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Chair: Mr. Ružička (Slovakia)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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

Agenda item 134: Improving the financial situation of the United Nations (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management), accompanying his statement* with a digital slide presentation, said that he would focus on four main financial indicators: assessments issued, unpaid assessed contributions, available cash resources and outstanding payments to Member States in respect of four budget categories: the regular budget, peacekeeping, the international tribunals, and the capital master plan. Overall, those financial indicators were sound, although some areas still needed to be closely monitored.

2. Unpaid assessments had been lower at the end of 2014 than at the end of 2013 in all areas except the regular budget. Cash balances had been positive for peacekeeping and the tribunals at the end of 2014, but the cash position of the regular budget and the capital master plan had been tight. Regular budget cash reserves had been used to cover the shortfalls.

3. At the end of April 2015, unpaid assessments had been higher for the regular budget and peacekeeping operations and lower for the tribunals than a year earlier. Cash balances had been positive for the regular budget, peacekeeping operations and the tribunals. At the first part of the resumed session, the General Assembly had resolved the issue of the shortfall in the capital master plan by financing the associated costs.

4. With regard to troop costs and contingent-owned equipment, the level of outstanding payments to Member States had been higher at the end of 2014 than a year earlier. However, the amount outstanding had decreased considerably by the end of the first quarter of 2015. The Secretariat would make every effort to expedite outstanding payments to Member States in 2015.

5. With regard to the regular budget, assessments issued and payments received from Member States by 30 April had both been higher in 2015 than in 2014. Unpaid assessed contributions had amounted to \$1.57 billion as at 30 April 2015, \$175 million higher than a year earlier.

6. By the end of 2014, 144 Member States had paid their regular budget assessments in full, two fewer than in 2013. He urged all other Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full as soon as possible.

7. There had been a significant reduction in outstanding assessments during the last quarter of 2014. As at 30 April 2015, such assessments had been concentrated among a few Member States, and the final outcome for 2015 would largely depend on actions taken by them. The differences in the financial years of Member States, however, and the timing of the related national legislative processes, might affect prompt payment. As at 30 April 2015, 84 Member States had paid their assessments to the regular budget in full, five more than by 30 April 2014. He urged other Member States to follow their example.

8. The cash resources available for the regular budget under the General Fund included the Working Capital Fund, authorized at \$150 million by the General Assembly, and the Special Account. Cash shortfalls in the last months of 2014 had been covered by the Working Capital Fund from September to December and also by the Special Account in November. As at 31 December 2014 there had been a cash shortfall of \$81 million in the regular budget, fully covered by the Working Capital Fund.

9. While Member State contributions had improved the regular budget cash position by 30 April 2015, if previous-year trends continued the position would become tighter in the last quarter. At the first part of the resumed session, the General Assembly had decided to fund the final shortfall in the capital master plan by transferring \$154.9 million from the General Fund, including \$36.6 million from the Special Account. The decision would be implemented later in 2015. Regular budget reserves would be reduced to \$348.4 million, comprising \$150 million in the Working Capital Fund and \$198.4 million in the Special Account.

10. The month-end cash position had been tight in the last quarter of 2014, and the daily situation complicated. The regular budget shortfall had been \$174 million in early November 2014, \$162 million in mid-November 2014 and \$136 million at the end of January 2015. The final cash position at the end of 2015 would largely depend on payments made by Member States.

* Subsequently circulated as document A/69/520/Add.1.

11. Comparison of the financial situation of peacekeeping operations and the regular budget was complicated by the fact that peacekeeping had a different financial period from the regular budget, from July to June; that assessments were issued separately for each operation; and that assessment letters were issued for different periods throughout the year, as they were issued only through the mandate period approved by the Security Council for each mission.

12. The total amount outstanding for peacekeeping operations at the end of 2014 had been \$1.28 billion, reflecting a significant decrease compared with the \$2.2 billion outstanding at the end of 2013. As at 30 April 2015, new assessments of \$2.2 billion had been issued and the level of unpaid assessments had amounted to \$2 billion.

13. Unpaid assessments continued to be concentrated among a few Member States. However, differences in the financial years of Member States and the timing of related national legislative processes must be taken into account, especially since letters of assessment were issued throughout the year for different missions, whenever the Security Council renewed the respective mandates.

14. He paid tribute to the efforts of Member States to pay their peacekeeping assessments in a timely manner despite those challenges. As at 31 December 2014, all peacekeeping assessments had been paid in full by 27 Member States, and as at 30 April 2015 by 23, despite the difficulty of making such payments by the cut-off date of 30 April when assessments had last been issued on 1 April. While \$4.3 billion had been available for peacekeeping at the end of 2014 — \$3.84 billion in the accounts of active missions, \$294 million in closed mission accounts and \$138 million in the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund — the General Assembly had decided to maintain separate accounts for each peacekeeping operation. It had specified that no peacekeeping mission should be financed by borrowing from other active peacekeeping missions. The use of the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund was restricted to new operations and the expansion of existing operations.

15. With regard to outstanding payments to Member States, the Secretariat would continue to accelerate payments and reduce the amount owed in respect of troops, formed police units and contingent-owned equipment. The total outstanding was expected to fall from \$779 million at the end of 2014 to \$561 million

by the end of 2015. As at 31 March 2015, \$153 million had been owed in respect of troops and formed police units, \$414 million in respect of contingent-owned equipment claims for active missions and \$86 million in respect of such claims for closed missions, giving a total of \$653 million.

16. The Secretary-General was committed to meeting obligations to Member States providing troops and equipment as expeditiously as possible, as the cash situation permitted. The Secretariat monitored the cash flow situation continuously, and maximized quarterly payments based on the cash available. That was dependent on Member States' meeting their financial obligations in full and on time, and on the expeditious finalization of memorandums of understanding with contributors of contingent-owned equipment.

17. The financial position of the international tribunals had improved, with outstanding assessments falling from \$54 million at the end of 2013 to \$40 million at the end of 2014. As at 30 April 2015, outstanding assessments had amounted to \$128 million, with 57 Member States having paid in full their assessed contributions to both tribunals and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. The month-by-month cash balances of the tribunals had been positive in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Once again, the final outcome in 2015 depended on Member States' continuing to honour their financial obligations to the tribunals.

18. A total of \$1.87 billion had been assessed under the special account for the capital master plan. As at 30 April 2015, the bulk of the assessed contributions had been received, with \$0.5 million still outstanding. The strong support for the project was evidenced by the fact that 180 Member States had paid their capital master plan assessments in full. He urged the Member States that had not yet paid their contributions to do so as soon as possible.

19. The capital master plan had experienced cash shortfalls since December 2014. The deficit had exceptionally been bridged from the Working Capital Fund. He thanked the Committee members for deciding to finance the final shortfall in the plan's associated costs through a transfer of \$154.9 million from the General Fund. After the approved transactions and transfers were made, the capital master plan account would be fully balanced.

20. In conclusion, he paid tribute to the 22 Member States that were up to date in the payment of their assessments for the regular budget, peacekeeping, the international tribunals and the capital master plan.

21. The financial situation at the end of 2014 had been generally sound, but it had been necessary to draw on regular budget cash reserves, both the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account, during the last months of the year. In 2015 the number of Member States paying in full under the regular budget had increased, but unpaid assessments remained at a significant level and continued to be highly concentrated.

22. The overall cash situation was positive as a result of the continued efforts of many Member States. However, the regular budget was expected to tighten towards the end of 2015. In recent years, the United Nations had been forced to resort to regular budget reserves to manage expenditure, in particular at the end of the year. The Secretariat would closely monitor cash flow and ensure prudent financial management.

23. Outstanding payments to Member States that contributed troops, police and equipment were expected to decrease to \$561 million at the end of 2015. The Secretariat would make every effort to expedite outstanding payments.

24. As always, the financial health of the Organization depended on Member States' meeting their financial obligations in full and on time. On behalf of the Secretary-General, he urged all Member States to do so.

25. **Mr. Rodrigues dos Santos** (Brazil) said that, as a founding member of the United Nations, Brazil was committed to honouring its budgetary obligations. The United Nations should have sufficient resources to discharge all its mandates under the three pillars of peace and security, human rights, and development. His Government had taken steps to pay all its outstanding contributions to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the international tribunals by the end of April 2015.

26. **Mr. Sánchez Azcu** (Cuba) requested further information regarding the shortfalls of \$23 million in the Working Capital Fund and \$24 million in the

Special Account as at 30 April 2015. He asked whether the figures for unpaid peacekeeping assessments included assessments for closed missions.

Agenda item 148: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Cross-cutting issues (A/69/308 (Part II), A/69/585, A/69/585/Corr.1, A/69/651, A/69/733/Rev.1, A/69/751/Rev.1, A/69/779, A/69/839, A/69/839/Add.9 and A/69/874; A/C.5/69/18 and A/C.5/69/21)

27. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/751/Rev.1) and the Secretary-General's note on the proposed budgetary levels for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/C.5/69/21), said that the report on the financing of peacekeeping provided a comprehensive overview of the strategic aspects of peacekeeping, budget performance and current and future operational requirements. Peacekeeping continued to be one of the most visible, challenging and important endeavours undertaken by the United Nations. The demand for security, stability and political and peacebuilding support to help countries mitigate crises, reinforce the foundations for peace, and work towards lasting recovery had continued to grow. The Organization was committed to further improving operational resilience, strategic responsiveness, coherence and cost-effectiveness. The budget proposals reflected enhanced planning, higher mobility, rapid response, improvements in force protection, information and analysis, and the use of new technologies.

28. In 2013/14, some \$7,520 million had been spent on peacekeeping operations, including missions, the United Nations Logistics Base and the support account, compared with the approved budget of \$7,833 million, leaving an unencumbered balance of \$313 million at an implementation rate of 96 per cent.

29. The underexpenditure had occurred mainly in respect of military and police personnel and operational costs, specifically the reduced deployment of contingent personnel and police officers for the

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI); the accelerated drawdown of uniformed personnel and the reduced cost of rations in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID); the limited deployment of Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism personnel and equipment and the suspension of the Mechanism's aerial and verification operations in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA); and lower requirements for air transportation in various missions.

30. The resources proposed for peacekeeping operations for 2015/16, including the United Nations Logistics Base and the support account, amounted to \$8,491.8 million, an increase of \$29.6 million, or 0.4 per cent, over 2014/15. The initial estimates had been adjusted following the authorization in Security Council resolution 2215 (2015) for the Secretary-General to implement the third phase of the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to reach lower ceilings for military and police personnel by September 2015.

31. More resources were required in 2015/16 because of the increased deployment of civilian personnel in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and higher operational costs in the second year of the Mission's establishment programme; the planned full deployment of civilian personnel in MINUSMA and increased mine detection and clearing services and construction projects; the increased number of locations at which support was provided to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) through the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA); and the proposed deployment of additional aircraft in UNSOA, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and MINUSCA.

32. The reductions in the 2015/16 budget resulted primarily from the drawdown of uniformed personnel in MINUSTAH, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), UNMIL, UNOCI and UNISFA; and lower costs for contingent-owned equipment reimbursement and travel on rotation in MONUSCO.

33. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/261, had requested the Secretary-General to apply

deductions to the reimbursement of troop costs for absent or non-functional major equipment. Retroactive deductions had been made for the first three quarters of 2014 in a total amount of \$68.7 million. The budget proposals did not include provisions related to such deductions, because projections of amounts to be recovered in 2015/16 were currently unreliable. The Secretariat would continue to analyse empirical data and trends as a basis for future projections of such amounts.

34. Turning to the Secretary-General's reports on the budget performance of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/585 and A/69/585/Corr.1), and the budget for the Base for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/733/Rev.1), she said that actual expenditure for 2013/14 had amounted to \$68.5 million, representing a budget implementation rate of 100 per cent.

35. The proposed 2015/16 budget amounted to \$71.7 million, an overall increase of \$1.4 million, or 1.9 per cent, compared with 2014/15, attributable to the proposed establishment of 26 new positions, mainly in support of MINUSMA and MINUSCA; the planned refurbishment and renovation of various buildings; and the need to replace ageing vehicles.

36. As part of the global field support strategy, the Base, in operation since 1994, had been incorporated into the Global Service Centre, a unified entity that also comprised the United Nations Support Base in Valencia, Spain. The Centre provided global information and communications technology, logistics and supply chain operational management and other services throughout the life-cycle of field missions, from start-up to liquidation.

37. **Mr. Khare** (Under-Secretary-General for Field Support), introducing the Secretary-General's fifth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy (A/69/651), said that the Department for Field Support and its partners must focus on needs in the field and on results, and must work rapidly, effectively and efficiently within the applicable rules and regulations.

38. The global field support strategy, launched in 2010, had been designed to unify the mission support community behind shared objectives and increase its capacity to manage its burgeoning portfolio. New missions in Chad, Darfur and Somalia had resulted in a

surge in field operations and had created challenges in mandate implementation, resourcing, and deployment. Since the launch of the strategy, a constant stream of new demands on United Nations peacekeeping had emphasized the importance of rapid and effective mission support.

39. Twelve new field missions had been established, including the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Mission for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER). Major crises had arisen in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Mali and South Sudan, resulting in significant mission reconfigurations. The number of authorized personnel had increased by 14 per cent between 2009/10 and 2014/15, and security conditions for peacekeepers, now actively targeted by hostile armed elements, had deteriorated. In the preceding 48 hours, shots had been fired at a United Nations helicopter and, in a separate incident, two peacekeepers had been killed in Beni, Democratic Republic of the Congo; an AMISOM patrol near Mogadishu had been attacked with an improvised explosive device; and a MINUSMA camp in Kidal, Mali, had come under mortar and rocket fire. The difficulties resulting from the current insecurity affected personal safety, logistics, communications and financial requirements.

40. While progress had not been even, field support operations were broadly more cost-efficient, leaner and faster than five years previously. Start-up budget planning and delivery had improved: for missions established between 2011 and 2013, only 1.6 per cent of budgeted funds had gone unspent during the first two years, compared with 7.3 per cent for missions established between 2007 and 2009. Following the abolishment of 3,000 posts, the ratio of support and security staff to total personnel had dropped by 11 per cent between 2010/11 and 2013/14. Since 2008/09, the cost of each peacekeeper, understood as the total cost measured against the number of deployed uniformed personnel, had declined by 17 per cent, adjusted for inflation. Since January 2010, the vacancy rate among civilian staff had fallen by a quarter, from 20 per cent to 15 per cent in August 2014. A stronger field service delivery model was in place: in 2014/15, about 70 per cent of authorized personnel would receive some form of shared service. Client satisfaction was measured

more systematically: in August 2014, 61 per cent of personnel had declared themselves satisfied with field support services, whereas only 21 per cent had expressed dissatisfaction.

41. In 2012, the need to strengthen supply chain management to ensure a more efficient, end-to-end approach to sourcing, distribution and oversight across all missions had been identified, as had four projects that would enable the piloting of a series of short-term improvements. The implementation of the supply chain management strategy would take a number of years.

42. The standard funding model had been used for the start-up budgeting of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and MINUSMA. The model was merely an approach to developing budgets and in no way limited the oversight bodies' authority in budget review and approval. In line with the observations of the Board of Auditors, the General Assembly was requested to endorse the refinements to the standard funding model for its use in future mission start-ups.

43. The Secretary-General proposed to expand shared services, which generated significant efficiencies and economies of scale, to all field missions supported by the Department, in order to reduce support costs and improve service consistency, quality and control, and sought the endorsement of that approach by the General Assembly. As the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe matured, the Secretariat proposed to develop a stand-alone budget rather than continue its reliance on funding from individual mission budgets. A separate budget would improve transparency, accountability and oversight, and increase efficiency in budget formulation and execution.

44. Pursuant to requests by the General Assembly, the Secretariat proposed to service the remaining field missions through an additional administrative transactional service centre, which would help deliver the above-mentioned benefits while providing a business continuity solution, given that the centralization of services in a single location generated operational risks. Should the General Assembly endorse that approach, the centre's location could be determined either by building on an already approved field support presence, thereby making use of existing infrastructure and expediting the expansion of shared services, or by conducting a wider analysis of alternative locations.

45. The Department was committed to a well-aligned approach to the delivery of shared services across the Secretariat. Accordingly, it had worked closely with the Department of Management to ensure that its pioneering work and the development of a global service delivery model were coordinated.

46. The global field support strategy reflected the Department's goals of rapidity, effectiveness, and efficiency. Although it had not been easy to mobilize such a large number of people behind a shared vision of the future, particularly given the diverse operating environments that characterized United Nations peacekeeping, many of the aims of the strategy, which had unified the mission support community behind such a vision, had been achieved. He paid tribute to the guidance and support of Member States throughout the strategy's implementation.

47. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/751/Rev.1), he said that peacekeeping missions must have adequate resources. The funding of missions on the basis of partial-year time frames limited the Secretariat's ability to plan ahead and make efficiencies. The Secretariat remained committed to the preparation of credible budgets that reflected fiscal prudence. He welcomed trust-based dialogue with Member States that took into account the need for flexibility in unstable and volatile operating environments.

48. Partnership with troop- and police-contributing countries was the lifeblood of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and the framework for the reimbursement of such countries was of vital importance. Significant changes had occurred in recent years, not only in rates of reimbursement but also in the mechanisms that linked reimbursement to operational risk and the rapid deployment of personnel and equipment. Such changes had resulted in the provision of essential tools to the Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

49. The Secretariat assigned high priority to conduct and discipline, particularly in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse, which it and the Member States were responsible for eliminating. In 2014 there had

been 51 allegations of abuse in peacekeeping operations and special political missions supported by the Department of Field Support; while it was the lowest figure since special measures for protection from such abuse had been put in place it remained unacceptable. The Secretary-General's report on such measures (A/69/779) contained proposals for reducing that number, including stronger vetting mechanisms.

50. He paid tribute to those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of international peace and security. The imminent conclusion of the global field support strategy represented the end of one chapter in the Department's efforts to support staff in the field, but the need to enhance the rapidity, efficiency and effectiveness of such support while working within the applicable rules and regulations remained.

51. The premise of the Department's discussions with the Committee was meeting the needs of field staff, whose lives were at greater risk than ever before. The Secretariat and Member States needed to balance the financial, administrative, operational and strategic risks of peacekeeping in a comprehensive manner.

52. **Ms. Wainaina** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management), introducing the Secretary-General's report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779), said that, in response to the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/306, the report provided information regarding new allegations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse received for the period from January to December 2014. The number of such allegations for the United Nations system totalled 79, compared with 96 in 2013. Although the number of allegations had decreased, even one was too many and could damage victims, their communities and the Organization's reputation and ability to deliver its mandate. The United Nations response to such exploitation and abuse must be improved.

53. In 2012, the Secretary-General had introduced an enhanced programme of action to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, as part of which, in 2013, an independent team of experts had visited the four peacekeeping missions with the highest incidences of abuse to identify contributing factors. In 2014, an interdepartmental and inter-agency working group had considered the team's recommendations, taking into account experience and lessons learned over the years.

The working group's recommendations, related to prevention, enforcement and remedial action, had been discussed at a high-level meeting of senior leaders, chaired by the Secretary-General, in January 2015. The proposals emanating from that meeting were summarized in the Secretary-General's report.

54. In terms of prevention, activities were planned to improve community outreach, training and vetting. The Department of Field Support was developing an e-learning programme on sexual exploitation and abuse. The programme would initially be mandatory for field personnel and ultimately for all Secretariat personnel. To ensure that former United Nations personnel found to have engaged in such exploitation or abuse did not re-enter the Organization, the Secretary-General was seeking to remove obstacles to the exchange of information among United Nations system organizations regarding personnel who had been repatriated or whose service had been terminated for misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, and staff who had resigned while disciplinary proceedings for alleged misconduct had been pending.

55. Efforts to enforce the prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse would focus on improving community-based complaint reception mechanisms to provide confidential and effective means of reporting allegations; establishing an immediate response team for deployment upon receipt of an allegation, to undertake initial evidence-gathering and preservation pending the dispatch of investigators; setting a six-month deadline for the conclusion of investigations; and strengthening managerial, leadership and individual accountability.

56. To strengthen accountability of uniformed personnel, the Secretary-General would withhold service medals from uniformed units while alleged misconduct was under investigation; consider the repatriation of an entire contingent or formed police unit in cases of widespread violations by several of its members; and refuse to pay the exceptional premium to individual contingent and police personnel under investigation for sexual exploitation and abuse. In terms of financial accountability of civilian staff, the sanction for a substantiated case of abuse could be dismissal and a fine. Following consultations, including with staff representatives, the Secretary-General intended to specify in the Staff Rules that staff members dismissed because of a substantiated case of sexual exploitation and abuse would not be paid the

balance corresponding to untaken annual leave, and to suspend payments to troop- or police-contributing countries in connection with an individual suspected of sexual exploitation and abuse on the basis of credible evidence. The suspended payments would be returned to the Member State if, after an investigation, the allegations were not substantiated.

57. Regarding remedial action in response to sexual exploitation and abuse, the Secretary-General would revisit the proposal to establish a trust fund to support the provision of services, including psychological assistance, medical care and access to legal help, to victims and to children born as a result of such abuse by United Nations personnel.

58. In addition to the proposed measures emanating from the high-level meeting of senior leaders, the report contained an update on actions taken in 2014 to address sexual exploitation and abuse.

59. The Secretary-General was committed to a policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse. Sustained efforts were needed to prevent such acts by United Nations personnel, which harmed the people the United Nations was meant to protect, tarnished the Organization's reputation and undermined its credibility. When such acts occurred, those responsible must be held accountable and the victims supported. The Secretary-General was committed to taking the action set out in the report to improve protection against exploitation and abuse.

60. **Ms. Lapointe** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), introducing the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on its activities on peace operations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 (A/69/308 (Part II)), said that General Assembly resolution 69/253 allowed OIOS to publish internal audit and evaluation reports on a continuing basis, thereby fostering transparency and accountability by giving Member States and the general public insight into the Secretariat's operations.

61. The report provided an overview of the work of the Office's Internal Audit Division, Investigations Division and Inspection and Evaluation Division. The Office had issued 191 oversight reports related to peace operations in 2014, including 495 recommendations, 46 of which had been classified as critical to the Organization.

62. The Internal Audit Division had made greater use of thematic audits to identify systemic strengths and weaknesses across peace operations. In 2014, audits had been completed of air operations, field central review bodies and the staff selection process in selected field missions, movement control operations, and the administration of entitlements and benefits for uniformed personnel. The approach had highlighted the need for overarching policy reviews, procedural changes and knowledge-sharing across missions.

63. In the Investigations Division, apart from the issuance of 115 reports, the focus had been on finalizing the restructuring of the Division, including the staffing of investigator positions at field offices. In addition, significant efforts had been made to develop a training strategy and provide training to investigators and lay panels appointed from outside OIOS to investigate prohibited conduct.

64. The Inspection and Evaluation Division had pursued a work plan modelled on the comprehensive risk-based work plan initiated in 2013. The exercise had identified 53 discrete peacekeeping topics, including cross-cutting themes, for evaluation. The Division's activity had included the report on the evaluation of the implementation and results of protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/787), which had concluded that, while efforts to prevent and mitigate the effects of conflict appeared to be achieving results, peacekeeping operations frequently lacked the capacity and willingness to intervene effectively to protect civilians under attack.

65. Sexual exploitation and abuse continued to mar the reputation of peacekeeping efforts. She was more worried by the magnitude of underreporting than by the level of reported incidents. As long as victims were unable to access community-based complaint mechanisms and assistance, the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy would not be seen as credibly implemented.

66. With regard to staffing, efforts to address vacancy rates throughout OIOS had continued through enhanced recruitment strategies and the increased use of rosters for staff selection. The OIOS vacancy rate at the end of April 2015 had been 15 per cent overall and 20 per cent for peacekeeping. The vacancy rate would continue to improve upon completion of onboarding

procedures for selected candidates, particularly in the Investigations Division.

67. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/69/839), which included observations and recommendations on the report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/69/779), recalled that the General Assembly had decided at its sixty-eighth session to defer consideration of several reports on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations, including the previous report of the Advisory Committee (A/68/782). Accordingly, all observations and recommendations made by the Advisory Committee in that report remained valid and subject to consideration by the General Assembly. The Advisory Committee had therefore decided to focus in its current report on just four themes with respect to the administrative and budgetary management of peacekeeping, where, in its view, there had been significant new developments in the past year.

68. With regard to the form and content of the Secretary-General's annual overview report, the Advisory Committee considered that the report had the potential to play an important role in providing information on the strategic direction of United Nations peacekeeping and on the efficient and effective use of resources; however, recent reports were no longer serving that purpose. The Advisory Committee recommended, therefore, that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit streamlined reports focusing on new developments, policy changes and management challenges facing the different peacekeeping operations, clearly highlighting those that required decisions from the General Assembly.

69. In connection with the first theme addressed in its report — planning, budgeting and financial management of peacekeeping operations — the Advisory Committee commented on the extent of redeployments between expenditure groups and classes in 2013/14, highlighting the risk to effective fiscal discipline and control. The Advisory Committee recommended that, in the light of the recent implementation of Umoja, which would allow for the production of more timely financial information, the Secretary-General should provide it with a written

update on the nature and extent of budgetary redeployments in peacekeeping every six months.

70. The Advisory Committee expressed reservations about the cost-sharing proposals contained in the Secretary-General's overview report with respect to the supply chain management initiative and applications developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology to be deployed in the field. As the costs for the applications related to development, piloting and testing, the Advisory Committee recommended that the costs should be reflected in the resource requirements for the support account, rather than in individual mission budgets. Similarly, given the preliminary nature of the supply chain management initiative and the lack of detail concerning its development, the Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed requirements of \$4 million should be removed from individual mission budget proposals.

71. The Advisory Committee had also examined other general planning and budgetary assumptions, such as the application of vacancy rates, the use of the Standard Cost and Ratio Manual, and the assumptions relating to official travel, with the specific budgetary implications reflected in its reports on individual mission budgets.

72. The second theme discussed in the Advisory Committee's report was management improvements and reported efficiency gains. The Advisory Committee maintained its reservations about the application of the cost per capita for uniformed United Nations personnel as a useful indicator of peacekeeping efficiency, and recalled its view that the presentation of efficiency targets should be improved and quantified wherever possible.

73. Thirdly, with respect to the resources allocated for information and communications technology (ICT), the Advisory Committee expressed concern over the observations made by the Board of Auditors concerning the use of ICT assets and resources in peacekeeping operations. The Board had been particularly critical of budgeting practices, standard-setting for different ICT products and services, staffing requirements, and deficiencies in the security of ICT resources and data. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit a detailed plan of action for implementation of the recommendations

of the Board of Auditors. It also stressed the importance of receiving a comprehensive picture of all resource requirements for ICT activities in peacekeeping, together with greater transparency with regard to ICT services provided regionally or by the United Nations Logistics Base, as well as transparent accounting of and reporting on costs.

74. The fourth theme examined in the report was air operations. The findings of the Board of Auditors in its recent audit of peacekeeping operations, together with the Advisory Committee's own observations, would provide the Organization with an important opportunity to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of air operations. Further analysis should be conducted of rates of utilization of air assets in missions to determine the optimum size and composition of the overall fleet. Full implementation of the air transportation information management system over 2015/16 should improve air operations management.

75. Turning to the special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, he reiterated that one substantiated case was one case too many. While noting that the number of allegations received in 2014 in respect of peacekeeping and special political missions was the lowest recorded since special measures had first been put in place in 2003, the Advisory Committee remained concerned about the persistence of cases relating to the most egregious forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and the high proportion of allegations relating to a few peacekeeping missions.

76. The Advisory Committee acknowledged that the measures taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen the Organization's response to sexual abuse demonstrated greater resolve. The next report of the Secretary-General should contain information on the implementation of the measures, particularly those requiring action on the part of the General Assembly. Sustained, proactive and visible involvement by senior managers at Headquarters and in the field was required, so that the zero-tolerance policy was properly monitored and reinforced.

77. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the fifth annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy (A/69/874), he said that the Advisory Committee had made observations and recommendations on a large number of issues, both of a general nature and on the

individual pillars of the strategy, given that it was the final progress report. Over the five-year implementation period of the global field support strategy, the Secretariat had been engaged in the concurrent implementation of a number of major interrelated and mutually supportive business transformation and change management initiatives, such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), Umoja and a series of human resources management reforms. More recent or upcoming proposals relating to support and service delivery included the adoption of an ICT strategy for the United Nations and proposals for a global service delivery model. As most of the ongoing reform initiatives were applicable Secretariat-wide, the Advisory Committee stressed the need for a holistic approach and close coordination to ensure that they were implemented in a manner that reinforced and multiplied their respective benefits, and avoided any duplication, wasteful use of resources or fragmentation of capacities.

78. Regarding individual pillars of the global field support strategy, the Advisory Committee was of the view that the standardized funding model, applied in UNMISS and MINUSMA, in both instances lacked sufficient flexibility to adapt to the particular circumstances of a start-up mission or take into account known requirements at the time of the preparation of the budget proposals. The key objectives of the standardized funding model — the submission of a budget within 30 to 90 days of start-up and a reduction in the number of requests for interim financing arrangements — had not been achieved in either case.

79. The standardized funding model had not been applied to the start-up of MINUSCA. The Advisory Committee had been informed that resource requirements had been estimated on the basis of deployment schedules for personnel and aircraft and that underlying costs and unit prices had been based on expenditure and deployment patterns of recent start-up missions, similar to those applied under the standardized funding model. Such an approach, which had allowed the timely submission of a start-up budget for MINUSCA and had been applied within the existing budget process by which peacekeeping budgets were formulated, considered and approved, could constitute a more flexible and adaptable solution than the standardized funding model. While efforts to

analyse and standardize cost parameters should continue, the Advisory Committee was of the view that there was no need for further development of the standardized funding model.

80. Experience to date of the provision of shared services had been positive and the Advisory Committee favoured its application to other field missions. In that connection, the Advisory Committee emphasized the need to ensure that the lessons learned during the implementation of the global field support strategy were embedded in proposals for a new global service delivery model. It was also important to establish clear criteria for determining the optimum location from which to provide support services, and an effective methodology for assessing the advantages and disadvantages of relocating such functions to shared service centres, including a cost-benefit analysis.

81. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the Secretary-General would seek General Assembly guidance on the proposed options for a second service centre. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to present, in his forthcoming report on the global service delivery model, a comprehensive view of overall service delivery requirements, including in peacekeeping. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to build on experience thus far in the provision of shared services.

82. While recognizing that the Secretary-General's proposal to present a separate budget and establish a separate account for the financing of the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, Uganda, could improve oversight of the Centre's resources, the Advisory Committee was of the view that the proposal needed further refinement, in particular the development of detailed proposals for a scalability model. Pending submission of a proposal for a scalability model, the Advisory Committee recommended against the establishment of a special account for the financing of the Regional Service Centre.

83. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the budget performance for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy (A/69/839/Add.9), he said that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would entail a reduction of

\$3,285,558 in the proposed budget for 2015/16. The Advisory Committee recommended against the approval of two of the four additional national General Service positions proposed for the Reference Verification Unit, and of two of the six positions proposed for the Geospatial Information Services Centre. The Advisory Committee also recommended a number of reductions under operational costs.

84. **Ms. Lingenfelder** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, paid tribute to the men and women who served in peacekeeping missions with such a high level of commitment, professionalism and courage, especially those who had lost their lives in the service of humanity, including the two Tanzanian peacekeepers who had died in an incident in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 5 May 2015.

85. When considering cross-cutting issues, the Committee must take into account the comprehensive assessment of United Nations peacekeeping operations currently being undertaken by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, which would consider, inter alia, the managerial, administrative and financial challenges facing missions. A practical approach should be adopted in addressing those challenges, bearing in mind that a more comprehensive analysis might be necessary when the Panel's report was presented to the General Assembly at its seventieth session. Meanwhile, the Group would seek clarification of the work of the High-level Panel in order to ascertain how its findings would relate to other peacekeeping initiatives. The Secretary-General's proposal for a global service delivery model and a detailed report on the implementation of the recently adopted ICT strategy would also be before the General Assembly at its seventieth session. Discussions at the second part of the resumed sixty-ninth session should therefore focus on issues where no major changes were foreseen for 2016, in order to allow the Committee to focus on other aspects of cross-cutting issues and adopt a draft resolution.

86. The Group would focus on ensuring that the necessary resources were allocated to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers in increasingly challenging security environments, where they faced asymmetric threats, and would ask what steps had been taken to implement Security Council resolution 2086 (2013). It would also focus on ensuring that budget preparation and approval were based on mission mandates and the real situation on the ground, rather

than arbitrary, across-the-board cuts, and on ensuring transparency and consistency in budget preparation, particularly with regard to the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and related budgetary arrangements.

87. Other important areas included the implementation of the global field support strategy and post-strategy plans, as well as other major business transformation projects related to peacekeeping operations, notably IPSAS and Umoja, and the proposal to amend the financing arrangements for the Regional Service Centre; the financial and budgetary implementation of inter-mission cooperation and related mechanisms, in order to ensure they did not violate rules approved by the General Assembly, specifically the prohibition of cross-borrowing between active missions; and the unresolved systemic difficulties faced by troop- and police-contributing countries, including underrepresentation in the Secretariat and mission civilian components, and matters related to timely settlement of death and disability compensation claims as well as of dues owed to troop-contributing countries for contingent-owned equipment.

88. Budget preparation and approval must be guided by the principle that each peacekeeping mission had its own mandate and functions, and faced its own challenges in a unique environment. The Group remained deeply concerned about a growing trend towards arbitrary budget reductions, shaped by financial imperatives, the need for additional resources in other peacekeeping missions, or an arbitrary overall target for peacekeeping expenditures, in blatant disregard of the specific needs of missions. It was also a great concern that so-called efficiency measures were sometimes pursued at the expense of operational capacities and the safety and security of peacekeepers.

89. While the Group recognized the political and security difficulties faced in responding to crisis in a timely manner and welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard, new challenges should not be used as justification for breaching decisions of the General Assembly and budgetary principles and procedures.

90. The Group concurred with the Advisory Committee that the recent reports of the Secretary-General on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations lacked focus and precision. It was not clear from the reports when

specific action or guidance was being requested from Member States. The matter should be addressed in the next overview report.

91. The Group recognized the benefits arising in some circumstances from inter-mission cooperation, but recalled, in accordance with the Assembly's prohibition of cross-borrowing between active missions, that such cooperation could not take place to the detriment of the independence of mission budgets and transparency in the budget process.

92. Troop-contributing countries made an invaluable contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security while making great sacrifices in harsh, complex and dangerous circumstances. The Secretary-General should consult closely with troop-contributing countries on all matters related to peacekeeping operations. The Group found it difficult to understand the continued lack of improvement in the representation of troop- and police-contributing countries in the Secretariat, particularly at the senior level, despite repeated calls by the General Assembly for the Secretary-General to ensure their adequate representation in all relevant departments, particularly in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and in the Department of Field Support, in line with their contributions to peacekeeping. The Group wished to hear about steps taken in that regard.

93. The Group expressed regret that the Office of Internal Oversight Services was conducting evaluations beyond its mandate and would continue to request that its report on the evaluation of the implementation and results of protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/787) should be disregarded.

94. The Group of 77 and China attached great importance to both the military and civilian mandates of peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping mandates had become more complex, wide-ranging and multidimensional in recent years, with objectives that went well beyond peacekeeping. It was long past the time when the benefits of multidimensional peacekeeping mandates were questioned. It would be a terrible setback if the pressure to reduce costs in a context of new and emerging challenges to international peace and security resulted in a return to the prevalence of military solutions that disregarded the need for parallel and effective peacebuilding.

95. The Group welcomed the interaction of peacekeeping missions with the Peacebuilding Commission and called for the relationship to be strengthened. Compromising the ability of missions to perform the substantive civilian activities foreseen in mandates undermined exit strategies and was a recipe for prolonged military presence. Noting that peacekeeping missions that had undergone a civilian staffing review had already had their civilian component significantly reduced, she cautioned against interpreting the staffing review mandate as a means to cut costs further.

96. The Group was dismayed that, in spite of the critical role played by quick-impact projects in strengthening the link between missions and local populations and in accomplishing mission objectives, the Committee could not avoid petty discussions over small provisions for such activities. Reducing resources for quick-impact projects was not an efficiency saving, but, rather, an arbitrary cut that jeopardized mandate implementation and the safety of United Nations personnel. The Group reaffirmed the critical role played by quick-impact projects and stressed the need to ensure that funds for their implementation were readily available during all phases of missions.

97. Lastly, the Group was concerned by recent media reports about the sexual abuse of children by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic and concurred with the Advisory Committee regarding the special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. While noting that the number of allegations received in 2014 in respect of peacekeeping and special political missions was the lowest recorded since special measures had been introduced, the Group stressed that one substantiated case of sexual abuse was one too many. Efforts to reduce the number of cases, particularly involving the most egregious forms of sexual abuse, and the length of time taken to investigate allegations, must continue in order to fully implement the zero-tolerance policy.

98. Turning to the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, she said that the Group attached great importance to the effective and efficient operation of the Logistics Base in supporting missions, and wished its functioning to be improved.

99. The Group noted that of the \$68.5 million budget for 2013/14, expenditure had been in the amount of \$68.49 million, reflecting full implementation. The Group also noted the projected expenditure for 2014/15 and would seek more detailed information on the variances under different categories. Similarly, the Group noted the proposed budget for 2015/16 in the amount of \$71.7 million and the information concerning the reorganization of the Base, as well as the related comments and observations of the Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee, including those on the implementation of the global field support strategy. The Group would examine the Secretary-General's proposals carefully, in particular those concerning ICT services, human resources and the United Nations Support Base in Valencia, Spain.

100. **Mr. Presutti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine, said that the member States of the European Union were strong supporters of peacekeeping — a core task of the Organization and the United Nations flagship activity — and were committed to ensuring that United Nations peacekeeping was as effective as possible in the interest of maintaining peace and security. The European Union member States were active participants in United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations, contributing troops, civilian police, other personnel and financing.

101. The Secretary-General's overview report provided a valuable basis for addressing the evolving challenges of peacekeeping. As the Committee had been unable to reach a consensus on a resolution on cross-cutting issues for the past two years, delegations should build on the positive momentum and work cooperatively to achieve a more fruitful outcome at the current session. His delegation was open to pragmatic approaches, such as focusing on areas where the Committee could agree, rather than on those where experience suggested it could not.

102. The Secretary-General's proposed budget of \$8.49 billion was another historical high. As a result, strict budgetary discipline was necessary to ensure that resources were really needed and were used as effectively and efficiently as possible. His delegation would scrutinize the budgets of all peacekeeping

missions and support functions, guided by the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors. Serious consideration would also be given to the valued recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

103. The Committee's assessment of peacekeeping needs presupposed an understanding of military, police and civilian personnel requirements in missions and the impact on the proposed budget. Closer scrutiny of the civilian component of peacekeeping was essential; his delegation looked forward to hearing more on the results of the ongoing review of civilian staffing.

104. It was also necessary to scrutinize the proposed levels of operational costs. There was room for improvement, in particular, in air transportation, training and travel costs, fuel, consultants, construction planning, rations delivery and asset management. His delegation was ready to examine the implications of exchange rate variations on mission budgets. It also saw value in updating the Standard Cost and Ratio Manual for equipment to reflect developments in technology and the life cycle of the mission and to ensure the safety and security of personnel; setting up multi-year plans, especially for construction; and extending the mandate of the Office for the Strategic Peacekeeping Partnership. He looked forward to hearing about the implementation of Umoja in missions and its impact on working procedures and overall performance.

105. He welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat to identify sustainable efficiency measures, which should be distinct from reductions resulting from mandate changes, and looked forward to more consistent efforts across missions and more targeted direction from Headquarters. Effective budgetary procedures were crucial for sustainable, predictable and affordable budgeting. Unfortunately, current budgetary practices failed to reflect in a timely manner Security Council decisions to reduce the authorized strength of uniformed mission personnel.

106. The European Union reiterated its full support for the global field support strategy. As the strategy neared the end of its fifth year, it was important to take stock of the progress made and to look into mainstreaming and consolidating its components. In that connection, while the progress made with regard to operations at the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe was welcome,

its performance should be improved further. His delegation saw value in the business model of a shared service delivery centre providing support capacity for missions based on a common governance model.

107. The European Union shared the view that one substantiated case of sexual abuse was one case too many. The number of allegations reported remained cause for concern, and he looked forward to hearing more on the investigation of allegations and on action to improve prevention.

108. **Mr. Ono** (Japan) expressed his Government's appreciation of all peacekeepers serving in the field and extended his condolences to the families of the two Tanzanian peacekeepers killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since Japan was both a major financial contributor and a troop-contributing country, his delegation paid careful attention to the conditions under which peacekeepers operated.

109. His delegation had been disappointed by the absence of a resolution on cross-cutting issues in the past two years. Member States should work towards adopting a resolution by consensus at the current part of the resumed session. Some of the ideas for improving the Committee's working methods could be used to reach consensus in a timely manner, including discussions on principles instead of hundreds of paragraphs that had little prospect of being adopted, and negotiations on more focused areas with streamlined texts.

110. With regard to the Secretary-General's overview report, the Committee should take a practical approach by prioritizing the issues and focusing on the new recommendations by the Advisory Committee, rather than repeating the same philosophical debate of previous years.

111. Budget levels should neither exceed nor fall short of the requirements for each mission's mandate. Levels of civilian staff requirements and operational costs should be examined in the light of the observations and recommendations made in the overview report and by the Advisory Committee. With regard to civilian personnel requirements, which constituted approximately 24 per cent of the peacekeeping budget proposal, his delegation appreciated the developments in the comprehensive civilian staffing review, conducted in accordance with resolution 66/264, in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Interim

Security Force for Abyei, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and at the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe. To ensure the right-sizing of missions, the Secretariat should address the findings of the review, as identified in the overview report, including the need for regular reviews of staffing requirements and the nationalization of staff.

112. Operational costs constituted approximately 34 per cent of the proposed peacekeeping budget. His delegation followed closely the various management reform initiatives, such as Umoja, IPSAS, supply chain management, new rations standards and the electronic fuel management system, which were either on track to be or had now been fully implemented. The Standard Cost and Ratio Manual should be used effectively in order to avoid overbudgeting for operational costs.

113. With regard to fiscal discipline, he expressed concern that redeployments between expenditure groups and classes were carried out as a matter of routine without evaluation, and concurred with the recommendations on redeployments made by the Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat should produce more accurate budget projections with budget ceilings for each expenditure group and class. He concurred with the Advisory Committee that the most recent exchange rates should be applied to peacekeeping budget proposals in order to avoid overbudgeting. The proposed peacekeeping budget should be adjusted accordingly and the revised figures communicated to the Committee.

114. As the five-year implementation phase of the global field support strategy neared completion, the initiative should be mainstreamed. The reported tangible savings of nearly \$425 million generated over the last four budget cycles should be examined in detail and the Secretary-General should provide the Committee with a comprehensive assessment report on the progress made towards the end-state achievements under each pillar.

115. His delegation had many questions regarding the proposals for a second shared services centre and a separate budget for the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe. The proposals should be examined in the light of the lessons learned from the implementation of the global field support strategy and assessment of the current functioning of the Regional Service Centre.

116. Sexual exploitation and abuse could not be tolerated; one substantiated case was one case too many. His delegation had undertaken various initiatives in collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and would continue to contribute to implementation of zero tolerance.

117. **Mr. Castro Córdoba** (Costa Rica) noted that there had been a slight decrease in the number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2014. However, it was alarming that many of the cases involved the most egregious forms of sexual abuse and were concentrated in the same four missions as in previous years. The extent of sexual violence in armed conflicts was deplorable. There were numerous examples throughout history of religion being used to justify political and economic wars, but the restrictions on the human rights of women and girls imposed by extremist groups, and the fact that limiting their rights had become a fundamental aspect of conflicts and had led to terrorist acts being committed specifically against women, were particularly worrying. Despite the United Nations best efforts, such crimes were unlikely to be eradicated in the near future.

118. He welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts and proposals to strengthen mechanisms for the prevention of sexual abuse, to enforce the prohibition in the Staff Rules of such abuse, to improve accountability and provide a more effective response, and to take remedial action and implement the zero-tolerance policy. Such abominable acts violated the right of local populations to protection; it was the responsibility of all stakeholders — the Organization and contributor States — to make greater efforts to eradicate cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions and to punish perpetrators.

119. In its routine operations, including peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the United Nations had an obligation to respect individual human rights and a duty to fully investigate perpetrators, including those in the chain of command, and to put an end to impunity.

120. Peacekeeping operations must have the necessary financial and human resources to protect women and children. Both the Organization and Member States should enhance the capacity to take preventive action by expediting investigations, taking disciplinary measures and providing assistance to victims at the

level of the offices involved. In most cases, the United Nations was the last glimmer of hope for communities and victims, and the Organization must not fail them. Allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse damaged the credibility of the Organization's peacekeeping missions, impeded the implementation of mission mandates, and undermined the perception of impartiality.

121. **Mr. Guo Xuejun** (China) said that he hoped that the current meeting would lead to consensus on cross-cutting issues. The discussions in the Committee should take into account the strategic review of all aspects of peacekeeping operations, including cross-cutting issues, being undertaken by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.

122. The increase in financial resources for peacekeeping operations should be accompanied by improved efficiency in their use. While his delegation would support any budget necessary to implement peacekeeping mandates and was against any unjustified cuts in mission budgets, it was concerned that the peacekeeping budget had reached a new historical high. The Secretariat should improve its budget and asset management and budget performance so as to ensure that the money provided by Member States was put to better use.

123. Member States that provided troops, formed police units and contingent-owned equipment to peacekeeping operations should be reimbursed expeditiously and in full. A number of peacekeeping operations had cash balances, yet the amounts owed to troop- and police-contributing countries had increased considerably in 2014 from 2013. Payment arrears cast the Organization in a bad light, were unfair to peacekeepers, who risked their lives on the ground in very difficult conditions, and undermined the long-term development of peacekeeping operations.

124. As the implementation phase of the global field support strategy was coming to an end, thorough consideration should be given to logistical and back-office support for peacekeeping operations. The Secretariat should carry out a general assessment of the effectiveness of the strategy, particularly with regard to the deployment of peacekeeping operations, security and compensation payments, in order to draw lessons and inform logistical and backstopping efforts in the future. Lastly, he paid tribute to all the personnel who had made major contributions to peacekeeping

operations, including the two MONUSCO peacekeepers who had died and the 13 injured on 5 May 2015. He extended his condolences to the families of those soldiers and to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.

125. **Mr. Ko Jae Sin** (Republic of Korea) said that his Government was a strong supporter of United Nations peacekeeping operations, providing troops as well as funding, and was committed to ensuring that those operations carried out their mandates as effectively and efficiently as possible. The overall level of the peacekeeping budget had increased significantly over recent years, reaching a new high of \$8.49 billion for 2015/16, and his delegation had doubts about the sustainability of the peacekeeping budget given the current climate of fiscal restraint and ongoing economic difficulties faced by many major financial contributors. Consideration should be given to creative and pragmatic proposals that enhanced the efficiency of peacekeeping operations without a negative impact on the implementation of their mandates.

126. The global field support strategy would be fully implemented by the end of June 2015, with tangible efficiency gains of more than \$400 million. The Secretary-General should accelerate efforts to improve efficiency using established mechanisms, such as standard financing models, shared service delivery and supply chain management. However, the Committee should examine the lessons learned from the global field support strategy project and evaluate the performance of the Regional Service Centre before considering the next step, including the establishment of a second regional service centre. He noted that many innovative management initiatives, such as aviation modules, new turnkey rations and fuel contracts, had been introduced and hoped that the Secretariat would sustain such operational innovation.

127. His delegation was concerned about the incremental approach to budgeting. The periodical review of civilian staffing requirements and mission activities was important: the results of such reviews should help to streamline resources. The impact of economic indicators such as oil prices and currency exchange rates must also be taken into account. Lastly, he hoped that the Committee would work together to adopt an effective resolution on cross-cutting issues given that it had failed to do so for the past two years.

128. **Mr. Conroy** (United States of America) paid tribute to those peacekeepers who had given their lives.

129. Peacekeeping had witnessed significant reforms over the past decade and the Committee must continue to build on that progress and strengthen capacities to deliver mandates. To that end, his delegation looked forward to working closely and constructively with all delegations on cross-cutting issues to arrive at a positive outcome.

130. As the global field support strategy was mainstreamed into the work of the Secretariat, his delegation would continue to support the initiatives undertaken as part of the strategy, including under the four pillars of financial framework and strategic resourcing, human resources, shared services, and supply chain and modularization. Benefits had already been achieved in the areas of expedited and streamlined service delivery to field operations, strengthened resource stewardship and accountability, staff safety and quality of life improvements, and reduction in environmental impact.

131. Peacekeepers often operated in remote and difficult conditions with limited infrastructure. Field support must therefore be characterized by efficient and effective solutions that took those conditions into account. Drawing on the lessons learned in connection with the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe and the other shared services initiatives that supported peacekeepers, his delegation would carefully review the Secretary-General's proposal for a second shared service centre to ensure that peacekeeping needs were best met.

132. Although there had been a reduction in the number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse over the past year, that promising development did not reflect the full story. His delegation shared the concerns raised by the Office of Internal Oversight Services regarding the underreporting of incidents. While Member States and the Secretariat had taken steps to strengthen the Organization's response to sexual exploitation and abuse in the areas of prevention, enforcement and remedial action, all stakeholders should do more, including through enhancing Member State accountability.

133. His delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee that the annual overview report should provide information on the strategic direction of United Nations peacekeeping and on the efficient and

effective use of resources. A streamlined overview report focusing on new developments, policy changes and management challenges would help to shape the Committee's discussions. Lastly, he recognized the Secretary-General's achievements to date in reforming management practices in United Nations peacekeeping.

134. **Mr. Sánchez Azcué** (Cuba) noted that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, and in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter, the Office of Internal Oversight Services was authorized to perform monitoring, internal audit, inspection and evaluation, and investigation, but that its inspection and evaluation function related only to the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization.

135. Accordingly, his delegation wondered what the reasons were for the preparation by OIOS of a second report on the contentious matter of the protection of civilians mandates (A/68/787). The resources might have been better spent on efforts to fill the Office's many remaining vacancies and to investigate pending cases. Notwithstanding the nobility of the call for greater protection for civilians, the report contained controversial and questionable value judgements and recommendations.

136. The Fifth Committee must respect the mandates and prerogatives of other United Nations bodies, and not involve itself in a political issue that was properly the domain of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

137. His delegation harboured serious reservations about the focus of the OIOS report and its recommendations, and shared some of the views expressed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in annex I to the report.

138. However, his delegation's primary concern was that the report represented an attempt to steer peacekeeping towards a "responsibility to protect". It should be understood that any such approach would be rejected by his delegation.

139. There was no agreed definition by the General Assembly of the concept of the responsibility to protect, let alone its possible scope and other fundamental issues that would need to be defined. It should be borne in mind that primary responsibility for

the protection of civilian populations lay with national authorities.

140. The concept of responsibility to protect compromised the neutrality of the United Nations, and, indeed, the safeguarding of the civilian population. Application of the concept in the context of peacekeeping operations would blur the line clearly separating a peacekeeping operation from military intervention.

141. The fundamental principles underlying peacekeeping operations must not be discarded. Peacekeeping operations were impartial, must be conducted with the consent of the host country, and could not resort to the use of force other than in self-defence.

Agenda item 149: Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (A/69/611, A/69/611/Corr.1, A/69/740 and A/69/839/Add.16)

Agenda item 152: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (*continued*) (A/69/621, A/69/743, A/69/743/Corr.1 and A/69/839/Add.13)

Agenda item 153: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (A/69/587, A/69/741, A/69/839/Add.7 and A/69/839/Add.7/Corr.1)

Agenda item 167: Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 1863 (2009) (A/69/592, A/69/728 and A/69/839/Add.14)

142. **Mr. Guazo** (Director, Accounts Division), introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/611 and A/69/611/Corr.1) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/740) for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, said that the proposed budget amounted to \$279.9 million, a decrease of 12.2 per cent compared with 2014/15. The reduced requirements were primarily attributable to delayed deployment of military observers and contingent personnel in 2015/16. The requirements identified for operational expenditure anticipated the completion of all major activities relating to camp establishment and asset acquisition during 2014/15. Civilian personnel requirements in 2015/16 took into account a reduction in national posts and volunteer positions and an increase in international posts.

143. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/621) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/743 and A/69/743/Corr.1) for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, he said that the proposed budget amounted to \$418.2 million, representing a decrease of 15.3 per cent compared with the 2014/15 budget. Reduced requirements were primarily attributable to the reduction in military contingents and United Nations police officers. The reduction of \$14.9 million for civilian personnel was mainly the result of a net reduction of 53 international posts, 83 national posts and 24 United Nations Volunteer positions. Operational costs were reduced by \$19.8 million, mainly as a result of the decrease in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and the reduction in the composition of the air fleet.

144. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/587) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/741) for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), he said that the proposed budget amounted to \$54.4 million and represented an overall decrease of 6.3 per cent compared with the 2014/15 budget. The variance was attributable mainly to a change in the post adjustment multiplier and the nationalization of four Field Service posts.

145. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/69/592) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/69/728) for the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia, he said that the Advisory Committee had approved a commitment authority of \$8 million on 1 May 2014 for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. The Mission had spent \$1.1 million under the commitment authority and that amount was now requested for appropriation and assessment. The proposed budget amounted to \$525.4 million, representing an increase of 7.2 per cent compared with the 2014/15 budget. The increased requirements were mainly as a result of an increase in the number of locations in which UNSOA provided support to the African Union Mission in Somalia, increased requirements for contingent-owned equipment and major equipment, and the proposed deployment of two additional aircraft to be shared with the United Nations

Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

146. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) drew attention to the observations and recommendations made in the Advisory Committee's reports that would have an impact on the budget proposals of the missions before the Fifth Committee, concerning the cost apportionment of the applications developed by the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the supply chain management initiative and the vacancy rates applied in connection with posts at the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe, in line with the report of the Advisory Committee on the global field support strategy (A/69/874). The Advisory Committee had also identified a number of issues related to trips planned for 2015/16, such as multiple trips to the same or nearby destinations and the need for more frequent use of video- and teleconferencing. The Advisory Committee was of the view that travel requirements should be consolidated, the number of travellers should be minimized and alternative means of communication should be used. It therefore recommended reductions in the proposed resources for official travel for the missions.

147. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNISFA (A/69/869/Add.16), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of \$1,544,200 in the proposed budget for 2015/16.

148. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNOCI (A/69/869/Add.13), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of \$5,484,600 in the proposed budget for 2015/16.

149. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNFICYP (A/69/869/Add.7 and A/69/869/Add.7/Corr.1), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of \$156,600 in the proposed budget for 2015/16. The Advisory Committee had taken note of the findings of the cost-benefit analysis comparing the cost of leasing and purchasing vehicles and had made recommendations in that regard.

150. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on UNSOA (A/69/869/Add.14), he said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a

reduction of \$8,036,300 in the proposed budget for 2015/16.

151. With regard to the cost-sharing arrangements under air transportation among UNSOA, UNSOM and MINUSCA, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide more detailed information in the budget proposals for 2016/17.

152. **Mr. Bame** (Ethiopia) said that since the deployment of UNISFA to the Abyei area, the mission had facilitated the safe return of internally displaced persons and refugees, ensured the protection of civilians and supported the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. In 2013/14, UNISFA had maintained a stable security situation by facilitating the return of displaced persons, disarming individuals, and encouraging armed groups to withdraw from the area. Pending the establishment of temporary institutions in Abyei, UNISFA had sought to stabilize security and safeguard civilians through its multifaceted conflict prevention and mitigation strategy. As a result there had not been any large scale outbreaks of intercommunal violence, despite the continuing tensions between communities.

153. UNISFA had incurred \$255.4 million in expenditure in 2013/14, representing a resource utilization rate of 77.6 per cent, compared with a resource utilization rate of 99.97 per cent in 2012/13. Efforts should be made to improve the rate. The Secretary-General had proposed a budget for UNISFA for 2015/16 in the amount of \$279,920,400, a decrease of 12.2 per cent compared with 2014/15. According to the Secretary-General, fewer resources would be needed for construction and the acquisition of facilities and equipment. However, the proposals had not given full consideration to the problems the mission faced. Despite repeated requests by the General Assembly that all construction projects should be completed in a timely manner, little progress had been made. The 48.3 per cent reduction in the budget for facilities and infrastructure would endanger the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel.

154. His delegation found it difficult to accept the Secretary-General's assumption that there would be less demand for the alteration, renovation and acquisition of prefabricated facilities in 2015/16 or that construction projects relating to camp establishment and expansion would be completed by the end of June

2015, as being inconsistent with the mission's past performance — for the past three years, the Secretary-General's performance reports had clearly shown that hardly any of the basic facilities had been completed on schedule. It was unwise to deduct resources, especially in the area of facilities and construction, when UNISFA had been facing serious logistical and other challenges since its inception and had a low rate of implementation of construction projects. The proposals should therefore be re-examined taking into consideration the objective reality in the area of operation.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.