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Chair: Mr. Mahmoud. (Egypt)*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Bachar Bong

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

Agenda item 146: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (continued)

Cross-cutting issues (continued) (A/78/774 and A/78/819)

1. **The Chair** drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/78/774) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/78/819), and the introductory statements of the Special Coordinator on Improving United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and of the Chair of the Advisory Committee, to be posted on the Fifth Committee's website.

Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda (A/78/601, A/78/722 and A/78/744/Add.6)

United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy (A/78/613, A/78/735 and A/78/744/Add.5)

2. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 (A/78/601) and on the budget for the Regional Service Centre for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (A/78/722), said that the proposed budget of \$48.2 million for the 2024/25 period represented an increase of \$4.6 million, or 10.4 per cent, compared with the approved resources for the 2023/24 period. The increase of \$2.8 million under civilian personnel was due to the proposed establishment of 31 posts transferred from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) on a cost-neutral basis; lower vacancy rates for international staff, national General Service staff and United Nations Volunteers; and higher salary rates for national staff. The increase of \$1.7 million under operational costs was due mainly to the replacement of equipment whose useful life had ended, and to the inclusion of services transferred from MONUSCO under communications and information technology. The increased requirements were offset in part by the proposed abolishment of 29 posts owing to the closure of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), lower common staff costs for international staff, higher vacancy rates for National Professional Officers, and updated exchange rates between the Ugandan shilling and the dollar.

3. Introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 (A/78/613) and on the budget for the Logistics Base for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (A/78/735), he said that the proposed budget of \$68.6 million for the 2024/25 period represented an increase of \$2.6 million, or 4.0 per cent, compared with the approved resources of \$66.0 million for the 2023/24 period. The budget proposal reflected an increase of \$2.8 million under civilian personnel, primarily attributable to the application of a lower vacancy rate for international staff, a higher post-adjustment multiplier, higher salary rates for national staff, and an updated exchange rate between the euro and the dollar; that increase was offset in part by the abolishment of three General Service posts owing to the closure of MINUSMA. The increased requirements were offset in part by reduced requirements of \$0.1 million under operational costs, attributable mainly to acquisitions of communications and information technology equipment and vehicles that had been undertaken in prior years.

4. **The Chair** drew attention to the reports of the Advisory Committee on the budget performance for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 for the Regional Service Centre (A/78/744/Add.6) and for the Logistics Base (A/78/744/Add.5), and the introductory statement of the Chair of the Advisory Committee, to be posted on the Fifth Committee's website.

5. **Mr. Ainomuhisha** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, with regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the Logistics Base for 2022/23 (A/78/613), the Group noted that, despite the unencumbered balance, expenditure on facilities and infrastructure had increased by more than 20 per cent. The Group acknowledged the importance of conducting necessary maintenance at duty stations in order to ensure proper working conditions but wished to understand why repairs had been undertaken urgently in 2023 after being delayed in previous periods.

6. Many general temporary assistance positions at the Logistics Base were funded through resources from cost-recovery activities. Since the use of such resources to finance posts was not new at the Logistics Base, the Group requested further information on the projections regarding the stability offered by cost recovery, and on the criteria used at the time of recruitment for posts funded through such resources. Although classified by the Secretariat as extrabudgetary, such funding did not

come from a traditional extrabudgetary source such as donations.

7. With regard to the composition of the staff of the Logistics Base, the Group noted significant imbalances related to gender parity and geographical representation. The number of female staff members, namely, 169, was only 66 per cent of the number of male staff members, namely, 255, while 80 per cent of staff, including all those at the level of D-1 and above, were from Western European and other States. The Group emphasized the importance of achieving gender parity and called for equitable geographical representation, particularly in high-level positions.

8. The Group was concerned about the fact that, despite the decision taken by the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session that the Regional Aviation Safety Office should report to the Director of the Logistics Base until clear and consistent criteria on tenant units were developed, the functional reporting line of the Office had been transferred to the Aviation Safety Section of the Department of Operational Support at Headquarters, without a related proposal having been included in the budgets submitted at the Assembly's seventy-sixth and seventy-seventh sessions. The Group looked forward to receiving clarification of the matter in informal consultations.

9. The Group wished to discuss thoroughly the scalability efforts made at the Logistics Base. It was intrigued by the Board of Auditors' findings to the effect that the end-to-end process related to the scalability model could not be audited owing to a lack of an auditable data matrix and of established methods for collecting data through Umoja. In contrast, the scalability model of the Regional Service Centre had matured considerably in recent years.

10. The leadership of the Regional Service Centre should continue to improve client satisfaction, which, as stated by the Secretary-General in his report on the budget performance for the 2022/23 period (A/78/601), had increased from 72 per cent in 2018 to 77.5 per cent in 2023.

11. The Group would be interested in discussing the Regional Service Centre's role in the evolving landscape of peacekeeping operations, mentioned by the Advisory Committee in its related report (A/78/744/Add.6). In view of the closure and downsizing of several missions in Africa, the Fifth Committee should consider the ways in which the Regional Service Centre could make the best use of its experience, for example by providing additional services and developing broader cooperation with regional organizations such as the African Union, particularly in view of Security Council resolution

2719 (2023) on the funding of African Union-led peace support operations.

12. The Group noted the Secretary-General's proposal, in his report on the budget for the Regional Service Centre for the 2024/25 period (A/78/722), to abolish 29 posts on the basis of the Centre's scalability model, in response to the closure and drawdown of MINUSMA, UNITAMS and MONUSCO. While appreciating the responsiveness of the scalability model, the Group noted that the three main priorities of the Regional Service Centre in 2024/25 would be performing residual activities associated with the closure of MINUSMA and UNITAMS, ensuring the smooth transfer of activities from MONUSCO, and providing efficient services to the Centre's client missions. Adequate resources would be required to address the workload and responsibilities related to those priorities.

13. Speaking as the representative of Uganda, he said that his country attached great importance to the role of the Regional Service Centre in facilitating the work of the United Nations, particularly in peacekeeping operations in Africa. His Government pledged its unwavering support for the Regional Service Centre's operations and for United Nations peacekeeping operations in the region and beyond. As the Secretary-General had said when he had visited the Centre in January 2024, the Centre was an effective platform for supporting not only peacekeeping operations but the global work of the United Nations. As noted in the various reports before the Committee, the Regional Service Centre had matured in terms of its approach and the structure of its service delivery, and was well placed to provide additional services in the Secretariat and the broader United Nations system.

14. **Ms. Minale** (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group wished to recall that the General Assembly had, in its resolution 64/269, established the Regional Service Centre as the first shared service centre for missions in the region under the global field support strategy, and had subsequently given the Centre operational and managerial independence. In the current budget period, the Centre would support 15 client entities, including 6 peacekeeping missions and 8 special political missions, as well as other United Nations offices and mandates, by providing services related to human resources, finance, communications and information technology, transportation, and movement control, and by providing residual support for the liquidation of closing and closed missions. The Centre had been instrumental in providing services in volatile, insecure and remote environments during mission closures and

crises, and was about to assume critical administrative and budgetary functions in the implementation of United Nations support for African peace support operations. The Centre must therefore be provided with resources commensurate with its increased workload and responsibilities.

15. With regard to human resources, the Group recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution [72/286](#), had indicated that eligible national staff of the Centre should be granted continuing contracts in line with the Assembly's relevant resolutions. The Group noted that the Centre had taken the measures required for its eligible General Service staff to be considered for continuing appointments. The Secretary-General should therefore facilitate the issuance of continuing contracts to national staff who met the eligibility criteria.

16. The Group was concerned about the fact that 33 posts had been vacant as at 29 February 2024. While recognizing the reduction in the number of vacant posts in the past two years, the Group emphasized the need to fill such posts as expeditiously as possible. With regard to the improvements in relation to staff turnover, the Group requested the Secretary-General to consider establishing incentives for the retention of staff in Entebbe.

17. The Global Procurement Support Section should be fully utilized, as previously requested by the General Assembly. The Secretariat should also make full use of the Centre in the supply chain activities of the United Nations in Africa, including the inclusion of assets from downsizing missions in the return, refurbishment and reuse programme of the Logistics Base. The Secretariat should also, through the Centre, increase local procurement and the use of local materials in the region. The Group noted the complementarity between the Regional Service Centre and the Logistics Base, and encouraged the Secretary-General to enhance the synergies between them, bearing in mind their respective mandates.

Agenda item 147: Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei ([A/78/597](#), [A/78/737](#) and [A/78/744/Add.4](#))

Agenda item 155: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali ([A/78/635](#), [A/78/744/Add.11](#), [A/78/761](#), [A/78/763](#) and [A/78/821](#))

Agenda item 157: Financing of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan ([A/78/629](#), [A/78/742](#), [A/78/744/Add.13](#) and [A/78/754](#))

18. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 ([A/78/597](#)) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 ([A/78/737](#)) for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), said that the proposed budget of \$301.2 million for the 2024/25 period represented an increase of \$14.0 million, or 4.9 per cent, compared with the approved resources for the current period. The increased requirements of \$4.9 million for civilian personnel were attributable to the proposed establishment of 12 posts and positions, primarily in connection with the transfer to UNISFA of the remaining core functions and the delivery of the mine action programme formerly provided by the Mine Action Service through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), as well as to higher salary scales and increased danger pay requirements for national staff. The increased requirements of \$9.6 million under operational costs were attributable to higher fuel and freight costs resulting from disruption in the supply chain following the closure of the main northern supply route owing to the conflict in the Sudan, and higher contractual costs for the rental and operation of aircraft; the increases under operational costs were offset in part by estimated efficiencies related to the transfer to UNISFA of the functions of the mine action programme. The overall increased requirements were offset in part by reduced requirements of \$0.5 million for military and police personnel, owing primarily to the application of a higher vacancy rate for United Nations police than in the 2023/24 period.

19. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 ([A/78/635](#)) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 ([A/78/761](#)) for MINUSMA, he said that the proposed budget of \$207 million for the 2024/25 period represented a decrease of \$659.8 million, or 76.1 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2023/24. The decrease was due to the withdrawal of all military contingents, United Nations police officers and formed police units, except those that would serve as guard units at the Mission's sites in Gao and Bamako until their closure; the phased separation of staff, except those needed for liquidation activities; the downsizing of the aviation fleet; and the reduction of the scope of Mission's activities owing to the closure of camps and the smaller staffing complement during the liquidation period.

20. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the donation of assets of MINUSMA ([A/78/763](#)), he said that the Secretary-General sought the General Assembly's approval for the proposed donation of MINUSMA assets with a net book value of \$42.5 million to the Transition

Government of Mali, in accordance with regulation 5.14 (e) of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

21. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 (A/78/629) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (A/78/754) for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), he said that the proposed budget of \$1.3 billion for the 2024/25 period represented an increase of \$132.4 million, or 11.5 per cent, compared with the approved resources for the 2023/24 period. The increase mainly reflected the Mission's expanded mandate for the protection of civilians and electoral support. The increased requirements of \$69.8 million for military and police personnel were primarily attributable to the planned deployment of more such personnel. The increased requirements of \$31.0 million for civilian personnel were primarily attributable to the proposed establishment of 75 posts and positions in support of the expanded mandate. Lastly, the increased requirements for operational costs in the amount of \$31.6 million were primarily attributable to proposed acquisitions to support the deployment of additional uniformed and civilian personnel, including the establishment of accommodation, the provision of information and communications technology equipment, and the establishment of six team sites to expand the Mission's footprint in hotspot areas.

22. **The Chair** drew attention to the related reports of the Advisory Committee (A/78/744/Add.4, A/78/744/Add.11, A/78/744/Add.13 and A/78/821), and the introductory statement of the Chair of the Advisory Committee, to be posted on the Fifth Committee's website.

23. **Mr. Swanson** (Assistant Secretary-General for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)), introducing the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the contribution of UNMISS to strengthening the rule of law and accountability in South Sudan (A/78/742), said that, in the evaluation, OIOS had assessed the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of the efforts of UNMISS to strengthen the rule of law and accountability in South Sudan from 2018, when the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan had been signed, to the end of 2022.

24. UNMISS had operated in a challenging post-conflict context, in which pervasive problems had hampered the achievement of systemic change across the justice system. Nevertheless, the Mission's support had been relevant to the State's needs, and it had strengthened the rule of law and accountability by deploying court sessions in areas without access to

statutory justice; developing police, judiciary and prison infrastructure through quick-impact projects; building capacity and providing mentoring for judicial and other related institutions; supporting the release of children recruited by parties to the conflict; and providing technical support for legal reforms related to land policy, security, elections and the Penal Code.

25. Although UNMISS had partnered with civil society and other organizations to promote human rights and transitional justice, its work with United Nations country team partners to strengthen the rule of law and accountability could have been more coherent. In order to achieve the shared objectives arising from the Revitalized Agreement, more could have been done to leverage each partner's comparative advantages.

26. The Office recommended that UNMISS develop a strategy to document best practices and lessons learned from initiatives, strengthen partnerships to leverage comparative advantages in working with United Nations country team entities, and coordinate a capacity assessment leading to a joint strategy for strengthening institutions related to the rule of law and accountability, as well an enabling environment. All three recommendations had been accepted and were being implemented.

27. **Mr. Aboubacar Sissoko** (Mali) said that his delegation took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the donation of assets of MINUSMA (A/78/763) and the proposed budget for the Mission for the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (A/78/761). Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2690 (2023), on the termination of the Mission's mandate, Mali had worked closely with the United Nations to ensure that the withdrawal was orderly, coordinated and safe. A high-level committee comprising various members of the Government had been established to steer the process, with the support of a technical monitoring committee and working groups to ensure that decisions taken, in particular on the jointly validated withdrawal timetable, were fully implemented.

28. Although the first phase of the handover of the Mission's camps to the Malian authorities had gone well overall, MINUSMA had not honoured its principal commitments during the second phase, which had begun on 1 September 2023. In particular, it had withdrawn hastily from Tessalit, Aguelhok and Kidal without a handover, failed to comply with its environmental obligations, and sabotaged civilian infrastructure. His Government was concerned by the serious violations during the withdrawal and urged the liquidation team to cooperate with the competent Malian authorities to facilitate the liquidation phase, which had begun on 1 January 2024.

29. His delegation would pay particular attention, at the current session, to compliance with environmental rules during the withdrawal of MINUSMA. His delegation was concerned about the fact that the Mission had left waste in containers or on the ground, particularly in Kidal, Tessalit and Aguelhok. An environmental and health risk assessment was being conducted at each MINUSMA site and area of operation; the results would serve as the basis for a risk management plan. Adequate resources should be allocated to soil remediation and waste treatment.

30. The Malian authorities stood ready to support the MINUSMA liquidation team in completing its work by 31 December 2024, the date by which his Government had decided that the liquidation phase would end. The General Assembly should allocate to the team the resources necessary to that end.

31. As at 31 December 2023, the Mission had been present in Mali for more than a decade. Although MINUSMA had been unable to fulfil its mandate, the people of Mali were grateful for the sacrifice made in the cause of peace. He paid tribute to the civilian and military victims, from Mali and elsewhere, who had fallen on the field of honour in the country. Although the Mission's mandate had ended, the cooperation between Mali and the United Nations would continue through the Organization's funds and programmes, and the specialized agencies. His Government would cooperate with all partners, including the United Nations system, on the basis of respect for its sovereignty, strategic choices and selection of partners, and for the interests of Malians.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.