mission's mandate, resource levels should be commensurate and should reflect the anticipated mission closure. During the relevant consultations, his delegation would seek further clarification of the operational requirements associated with the mission's work. It was keen to obtain additional insights into the performance metrics and the rationale behind the proposed budget allocation.

60. **Mr. Tur de la Concepción** (Cuba) said that, in recent years, the share of resources allocated to special political missions under the regular budget had been consistently high. Although Cuba recognized the contributions made by such missions, it did not agree that they should be funded under the regular budget, of which they accounted for approximately one fourth, when they were established exclusively by the Security Council. Special political missions should therefore be funded through a separate account with criteria that reflected the special role of the permanent members of the Security Council in addressing peace-related matters.

61. With regard to the budget estimates for cluster I missions, Cuba firmly supported the work of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide as part of its principled position against the crime of genocide. However, it wished to stress once again its categorical opposition to the inclusion in those budget estimates of activities and outputs relating to the responsibility to protect. There was no United Nations resolution establishing the position of Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, which was based on a concept that was clearly divisive. The outcome document of the 2005 World Summit (General Assembly resolution 60/1) provided no justification whatsoever for such a position to be established, and still less for the work of the Special Adviser to be funded from the regular budget. Moreover, the establishment of the Special Adviser position represented a departure from the letter and

spirit of paragraphs 138 and 139 of General Assembly resolution 60/1.

62. It was therefore unlawful for the Organization, without a clear legislative mandate, to allocate resources to the position; it was also worrying that the resources allocated to that position and those allocated to the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide were combined, making oversight by the Member States difficult. His delegation would put forward specific proposals to remove references to the so-called responsibility to protect from the budget for the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

63. **Mr. Abbas** (Iraq) said that special political missions contributed greatly to achieving the goals of the United Nations, and recalled that Iraq had been host to such a mission for over 20 years. His delegation welcomed the efforts of UNAMI and other United Nations entities, and wished to thank the Member States for providing them with resources. The role of special political missions in providing humanitarian and technical assistance to countries facing multiple challenges should continue. However, special political missions should only ever be a response to a request from the countries themselves.

64. It was essential that the budget of UNAMI should be determined according to the situation on the ground in Iraq, which was changing in the light of political, legal and judicial developments, government programmes and national priorities. In its resolution 2682 (2023), the Security Council, at the request of the Government of Iraq, had extended the mandate of UNAMI until 31 May 2024. He wished to recall that the resolution provided for a review to be conducted at the end of that period, and that Iraq had experienced a considerable level of stability. Lastly, his Government supported most of the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in its report on the Mission (A/78/7/Add.6).

65. **Mr. Al-Nezi** (Kuwait) said that, in the light of the need for the Organization to have financial stability and deliver on its mandates, his delegation wished to call on the Member States to pay their contributions on time. Recalling that the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic were still being felt worldwide through the greatest wave of economic contraction in 90 years, he said that such effects were worsened by conflict and confrontations with effects well beyond the parties involved. Such crises should be addressed and contained through a multilateral United-Nations-led international framework. Kuwait appealed for special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives, particularly those in the Middle East, to be allocated the

resources that they needed for their efforts to promote international peace and security.

66. For over 20 years, in a spirit of good neighbourliness, Kuwait had been providing Iraq with recovery assistance, acting unstintingly through close cooperation to help that country regain its rightful place in the region and in the world and meet the aspirations of its people. His delegation urged the Member States to allocate the required resources to maintain the continuity of the work of UNAMI. For its part, Kuwait would continue to pay its contributions in full, on time and without conditions, and it called on the other Member States to do likewise.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

67. **Mr. Camelli** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer) said that he wished to recall that the established procedures and working methods of the Fifth Committee meant that its deliberations on the budgets of special political missions were based on Security Council resolutions which established a framework of mandates for those missions and set out the parameters of the political processes involved. In that connection, he wished to recall in particular resolution 541 (1983) and resolution 550 (1984), in which the Council “calls upon all States to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-alignment of the Republic of Cyprus” and “calls upon all States not to recognize any Cypriot State other than the Republic of Cyprus”. Those resolutions were binding on all Member States, which were obliged to adhere to, and abide by, them. The role of the Member States in the Fifth Committee was not to revisit those mandates, but to discuss and adopt the level of resources that would allow their full implementation.

68. **Ms. Demosthenous** (Cyprus) said that the use by the representative of Türkiye of unilaterally-coined arbitrary names was regrettable. She wished to stress the importance of according respect to all delegations present, and of addressing them using their official names. Cyprus was a member of the United Nations and, under international law and Security Council resolutions, the only recognized State on the island. About that, the international community had no doubts. The remarks of the representative of Türkiye at the current meeting were objectionable both on the grounds of relevance, considering the technical nature of the Committee, and of substance, as they were blatantly at odds with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 541 (1983) and resolution 550 (1984). Her delegation rejected those remarks in their entirety. Respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations was an obligation, and not something

subject to the discretion of the Member States. The statement of the representative of Türkiye only proved the pressing nature of the issues raised by the delegation of Cyprus in its initial statement. The stalemate over the resumption of peace negotiations and the delay in appointing a new Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus demonstrated the difficulties that had resulted from the position of the occupying country on the Cyprus issue, a position that fell unambiguously outside parameters established by the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.