



General Assembly

Distr.: General
29 September 2022

Original: English

Seventy-seventh session

Agenda item 137

Programme budget for 2022

Revised estimates on United Nations activities to mitigate global food insecurity and its humanitarian impact

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 in respect of the revised estimates on United Nations activities to mitigate global food insecurity and its humanitarian impact (A/77/325). During its consideration of the report, the Committee received additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses dated 27 September 2022.

2. The Secretary-General states that the proposal is related to international cooperation in solving international problems of a humanitarian character which, as stated in Article 1 (3) of the Charter of the United Nations, is among the purposes of the Organization, and to General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 76/124 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, as well as resolution 76/264 on the state of global food insecurity, in which the Assembly recognized the fundamental role of the United Nations system in coordinating a comprehensive global response and called upon Member States and other relevant stakeholders to keep food and agriculture supply chains functioning (ibid., paras. 1–2). **The Advisory Committee notes the related mandates and highlights the importance and urgency of this proposal for the consideration of the General Assembly.**

3. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the proposals were also submitted pursuant to the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, with specific reference to regulation 2.8 and rule 102.4, which indicate that revised and supplementary programme budget proposals may be submitted by the Secretary-General whenever necessary, including when they relate to activities which the Secretary-General considers to be of the highest urgency and which could not have been foreseen at the time the initial programme budget proposals were prepared (see paras. 4–9 below). The Committee was further informed, with regard to the submission of



revised estimates and the authorization of commitment authority, that the current request was unique in terms of its circumstances and aspects and that the Secretary-General deemed it necessary to put forward a revised estimates report to the General Assembly based on his assessment that the Assembly should be involved owing to the sensitivity of the proposals and the fact that future requests in this area were probable and could grow in volume and nature. **The Advisory Committee notes the exceptional nature of the submission process, which should not set a precedent.**

II. Background

4. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that, as measured by the food price index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), international export quotations of basic foodstuffs saw almost uninterrupted increases from the second half of 2020 until March 2022, when they reached an all-time high. Global cereal and vegetable oil markets were among those most affected. FAO simulations from June 2022 indicated that alternative origins would be able to compensate only partially for a sudden and steep reduction in grain exports by the Russian Federation and Ukraine, with a subsequent global supply gap further increasing international prices for food and feed by between 8 per cent and 22 per cent (A/77/325, para. 5).

5. In his report, the Secretary-General also indicates that both countries are net exporters of agricultural products and are leading suppliers of foodstuffs and fertilizers to global markets. In 2021, either the Russian Federation or Ukraine, or both, ranked among the top three global exporters of wheat, barley, maize, rapeseed and rapeseed oil, and sunflower seed and sunflower oil. The Russian Federation also ranked as the world's top exporter of nitrogen fertilizers, the second leading supplier of potassic fertilizers and the third largest exporter of phosphorous fertilizers (*ibid.*, para. 3).

6. The report highlights that a large number of food- and fertilizer-importing countries, many of which fall into the groups of the least developed countries and the low-income food-deficit countries, rely on Russian and Ukrainian food supplies and fertilizers to meet their consumption needs. Many of those countries were already grappling with the negative effects of high international food and fertilizer prices prior to February 2022, owing in part to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. These dynamics were compounded by the consequences of the armed conflict in Ukraine. The significant increase in food prices is affecting the most vulnerable populations in developing countries. Ensuring the availability of food supplies and fertilizers in import-dependent settings is crucial (*ibid.*, paras. 4, 7 and 8).

7. To address the challenges related to food and fertilizer, it is indicated in the report that the Secretary-General met with the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Ukraine on the parallel implementation of two initiatives: one facilitating safe navigation for the export of grain and related foodstuffs and fertilizers, including ammonia, from the ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Yuzhne; and the second facilitating unimpeded access to the world market for food products and fertilizers originating from the Russian Federation. The Secretary-General also met with the President of Türkiye to discuss the impact of the armed conflict on global issues, including food security, energy and finance. The Secretary-General established two United Nations task forces to negotiate this plan (*ibid.*, paras. 9–10).

8. The negotiations culminated in the signing on 22 July 2022 of a memorandum of understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat of the United Nations on promoting Russian food products and fertilizers to the world market (referred to as the Trade Facilitation Initiative) and the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports between Türkiye, the

Russian Federation and Ukraine (also referred to as the Black Sea Grain Initiative), with the Secretary-General of the United Nations signing as a witness. The memorandum of understanding on trade facilitation will remain in effect for a period of three years. The Black Sea Grain Initiative will remain in effect for 120 days from the date of its signature but may be extended automatically for the same period, unless one of the parties notifies the others of its intent to terminate or modify the Initiative (*ibid.*, paras. 11–12). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the memorandum of understanding could be aligned if the different parties agreed to do so.

9. **The Advisory Committee trusts that more detailed information on the accessibility and beneficial impact of the Initiatives for the Member States, in particular the least developed countries and low-income food-deficit countries, will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and included in the next report of the Secretary-General (see also table 2 and paras. 13 and 23 below).**

III. Proposal of the Secretary-General

10. The report sets out the initial resource requirements relating to United Nations support for the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the Trade Facilitation Initiative, while voluntary contributions are being used as a temporary bridging mechanism. The total estimated resource requirements to cover the period from 22 July to 31 December 2022 would amount to \$3,524,600, including \$848,600 to support the Trade Facilitation Initiative, \$2,481,700 to support the Black Sea Grain Initiative and \$194,300 to cover staff assessment requirements. The General Assembly is requested to approve the total estimated resource requirements and authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding \$3,524,600 to support the Initiatives and to take note that the Secretary-General will report on the use of the commitment authority in the context of the financial performance report for the budget period 2022. The proposal is based on the assumption that the Black Sea Grain Initiative will be extended beyond the initial period of 120 days. The Secretary-General plans to submit a revised estimates report on the proposed programme budget for 2023 that would include the budgetary requirements for 2023 regarding United Nations activities to mitigate global food insecurity and its humanitarian impact, for the Assembly's consideration during the main part of its seventy-seventh session ([A/77/325](#), paras. 13–15).

11. Regarding the utilization of the programme budget compared with extrabudgetary resources, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the determination had been made in view of the criticality and worldwide importance of the issues being addressed by the Initiatives and the priority accorded by Member States to addressing global food insecurity, and noting that United Nations assistance depended on the mobilization of a unique combination of capacities and expertise drawn from across the Organization, in support of the core purposes set out in the Charter, and in a highly politically complex setting. Regular budget resources were being sought to ensure funding stability, sustainability and predictability, and a request for voluntary contributions to specifically support the Initiatives had not been made. If the General Assembly approved the request, the Secretary-General intended to use the existing programme budget appropriation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to cover the cost of United Nations support to the extent possible, and to cover any shortfalls from savings in other sections, to the extent possible. The last resort would be to seek additional appropriation for the commitment authority in the context of the financial performance report for 2022.

A. Trade Facilitation Initiative

12. The Secretariat will oversee and coordinate the Trade Facilitation Initiative, with UNCTAD as the lead entity. The Initiative is aimed at the following:

(a) Continuation of commercial supplies of food and fertilizers from the Russian Federation to the countries in need of such products;

(b) Continuation of efforts by the Secretariat to facilitate the transparent unimpeded access of food and fertilizers, including the raw materials required to produce fertilizers (including ammonia), originating from the Russian Federation to the world market; under the Initiative, the Russian Federation will inform the Secretariat of any potential or existing impediments to such access;

(c) Facilitation by the Russian Federation of the unimpeded export of food, sunflower oil and fertilizers from the Ukrainian ports (*ibid.*, paras. 17–18).

13. These activities relate to programme 10, Trade and development, of the programme plan and to section 12, Trade and development, of the programme budget for 2022, which falls under the responsibility of UNCTAD. UNCTAD will undertake in-scope requests from the Russian Federation and provide technical guidance to the Russian Federation and to Russian companies. UNCTAD has established a task team to support the Initiative as follows:

(a) Establishment of channels for the mutual exchange of information between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat for the purposes of implementing the agreement and informing the Secretariat on any impediments to the access of food and fertilizers originating from the Russian Federation to global markets;

(b) Facilitation of and support for the efforts of bilateral and multilateral sectoral working groups involving relevant actors from the government and private sectors;

(c) On the basis of in-scope requests received from the Russian Federation, liaising with the private sector, including business associations, industry groups and companies, to address issues arising from non-sanctioned trade related to the memorandum of understanding between the Russian Federation and the United Nations (*ibid.*, paras. 22–24). **The Advisory Committee trusts that updated information on the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Initiative will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and in the next submission of the Secretary-General (see also para. 9 above).**

14. The estimated additional resource requirements to support the Trade Facilitation Initiative for the period from 22 July to 31 December 2022 would amount to \$848,600 (net of staff assessment) under section 12, as set out in table 1.

Table 1
Additional resource requirements for 2022 by object of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Resource requirements 2022</i>
Other staff costs	206.6
Consultants	312.0
Travel of staff	260.0
General operating expenses	70.0
Total	848.6

15. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the UNCTAD extrabudgetary resources were fully earmarked and did not cover the scope of activities falling under the Trade Facilitation Initiative. On the utilization by UNCTAD of the extrabudgetary resources provided as a temporary bridging mechanism, the Committee was informed that total expenditures to date amounted to \$235,165.79, composed of: (a) other staff costs – \$157,098.00; (b) official travel costs – \$76,167.79; and (c) other costs – \$1,900.00. **The Advisory Committee trusts that updated expenditure information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

16. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the estimated additional resource requirements would provide for three general temporary assistance positions (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 General Service (Other level)) that would form the UNCTAD task team based in Geneva. The task team is led by a Special Adviser at the D-2 level who is a staff member of the World Food Programme (WFP) on non-reimbursable loan to UNCTAD until 31 December 2022. The Special Adviser would liaise with the Government of the Russian Federation and other Governments, as well as with other relevant authorities and representatives of the United Nations, and oversee bilateral and multilateral sectoral working groups involving relevant actors from the government and private sectors ([A/77/325](#), paras. 26 and 28). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Special Adviser was accountable to the UNCTAD Secretary-General, who had been entrusted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with leading the negotiations, preparation and implementation of the Trade Facilitation Initiative.

17. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the Senior Coordination Officer (P-5) would implement the activities related to the Trade Facilitation Initiative, including the coordination and facilitation of work of the bilateral and multilateral sectoral working groups; analyse incoming requests from the Russian Federation; and oversee the work of consultants working on assignments related to the implementation of the Initiative (*ibid.*, annex II).

18. The Economics Affairs Officer (P-4) would analyse the impact and potential of the memorandum of understanding on major companies in relevant sectors, including agriculture, chemical (fertilizer), finance, insurance and shipping; liaise with the private sector to address issues arising from non-sanctioned trade related to the memorandum of understanding; and prepare notes and presentations on the impact and potential of the memorandum of understanding on commodity markets. The Programme Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would provide assistance in the planning and implementation of activities (*ibid.*).

19. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Special Adviser (D-2) provided on a non-reimbursable basis was encumbered and that onboarding for the remaining positions was taking place, with the Senior Coordination Officer (P-5) expected to start on 22 September, the Economic Affairs Officer (P-4) expected by 15 October and the Programme Assistant (General Service (Other level)) expected by 1 October 2022.

20. Under consultants, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the amount of \$312,000 would provide for one Principal Legal Adviser (\$84,000); one Communications Specialist (\$72,000); one consultant to serve as a subject matter expert providing advice, counsel and policy recommendations on a specific trade sector or issue relating to the implementation of the Initiative (\$84,000); and one consultant to serve as a subject matter expert on a specific trade sector or issue relating to the implementation of the Initiative, including to liaise with the private sector and other United Nations workstreams (\$72,000). **The Advisory Committee trusts that more justifications related to resources for consultants will be**

provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report, and that more efforts will be made to utilize in-house capacities, especially for core functions.

21. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the amount of \$260,000 under official travel would provide for daily subsistence allowance and travel costs for six official missions of the Trade Facilitation Initiative team members to meet with partners and representatives of relevant authorities. **The Advisory Committee trusts that more justifications for official travel will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.** Under general operating expenses, \$70,000 would provide for local transportation, rental of information and communications technology equipment and related support services, as well as meeting-related and other costs.

B. Black Sea Grain Initiative

22. The Black Sea Grain Initiative provides for the establishment of a joint coordination centre set up in Istanbul, Türkiye, under the auspices of the United Nations that includes representatives of the three parties and the United Nations. The Joint Coordination Centre exercises general oversight and coordination of the Initiative, and its key tasks include: (a) the establishment of a maritime humanitarian corridor linking the three designated Ukrainian ports to global markets; (b) the development of standard operating procedures, including in relation to the inspection of incoming and outgoing vessels; and (c) the monitoring of movements of vessels through the maritime humanitarian corridor. Inspections of incoming and outgoing vessels are conducted by inspection teams consisting of representatives of all parties and the United Nations. The purpose of inspections of incoming vessels is to confirm that holds are empty of cargo and that ships are not transporting unauthorized personnel. Inspections of outgoing vessels are to ensure that the only items being transported are those addressed in the Initiative (i.e. grain and related foodstuffs or fertilizers, including ammonia) and that no unauthorized cargo or personnel are being transported. Inspections are carried out while vessels are at anchor in the Sea of Marmara, to the south-west of the entrance to the Bosphorus, near Istanbul, with a secondary inspection site in the Black Sea, to the north-west of the Bosphorus (*ibid.*, paras. 32–33).

23. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the quantity of food transported under the Black Sea Grain Initiative had increased to 3.06 million tons as at 14 September 2022 and that updated information was regularly provided on the Initiative's website (www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative/vessel-movements). The Committee was further informed that, owing to the conflict, insurance rates had increased significantly, from 0.01 per cent to 4–5 per cent; with the Initiative, insurance rates decreased to about 2 per cent and could be reduced further to 0.5 per cent. The Committee was also provided with table 2 on the quantity of food transported by destination, in descending order of magnitude, noting that tracking by the Joint Coordination Centre does not reflect subsequent trans-shipment or re-export following processing in initial destinations. **The Advisory Committee trusts that updated information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and in the next submission of the Secretary-General (see also para. 9 above).**

Table 2
Information on food transported by destination

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Quantity (tons)</i>
Türkiye	562 724
Spain	488 864
Egypt	274 691
Italy	230 309
Netherlands	223 918
China	206 840
Republic of Korea	138 720
Islamic Republic of Iran	126 234
India	125 600
Romania	106 278
Israel	105 761
Sudan	65,340
Germany	58 510
Bangladesh	55 000
Kenya	51 400
Yemen	37 500
Greece	33 179
Ireland	33 000
Somalia	28 500
TBD ^a and Türkiye	26 527
Lebanon	26 330
Djibouti	23 300
France	21 750
Bulgaria	9 835
Total	3 060 110

^a The cargo was not offloaded at its initially intended destination owing reportedly to non-acceptance by the initial commercial buyer. Some of the cargo was subsequently offloaded in Türkiye, and the commercial shipper is seeking a buyer for the remaining cargo.

24. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the activities of the United Nations participation in the Joint Coordination Centre relate to programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme plan and to section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for 2022. Activities will consist of the inspection teams checking incoming and outgoing vessels bound for or returning from the three ports on the Black Sea coast under the auspices of the Centre; comprehensive secretariat assistance for the work of the Centre itself; high-level dialogue and engagement with the parties and a wide range of external actors and entities by the United Nations Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative; the establishment and maintenance of a watch room operating on a 24-hour basis; and support for various public information activities linked to United Nations assistance in the implementation of the Initiative (A/77/325, paras. 36–37).

25. The estimated additional resource requirements to support the Black Sea Grain Initiative from the signing of the agreement to 31 December 2022 would amount to \$2,481,700 (net of staff assessment) under section 27, as set out in table 3.

Table 3

Additional resource requirements for 2022 by object of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Resource requirements 22 July–21 November (120 days)</i>	<i>Resource requirements 22 November–31 December 2022 (39 days)</i>	<i>Total resource requirements 2022</i>
Other staff costs	786.9	269.2	1 056.1
Travel of staff	304.2	20.0	324.2
Contractual services	49.0	13.0	62.0
General operating expenses	39.3	12.0	51.3
Supplies and materials	8.1	–	8.1
Furniture and equipment	30.0	–	30.0
Grants and contributions	700.0	250.0	950.0
Total (net requirements)	1 917.5	564.2	2 481.7

26. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with table 4 setting out the expenditures to date. **The Advisory Committee trusts that updated expenditure information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

Table 4

Expenditures in support of the Black Sea Grain Initiative

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Other staff costs	103.0
Travel of staff	170.0
Contractual services	13.1
General operating expenses	13.7
Supplies and materials	0.6
Furniture and equipment	7.9
Grants and contributions	755.0
Total	1 063.3

27. The Advisory Committee was also informed upon enquiry that the existing available resources of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had been provided by donors to fund activities set out in its annual plan and that United Nations assistance for the Black Sea Grain Initiative fell outside the scope of its annual plan. Furthermore, allocations from the Central Emergency Response Fund were possible only to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes undertaking humanitarian activities and that, given that it managed the Central Emergency Response Fund, it could not receive funds from that Fund.

Staffing

28. Under other staff costs, the Secretary-General indicates in his report that the amount of \$1,056,100 would provide for salaries and common staff costs for 28 general temporary assistance positions (1 Assistant Secretary-General, 1 D-1, 4 P-5, 4 P-4, 8 P-3, 6 National Professional Officer and 4 Local level) for the United Nations support team to the Joint Coordination Centre, with 25 positions in Istanbul (1 Assistant Secretary-General, 1 D-1, 4 P-5, 3 P-4, 8 P-3, 5 National Professional Officer and 3 Local level), 1 P-4 at United Nations Headquarters, as well as 1 National Professional Officer and 1 Local level in Ankara (*ibid.*, para. 40).

29. The United Nations Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative (Assistant Secretary-General) would represent the Secretary-General on all matters relating to the United Nations assistance in the implementation of the Initiative, subject to United Nations authorities and mandates, and would report to the Chef de Cabinet through the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs; oversee and lead the participation of the United Nations in the Joint Coordination Centre, as well as strategy development and planning; and serve as the primary senior-level United Nations interlocutor with the parties to the Initiative and external stakeholders (*ibid.*, annex II). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the United Nations assistance for the implementation of the Initiative required the mobilization of a unique combination of United Nations expertise and capacities, spanning maritime affairs and inspections, complex and evolving political engagement, dynamic public information and strategic communications support, and other areas. A United Nations presence of this nature in a challenging and rapidly changing context required highly experienced senior leadership present on the ground in Istanbul.

30. The Assistant Secretary-General would be supported by: (a) a Political Affairs Officer (P-4) to provide political advice to the United Nations Coordinator and support/facilitate coordination across the United Nations assistance in the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, including external engagements by the United Nations Coordinator with Member States and other interlocutors; (b) a Special Assistant (P-3) to support the management of the schedule and travel of the United Nations Coordinator; support the preparations for meetings and engagements, including in coordination with other members of the Joint Coordination Centre team of the United Nations and other interlocutors in Türkiye, the region and elsewhere; and (c) a Driver (Local level) (*ibid.*).

31. The Deputy United Nations Coordinator/Chief of Staff (D-1) would deputize for the United Nations Coordinator in relation to all of his or her representational functions; provide strategic oversight and management across key pillars of the United Nations assistance in the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative; and maintain ongoing contact with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and all other relevant Headquarters entities on the required assistance in the implementation of the Initiative (*ibid.*).

32. The secretariat to the Joint Coordination Centre would comprise: (a) one Senior Political Affairs Officer/Head of Unit (P-5) to serve as the primary political adviser to the United Nations Coordinator and the Deputy United Nations Coordinator; provide ongoing assistance to the parties to the Black Sea Grain Initiative and to the work of the Joint Coordination Centre specifically, including in relation to discussions and negotiations concerning maritime routes, security and all other matters linked to the safe and unhindered movement of commercial traffic through the agreed maritime humanitarian corridor; and oversee additional secretariat assistance; and (b) two Political Affairs Officers (1 P-4 and 1 P-3) to support all functions under the responsibility of the Senior Political Affairs Officer/Head of Unit (*ibid.*).

33. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the P-4 would support ongoing engagement and dialogue between the parties and the day-to-day interaction necessary to ensure the ongoing clearance of vessel movements and other core deliverables. The responsibilities of the P-3 would include following political issues pertaining to the situation in Ukraine and the maritime movement of grain, foodstuffs and fertilizer, and providing flexible support for ongoing engagement between the parties through the Black Sea Grain Initiative, including during daily plenary meetings of the Joint Coordination Centre, during which movement requests were reviewed and authorized. Support would include the preparation of documentation ahead of and during meetings, written and oral translation support, minute taking and drafting of various written reports, records and summaries.

34. The Media and Communications Unit would be headed by a Senior Public Information Officer (P-5) serving as the senior spokesperson to lead United Nations communications planning and strategy development in all their aspects and the day-to-day engagement with the media on the United Nations assistance for the work of the Joint Coordination Centre and the movement of vessels under the Initiative; and manage a media relations and public information team. The Unit would also include one Public Information Officer (P-3) and one National Media Officer (Istanbul) (National Professional Officer) for support (*ibid.*). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that this structure reflected continuing high levels of interest in the implementation of the Initiative from international media and the importance of ensuring sufficient capacity to manage engagement in this regard, in close coordination with the parties.

35. The Advisory Committee was further informed that the Senior Public Information Officer managed media relations, liaised and coordinated with all relevant United Nations offices in the region and at Headquarters, including relevant agencies, funds and programmes, and liaised with the delegations of the parties to the Initiative and relevant offices in their respective capitals and performed quality control of public information products and digital platforms that promoted the Initiative. In addition, the Senior Public Information Officer provided strategic communications support related to the implementation and renewal of the Initiative. The Public Information Officer (P-3) would prepare key messages and public information products in response to daily media requests in liaison with relevant United Nations offices, be in charge of maintaining and updating multimedia and digital platforms, including the United Nations website, and fill in for the Senior Public Information Officer. The National Media Officer would provide knowledge of the Türkiye-based media landscape and context, liaise with national and local authorities in relation to media coverage of Joint Coordination Centre activities, including the sensitive work of the inspections, work with journalists who worked for both national and international media to strengthen advocacy and provide timely and accurate information, monitor and analyse the media reporting and public narrative on the Initiative and recommend related actions. **The Advisory Committee trusts that more justifications for resources related to media and communications will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

36. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the Reporting and Information Management Unit would comprise one Head of Reporting and Information Management (P-4) to oversee the production of public and internal monitoring and reporting products; one Reports Officer (P-3), the primary technical focal point for the production of internal and external reports; and one National Information Officer (Istanbul) (National Professional Officer) (*ibid.*). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Head of Reporting and Information Management (P-4) would oversee both database management and analysis, telecommunications and cybersecurity, mapping and infographics, as well as websites and written

products, while the Reports Officer (P-3) would produce daily situation reports and updates, maintain the database of vessel movements, cross-check information with the delegations and the monitoring team, respond to queries, and present breakdowns of operational data such as cargo types, destinations and quantities, working closely with the National Information Officer.

37. Under Operations, one Head of Operations (P-5) would provide technical oversight and leadership with regard to the operational aspects, including by leading and managing the work of United Nations members of the inspection teams checking inbound and outbound vessels engaging with the Initiative, and United Nations support for the 24-hour watch room within the Joint Coordination Centre; oversee the development of guidelines and standard operating procedures relating to operational aspects of the United Nations assistance in the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative; and serve as the primary senior technical focal point for maritime matters and for engagement with external entities, including the International Maritime Organization. The Head of Operations would be supported by three Joint Operations Officer/Watchkeeper (P-3) and two Information Analyst/Watchkeeper (National Professional Officer) to maintain a 24-hour watch room within the Centre, monitoring movements of vessels through the maritime humanitarian corridor and ensuring adherence to agreed procedures and protocols (*ibid.*).

38. With respect to Administration, one Senior Administrative Officer (P-5) would manage all administrative aspects (including human resources, financial, procurement, communications and information technology); functions would include the administrative oversight of secondment and recruitment of local and international personnel, the management of contracts and consultancies, the development of internal administrative procedures and processes, and general financial oversight for the United Nations assistance in the implementation of the Initiative. The Senior Administrative Officer would be supported by one Human Resources Officer (P-3), two National Administration and Finance Officers (National Professional Officer) and three Local level positions (*ibid.*). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the Senior Administrative Officer position (P-5) was required, in view of the innovative and multifunctional nature of the United Nations presence and the need to draw on support and capacities from a range of entities, particularly during the initial deployment phase. This had implications for the administrative and financial processes, and associated delegations, required to establish and maintain the United Nations assistance in Istanbul, which were expected to be significantly more extensive and complex than for a more typical United Nations presence of this scale.

39. In addition, Headquarters support of one Humanitarian Affairs Officer (P-4) is proposed to support engagement and liaison between the Office of the Coordinator and Headquarters entities, including the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other Secretariat offices and departments (*ibid.*). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that this role ensured a dedicated focal point at Headquarters on the Black Sea Grain Initiative, enabling ongoing engagement with Member States, advice to leadership, the preparation of briefing material, and Headquarters-level coordination of support being mobilized from across the Secretariat and from other United Nations entities. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had supplied bridging capacity at Headquarters to support the initial scaling up through the temporary reassignment of a staff member supporting humanitarian field operations, but this was not a sustainable arrangement.

40. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, as at 15 September, the current United Nations footprint in support of the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative included 12 personnel (1 Assistant Secretary-General, 1 D-1, 3 P-5, 2 P-4, 3 P-3 and 2 National Professional Officer), including 1 based in Odesa and 1 based

in New York, of whom a majority were temporarily deployed on temporary duty/surge capacity.

41. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the resource estimate includes a 40 per cent vacancy rate that would account for the phased deployment of staff (ibid., para. 40). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the application of a 40 per cent vacancy rate took into account the anticipated deployment of United Nations personnel from August to December 2022, with the majority of the initial deployments in August and September being covered from surge capacity, that is, two of the five months, whereas the application of the 50 per cent vacancy rate applied to new posts and general temporary assistance positions of a finite duration.

Non-post objects of expenditure

42. Under official travel, the estimate of \$324,200 would provide for the tickets and daily subsistence allowances for staff deployed during the start-up phase, and travel of the United Nations Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative to New York, Geneva, Moscow and Kyiv to attend meetings in support of the Initiative (ibid., para. 41 (a)). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that resources would provide for surge/temporary duty deployments during the start-up phase; as at mid-September, 21 United Nations personnel had been deployed on surge/temporary duty basis for varying durations and from various locations, covering functions including that of the interim United Nations Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Deputy United Nations Coordinator, Spokesperson, Reporting Officer, Joint Operations Officer/Watchkeepers and Senior Administrative Officer. Costs relating to surge/temporary duty deployments of this nature covered air tickets and daily subsistence allowance. The amount also included requirements for anticipated travel until the end of 2022, including international travel by the United Nations Coordinator for the Initiative to the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Geneva and New York. **The Advisory Committee trusts that updated information and justifications on the utilization of official travel resources will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

43. In paragraph 41 (b) of the report, the Secretary-General indicates that contractual services in the amount of \$62,000 would provide for translation, printing and public information services/photography services. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the majority of the proposed amount (\$55,000) related to translation services required during meetings of the Joint Coordination Centre and were contracted locally. The budgeted amount for photography and videography services (\$5,000) was intended primarily to cover short-term contracting arrangements during high-level visits and as part of broader efforts to publicize and promote in a transparent manner the work of the Centre and the assistance of the United Nations. This budget line also covered external printing services, estimated at a total cost of \$2,000.

44. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, under general operating expenses, the estimate of \$51,300 would provide for local transportation including vehicle rental (\$12,000), communications equipment and services (\$14,300), pouch services for shipment of equipment (\$7,000), kits for ship inspectors (helmets, boots, life jackets) (\$10,000), and other operating expenses (\$8,000). In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the estimated amount of \$8,100 under supplies and materials would provide for office supplies and materials. Under furniture and equipment, \$30,000 would provide for office automation and communication equipment, and public information equipment (ibid., para. 41 (d) and (e)).

45. The estimated amount of \$950,000 under grants and contributions would provide for inspection services by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to carry out joint inspections as part of the United Nations assistance for

the Joint Coordination Centre, including the temporary services of a P-4 Inspections Coordinator/Supervisor (*ibid.*, para. 41 (f)). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the grant budget line included resource movements between internal United Nations funds for the provision of services. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was the leading entity for the Black Sea Grain Initiative and was utilizing the inspection services provided by UNODC, an implementing partner. Similar provisions had been made in other cases, for example under section 7, International Court of Justice, whereby grants and contributions included requirements for services provided by the United Nations system of administration of justice under section 1. The Committee was also informed that the ability of UNODC to provide personnel on a non-reimbursable basis to new operations in new locations was limited, as UNODC was, to a large extent, funded on a project basis and UNODC operational staff (including inspectors and similar functions) were attached to existing projects.

46. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that voluntary contributions in kind include office facilities made available to the Joint Coordination Centre by the Government of Türkiye, and the post of Senior Ports Liaison Officer (P-5) provided by WFP on a non-reimbursable basis. The Officer reports to the Head of Operations with a dotted reporting line to the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Kyiv. The Officer fulfils a liaison function with regard to the United Nations participation in the Initiative, including through contact and coordination with Ukrainian port authorities, military forces and logistics companies, as well as with other United Nations entities in Ukraine (*ibid.*, para. 42). The Advisory Committee also notes the non-reimbursable loan of a Special Adviser (D-2) provided by WFP for the Trade Facilitation Initiative. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the Initiatives and expresses its gratitude to the Government of Türkiye and WFP for their support to the Trade Facilitation Initiative and the Black Sea Grain Initiative.**

IV. Conclusion

47. Paragraph 45 of the report sets out the actions requested of the General Assembly, as follows:

(a) To approve additional resource requirements in the amount of \$3,524,600 under the programme budget for 2022, under section 12, Trade and development (\$848,600); section 27, Humanitarian assistance (\$2,481,700); and section 36, Staff assessment (\$194,300), to be offset by an equivalent increase of \$194,300 under income section 1, Income from staff assessment;

(b) To authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding \$3,524,600;

(c) To note that the use of the commitment authority of \$3,524,600 for 2022 will be reported in the financial performance report for 2022;

(d) To note that the Secretary-General intends to submit a revised estimates report for consideration by the General Assembly during the main part of the seventy-seventh session that would include the budgetary requirements for 2023 relating to United Nations activities to mitigate global food insecurity and its humanitarian impact.

48. **Subject to its observations above, the Advisory Committee recommends to the General Assembly the consideration of the proposal of the Secretary-General (see paras. 2–3 above).**