



General Assembly

Distr.: General
1 May 2019

Original: English

Seventy-third session

Agenda item 150

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Observations and recommendations on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Abbreviations	2
I. Introduction	3
II. Reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of peacekeeping operations	3
A. General observations and recommendations	3
B. Planning, budgeting and financial management	7
C. Delivery of support to peacekeeping missions	15
D. Other cross-cutting matters	18
III. Conclusion	24
Annex	
Reports considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on issues related to peacekeeping	25



Abbreviations

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
MINUJUSTH	United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNSOS	United Nations Support Office in Somalia
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

I. Introduction

1. The present report contains the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on cross-cutting issues and addresses matters arising from the reports of the Secretary-General on peacekeeping operations, including his most recent report on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations ([A/73/776](#)), as well as its substantive comments on the findings of the Board of Auditors on the accounts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 (see [A/73/5 \(Vol. II\)](#)) and the related report of the Secretary-General ([A/73/750](#)). Mission-specific findings of the Board are reflected in the respective reports of the Committee on individual peacekeeping missions, as appropriate.¹

2. The list of reports related to peacekeeping considered by the Advisory Committee during its 2019 winter session is provided in the annex to the present report. During its consideration of the cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 26 April 2019.

II. Reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of peacekeeping operations

A. General observations and recommendations

3. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [59/296](#), the annual report of the Secretary-General on the financing of peacekeeping operations provides an overview of the financial and administrative aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The most recent report presents consolidated information on the budget performance for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, the budget proposals for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 and the status of the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund as at 30 June 2018 ([A/73/776](#), sect. XVIII).

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly adopted resolution [70/286](#), its most recent resolution on cross-cutting issues relating to peacekeeping operations, in 2016.

5. In the present report, where applicable, the Advisory Committee reiterates certain observations and conclusions reflected in its last two cross-cutting reports ([A/72/789](#) and [A/71/836](#)) and, in certain cases, further elaborates its views based on its review of the most recent peacekeeping reports. The Committee also provides an analysis of the overall trends in financing and resource requirements for peacekeeping operations. Specific subjects on which the Committee has commented elsewhere, such as in recent reports on the standards of accommodation for air travel ([A/73/779](#)), procurement activities ([A/73/790](#)), human resources management ([A/73/497](#)), the tenth progress report on the enterprise resource planning project (Umoja) ([A/73/607](#)) and the implementation of the information and communications technology strategy ([A/73/759](#)), covering the entire scope of the activities of the Secretariat, are not included in the present report. The Committee's observations and recommendations with respect to individual mission budget proposals, the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy (UNLB), the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda

¹ The reports of the Advisory Committee on individual peacekeeping missions are issued as addenda to the present report.

(RSCE), and the support account are contained in its reports on those subjects (see annex).

1. Operating context and planning assumptions for peacekeeping

6. In his overview report, the Secretary-General states that peacekeeping operations remain one of the most effective political tools available to help conflict-affected countries reach political solutions and sustainable peace. At the same time, peacekeeping operations continue to face increasing challenges, including wide-ranging mandates, complex political and security environments and threats often targeted at United Nations personnel ([A/73/776](#), para. 2).

7. In March 2018, the Secretary-General launched the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, aimed at refocussing peacekeeping, with realistic expectations; making peacekeeping missions stronger and safer; and mobilizing greater support for political solutions and for well-structured, well-equipped and well-trained forces. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the initiative has led to the elaboration of mutually agreed commitments, encapsulated in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which had been endorsed by 151 Member States and four partner organizations by January 2019. According to the Secretary-General, the priorities for peacekeeping for the 2019/20 period reflect the commitments set out in the eight areas of the Declaration, as follows: (a) advance political solutions to conflict and enhance the political impact of peacekeeping; (b) implement the women, peace and security agenda; (c) strengthen the protection provided by peacekeeping operations; (d) support effective performance and accountability by all peacekeeping components; (e) strengthen the impact of peacekeeping on sustaining peace; (f) improve the safety and security of peacekeepers; (g) improve peacekeeping partnerships; and (h) strengthen the conduct of peacekeeping operations and personnel ([A/73/776](#), paras. 5–8). The Secretary-General provides information on each of these priority areas in chapters III–X of his report.

8. In addition to information on financial and human resources for peacekeeping operations, including on budget performance for the 2017/18 period and proposed resources for the 2019/20 period, the report provides information related to the impact of the management reform on peacekeeping operations, transition contexts, personnel issues, budget preparation and financial management ([A/73/776](#), sects. XI–XIV) and concludes, under action to be taken by the General Assembly, with a request that the Assembly take note of the overview report (*ibid.*, para. 242). **The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that the “taking note” by the General Assembly of the overview report of the Secretary-General should not be viewed as an endorsement for any initiatives referred to therein on which no specific action is proposed. Any related resource implications related to such initiatives will be considered on their own merits when presented (see [A/72/789](#), para. 11).**

9. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that between the 2017/18 and 2019/20 periods, MINUSTAH and UNMIL were closed, the latter to be replaced by MINUJUSTH, which itself will transition to a non-peacekeeping United Nations presence, and refers to the ongoing downsizing and transition of UNAMID and the rightsizing of MONUSCO ([A/73/776](#), para. 4). During the 2019/20 period, the geographical focus of United Nations peacekeeping is expected to remain on Africa and the Middle East (*ibid.*, para. 206). The Secretary-General also indicates that recommendations arising from reviews of 10 peacekeeping missions conducted over

the course of 2017 and 2018² have been considered in the preparation of proposed budgets for the respective missions for the 2019/20 period (ibid., para. 171). **The Advisory Committee considers that information summarizing the results of these reviews should be included in future mission budget reports.**

2. Overview of financial and human resources for peacekeeping

10. Table 1 below indicates that the total proposed resource requirements for peacekeeping operations for the financial period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, inclusive of RSCE, UNLB and the support account, are currently estimated at \$6.637 billion, excluding voluntary in-kind contributions.³ This represents a net decrease of \$382.2 million, or 5.4 per cent, when compared to the approved resources for the 2018/19 period. **The Advisory Committee notes that the overall resource level for peacekeeping operations has been decreasing every year since the 2014/15 period.**

11. The table also reveals that the Organization is engaged in 14 active peacekeeping missions (including UNMOGIP and UNTSO, which are funded under the programme budget) as well as UNSOS, the operation that is providing logistical support to AMISOM uniformed personnel in Somalia. For 2019/20, United Nations peacekeeping operations would require a projected deployment of some 95,537 United Nations uniformed personnel, 20,626 military personnel deployed by the African Union in Somalia and 16,394 civilian personnel. **The Advisory Committee notes that, after peaking in 2014/15, the number of uniformed personnel declined over the five following financial periods, while the number of civilian personnel has been decreasing every year since 2012/13** (see also [A/72/789](#), para. 15).

Table 1

Overview of financial and human resources for peacekeeping operations: 2013/14–2019/20

Peacekeeping component	Actual					Approved ^a	Projected ^b
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of ongoing missions and support operations							
Funded by peacekeeping budgets	13	14	14	14	13	12	12
UNSOA/UNSOS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
UNMOGIP and UNTSO	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total, active missions and support operations	16	17	17	17	16	15	15
Financial resources (Millions of United States dollars (gross))							
Peacekeeping missions and UNSOA/UNSOS	7 136.8	7 900.3	7 614.4	7 354.6	6 984.1	6 580.7	6 155.4
RSCE	–	–	–	36.3	32.8	31.4	35.7
UNLB	68.5	66.5	67.1	82.2	80.2	82.5	65.2
Support account (includes enterprise resource planning project)	315.0	324.2	335.9	327.1	325.8	324.7	380.8
Subtotal, peacekeeping operations budgets	7 520.3	8 291.0	8 017.4	7 800.2	7 422.9	7 019.3	6 637.1

² Over 2017 and 2018, independent comprehensive reviews were undertaken of MINURSO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, UNDOF, UNIFICYP, UNISFA, UNMISS and UNSOS, while MONUSCO and UNAMID conducted strategic reviews. In addition, a strategic assessment was conducted for MINUJUSTH in January 2019 while strategic assessments/reviews were planned for MONUSCO and UNAMID during the course of 2019.

³ An additional \$0.9 million in voluntary in-kind contributions is expected in 2019/20.

<i>Peacekeeping component</i>	<i>Actual</i>					<i>Approved^a</i>	<i>Projected^b</i>
	<i>2013/14</i>	<i>2014/15</i>	<i>2015/16</i>	<i>2016/17</i>	<i>2017/18</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>
UNMOGIP and UNTSO	46.6	41.5	44.7	47.3	49.2	45.5	46.2
Total, financial resources	7 566.9	8 332.5	8 062.1	7 847.5	7 472.1	7 064.8	6 683.3
Number of personnel							
Uniformed personnel							
United Nations uniformed personnel ^c	113 326	127 138	120 957	121 571	106 862	96 468	95 537
AMISOM uniformed personnel ^c	22 126	22 126	22 126	21 586	21 586	21 626	20 626
Subtotal, peacekeeping operations budgets	135 452	149 264	143 083	143 157	128 448	118 094	116 163
UNMOGIP and UNTSO	197	197	197	197	197	197	197
Total, uniformed personnel	135 649	149 461	143 280	143 354	128 645	118 291	116 360
Civilian personnel							
Civilian personnel in missions and UNSOA/UNSOS ^d	22 808	22 542	21 134	19 730	18 241	14 760	14 109
Civilian personnel at RSCE	—	—	—	421	427	406	404
Civilian personnel to support missions ^e	1 855	1 882	1 913	1 913	1 885	1 872	1 881
Subtotal, peacekeeping operations budgets	24 663	24 424	23 047	22 064	20 553	17 038	16 394
UNMOGIP and UNTSO	340	323	323	318	318	309	309
Total, civilian personnel	25 003	24 747	23 370	22 382	20 871	17 347	16 703

^a Approved resources reflects authority to enter into commitments for UNAMID for the 6-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2018, as well as additional resources for the 6-month period from 1 January to 30 June 2019. However, the resources are exclusive of the authority to enter into commitments of \$80 million for MONUSCO support for the presidential and legislative elections for the 2018/19 period (see Security Council resolution [2348 \(2017\)](#)) as well as requests for additional authorities to enter into commitments of \$32.6 million, \$28.3 million and \$25.9 million for the 2018/19 period for MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNMISS.

^b Reflects resource requirements in respect of MINUJUSTH and UNAMID for a 6-month period.

^c Highest level of personnel authorized.

^d Excludes resources under the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy (UNLB), the support account for peacekeeping operations for all periods and the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda (RSCE) for the 2016/17 period onwards. From 2011/12 to 2015/16, resource requirements for RSCE were reflected in the budgets of the client missions it served.

^e Posts and positions for UNLB and the support account for peacekeeping operations at Headquarters.

12. In his overview report, the Secretary-General depicts the evolution of financial resources for peacekeeping operations over the 10-year period from 2010/11 to 2019/20, taking into account inflationary factors. The report indicates that the decrease in overall resources since 2015/16 is mainly attributable to the liquidation of UNOCI in 2017 and UNMIL in 2018 and the proposed six-month financing estimates for MINUJUSTH and UNAMID for the 2019/20 period (see [A/73/776](#), table 8 and figure I).

13. The trend in financial resources by major groups of expenditure and support from 2013/14 to 2019/20 is depicted in figure II of the report of the Secretary-General. In terms of the relative proportion between the three major groups of expenditure, as shown in table 9 of the overview report, the share of military and police personnel costs has risen from 44.2 per cent in the 2013/14 period to a forecasted 47.2 per cent in 2019/20, while the share of civilian personnel and operational costs have declined by 1.6 per cent and 1.4 per cent, respectively, over the same period.

14. With regard to the approved resource levels for the 2018/19 financial period, the Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General has sought the concurrence of the Committee to provide additional funding of \$32,600,000 for MINUSMA, owing to increased troop deployment levels, \$28,287,100 for MONUSCO, owing to the additional deployment of one rapidly deployable battalion and unforeseen security costs in support of the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and \$25,933,600 for UNMISS, owing to the increased pace of deployment of uniformed personnel and associated operational costs. In April 2019, the Committee provided its concurrence for the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the 2018/19 period in amounts not to exceed \$32,600,000 for MINUSMA, \$28,287,100 for MONUSCO and \$25,933,600 for UNMISS. The Committee notes that if these requests for authorities to enter into commitments are taken into account, the estimated resource level in respect of peacekeeping operations will increase by \$86.8 million, to \$7,106.0 million for the 2018/19 period.

15. The Advisory Committee notes that, beginning in the 2017/18 period, there has been an increase in the number and frequency of requests to enter into financial commitments additional to the mission resource levels initially approved by the General Assembly. In the 2017/18 period, there were five such instances, with the ceiling for the authorities to spend totalling \$180.6 million (A/73/776, table 12). For 2018/19, an authority to enter into commitments of \$80 million was approved by the Assembly for MONUSCO in its resolution 72/293 and, as indicated in paragraph 14 above, a further three requests for commitment authority have been approved by the Committee for MINUSMA, MONUSCO⁴ and UNMISS.

16. In addition, overall resource requirements and personnel levels are continually affected by developments on the ground, the consideration of different situations by the Security Council and the actions of the General Assembly. Specifically, on 12 April, the Council adopted resolution 2466 (2019), authorizing a final extension of the mandate for MINUJUSTH through to 15 October 2019 and its subsequent transition to a non-peacekeeping presence. In addition, the Council has expressed its intention to review, by 30 June 2019, the scope and pace of the reconfiguration of UNAMID and the modalities for the drawdown of the operation during the latter part of the 2019/20 period. Excluding MINUJUSTH and UNAMID, the budget proposals for other continuing peacekeeping missions with full-year budget proposals amount to \$6,315.3 million for the 2019/20 period, representing a net increase of 2.2 per cent (or \$133.0 million) compared to the apportionment for the 2018/19 period (A/73/776, para. 211). The Advisory Committee points out that the adjusted variance of \$133 million does not include the requests for commitment authorities under consideration for the 2018/19 period (see para. 14 above).

B. Planning, budgeting and financial management

1. Budget performance for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018

Budget implementation

17. In his overview report, the Secretary-General indicates that, for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, expenditures of \$7,422.9 million in 14 active peacekeeping missions, UNSOS, UNLB, RSCE and the support account for peacekeeping operations were made against a total appropriation for the period of \$7,496.3 million, with an unencumbered balance of \$73.4 million (A/73/776, table 20

⁴ For MONUSCO, the Advisory Committee concurred with the additional request to enter into commitments on the basis that expenditures would be charged against the balance of the \$80 million commitment authority approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/293.

and para. 231). This reflects an overall budget implementation rate of 99.0 per cent, as compared to a rate of 98.6 per cent for the preceding period (2016/17). **The Advisory Committee notes a higher rate of budget implementation in the 2017/18 period, as reflected in table 11 and figure V of the overview report.**

18. The Secretary-General also indicates that in addition to their approved budgets for the 2017/18 period, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNDOF and UNMISS received authorities to enter into commitments totalling \$180.6 million, resulting from changes to mandates from the Security Council, deteriorating security environments and other substantial changes in the cost parameters and assumptions applied in the budget; the overall utilization of the commitment authorities amounted to \$127.9 million ([A/73/776](#), table 12 and paras. 192–193). A full analysis of actual expenditures for the 2017/18 budget period as compared to the apportionment and the variances between them is also contained in the overview report (*ibid.*, annex II, table 1). The main factors for variances in resource requirements are also described in detail by category of expenditure (*ibid.*, annex II, table 2) and by peacekeeping components (*ibid.*, annex II, tables 3–4).

19. In his overview report, the Secretary-General also provides information on the redeployment of resources by group of expenditure, depicting a consistent trend over the last five years to cover higher-than-budgeted civilian personnel costs under group II ([A/73/776](#), figure VII). In 2017/18, such redeployment, representing 8.31 per cent of approved resources compared to 4.98 percent in the 2016/17 period, was mainly attributable to additional requirements for civilian personnel costs in MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNSOS. A redeployment of approved resources from group III, operational costs, was possible because of reduced requirements for air operations, lower freight costs, lower actual costs of unmanned aerial systems and reprioritized requirements for construction. There was also an inflow to all groups of expenditures related to the authorities to enter into commitment, as described in paragraph 18 above (see *ibid.*, paras. 200–202).

Observations of the Board of Auditors for the 2017/18 performance period

20. In its report on the on the accounts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, the Board of Auditors states that its audit was conducted in conformity with article VII of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and the International Standards on Auditing (see [A/73/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), para. 1). The Board reviewed the peacekeeping accounts and operations at peacekeeping headquarters, the 14 active and the 33 completed missions and the six special-purpose accounts (*ibid.*, para. 3, and annex I). In the opinion of the Board, the financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the United Nations peacekeeping operations and their financial performance and cash flows as at 30 June 2018 in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

21. Detailed information on the implementation of previous recommendations of the Board is provided in paragraphs 8 to 13 and annex II of the most recent report of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations ([A/73/5 \(Vol. II\)](#)) and information on the implementation of the recommendations made in that report is presented in the related report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board ([A/73/750](#), sect. II). For the financial period 2017/18, the Board issued 52 recommendations (including 17 main recommendations), compared with 75 recommendations (including 32 main recommendations) for the period 2016/17 and 55 recommendations (including 17 main recommendations) for the period 2015/16. The Board indicates that, in the previous four financial years (2012/13–2015/16), it issued a total of 198 recommendations, 15 of which had been overtaken by events. Out of the remaining

183 recommendations, 168 (92 per cent) had been implemented and 14 were still under implementation: one recommendation had not been implemented (A/73/5 (Vol. II), para. 10, and annex II). The Board indicated that in some cases recommendations require a longer time to implement (*ibid.*, para. 11). **As a matter of principle, the Advisory Committee stresses that every effort should be made to improve the rate and timeliness of the implementation of the accepted recommendations of the Board of Auditors.**

22. **The Advisory Committee notes that there are certain matters in the latest report of the Board of Auditors on peacekeeping operations that it considers to be policy matters under the purview of Member States.** In the view of the Committee, the matters include the development of selection criteria for the force generation manual (A/73/5 (Vol. II), para. 144), taking into account the contributions of unformed personnel to peacekeeping missions, and the inclusion of performance criteria in the memorandums of understanding between the United Nations and Member States (*ibid.*, para. 151).

23. In addition, the Advisory Committee notes difficulties in the implementation of two prior recommendations of the Board of Auditors concerning the implementation of a centralized air operations authority, including central approval of air operations budgets for strategic flights (A/73/5 (Vol. II), para. 266), and the delegation of coordination and tasking authority for the strategic air operations of all peacekeeping and special political missions to the Strategic Air Operations Centre at UNLB (*ibid.*, para. 273)

24. Detailed information regarding the financial position of peacekeeping operations for the 2017/18 period is provided in the report of the Board of Auditors (A/73/5 (Vol. II), paras. 20–21), including information, as at 30 June for each year from 2014 to 2018, on the four financial ratios, namely: the assets-to-liabilities ratio; the current ratio; the quick ratio; and the cash ratio (*ibid.*, table II.6): that information is reflected in table 2 below.

Table 2

Financial ratios for peacekeeping operations as at: 30 June 2014–30 June 2018

<i>Ratios</i>	<i>30 June 2018</i>	<i>30 June 2017</i>	<i>30 June 2016</i>	<i>30 June 2015</i>	<i>30 June 2014</i>
Assets-to-liabilities ratio^a	1.19	1.19	1.17	1.21	1.25
Total assets: total liabilities					
Current ratio^b	1.25	1.22	1.17	1.09	0.97
Current assets: current liabilities					
Quick ratio^c	1.08	1.06	1.04	0.96	0.80
Cash + short-term investments + accounts receivable: current liabilities					
Cash ratio^d	0.45	0.66	0.60	0.56	0.51
Cash + short-term investments: current liabilities					

^a A high ratio (generally at least 1) indicates an entity's ability to meet its overall obligations.

^b A high ratio (generally at least 1) indicates an entity's ability to pay off its current liabilities.

^c The quick ratio is more conservative than the current ratio, because it excludes inventory and other current assets, which are more difficult to turn into cash. A higher ratio means a more liquid current position.

^d The cash ratio is an indicator of an entity's liquidity; it measures the amount of cash, cash equivalents or invested funds that are in current assets to cover current liabilities.

25. The Advisory Committee notes the conclusion of the Board of Auditors that, overall, the financial position of peacekeeping operations was sound during the

financial year 2017/18, with sufficient resources to sustain core operations, although it also indicates that a delay in the payment of assessed contributions led to challenges with regard to cash management, in particular for two missions. The Board states further that, as at 30 June 2018, current assets were 1.25 times current liabilities and total assets were 1.19 times total liabilities. Whereas the trend of slight increases of the current ratio and the quick ratio continued, the assets-to-liabilities ratio did not change compared with the 2016/17 period and the cash ratio decreased significantly, by 31.8 per cent, indicating a decline in liquidity (A/73/5 (Vol. II), para. 20).

26. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information by the Secretariat on the same four financial ratios as at 31 January for each year from 2016 to 2019, which is set out in table 3 below. From a review of information provided, the Committee notes that, as at 31 January, for each year from 2016 to 2019, all ratios were above 1.

Table 3

Financial ratios for peacekeeping operations as at 31 January: 2016–2019

<i>Ratios</i>	<i>31 Jan. 2019</i>	<i>31 Jan. 2018</i>	<i>31 Jan. 2017</i>	<i>31 Jan. 2016</i>
Assets-to-liabilities ratio	2.58	2.61	2.74	1.21
Current ratio	4.83	5.33	4.62	5.65
Quick ratio	4.30	4.69	4.07	5.10
Cash ratio	1.19	2.35	2.67	2.02

27. Regarding the management of mission assets, the Board of Auditors observed that, following the migration of data from the Galileo asset and inventory management system to Umoja, a number of data quality issues occurred, such as different items being represented by a single product identification code in Umoja. This resulted in the incorrect presentation of inventory values in the financial statements, as it was not possible to identify materials through their unique product identification codes in the material master record. The Board also reported that the Secretariat had initiated a related project in order to improve the reliability of data (A/73/5 (Vol. II), paras. 28–39). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the objective of this project is to remediate data quality issues in peacekeeping and special political missions through assessing inventory data (quantity, description and value). It is anticipated that, owing to the complex and cross-cutting nature of the project, the project will be implemented in stages over multiple years. **The Committee intends to monitor the progress of the physical inventory and reconciliation optimization project in the context of future budget and performance reports of peacekeeping operations and looks forward to an update on the project in the next report of the Board.**

28. Cases of fraud and presumptive fraud in peacekeeping operations are addressed in the report of the Board of Auditors (A/73/5 (Vol. II), paras. 452–454, and annex IV), which reveals that, in 2017/18, the Office of the Controller and the Office of Internal Oversight Services reported 115 cases of fraud or presumptive fraud to the Board, involving an amount of \$16.26 million, compared with 39 cases involving an amount of \$9.40 million in 2016/17, and 27 cases involving an amount of \$4.54 million in 2015/16. The Board indicates that those cases include cases of fraud or presumptive fraud related to theft, extortion, billing irregularities/bribery, leave entitlements and education grant claims (ibid., annex IV). **The Advisory Committee is of the view that additional efforts should be made to mitigate the risk of fraud in peacekeeping operations and to enhance accountability.**

29. Regarding the recovery and disclosure of costs for services provided by peacekeeping missions to each other and/ or to external clients, for example to non-governmental organizations or implementing partners, the Board of Auditors observed that such costs are not identified in mission budgets and will therefore be reported as expenditures from regular, mandated activities. The Board observed that there is a need to formalize the cost recovery methodology and to disclose these transactions in the Umoja peacekeeping cost recovery fund in order to ensure transparency and accountability (A/73/5 (Vol. II), paras. 61–71). **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendation of the Board of Auditors that the Secretary-General should issue comprehensive guidance on cost recoveries, including responsibilities, agreements and contractual relationships, budgeting, pricing, recovering costs and processing in Umoja.**

2. Information on the current financial period

30. In his overview report, the Secretary-General provides a synopsis of approved budgets for the 2018/19 period, including adjustments approved by the General Assembly at its seventy-third session for UNAMID, which had previously received an authority to enter into commitments for six months until 31 December 2018, pending consideration of a revised budget (A/73/776, paras. 176–180, and table 5). As indicated in paragraph 15 above, the figures for 2018/19 do not include an authority to enter into commitments for MONUSCO of \$80 million for support to the presidential and legislative elections nor \$86.8 million in additional requests for commitment authority subsequently received during the current financial period.

3. Proposed budgets for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

31. Information on the total proposed resource requirements for 2019/20 for 12 active missions plus UNSOS, RSCE, UNLB and the support account for peacekeeping operations, is provided in table 4 below.⁵ The total of proposed resource requirements for United Nations peacekeeping amounts to \$6,637 085,700 for the 2019/20 period, of which peacekeeping missions and UNSOS comprise \$6,155,372,700 and the support elements comprise \$481,713,000. When the requirements for RSCE, UNLB and the support account are excluded, the proposed budgetary level for the 12 missions plus UNSOS represents a decrease of \$425,311,200, or 6.5 per cent, compared with the apportionment for the 2018/19 period. Concurrent with the proposed decrease in resource requirements for missions in the 2019/20 period, the Advisory Committee notes that the proposed requirements for the support elements in 2019/20 represent an increase of \$43,121,700, or 9.8 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2018/19.

32. As mentioned above, the budget proposals do not include full-year provisions for MINUJUSTH and UNAMID and the comparative amounts for the 2018/19 period do not reflect the authority to enter into commitments for MONUSCO approved by the General Assembly and additional requests for authorities to enter into commitments for the current period (see paras. 12, 14 and 16 above).

33. The Advisory Committee considers that further efforts should be undertaken to provide a comparable baseline in future overview reports to facilitate the analysis of resource requirements and the identification of trends over different budget periods.

⁵ Excluding UNMOGIP and UNTSO, which are funded under the regular budget.

Table 4
Proposed resource requirements for the 2019/20 period by peacekeeping component

(Thousands of United States dollars. Budget year is from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.)

Peacekeeping component	Apportionment (2018/19) ^a	Proposed budget (2019/20) ^b	Variance	
			Amount	Percentage
MINUJUSTH	121 455.9	51 850.1	(69 605.8)	(57.3)
MINURSO	52 350.8	56 369.4	4 018.6	7.7
MINUSCA	930 211.9	925 498.9	(4 713.0)	(0.5)
MINUSMA	1 074 718.9	1 149 778.8	75 059.9	7.0
MONUSCO	1 114 619.5	1 023 267.6	(91 351.9)	(8.2)
UNAMID	715 522.7	269 920.9	(445 601.8)	(62.3)
UNDOF	60 295.1	70 092.0	9 796.9	16.2
UNFICYP	52 938.9	51 410.7	(1 528.2)	(2.9)
UNIFIL	474 406.7	485 178.3	10 771.6	2.3
UNISFA	263 858.1	267 918.4	4 060.3	1.5
UNMIK	37 192.7	37 246.7	54.0	0.1
UNMISS	1 124 960.4	1 197 334.3	72 373.9	6.4
UNSOS	558 152.3	569 506.6	11 354.3	2.0
Subtotal missions	6 580 683.9	6 155 372.7	(425 311.2)	(6.5)
UNLB ^c	82 448.9	65 237.2	(17 211.7)	(20.9)
RSCE ^d	31 438.9	35 708.3	4 269.4	13.6
Support account for peacekeeping operations ^e	324 703.5	380 767.5	56 064.0	17.3
Subtotal, support elements	438 591.3	481 713.0	43 121.7	9.8
Subtotal financial resources	7 019 275.2	6 637 085.7	(382 189.5)	(5.4)
Voluntary contributions in kind (budgeted)	1 111.2	956.4	(154.8)	(13.9)
Total resources	7 020 386.4	6 638 042.1	(382 344.3)	(5.4)

^a Exclusive of authority to enter into commitments of \$80.0 million for the provision of MONUSCO support for the presidential and legislative elections for the 2018/19 period.

^b Reflects requirements in respect of MINUJUSTH and UNAMID for a 6-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2019.

^c Inclusive of requirements related to operating and maintenance costs of the enterprise resource planning system in the amount of \$15.8 million for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

^d Inclusive of requirements in the amount of \$595,500 to be charged against the appropriation for the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 under section 3, Political and peacebuilding affairs, approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions [72/286](#) and [73/279](#).

^e Inclusive of requirements for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 for: the enterprise resource planning project (\$19.4 million); information and systems security (\$0.8 million); the global service delivery model (\$0.9 million); the Global Shared Service Centres (\$19.9 million); the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (\$3.9 million); and the maintenance and support costs for the enterprise resource planning system (\$21.4 million).

34. Table 14 of the report of the Secretary-General provides information on the main factors for variance in the resource requirements for the 2019/20 period compared to 2018/19, including a detailed analysis of variances by class of expenditure and peacekeeping component ([A/73/766](#), annex I, tables 2 and 5). The Advisory Committee notes that most expenditure lines show decreased requirements for 2019/20, including for military contingents (\$138.7 million), air operations

(\$69.3 million) and national staff (\$61.9 million). For three expenditure lines, increases are proposed, namely: a \$3.4 million increase under facilities and infrastructure, mainly due to increased requirements in MINUSMA, UNISFA and UNMISS; a \$3.2 million increase under communications and information technology, mainly due to investments in strengthened security systems in MINUSMA and UNSOS, as well as additional costs for hardware, licenses and Umoja support costs reflected in the support account; and a \$0.3 million increase under marine operations, mainly attributable to the requirement for additional sea containers in MONUSCO and UNMISS.

35. The Advisory Committee also notes that the budget proposals for the 2019/20 period reflect the budgetary practice of charging enterprise-wide or cross-cutting peacekeeping initiatives to the support account for peacekeeping operations. This includes amounts of \$19.4 million for the enterprise resource planning project (Umoja), \$19.9 million to support the start-up and operationalization of the centres envisaged under the Secretary-General's proposal for a global service delivery model⁶ and \$21.4 million for the annual maintenance and support costs for Umoja, which has been previously reflected in the budget of UNLB in the amount of \$15.8 million approved for the 2018/19 period.⁷ The Committee's observations and recommendations with respect to these resource requirements are included in its report on the support account for peacekeeping operations ([A/73/849](#)).

36. Information on cost factors contributing to changes in resource requirements for the 2019/20 budget period, including fuel price and exchange rate fluctuations, vacancy factors, civilian personnel incumbency trends and staff costs, is set out in the report of the Secretary-General ([A/73/776](#), paras. 216–225). Figure XI depicts trends in average fuel prices from January 2017 to December 2018, while figures XII and XIII show the performance of the United States dollar against the euro and the CFA franc, respectively, over the 2018 calendar year.

37. With respect to vacancy rates, information on the planned and actual vacancy rates for each mission is provided in table 18 of the overview report. The Secretary-General indicates that vacancy rates with respect to the computation of personnel costs are based on actual personnel deployment for the 2017/18 period and the first half of the 2018/19 period, as well as the expenditure pattern of missions and projected changes in mission levels of personnel and mission-specific circumstances in relation to the deployment of uniformed personnel and the recruitment of civilian staff ([A/73/776](#), para. 220). The Secretary-General also indicates that the vacancy rates for civilian personnel are mainly projected to decrease owing to the maturity of missions and operational circumstances, as well as the effect of international staff separating from closing or downsizing missions being recruited to fill vacant posts in other active missions (*ibid.*, para. 223). Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with updated information with respect to the actual civilian personnel vacancy rates in each mission.

38. The Advisory Committee notes that for the majority of civilian staffing categories, the budgeted vacancy rates for 2018/19 exceed the actual rates experienced in missions for the period from 1 July 2018 through 28 February 2019. The Committee also notes from its analysis of variances between budgeted and actual expenditures for the prior budget period (2017/18) that a number of missions experienced lower-than-budgeted vacancy rates during this time (see [A/73/776](#), annex II, table 4). As mentioned in paragraph 19 above, there has also been a consistent trend in recent years of redeploying approved resources within budget cycles to cover

⁶ [A/73/706](#) is the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the global service delivery model for the United Nations Secretariat.

⁷ [A/73/774](#), para. 140.

shortfalls in civilian personnel costs. In the view of the Committee, such redeployments may be due, in part, to unrealistic vacancy factors being applied within the approved mission budgets.

39. The Advisory Committee considers that further efforts are required to improve the accuracy and consistency of vacancy rate factors applied in mission budgets and to ensure that approved rates are based on a realistic set of assumptions. The Committee intends to continue monitoring this factor in its examination of future budget proposals for peacekeeping operations. Additional comments on the vacancy factors proposed in each of the mission budgets for the 2019/20 period are contained in the Committee reports on individual peacekeeping operations.

40. With regard to the staffing resources within integrated peacekeeping missions dedicated to supporting the Resident Coordinator, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that four missions have a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General who also acts as a Resident Coordinator (MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNMISS). In all four missions, the salary of the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator is part of a 50 per cent cost-sharing arrangement between the mission budgets and the country teams. In the case of MINUSCA and UNMISS, the Committee notes that the Resident Coordinator continues to perform the function of the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), an arrangement that appears to be inconsistent with the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. In that resolution, the Assembly decided to create a coordination function for the United Nations development system that involved a separation of the functions of the resident coordinator from those of the resident representative of UNDP (see resolution [72/279](#), para. 8, [A/73/769](#), para. 41, and [A/73/772](#), para. 45, along with the additional comments of the Committee in its report [A/73/755/Add. 12](#), para. 24).

41. From the information provided to it, the Advisory Committee notes that staffing levels for the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General vary considerably between the four missions. In the case of MINUSCA, the Committee notes that two additional posts (1 P-4 Special Assistant and 1 Field Service Administrative Assistant) are sought to support the Deputy Special Representative within the context of the mission budget proposal for 2019/20 ([A/73/772](#), paras. 45–49, and table 3). In MONUSCO, the Committee was informed that the two posts dedicated to supporting the Deputy Special Representative in her function as Resident Coordinator, administered by UNDP, are funded from the budget of the Development Operations Coordination Office. For MINUSMA, staff dedicated to the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator include: one P-5 and one P-4, both serving as Special Assistants, one Field Service Staff Assistant and two national General Service posts. For UNMISS, the Office of the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator is staffed with one P-4 Special Assistant, one P-4 and one P-3 serving as Coordination Officers, one P-2 Associate Humanitarian Affairs Officer, two Field Service Administrative Assistants and two national General Service staff.

42. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in its resolution [73/279](#) A, the General Assembly endorsed the Committee's recommendation, put forth in the context of its most recent report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives, requesting the Secretary-General to undertake a review of the proposed funding arrangements for the double-or triple hatted Deputy Special Representatives and further determine how the related operational costs should be budgeted for those positions in both the concerned special political missions and peacekeeping operations, with a view to adopting a consistent approach

(see [A/73/498](#), para. 27). The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to expedite completion of the results of the aforementioned review. The Committee intends to keep this matter under review in the context of its consideration of future mission budget proposals for both peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

C. Delivery of support to peacekeeping missions

1. Backstopping requirements

43. In his report, the Secretary-General provides information on trends in financial and human resources for peacekeeping operations ([A/73/776](#), paras. 181–188), including details comparing the financial resources allocated to the support account, UNLB and RSCE against resources for operations under peacekeeping mission budgets since the 2013/14 period (ibid., table 10 and figure III), referred to in the overview report as the field support ratio.⁸ Table 10 indicates that for 2019/20, while the overall cost of peacekeeping missions and UNSOS is estimated at \$6.16 billion, the combined resource requirements proposed for supporting them (from the support account, UNLB and RSCE) total approximately \$415.3 million. The Advisory Committee notes, however, that this figure does not include the expenditure and resource requirements for the peacekeeping share of enterprise-wide initiatives (ibid., table 10, footnote a/). As indicated in table 4 above, with these costs included, the cost of projected support elements increases to \$481.7 million for 2019/20, representing an increase of \$43.1 million, or 9.8 per cent, over the appropriation for the 2018/19 period.

44. According to the data contained in table 10 of the overview report (which excludes the costs of the enterprise-wide initiatives), the average field support ratio has risen steadily, from 5.19 per cent in 2014/15 to an estimated 6.75 per cent in the 2019/20 period. The support specifically provided from Departments and offices at Headquarters, the support account ratio, has also risen over this period of time, from 3.86 per cent in 2014/15 to an estimated 5.11 per cent in 2019/20.

45. The Advisory Committee notes that, while the Secretary-General indicates that the requirements for human resources in backstopping entities have remained stable ([A/73/776](#), para. 205), the report does not provide any analysis or explanation for the above-mentioned trend. The Committee recalls that, at the time of its consideration of the overview report for the 2018/19 period, it had noted that, according to the Secretary-General, the support account showed a lag in responding to changes in the overall level of resource requirements for peacekeeping operations, in particular since reductions in uniformed personnel and/or the closure of missions did not immediately translate into a reduced workload for backstopping functions (see [A/72/789](#), para. 58). The Committee also recalls its previous observation that the backstopping ratio does not appear to have a strict correlation with either overall uniformed or civilian personnel levels in missions (ibid., para. 59, and [A/70/742](#), para. 61). With regard to the backstopping funded from the support account and the impact of the recent establishment of two new Headquarters departments, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support, the Committee notes the Secretary-General's intention to submit a proposal for a clear and consistent approach to financing the two new Departments from the support account at the second part of the General Assembly's seventy-fourth session (see [A/73/793](#), para. 8).

⁸ Previously referred to as the backstopping ratio.

46. The Advisory Committee stresses again that the implementation of global and regional efficiency initiatives, such as the global field support strategy, the establishment of RSCE and the implementation of Umoja should now be having a positive impact on the ratio for the provision of support to peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, in view of the significant reductions in both uniformed and civilian components deployed to peacekeeping operations since 2014/15, the Committee would have expected a reduction in this ratio, reflecting a more efficient provision of support services over time (see also [A/72/789](#), para. 60, and [A/71/836](#), para. 64).

47. The Advisory Committee notes with concern the persistent increases in the field support ratio and the support account ratio since 2014/15 and the absence of any adequate analysis in the overview report of the Secretary-General. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive analysis of this matter, with a view to establishing indicative linkages between the levels of resource requirements for peacekeeping operations overall and field support and support account levels, and to report thereon in the next overview report, together with related resourcing adjustments (see also the observations and recommendations of the Committee on the proposed budget for 2019/20 for the support account ([A/73/849](#))).

48. The Advisory Committee notes that an examination of the backstopping ratio is closely related to scalability in the resource levels for UNLB, RSCE and the support account for peacekeeping operations. The Committee's observations and recommendations thereon are included in its reports on the proposed resource requirements for these operations for the 2019/20 period (see [A/73/755/Add.9](#) and [A/73/755/Add.14](#) and [A/73/849](#)). One aspect of scalability which, in the view of the Committee, has not been closely examined, is the degree to which the mission support components within individual missions should be scalable in relation to the size and complexity of the other mission components. This becomes particularly relevant when missions are reconfiguring, downsizing or transitioning. **The Committee is of the view that budget proposals should demonstrate the scalability of mission support components, including their staffing and operational costs, in relation to the changing level of other mission components, particularly during downsizing or reconfiguration.**

2. Mission support structures

49. In its last two cross-cutting reports, the Advisory Committee has made observations and recommendations concerning the repeated changes to mission structures and related post/position locations and functions from one year to the next with no apparent link to changes in mandates or operational circumstances ([A/72/789](#), para. 69, and [A/71/836](#), para. 125). In particular, the Committee had noted large numbers of post redeployments and reassignments within and between mission components, particularly within divisions or offices providing mission support ([A/72/789](#), para. 68, and [A/71/836](#), para. 121). The Secretary-General indicated, in his previous overview report, that there had been a concerted effort to ensure consistency among the functions and structures of mission support elements across field missions, while recognizing that some flexibility may be necessary depending on unique operating environments. Initial guidance had been issued by Headquarters in December 2014, supplemented by additional guidance for the 2018/19 budget period, reflecting ongoing developments, such as the implementation of the supply chain management initiative, the further development of shared service provision concepts, the enhancement of Umoja and the promulgation of an environmental strategy ([A/72/770](#), para. 93). Missions have been requested to standardize their

support structures over two financial periods (2018/19 and 2019/20) ([A/72/789](#), para. 67).

50. For the 2019/20 budget period, for the third year in a row, the Advisory Committee notes, once again, large numbers of post redeployments and reassignments in the mission budget proposals. Some of these relate to the above-mentioned standardization exercise (including MINURSO, MINUSCA, UNDOF, UNFICYP, UNMIK and UNMISS), while others are attributed to the impact of recent comprehensive assessments, staffing reviews or reconfiguration initiatives (including MONUSCO and UNSOS). The Committee also recalls that the backstopping support structures at Headquarters have also been restructured as of January 2019 as a result of the implementation of the management reform. In his overview report, the Secretary-General refers, for example, to the recent establishment of the Office of Supply Chain Management within the Department of Operational Support and the resulting consolidation of logistics, procurement and uniformed capabilities functions at Headquarters (see [A/73/776](#), para. 68).

51. The Advisory Committee notes that multiple restructuring exercises of the support component have been undertaken in peacekeeping operations in recent years and it is of the view that repeated changes to mission structures and post/position locations and functions from one year to the next with no apparent link to changes in mandates or operational circumstances may affect the clarity and continuity of lines of accountability and control and have an impact on staff performance. Furthermore, frequent movement of posts and positions has an impact on the transparency of related resource requirements and the attribution of costs to specific activities within the mission, making comparisons across financial periods challenging.

52. The Advisory Committee considers that, after completion of the ongoing restructuring exercises of the support components, there is a need for a period of stabilization and an assessment of the effectiveness of the reorganized structures, information on which should be included in the next overview report. The Committee comments further on this matter, where applicable, in its reports on individual mission budget proposals.

53. On a related matter, the Advisory Committee also notes that adaptations to the support structures have led to some proposed changes in the names attached to certain organizational units. For example, in the budget proposals for the 2019/20 period in RSCE it is proposed to rename the Regional Information and Communication Technology Service as the Regional Field Technology Service, while at UNLB it is proposed to rename the Service for Geospatial Information and Telecommunication Technologies as the Global Technology Service (see [A/73/764](#), para. 11, and [A/73/774](#), para. 115). **The Committee considers that the rationale and justifications for these changes are not convincing and that the approach taken is somewhat ad hoc and fragmented. In the view of the Committee, there is a need for consistency in and oversight of the naming of comparable operational structures.**

3. Supply chain management

54. The supply chain management initiative of the Secretary-General has been the subject of extensive comments by the Advisory Committee in observations contained in its reports on: the last three cross-cutting reports of the Secretary-General; the management reform proposals of the Secretary-General; and the most recent report of the Secretary-General on procurement activities.⁹ The Committee has repeatedly

⁹ [A/70/742](#), [A/71/836](#), [A/72/7/Add.49](#), [A/72/789](#), and [A/73/790](#).

stressed the need for a comprehensive description of project costs and benefits to be provided to the General Assembly and has also stressed the importance of drawing lessons from other organizational initiatives (see [A/72/789](#), para. 77, [A/71/836](#), para. 98, and [A/70/742](#), para. 87). The Board of Auditors, in its report on the financial statements for peacekeeping operations for the 2017/18 period, also provides comments on the initiative, particularly on the related alignment of support structures in missions and on project management aspects of the initiative (see [A/73/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), paras. 299–321).

55. In his overview report, the Secretary-General indicates that the supply chain management approach was first introduced to ensure the provision to field missions of “the right products and services at the right time, to the right place, at the right cost”. In terms of its prospective impact, the Secretary-General indicates that the approach will assist in identifying global requirements for goods and services, with accompanying analysis and a determination of optimal sourcing options and opportunities for enhanced and consolidated delivery. Various other enhancements are under development, including targeted training programmes, development of a performance management framework and expanded vendor outreach and registration ([A/73/776](#), paras. 69–71).

56. **The Advisory Committee notes that no detail pertaining to the costs and benefits of this initiative were provided in the context of the latest overview report nor in the budget reports with respect to UNLB, RSCE or the support account for peacekeeping operations. In the view of the Committee, the information provided in the overview report on supply chain management lacks clarity and precision in terms of the direct impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the logistical support provided to field missions, and details on the individual components of the supply chain management approach lack specificity** (see also [A/72/789](#), para. 77, and [A/71/836](#), para. 98).

57. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to carry out a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis on the supply chain management initiative and report thereon in the next overview report.**

D. Other cross-cutting matters

1. Programmatic activities within peacekeeping operations

58. The inclusion of programmatic activities within peacekeeping mission budgets has been the subject of extensive comments of the Advisory Committee in its two previous cross-cutting reports (see [A/72/789](#), chap. II.E; [A/71/836](#), chap. II.F). The Committee has noted the expansion of programmatic tools within peacekeeping missions and the related increase in programmatic activities funded from peacekeeping mission budgets during recent years ([A/72/789](#), para. 102). The Committee also recalls that the General Assembly, in paragraph 68 of its resolution [70/286](#) on cross-cutting issues, recognized that the inclusion of programmatic funds in mission budgets on a case-by-case basis is intended to support the effective implementation of mandated tasks and requested the Secretary-General to clearly and consistently present the cost of such activities when they are included in future mission budgets. Furthermore, in paragraph 12 of its resolution [72/290](#), on the financing of MINUSCA, the Assembly incorporated cross-cutting elements by underlining the critical contribution that programmatic activities make to the implementation of the mandates of the Mission and that all such activities must be directly linked to the mandates of the Mission. In the same resolution, the Assembly also encouraged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to develop an

accountability framework for the performance of entities that are not a part of the United Nations Secretariat when they perform activities funded by the Mission resources, excluding the provision of goods and services through contractual arrangements (resolution 72/290, para. 11).

59. Details of the proposed resources for programmatic activities included in peacekeeping operations are contained in annex IX of the overview report. For the 2019/20 period, the requirements for programmatic activities in 11 missions are estimated in the amount of \$217.8 million, of which \$152.9 million relates to mine action activities. Other main categories of programmatic activity include: activities in support of the rule of law, human rights, security institutions and security sector reform (\$20.2 million); community stabilization and violence reduction projects (\$18.2 million); and activities related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes (\$9.2 million). The Advisory Committee notes that annex IX includes a category of “other” programmatic activities amounting to an estimated \$13.05 million, \$11.3 million of which relate to activities to be undertaken in UNAMID.

60. In his overview report, the Secretary-General also states that guidance concerning programmatic activities has been issued to missions providing direction on the planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of programmatic activities. In addition, a template setting out the terms and conditions between missions and prospective implementing partners has been established, which includes the general responsibilities of the implementing partner, financial arrangements and reporting obligations ([A/73/776](#), para. 240).

61. The Advisory Committee notes that the report of the Secretary-General continues to lack detailed information relating to the scope of programmatic activities included in peacekeeping mission budget proposals and the criteria for their inclusion. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in future overview reports: (a) detailed explanations of the types of programmatic activity to be funded by peacekeeping missions; (b) justifications that the activities support implementation of mandated tasks in each mission; (c) the comparative advantage of each mission in the delivery of these activities, as well as those of the partners selected to implement them; and (d) the contractual arrangements in place with implementing partners, including clear identification of any related administrative overhead charges.

62. Information on mine-action activities being undertaken within the context of peacekeeping operations is set out in the overview report ([A/73/776](#), paras. 92–96). The Secretary-General indicates that the work undertaken by the United Nations Mine Action Service in support of peace operations falls into three broad categories: (a) risk mitigation and clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war; (b) weapons and ammunition management; and (c) improvised explosive device threat mitigation. Annex VIII of the report also provides details on planned mine-action activities for the 2019/20 period, including the types of activity foreseen in each mission, key expected outcomes, proposed resource requirements and designated implementing partners or agencies. It is indicated that the proposed resource requirements relating to mine action activities amount to \$152.9 million for 10 missions, compared with the \$155.8 million approved for the 2018/19 period. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on the amounts budgeted and spent on demining activities within peacekeeping missions between 2014/15 and 2018/19, along with mission-specific details concerning the implementation of activities. **The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide more detailed justifications in future mission budget proposals with respect to mine action activities.**

2. Deployment, use and oversight of unmanned aerial systems

63. In its resolution [70/286](#) (para. 36), the General Assembly, inter alia, reaffirmed its request to the Secretary-General to ensure consistency, transparency and cost-efficiency in the budgeting for unmanned aerial systems in individual peacekeeping operation budget proposals, and also reaffirmed its request to the Secretary-General to include comprehensive information in the next overview report, including on lessons learned from the utilization of unmanned aerial systems in peacekeeping operations.

64. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the use of unmanned aerial systems in peacekeeping missions continues to evolve. He also indicates that mission requirements for airborne intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance systems, including unmanned aerial systems, have been systematically reviewed in the missions that currently use them (MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO). As a result, specific unmanned aerial systems services have been replaced or upgraded on a case-by-case basis and related contracts and/or letters of assist have been updated. It is also indicated that related guidance has been incorporated into the United Nations Aviation Manual (2018) ([A/73/776](#), para. 41). The relevant excerpt of the Manual was made available to the Advisory Committee, upon enquiry. According to the information provided, the Manual incorporates the lessons learned from the experience of functioning unmanned aerial systems in peacekeeping missions, including in the areas of sourcing, drafting specifications and operating crew arrangements.

65. Information on the current and planned deployment, including estimated resource requirements for 27 systems to be provided under commercial or letter of assist arrangements for the 2019/20 period, are set out in annex III to the overview report. Projected resource requirements for these systems in MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO amount to approximately \$33.7 million for 2019/20. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that total approved resources for such systems in the same three missions amounted to \$28.8 million in 2018/19. It is indicated that this projection does not include those unmanned aerial systems provided by military contingents and subject to the provisions governing contingent-owned equipment.¹⁰ With regard to the considerable cost variation between systems, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that operational differences between the different systems are significant, with the larger systems deployed at greater distances for several hours at a time, beyond the line of sight, and operated by experienced crew and data analysis experts.

66. In its previous report on cross-cutting issues, the Advisory Committee, citing concerns expressed by the Board of Auditors concerning the underutilization of certain unmanned vehicles provided under commercial contract, expressed its expectation that a utilization factor would be built into the contractual arrangements concerning the provision of unmanned aerial systems (see [A/72/789](#), para. 93). In its review of the latest overview report, upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with utilization rates for the systems deployed in MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO during the 2017/18 period. The Committee was informed that the systems in MINUSCA were used on standby on an as-needed basis, with a utilization factor of between 31.3 and 34.7 per cent. For MINUSMA, utilization was provided in terms of operational days (flight days and days on alert), producing a factor ranging from 66.3 to 95.9 per cent. In the case of MONUSCO, the utilization rate stood at 34.9 per cent for 2017/18. The Committee was informed that every contract and letter of assist

¹⁰ The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 12 March 2019, across MINUSCA, MINUSMA and MONUSCO combined, 126 unmanned aerial systems were provided under memorandums of understanding as contingent-owned equipment.

in MONUSCO included a clause to allow for financial deduction in case of low utilization and/or availability, with the latest contract providing several formulas to compensate the United Nations for low utilization or deficiencies in system performance.

67. The Advisory Committee notes the significant level of resource requirements for unmanned aerial systems in peacekeeping missions. Given the growing diversity in system capabilities, costs and usage, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide more detailed information on the lessons learned from deployment of systems in past and present periods, the rationale and justification for specific unmanned aerial systems, including the optimization of the number and types of systems to be acquired, along with measures to improve utilization rates and secure cost recovery in cases of low utilization and/or availability.

3. Environmental management issues

68. In paragraph 31 of its resolution [70/286](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to reduce the overall environmental footprint of each peacekeeping mission, including by implementing environmentally-friendly waste management and power generation systems, in full compliance with the relevant rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, United Nations environmental and waste management policy and procedures. In his overview report, the Secretary-General indicates that, after completing the first two years in the implementation of its six-year environment strategy, progress has been made across each of the five pillars of the strategy: energy; water and wastewater; solid waste; wider impact; and an environmental management system ([A/73/776](#), para. 130). Detailed information on mission-specific projects, under each of these areas, was provided to the Advisory Committee for its consideration as part of its review of mission budget proposals, including the planned implementation period, anticipated impact, initial investment, ongoing costs and anticipated savings.

69. Upon request, the Advisory Committee sought and was provided with individual mission-specific environmental management scorecards, which provided a risk assessment, a rating for overall performance and information on each scored indicator within the five pillars of the strategy. It is indicated that significant risk was identified in wastewater treatment in three missions (MONUSCO, UNISFA and UNMISS), and that therefore the environmental score for those missions was nullified, with each mission subsequently developing mitigation plans to address the situation ([A/73/776](#), para. 133). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that having started in 2017, the strategy is still in its initial phase, with data collection relying in large part on estimation and self-reporting. Scores are indicative and subject to fluctuations as data quality improves. It is anticipated that three fiscal year cycles will be required to reach a robust baseline by June 2020. In addition, given the significant differences between missions in operational conditions, including security risks and access to local infrastructure, the comparability of quantitative metrics between missions may be limited.

70. With regard to energy-related initiatives, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on the solar panel systems in place across 12 peacekeeping missions, RSCE and UNSOS, including energy generation capacity and related costs. The Committee notes that the total cost of solar panel systems installed since 2014 amounted to \$26.2 million.¹¹

¹¹ These costs include the costs of the panels, batteries, converters, installation costs and any other costs to operationalize solar panel systems.

71. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry that there are a number of challenges in developing accurate cost-benefit analyses with regard to renewable energy, including lack of reliable baseline data, difficulties in determining a payback period and the dynamic and complex nature of peacekeeping operations. In addition, project costs can be highly variable owing, for example, to the remoteness of some sites, making it difficult to determine a standard cost per installation. Nevertheless, the Committee noted that, in the case of UNFICYP, upon request, information was made available that would form the basis for determining a target payback period across different renewable energy projects. In addition, the Committee was informed that standard operating procedures have been promulgated with regard to the development of energy infrastructure management plans and efforts are ongoing to implement metering across all missions.

72. The Advisory Committee welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the multi-year environmental strategy to reduce the footprint of peacekeeping operations and looks forward to examining the details of the full scorecard approach in the next overview report. The Committee trusts that the details of any underperforming missions will also be included in the next overview report. The Committee also recognizes the efforts being made to develop performance information with respect to the capacity and use of energy in peacekeeping missions and trusts that further information on progress thereon will be included in future overview reports.

4. Downsizing, closing or transitioning peacekeeping missions

73. Information on peacekeeping missions in transition contexts is provided in paragraphs 144 to 150 of the overview report. The Secretary-General indicates that the experience of three mission closures during the 2017/18 period (MINUSTAH, UNMIL and UNOCI) has yielded significant lessons learned for liquidation and transition, including the importance of commencing liquidation planning early, the importance of a transition process that takes into account the significant logistical and administrative challenges and the need to improve guidance and support on the environmental aspects of mission closure. It is also indicated that a guide to mission closure has been prepared and that the Field Mission Liquidation Manual has been revised to ensure early engagement with the United Nations country teams on the impact of mission withdrawals and opportunities presented by the departing missions ([A/73/776](#), para. 145).

74. Specific staff-related issues arising in transitional contexts are discussed in paragraphs 152 to 155 of the report, including support for the placement of staff, where possible, and the formulation of guidelines for the conduct of comparative review processes and for the timely completion of personnel actions. It is indicated that a key lesson learned in the post-mission closure process was that early engagement with stakeholders resulted in more efficient and timely processing of separation and pension entitlements ([A/73/776](#), para. 155). In this connection, the Advisory Committee also recalls the recent efforts undertaken in UNMIL to implement a national staff capacity-building programme and to organize job fairs ([A/73/855](#), para. 10).

75. Two additional missions, MINUJUSTH and UNAMID, are preparing for drawdown and anticipated closure in accordance with timelines defined by the Security Council ([A/73/776](#), para. 147). **The Advisory Committee trusts that the lessons learned from the recent closure of three peacekeeping missions in the 2017/18 period will be fully integrated into the transition processes for MINUJUSTH and UNAMID so as to ensure that these processes are planned and executed in the most orderly fashion possible and that risk mitigation measures are put in place, particularly with respect to heightened risk of loss or theft of**

assets in downsizing, closing or transitioning missions. The Committee also expects that every effort will be made to ensure the smooth-handling of staff-related issues in MINUJUSTH and UNAMID, including through capacity-development activities for departing staff such as targeted training courses and job fairs.

76. On the matter of asset disposition, the Advisory Committee notes from the experience of recently closed missions, that asset disposal had been undertaken both prior to and after the liquidation period and that the treatment differs according to the terms of the financial regulations and financial rules applicable to the preliquidation and liquidation periods. **The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include disaggregated information for assets disposed of in the preliquidation and liquidation periods in the performance reports of closing missions.**

5. Use of the special post allowance

77. The Advisory Committee recalls that staff members may be granted a special post allowance on an exceptional basis when they are called upon to assume the full duties and responsibilities of a post at a clearly recognizable higher level than his or her own for a temporary period exceeding three months (see staff rule 3.10 (b)). In the context of its consideration of different mission budgets, the Committee has highlighted instances in which missions had granted special post allowances to mission personnel for a protracted period of time (see for example [A/73/656](#), paras. 15–16, and [A/73/755/Add.4](#), para. 21). In addition, the Committee recalls that the Board of Auditors, in its report on the financial statements and audited financial statements of the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2017, noted that 2,468 temporary assignments involving special post allowances were made during the 2016–2017 biennium and that 718 of those temporary assignments were for more than one year (see [A/73/5 \(Vol. I\)](#), para. 94). The Board concluded that the granting of special post allowances had not been limited to exceptional cases during the biennium 2016–2017 (*ibid.*, para. 96).

78. In the context of its review of budget proposals for peacekeeping operations for the 2019/20 period, the Advisory Committee requested but did not receive adequate information on all posts filled through temporary incumbents in receipt of the special post allowance entitlement, including post levels, the dates when the posts became vacant and when the posts were temporarily incumbered.

79. **The Advisory Committee reiterates its concern over cases of “temporary” assignments of staff members to higher-level positions for lengthy periods and reiterates its observation that all current and future vacant positions should be filled expeditiously, and their recruitment processes completed (see [A/73/799](#), para. 8, and [A/73/498](#), para. 20). The Committee also recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include information on temporary assignments with special post allowances, including the length of those assignments and the related recruitment status of those posts, in the context of all future peacekeeping performance reports.**

6. Death and disability compensation

80. Details on the status of claims for death and disability compensation for 2018 are provided in annex IV of the overview report of the Secretary-General. In his report, the Secretary-General recalls that, in its resolution [72/285](#), the General Assembly decided to increase the death and disability compensation rates by 10 per cent, effective 1 July 2018 ([A/73/776](#), para. 55).

81. As set out in annex IV of the overview report, from 1 January to 31 December 2018, 176 death or disability claims were processed, and an additional 467 claims were pending, of which 442 claims had been outstanding for more than 90 days. The Advisory Committee notes that these figures show a significant increase in the number of pending claims as compared to the two previous years when, at the same time, 48 and 47 claims were pending for more than three months, respectively ([A/72/789](#), para. 123, and [A/71/836](#), para. 207). In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that 290 claims are awaiting assessment from the Medical Services Division related to cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, caused, in most cases, by events that occurred 15 to 20 years ago (see [A/73/776](#), annex IV, paras. 2–3). **The Committee notes with concern the significant increase in the number of death and disability claims pending for longer than three months and recalls paragraph 25 of General Assembly resolution 66/264, in which the Assembly urged the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to ensure the timely settlement of all such claims within three months from the date of their submission. The Committee reiterates the importance of efforts to address this backlog and underscores the importance of ensuring that the related interaction with Member States in connection with such claims is conducted in a timely manner.**

III. Conclusion

82. Subject to its observations and recommendations expressed in the present report, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General ([A/73/776](#)).

Annex

Reports considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on issues related to peacekeeping

Financial report and audited financial statements for the 12-month period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 and report of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations ([A/73/5 \(Vol. II\)](#)) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors concerning United Nations peacekeeping operations ([A/73/750](#));

Reports of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, on proposed budgets for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 and on the disposition of assets, received by the Advisory Committee in advance or final form, and the related reports of the Committee, as follows:

MINURSO	A/73/737
	A/73/617
	A/73/755/Add.1
MINUSCA	A/73/772
	A/73/654
	A/73/755/Add.12
MINUSMA	A/73/760
	A/73/634
	A/73/755/Add.7
MINUSTAH	A/73/621
	A/73/856
MINUJUSTH	A/73/748
	A/73/641
	A/73/755/Add.6
MONUSCO	A/73/816
	A/73/633
	A/73/755/Add.15
UNAMID	A/73/785
	A/73/653
	A/73/755/Add.10
UNDOF	A/73/734
	A/73/614
	A/73/755/Add.3

UNFICYP	A/73/738
	A/73/615
	A/73/755/Add.5
UNIFIL	A/73/735
	A/73/627
	A/73/755/Add.2
UNISFA	A/73/742
	A/73/610
	A/73/755/Add.11
United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy	A/73/774
	A/73/636
	A/73/755/Add.9
UNMIK	A/73/733
	A/73/613
	A/73/755/Add.4
UNMIL	A/73/692
	A/73/855
UNMISS	A/73/769
	A/73/652
	A/73/755/Add.13
UNOCI	A/73/707
	A/73/854
UNSOS	A/73/762
	A/73/611
	A/73/755/Add.8
Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda	A/73/764
	A/73/612
	A/73/755/Add.14

Support account for peacekeeping operations	A/73/793
	A/73/661
	A/73/661/Add.1
	A/73/768
	A/73/849
Overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations	A/73/776
