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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

**General and complete disarmament: convening of
the fourth special session of the General Assembly
devoted to disarmament**

Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

Programme budget implications of the amendment (A/70/L.26) to the decision recommended in the report of the First Committee (A/70/460)

Thirty-eighth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered an advance version of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.5/70/18) on the programme budget implications of the amendment (A/70/L.26) to the draft decision recommended by the First Committee on the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament. During its consideration of the statement, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarifications received on 9 December 2015.

2. It is indicated in the statement of the Secretary-General that the First Committee adopted draft decision A/C.1/70/L.11 on 5 November 2015, having heard an oral statement indicating that there were no budgetary implications arising from the draft decision (A/C.5/70/18, para. 1). Subparagraph (a) of the draft decision (see A/70/460, para. 95) reads:

To hold, at a later date, an organizational session of the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament for the purpose of setting a date for its substantive sessions in 2016 and 2017, and that the Working Group should submit a report



on its work, including possible substantive recommendations, before the end of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

3. It is further indicated in the statement that subsequently, on 3 December 2015, an amendment (A/70/L.26) to the draft decision was submitted, by which the General Assembly would amend subparagraph (a) of the decision recommended in the report of the First Committee (A/70/460, para. 95) by replacing “at a later date” with “in 2016”, and replacing “setting a date for its substantive sessions in 2016 and 2017” with “setting the dates for its three substantive sessions, consisting of five working days each, in 2016 and 2017”.

4. Pursuant to the draft decision as amended by document A/70/L.26, it is envisaged that the Open-ended Working Group would hold in New York two additional substantive sessions of five days duration each, with interpretation in all six official languages, in 2016 and 2017 (\$222,800 for a total of 20 meetings); there would also be additional requirements for documentation to be issued in all six languages (\$170,100). The total additional conference-servicing requirements would amount to \$392,900 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/C.5/70/18, paras. 5, 6 and 8).

5. The Secretary-General indicates that the conference-servicing requirements related to the organizational session and one substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group in 2016 have been included under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*ibid.*, para. 7).

6. The Advisory Committee notes that the additional documentation workload for the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management would constitute 14 documents as follows: 2 pre-session documents (\$4,700 for 660 total words), 10 in-session documents (\$118,400 for 20,000 total words) and 2 post-session documents (\$47,000 for 8,000 total words) for 2016 and 2017 to be issued in all six official languages (\$170,100) (A/C.5/70/18, para. 6 and table). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, with respect to the translation of the in-session documentation, it has been the established practice of the General Assembly to translate into all six official languages the in-session documentation of the Open-ended Working Group. The working papers for the two most recent sessions of the Open-ended Working Group, which were held in 2003 and 2007, are posted to the Official Document System (ODS) with official document symbols. The working papers consist of text proposals, views of Member States and regional groups, and amendments to language which have been used to negotiate the text of the final document of the Open-ended Working Group. Such text proposals and amendments are made in any of the six official languages. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide more detailed information to the General Assembly with respect to the requirements of translation into the six official languages of the in-session documentation of the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament.**

7. A related matter concerns standard unit costs of the processing of documentation at each duty station and the costing methodology applied for documentation. The Advisory Committee recalls that the costs for 2015 for processing one document of 8,500 words in the six official languages across the four duty stations are as follows: New York (\$50,900), Geneva (\$30,600), Vienna

(\$33,485) and Nairobi (\$29,619) (see A/70/7, table I.5; see also A/69/656, paras. 6-9 and annex). At the time of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for 2016-2017, the Committee was informed that a working group on costing had been established in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to develop a unified methodology and coherent process for updating costings across all duty stations, and that the results and conclusions of the working group would be reported to the General Assembly at the main part of its seventieth session (see A/70/7, para. I.62). As at the date of the issuance of the present report, the conclusions of the working group had not yet been provided to the General Assembly (see also A/70/7/Add.28, para. 18). **The Advisory Committee notes that the question of the costs of interpretation and the processing of documentation by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has broad implications across all budget sections. The Committee stresses the need for reliable information on the standard unit costs of interpretation and the processing of documentation at each duty station for proper assessment of proposals for resource requirements. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide to it, before the end of the main part of its seventieth session, information on the conclusions of the above-mentioned working group on costing on a unified methodology and coherent process for updating costings, including information on the unit costs of interpretation and processing of documentation (see A/70/7/Add.28, paras. 17-20).**

8. The Secretary-General indicates that no provision has been made under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 for the implementation of the activities related to the draft decision as amended. At the current stage, it is not possible to identify activities within the section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium. It is therefore necessary that the additional resources in the amount of \$392,900 be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/C.5/70/18, para. 9).

9. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft decision recommended by the First Committee, as amended by document A/70/L.26, additional resource requirements in the amount of \$392,900 would arise under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. The amount of \$392,900 would require additional appropriation for the biennium 2016-2017 to be approved by the General Assembly and, as such, would represent a charge against the contingency fund.**