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Proposed programme budget for 2020

Proposed programme budget for 2020

Part II

Political affairs

Section 3

Political affairs

Special political missions

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General

Third report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for 2020

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General in respect of special political missions that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2020 for thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General ([A/74/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.2](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 23 August 2019.

2. The Secretary-General, in addendum 1 to section 3, Political affairs, of his report on the proposed programme budget for 2020 ([A/74/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#)), provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2020 for 37 special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. Detailed information in respect of each special political mission is contained in five addenda to section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget ([A/74/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.2–6](#)). The addenda cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations



Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).¹ The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions are contained in its main report (A/74/7/Add.1), while its comments and recommendations on budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI are covered in its related reports.² The Secretary-General also indicates that he will present to the General Assembly separate proposals for any additional requirements emanating from additional mandates or changes in mandates, including the requirements for 2020 for the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) (thematic cluster III) (see A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, paras. 5 and 14). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that resource requirements for the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) (thematic cluster III), to be established on 16 October 2019 pursuant to Security Council resolution 2476 (2019), will be presented separately. The Committee's comments and recommendations pertaining to these additional budget proposals will be contained in its related reports.

3. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2020 (A/74/7, chap. I, sect. A), the Advisory Committee has made comments and recommendations on the budget, methodology, format and presentation, which also apply to the reports of the Secretary-General on the estimates in respect of special political missions (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.2–6).

II. Budget performance for 2018 and 2019 and resource requirements for 2020

4. The proposed resource requirements for 2020 for the 11 special political missions under thematic cluster I, compared with the approved resources for 2019 and the expenditures for 2018, are summarized in table 1 below.

Table 1
Summary of resource requirements for thematic cluster I

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	2018	2019	2020		Variance
	Expenditure	Appropriation	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2020 vs. 2019 Increase/ (decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(3)-(2)
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus	2 326.4	2 775.8	2 899.2	—	123.4
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide	2 189.6	2 179.9	2 235.3	—	55.4
Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	242.4	450.6	439.9	—	(10.7)
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)	319.6	361.2	397.2	—	36.0
Office of the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions	1 924.3	1 887.1	2 236.7	—	349.6
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	14 951.4	16 200.2	16 235.3	—	35.1
Office of the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa	1 469.5	1 496.4	1 496.4	—	—
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	4 157.5	4 400.4	4 400.4	—	—

¹ A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.2, A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.3, A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.4, A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.5 and A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.6.

² A/74/7/Add.2, A/74/7/Add.3, A/74/7/Add.4, A/74/7/Add.5 and A/74/7/Add.6.

Category of expenditure	2018	2019	2020		Variance
	Expenditure	Appropriation	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2020 vs. 2019 Increase/ (decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(3)-(2)
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	13 959.7	17 020.0	18 423.0	481.3	1 403.0
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi	6 583.6	7 007.8	7 237.0	—	229.2
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar	502.5	1 220.3	1 073.0	—	(147.3)
Total	48 626.5	54 999.7	57 073.4	481.3	2 073.7

5. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with the expenditures for 2019, as at 30 June 2019, for the missions grouped under thematic cluster I, which amount to \$24,594,600, against the 2019 appropriation of \$54,999,700. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide updated information on expenditures for 2019 to the General Assembly, at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

6. The proposed requirements for 2020 for the 11 continuing missions grouped under thematic cluster I amount to \$57,073,400 (net), representing an increase of \$2,073,700, or 3.8 per cent, compared with the 2019 appropriation. A summary of variances between approved resources for 2019 and proposed resources for 2020 for continuing missions is provided in table 5 of the main report of the Secretary-General (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, table 5).

A. Comments and recommendations on staffing requirements

7. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table presenting positions approved for 2019 and proposed staffing requirements for 2020 for the missions under thematic cluster I (see table 2 below). Staffing changes are also summarized in annex XI to the main report of the Secretary-General (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1).

Table 2
Thematic cluster I: staffing requirements

Mission	Approved for 2019	Proposed for 2020	New positions	Abolishment	Conversion	Reclassification	Reassignment	Redeployment/ relocation
Cluster I								
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus	21 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 3 P-5, 5 P-4, 1 P-3, 4 FS, 1 GS and 5 LL)	21 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 3 P-5, 5 P-4, 1 P-3, 4 FS, 1 GS and 5 LL)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide	10 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 P-5, 3 P-4, 2 P-3 and 2 GS)	10 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 P-5, 3 P-4, 2 P-3 and 2 GS)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Office of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara	2 (1 USG and 1 P-3)	2 (1 USG and 1 P-3)	—	—	—	—	—	—

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Approved for 2019</i>	<i>Proposed for 2020</i>	<i>New positions</i>	<i>Abolishment</i>	<i>Conversion</i>	<i>Reclassification</i>	<i>Reassignment</i>	<i>Redeployment/ relocation</i>
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)	3 (1 USG, 1 P-4 and 1 GS)	3 (1 USG, 1 P-4 and 1 GS)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Office of the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions	7 (1 ASG, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3 and 1 GS)	7 (1 ASG, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3 and 1 GS)	–	–	–	–	–	1 P-3
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	91 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 D-2, 3 D-1, 8 P-5, 16 P-4, 12 P-3, 1 P-2, 10 FS, 7 GS and 31 LL)	91 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 D-2, 3 D-1, 8 P-5, 14 P-4, 14 P-3, 10 FS, 8 GS and 31 LL)	–	–	–	3 (2 P-4 to P-3 and 1 P-2 to GS-OL)	1 LL	–
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan/Horn of Africa	9 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 NPO and 2 LL)	9 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 NPO and 2 LL)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	27 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 4 P-5, 6 P-4, 4 P-3, 1 FS, 1 GS, 1 NPO and 7 LL)	27 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 4 P-5, 6 P-4, 4 P-3, 1 FS, 1 GS, 1 NPO and 7 LL)	–	–	–	–	–	1 P-3
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	95 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 6 P-5, 15 P-4, 11 P-3, 25 FS, 1 GS, 8 NPO and 26 LL)	101 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 6 P-5, 15 P-4, 12 P-3, 26 FS, 1 GS, 8 NPO and 29 LL)	6 (1 P-5, 1 P-3, 1 FS and 3 LL)	–	–	1 P-5 to D-1	1 P-5	7 (2 P-4, 3 FS, 1 NPO and 1 LL)
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi	30 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 4 P-5, 5 P-4, 2 P-3, 7 FS, 1 GS, 2 NPO and 5 LL)	30 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 4 P-5, 5 P-4, 2 P-3, 7 FS, 1 GS, 2 NPO and 5 LL)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Office of the Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Myanmar	5 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 LL)	5 (1 USG, 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 LL)	–	–	–	–	–	–

Abbreviations: USG, Under-Secretary-General; FS, Field Service; GS, General Service; GS (OL), General Service (Other level); LL, Local level; ASG, Assistant Secretary-General; NPO, National Professional Officer.

8. The proposed staffing changes for 2020 are as follows:

(a) In the Office of the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions, the redeployment of one position of Police Adviser (P-3) from the Office's headquarters in Geneva to Zugdidi, Georgia (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add. 2, para. 139);

(b) In the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria: (i) the downward reclassification of one position of Public Information Officer from the P-4 to the P-3 level and one position of Associate Public Information Officer (P-2) to Public Information Assistant (General Service (Other level)) in the Public Information Office; (ii) the reclassification and reassignment of one position of Special Assistant (P-4) in the immediate Office of the Special Envoy as a Planning Officer (P-3) in the Office of the Chief of Staff; and (iii) the reassignment of one position of Security Assistant (Local level) from the Security Office as a Vehicle Technician in the Administrative and Logistics Unit (*ibid.*, para. 166);

(c) In the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, the redeployment of one position of Political Affairs Officer (P-3) from Kinshasa to Nairobi (*ibid.*, para. 220);

(d) In the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen: (i) the establishment of six positions, comprising one Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5), one Field Interpreter (P-3), one Administrative Officer (Field Service), and three drivers (Local level) (*ibid.*, para. 248 (a)–(e)); (ii) the upward reclassification and reassignment of one position of Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) as Chief of Staff (D-1) (*ibid.*, para. 248 (f)); (iii) the reassignment of the position of Chief of Mission Support (P-5) to Chief of Operations and Resource Management (P-5) (*ibid.*, para. 248 (g)); and (iv) the redeployment of seven positions, comprising two (1 P-4 and 1 Field Service) from Sana'a to Amman, four (1 P-4, 2 Field Service and 1 National Professional Officer) from Amman to Sana'a and one (Local level) from Sana'a to Aden, Yemen (*ibid.*, para. 248 (h)).

9. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the proposed establishment of the positions of Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) and Administrative Assistant (Field Service) in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen would strengthen its field presence in Aden (*ibid.*, para. 248 (a)). Information provided to the Committee shows that the Aden office currently comprises five positions (1 P-4, 2 P-3, 1 National Professional Officer and 1 Field Service). The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that the staffing of the Office in Aden and Sana'a would gradually increase over time as security and operational conditions permit. **Taking into account the existing capacity in Aden, the Advisory Committee considers the proposal premature at this stage and recommends against the proposed establishment of the positions of Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) and Administrative Assistant (Field Service). Any related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.**

10. With respect to the proposed reclassification and reassignment of one Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) as Chief of Staff (D-1) in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Chief of Staff would, *inter alia*, enable and ensure oversight of the coherent and holistic delivery mandate of the Office; coordinate strategic and operational planning, as well as results-based budgeting; provide policy advice; and ensure efficient management of resources. The Committee notes that some of the above-mentioned functions, in particular those related to mission support, are also performed by other senior officers at the D-1 and P-5 levels in the integrated mission support component of the Office and UNMHA (see also [A/73/498/Add.8](#), para. 20). **The Advisory Committee considers that the need for a position of Chief of Staff was not sufficiently justified and recommends against the proposed upward reclassification and reassignment of the position of Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5). Any related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.**

Special post allowance

11. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 June 2019, a total of 18 positions (1 D-2, 2 D-1, 3 P-5, 6 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 FS and 1 General Service (Other level)) were encumbered by staff members receiving a special post allowance. The Committee notes that three positions (1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 Field Service) have been occupied by staff on special post allowance for more than one year. The Committee discusses the use of the special post allowance further in its report on the proposed programme budget for 2020 (A/74/7, chap. I, paras. 90–94). **The Advisory Committee expects that the recruitment for positions encumbered by staff members in receipt of a special post allowance for extended periods will be completed without further delay.**

Vacant positions

12. The Advisory Committee was informed that 53 positions were vacant under thematic cluster I, as at 23 July 2019, including the positions of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) and Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, as well as 18 positions in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and another 18 positions in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. As at 31 July 2019, seven positions (2 P-4, 4 P-3 and 1 P-2), all in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, had been vacant for two years or longer, owing mainly to delays in the issuance of visas. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide to the General Assembly, at the time of its consideration of the present report, updated information on the status of the above-mentioned long-vacant positions proposed for retention. The Committee expects that recruitment for the vacant positions will be completed expeditiously.**

13. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 9 and 10 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the staffing proposals of the Secretary-General.**

B. Comments and recommendations on operational costs

14. The proposed resources for operational costs under thematic cluster I for 2020 amount to \$21,376,200, reflecting an increase of \$795,900, or 3.72 per cent, compared with the appropriation of \$20,580,300 for 2019. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the operational costs for thematic cluster I, including the 2018 expenditures, 2019 appropriation and the proposed requirements for 2020, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3
Thematic cluster I: operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2018	2019	2020		Variance
	Expenditures	Appropriation	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2020 vs. 2019 Increase/ (decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(3)-(2)
1. Experts	—	—	—	—	—
2. Consultants and consulting services	456.5	464.0	437.8	—	(26.2)
3. Official travel	3 728.4	4 503.7	4 384.2	—	(119.5)
4. Facilities and infrastructure	7 147.1	8 981.8	9 179.3	—	197.5
5. Ground transportation	603.8	1 227.8	1 624.4	418.5	396.6
6. Air operations	214.5	1 357.6	1 417.7	—	60.1
7. Marine operations	—	—	—	—	—
8. Communications and information technology	1 867.1	2 011.4	2 065.5	—	54.1
9. Medical	103.1	189.9	212.6	—	22.7
10. Special equipment	—	—	—	—	—
11. Other supplies, services and equipment	1 553.0	1 844.1	2 054.7	62.8	210.6
Total	15 673.5	20 580.3	21 376.2	481.3	795.9

Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus

15. Resource requirements for operational costs for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus amount to \$523,000, which is unchanged compared with the 2019 appropriation. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that the 2018 expenditures for operational costs amount to \$328,400, or 56.4 per cent, of the approved operational resources for 2018. Furthermore, the Committee was provided with information showing that the Office's overall expenditures, as at 30 June 2019, amounted to \$1,043,400, or 37.6 per cent, against the 2019 appropriation of \$2,775,800. **Taking into account the pattern of past expenditures, the Advisory Committee recommends a 4 per cent (or \$20,900) reduction to the proposed resources for operational requirements for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus.**

Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide

16. Resource requirements for operational costs for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide amount to \$617,300. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that expenditures for consultants and consulting services in 2018 amounted to \$36,800, while the corresponding requirements for 2020 amount to \$50,500. Similarly, expenditure for official travel in 2018 amounted to \$338,000, while the requirements for 2020 amount to \$347,300. The Committee was also provided with information showing that the overall expenditure of the Office, as at 30 June 2019, amounted to \$769,100, or 35.3 per cent, against the 2019 appropriation of \$2,179,900. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that the level of the proposed requirements has been fully justified and recommends a reduction of 2 per cent under consultants and consulting services (\$1,000) and official travel (\$6,900), for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.**

Office of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara

17. Resource requirements for operational costs for the Office of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara amount to \$220,500. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that expenditures for consultants and consulting services in 2018 amounted to \$1,800, while the corresponding requirements for 2020 amount to \$29,600. Similarly, expenditure for official travel in 2018 amounted to \$70,700, while the requirements for 2020 amount to \$108,100. The Committee was also provided with information showing that the overall expenditure of the Office, as at 30 June 2019, amounted to \$170,800, or 37.9 per cent, against the 2019 appropriation of \$450,600. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that the level of the proposed requirements has been fully justified and recommends a reduction of 4 per cent under consultants and consulting services (\$1,200) and official travel (\$4,300), for the Office of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara.**

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

18. Resource requirements for operational costs in the amount of \$7,356,500 for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen reflect an increase of \$1,319,300 compared with the 2019 appropriation, attributable mainly to higher requirements under facilities and infrastructures (\$786,000), ground transportation (\$232,300), communications and information technology (\$146,400) and other supplies, services and equipment (\$109,000). The Advisory Committee was provided with information showing that the overall expenditure of the Office, as at 30 June 2019, amounted to \$7,783,100, or 45.7 per cent, against the 2019 appropriation of \$17,020,000. **The Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 3 per cent (or \$39,600) of the proposed increase for operational costs for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.**

Facilities and infrastructures*Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi*

19. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that proposed resources under facilities and infrastructure for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi include provisions for the rental of premises (\$986,800) and for the acquisition of safety and security equipment (\$100,000). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Office remains the only tenant in premises that were previously shared by other United Nations entities and bears the full financial responsibility for rented space that exceeds its operational needs. The Committee was also informed that attempts to relocate to a different compound had thus far been unsuccessful. Furthermore, in order to secure the compound, the Secretary-General proposes the acquisition of security and fire safety equipment, given the age and status of the existing equipment. **Considering the costs of the premises of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Burundi, the Advisory Committee encourages further efforts to seek alternative accommodation, commensurate with the security and space requirements of the Office, as appropriate (see also [A/73/498/Add.1](#), para. 28).**

20. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 9, 10, 15, 16, 17 and 18 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for operational costs.**

C. Other matters

Compliance with advance purchase policy

21. The Secretary-General provides information on the compliance of the missions under thematic cluster I with the 16-day advance booking policy for the period 2016–2018 in annex VI to his main report on special political missions (A/74/6 (Sect. 3) /Add.1). The Advisory Committee notes that only the Office of the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions has complied with this policy, while the other 10 missions show compliance rates of zero per cent or significantly below the benchmark rate of 75 per cent. The Committee further discusses compliance with the advance purchase policy under official travel in its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2020 (A/74/7, chap. I, paras. 99 and 100). **The Advisory Committee regrets the persistent non-compliance with the advance purchase policy (see A/73/498/Add.1, para. 25). While recognizing that, depending on the nature of the official business involved, the predictability of certain types of trips can vary, the Committee expects that the missions will give the matter priority attention and reiterates that more efforts are required, in particular in areas in which travel can be better planned, including through the development of concrete plans and strategies to improve adherence to the advance purchase policy. The Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will include information on such plans in his next budget submission.**

Cost-sharing arrangements

22. Regarding cost-sharing arrangements under thematic cluster I, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria provides accommodation, when not in use, to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on a cost-recovery basis. The Committee was also informed that the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen has entered into cost-sharing agreements with: (a) the United Nations Population Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office for Project Services, for the use of office space; (b) the United Nations country team, for the use of accommodation in Aden at a per diem rate; (c) UNAMI, for the rental and operational costs of a fixed-wing aircraft; and (d) UNMHA for the utilization of air assets on a reciprocal cost-recovery arrangement. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the cost-sharing arrangements in place maximize efficient resource use and cost transparency.**