



General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 December 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session

Agenda items 134 and 92

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

**Developments in the field of information and
telecommunications in the context of international security**

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

Programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.1/70/L.45](#)

Twenty-seventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General ([A/C.5/70/10](#)) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.1/70/L.45](#) on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security. During its consideration of the statement, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 2 December 2015.

2. It is indicated in paragraph 2 of the statement that, under the terms of operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution [A/C.1/70/L.45](#), the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General, taking into account the assessments and recommendations contained in the 2015 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, to continue to study, with a view to promoting common understandings, existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, and how international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States, and to submit a report on the results of the study to the Assembly at its seventy-second session. The Secretary-General would undertake this work with the



assistance of a group of governmental experts, to be established in 2016 on the basis of equitable geographical distribution.

II. Activities through which the proposed requests would be implemented and related financial implications

3. The activities through which the requests would be implemented are described in paragraphs 4 to 8 of the statement. Paragraphs 10 to 12 of the statement contain information on the estimated resource requirements. The Secretary-General estimates that the cost of implementing the above request would amount to \$1,329,500, comprising \$565,500 for conference-servicing requirements under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017; and \$764,000 for non-conference-servicing requirements under section 4, Disarmament, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

4. The Advisory Committee was provided, upon request, with a breakdown of the estimated costs in the amount of \$565,500 for conference-servicing requirements, which indicated that \$111,400 had been estimated to cover servicing in the six official languages for each of the two 10-meeting sessions (first and fourth) in New York; and \$84,000 to cover servicing in the six official languages for each of the two 10-meeting sessions (second and third) in Geneva. It was also indicated that all session documents would be prepared in the six official languages in New York, with one 3,000-word pre-session document at an estimated cost of \$18,000 and four post-session documents, one for each session, estimated at \$29,000, \$35,300, \$41,500 and \$50,900 respectively, averaging \$5.91 per word.¹ With regard to the non-conference-servicing requirements, which entail consultants and the travel of the Group of Governmental Experts, the Committee was provided with information regarding the basis upon which the estimate of \$714,000 for the travel of the 25 members of the Group of Governmental Experts and of one staff member had been determined.

5. As regards the requirements for consultants, the Advisory Committee was informed that the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) had been engaged by the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat as consultant to the Group of Governmental Experts and that a memorandum of understanding containing the terms of reference for the work and the payment and delivery schedule had been signed by the Director of UNIDIR and the Controller on behalf of the United Nations Secretariat. According to the information provided, the terms of reference included, inter alia, provision of expert advice to the Chair of the Group; drafting of the Group's report, documenting statements of Group members in session; and conduct of research and analysis for the Group. The Committee was also informed that the consultancy arrangement, taking into account the highly technical and political nature of the Group's discussions, provided for two experts, one UNIDIR staff expert and one external technical expert. Upon further enquiry, the Committee was informed that the estimate of \$50,000 comprised an amount of \$34,000 in consultancy fees and an amount of \$16,000 in travel costs for

¹ During its consideration of the Secretary-General's statement, the Advisory Committee was provided with varying cost estimates for conference-servicing activities by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat.

consultants. The Committee was also provided with information indicating that, for the biennium 2014-2015, UNIDIR had been engaged by the Office for Disarmament Affairs to provide similar consultancy services, at \$42,000, and that the higher estimate of \$50,000 for 2016-2017 was a reflection of the expected workload resulting from an increase of the Group's membership from 20 to 25 (see also para. 6 below). **Taking into consideration that the membership of the Group will be drawn from subject-matter experts in the areas of information and telecommunications security, the Committee is of the view that the Group should be able to undertake its activities with minimal reliance on external consultants. The Committee is also of the view that in order to further minimize the requirement for external consultants, the Group should make optimal use of the support capacity available within the Office for Disarmament Affairs for functions such as drafting of the Group's report, documenting statements of Group members in session; and conducting of research and analysis. Furthermore, given that UNIDIR is expected to provide similar services to the Group in 2016-2017, the Committee is not convinced that an increase in the Group's membership from 20 to 25 justifies the proposed increase in consultancy fees. Therefore, the Committee recommends a reduction of \$8,000 in the resources proposed for consultants.**

III. Other matters

6. With regard to the number of experts participating in the Group, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the number of participants had never been specified in the resolutions establishing the groups of governmental experts that were convened in the past and that it had always been left up to the Secretary-General to make an informed determination based on the prevailing demand and interest. The Committee was also informed that the membership of the first three Groups of Governmental Experts on this issue had been set at 15 and was subsequently increased to 20 for the Group that met during the biennium 2014-2015 so as to allow for participation by a greater number of Member States. As regards the Group of Governmental Experts whose establishment is being proposed for the biennium 2016-2017, the Committee was informed that, based on the consultations between the Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and Member States, there was a near unanimous view that the number of participating members should be increased, considering the growing importance of this subject and the increasing interest among Member States. In this regard, the Committee was informed that the statement of programme budget implications, circulated in the First Committee to all Member States prior to the adoption of draft resolution [A/C.1/70/L.45](#), had specified a membership of 25 in the next Group, and that subsequently the draft resolution had been adopted without a vote.

IV. Conclusion

7. **Taking into account its recommendation in paragraph 5 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution [A/C.1/70/L.45](#), additional resources in the amount of \$1,321,500 would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, comprising \$565,500 under section 2,**

General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and \$756,000 under section 4, Disarmament.

8. This amount would require an additional appropriation for the biennium, to be approved by the General Assembly and, as such, would represent a charge against the contingency fund.
