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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster III: regional offices, offices in support of political processes and other missions

United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General ([A/73/352/Add.9](#)) on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, which contains the proposed resource requirements for the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement in the amount of \$57,851,700 (net) for the period from 21 December 2018 to 31 December 2019. During its consideration of the report, the Committee met representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 23 May 2019.

II. Background and mandate

2. By paragraph 5 of its resolution [2451 \(2018\)](#), adopted on 21 December 2018, the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to establish and deploy, for an initial period of 30 days, an advance team to begin monitoring and to support and facilitate the immediate implementation of the Stockholm Agreement ([S/2018/1134](#), annex), which sets out, inter alia, the terms of the Hudaydah Agreement.



3. Subsequently, by paragraph 1 of its resolution [2452 \(2019\)](#), adopted on 16 January 2019, the Security Council decided to establish the Mission to support the implementation of the agreement on the city of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa, as set out in the Stockholm Agreement, for an initial period of six months. The Mission is mandated to, inter alia, lead and support the Redeployment Coordination Committee, established to oversee the implementation of the Hudaydah Agreement, as well as to monitor the compliance of the parties with the governorate-wide ceasefire and the mutual redeployment of forces (resolution [2452 \(2019\)](#), para. 2). The Council approved the proposals of the Secretary-General on the composition and operational aspects of the Mission, which included that it be headed by the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee at the Assistant Secretary-General level and comprise up to 75 United Nations monitors and additional staff as required for the Mission to fulfil its mandate (*ibid.*, para. 3). Furthermore, the Council underlined the importance of close collaboration and coordination between the United Nations entities operating in Yemen in order to prevent duplication of effort and to maximize the leveraging of existing resources (*ibid.*, para. 4).

4. The planning assumptions of the Mission are described in paragraphs 21 to 39 of the report of the Secretary-General and include the establishment of field-level liaison and coordination capacities, consisting of United Nations monitors and civilian personnel ([A/73/352/Add.9](#), para. 28); the granting of the necessary authorizations to deploy, transport and utilize personnel and resources by the appropriate authorities (*ibid.*, para. 31); the non-resumption of major combat operations between the parties in the Hudaydah Governorate (*ibid.*, para. 32); and the availability of appropriate secure infrastructures, assets, medical care and casualty evacuation capacity (*ibid.*, paras. 33 and 35).

III. Resource requirements

5. The proposed resource requirements for the Mission for the period from 21 December 2018 to 31 December 2019 amount to \$57,851,700 (net), comprising estimated expenditures of \$171,600 in 2018, for which there was no appropriation in 2018, and the proposed budget for 2019 in the amount of \$57,680,100 (net) (*ibid.*, para. 8).

6. Table 1 of the report of the Secretary-General summarizes the process leading to the formulation of the current budget proposal and provides information regarding the funding provided thus far, under commitment authorities totalling up to \$31,240,800, consisting of: (a) \$2.7 million for the period from 21 to 31 December 2018 under the authority granted to the Secretary-General under paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution [72/264](#) relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2018–2019; (b) \$2.7 million for the period from 1 to 15 January 2019 under the same authority granted to the Secretary-General; (c) \$8.2 million authorized by the Advisory Committee under the terms of the same resolution for the period from 16 January to 31 March 2019; and (d) \$17,640,800 approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [73/279 B](#) for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2019. Upon request, the Committee was provided with information showing that estimated expenditures as at 21 May 2019 amounted to \$21,651,500.

7. With respect to the funding under the authority granted to the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/264](#), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the total amount of \$5.4 million was granted to cover the activities of the advance team established under resolution [2451 \(2018\)](#) (see para. 2 above) for an initial period of 30 days, which would straddle the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019. The Committee was further informed that, according to

the Secretariat, given the urgent circumstances, a commitment authority of \$2.7 million was earmarked against the Secretary-General's \$8 million overall authority to authorize commitments to enter into unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for 2018, and an equal amount of \$2.7 million against the 2019 provision, and that this separation into two amounts was a practical matter put in place at the discretion of the Secretary-General. In addition, the Committee was also informed that the unutilized portion of the 2018 commitment authority, in the amount of \$2,528,400, was subsequently rolled over for use in 2019, given that the mandate for the deployment of the advance team continued into 2019, but fell within the 2018–2019 biennium. **The Advisory Committee recalls that, in its resolution 72/264, the General Assembly authorizes the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding a total of \$8 million in any one year of the biennium 2018–2019 as the Secretary-General certifies relate to the maintenance of peace and security, without the concurrence of the Committee. The Committee expresses concern that the proposal to carry forward to 2019 an unutilized portion from the amount authorized for use in 2018 does not align with the terms of the resolution. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to observe the limits and provisions established by the Assembly with respect to the charges he makes to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses without the prior concurrence of the Committee and/or the General Assembly (see also A/69/661, para. 15).**

8. With respect to the estimated requirements for 2019, the proposed resources would provide for up to 75 United Nations monitors; civilian personnel, comprising the estimated costs of the temporary positions created during the period from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019 and the costs for the proposed establishment of 138 civilian staff positions and 5 government-provided personnel for the second half of 2019; and operational costs (A/73/352/Add.9, para. 44).

1. Observers and civilian personnel

9. The Secretary-General proposes the phased deployment during 2019 of up to 75 United Nations monitors, as endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2452 (2019). The Secretary-General also proposes the establishment of 138 civilian positions for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2019 (1 Assistant Secretary-General, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 5 P-5, 9 P-4, 20 P-3, 1 P-2, 31 Field Service, 4 National Professional Officer and 65 Local level), comprising 45 positions for the substantive component, 22 for the security component and 71 for the mission support component (A/73/352/Add.9, paras. 44 and 45).

10. **As a general observation, the Advisory Committee considers that, at the initial stage of the deployment of a mission, in particular one that is operating under complex and evolving circumstances, it is difficult to fully assess whether the proposed staffing levels, distribution of positions and structures enable the efficient delivery of the mandate (see also A/73/498/Add.6, para. 16). The Committee therefore intends to reassess personnel resource requirements in the context of future budget submissions.**

11. The report of the Secretary-General indicates that the mandated activities of the Mission are distributed among four locations: Hudaydah, Sana'a, Djibouti and Jordan (A/73/352/Add.9, para. 29). The Advisory Committee was provided with information showing that the largest staffing component would be based in Yemen, to carry out substantive, operational and liaison tasks, with 119 positions to be located in Hudaydah and 6 in Sana'a. The remaining 13 positions would be based in Amman (9), to provide support services within the mission support structure integrated with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (see para. 14 below); Djibouti (2), to coordinate air operations relating to medical evacuations; and

New York (2), for backstopping support at United Nations Headquarters (see para. 13 below). **The Advisory Committee notes the efforts of the Secretary-General to locate personnel as close as possible to the Mission's area of operations and trusts that this factor will continue to be taken into account in the formulation of future budget requests (see A/73/498/Add.8, para. 16).**

12. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the current requirements of 69 national positions reflect an increase of 33 national staff positions compared with the 36 national staff positions proposed in the previous funding request (see A/73/498/Add.8, para. 15). The Committee was also informed that, while the proposed level of national staff was considered appropriate for the current phase of the Mission's life cycle, further nationalizations might be sought, as appropriate, as the Mission progresses. **The Advisory Committee acknowledges the greater use of national staff, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of section IV of its resolution 73/279 B, and encourages the Secretary-General to continue strengthening the Mission's national staffing complement, as appropriate, in the context of future budget submissions (see A/73/498/Add.8, para. 16).**

13. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of two backstopping positions at United Nations Headquarters: one Political Affairs Officer (P-4) in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and one Associate Human Resources Officer (P-2) in the Department of Operational Support. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, while every effort had been made to accommodate the necessary backstopping substantive and operational support within existing resources, the significant increase in workload could not be absorbed. The scope and scale of the responsibilities of the Political Affairs Officer position would require dedicated capacity and the Associate Human Resources Officer position would facilitate the deployment of the Mission personnel. **The Advisory Committee approves the establishment of the proposed positions of Political Affairs Officer (P-4) and Associate Human Resources Officer (P-2), in view of the workload surge arising during the start-up period of the Mission. Given that the related backstopping workload may change as the Mission deploys, in particular with respect to recruitment, the Committee urges the Secretary-General to further explore the use of existing Headquarters capacity, including the existing backstopping support of the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, and expects that this will be reflected in the staffing proposals contained in his next budget submission.**

Mission support

14. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that, in line with paragraph 4 of resolution 2452 (2019), underlining the importance of cooperation across the United Nations system entities operating in Yemen, the Mission works closely with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the United Nations country team in Yemen. In particular, he indicates that the Office of the Special Envoy has provided critical support during the initial phase of the Mission's work, which will continue to remain critical, as the Mission will draw largely upon the mission support component of the Office, augmented as necessary (see A/73/352/Add.9, para. 10).

15. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Secretary-General proposed a single integrated mission support structure for the two missions. The incumbent of a proposed Chief of Mission Support position at the D-1 level, funded by the Mission, would manage and coordinate both the increased support capacities required for the Mission, such as with respect to air operations, procurement and engineering, as well as the ongoing support requirements of the Office of the Special Envoy. The Committee was also informed that the existing

position of Chief of Mission Support (P-5) in the Office would be considered in the context of the 2020 programme budget proposal for that Office.

16. The Advisory Committee welcomes a single integrated mission support structure with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and trusts that the Secretary-General will monitor this structure, with a view to achieving maximum realization of economies of scale and minimizing duplications. The Committee intends to keep the integrated mission support structure under review, including with respect to the existing position of Chief of Mission Support (P-5), in its reports on future budget submissions for both missions.

Vacancy rates and deployment status

17. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that the proposed requirements reflect the application of a 50 per cent delayed deployment factor for the United Nations monitors and a 50 per cent vacancy rate for both international and national positions. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 21 May 2019, 14 monitors had been deployed to the Mission, with further deployment dates to be confirmed. Additionally, 24 civilian staff had been deployed as at 19 May 2019 (8 had been recruited and 16 were on temporary duty assignment). The Committee was also informed that, of the 105 positions originally proposed for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2019, the incumbents of 17 positions were being onboarded or were on travel status, and 53 positions remained to be advertised. The pace of recruitment had been affected by significant delays and difficulties in obtaining visas and in attracting serving staff members for release for short-term assignments pending the finalization of recruitments against the approved positions.

18. The Advisory Committee notes the slow pace of deployment thus far and the ongoing challenges affecting the recruitment of personnel (see also [A/73/498/Add.8](#), para. 13). Recalling the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of section IV of its resolution [73/279 B](#), the Committee urges the Secretary-General to make every effort to expedite deployments and recruitments against vacant positions, including through intensified recruitment activities.

19. Subject to its observations above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's staffing requirements.

2. Operational costs

20. The proposed resource requirements for operational costs for 2019 amount to \$50,810,700 and comprise resources for official travel (\$1,550,900); facilities and infrastructure (\$14,206,700), including the rental and refurbishment of premises and a marine vessel for the temporary accommodation of the Mission in Hudaydah; ground transportation (\$6,092,600), including the acquisition of 35 armoured vehicles and their maintenance; air operations (\$16,317,900), including the rental of one fixed-wing aircraft and one rotary-wing aircraft; information and communications technology (\$2,916,000) for the acquisition of the information technology equipment and telecommunications services; medical (\$6,705,000), primarily for the engagement of a commercial contractor to provide medical services to mission personnel in Hudaydah; and other supplies, services and equipment (\$3,021,600), including freight and related costs.

21. Regarding facilities and infrastructure, the report of the Secretary-General indicates that all Mission personnel stationed in Hudaydah are currently accommodated in a United Nations-flagged marine vessel anchored in the port of Hudaydah. The vessel is anticipated to serve as the Mission's office and living

accommodation until October 2019, to allow adequate time to finalize alternate office and living accommodations that comply with the requisite security standards (see [A/73/352/Add.9](#), para. 34). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the monthly resource requirements for the rental of the vessel, which had been initially estimated at approximately \$2.3 million and subsequently revised downwards to \$1.7 million, were now significantly lower, with the contractual monthly cost for the rental of the vessel amounting to \$810,000 and one-time mobilization and demobilization costs amounting to \$80,000.

22. The Advisory Committee requested, but did not receive, comprehensive information regarding the costs, plans and timelines for the operationalization of the land accommodation options. However, the Committee was informed that, while other options were being fully explored, the Mission considered that the most effective intermediate solution for a combined office and accommodation space would be the lease and refurbishment of two compounds. The lease agreement for the first compound, able to accommodate up to 64 persons, had been signed and refurbishment works were under way, with estimated completion by October 2019. The negotiations for the lease of a second compound, able to accommodate the remaining living and office requirements, including a clinic, were ongoing and it was estimated that the necessary refurbishment works would be completed by December 2019.

23. The Advisory Committee urges the Secretary-General to ensure that all necessary arrangements and refurbishment works relating to the identified land-based accommodation solution are completed as expeditiously as possible, within the approved resources and estimated timelines. The Committee trusts that updated information regarding future land-based accommodation plans will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General.

24. The report of the Secretary-General indicates that, where the Mission's capacity allows, the United Nations country team can benefit from the Mission's services, such as accommodation and air transport (see [A/73/352/Add.9](#), para. 15). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that for the Mission's flights between Amman and Sana'a a "per seat" charge would be applied to other United Nations institutions utilizing that service. Similarly, the cost of United Nations entities using the Mission's facilities will be shared through a memorandum of understanding. **The Advisory Committee notes the proposed arrangements and trusts that the Secretary-General will continue to provide information on the cost-sharing arrangements in place in the context of future budget submissions** (see [A/73/498/Add.8](#), para. 26). Furthermore, the Committee encourages the Secretary-General to explore additional opportunities for cost-sharing whenever possible.

25. In view of the slow pace of the start-up of the Mission, as reflected in the actual level of expenditure of the Mission between 21 December 2018 and 21 May 2019, the Advisory Committee recommends a 2 per cent reduction (amounting to \$1,016,200) in the proposed requirements under operational costs. The Committee intends to reassess the operational costs in the context of future budget submissions, on the basis of the actual experience of the Mission on the ground.

IV. Recommendations

26. The proposed actions requested of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General in connection with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah

Agreement are set out in paragraph 48 of his report. **Subject to its observations and recommendations in this report, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for the Mission for 2019. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Approve the budget for the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement for 2019 amounting to \$56,663,900 (net);**

(b) **Appropriate, under the procedures provided for in paragraph 11 of annex I to resolution [41/213](#), an additional amount of \$56,835,500 (net) under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, after taking into account the estimated expenditures for 2018, amounting to \$171,600;**

(c) **Appropriate an amount of \$590,600 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019.**
