



General Assembly

Distr.: General
29 March 2019

Original: English

Seventy-third session

Agenda item 136

Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

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

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

United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General ([A/73/352/Add.8](#)) on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, which contains preliminary resource requirements in the amount of \$17,640,800 (net) for the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2019. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 28 March 2019.

II. Background and mandate

2. In his report, the Secretary-General describes the process leading to the establishment of the Mission and its initial funding up to 31 March 2019 ([A/73/352/Add.8](#), paras. 1–7). Information on the mandate and planning assumptions of the Mission is provided in paragraphs 8 to 17 of the report.

3. By paragraph 5 of its resolution [2451 \(2018\)](#), adopted on 21 December 2018, the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to establish and deploy, for an



initial period of 30 days, an advance team to begin monitoring and to support and facilitate the immediate implementation of the Stockholm Agreement (S/2018/1134, annex), which sets out, inter alia, the terms of the Hudaydah Agreement. In this regard, an amount of \$5.4 million was provided under the authority granted to the Secretary-General under paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 72/264, adopted on 24 December 2017, relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses (A/73/352/Add.8, para. 4) (see also para. 9 below).

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

5. Following the adoption of that resolution, the Secretary-General sought the concurrence of the Advisory Committee, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 72/264, to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding \$9,200,600 (net) to meet the most immediate requirements for the Mission for the period from 16 January to 31 March 2019. **The Advisory Committee recalls that it authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed \$8.2 million for the period from 16 January to 31 March 2019.**

6. In his report (A/73/352/Add.8, para. 33), the Secretary-General indicates that, pending the submission of a detailed revised programme budget during the second part of its resumed seventy-third session, the General Assembly is requested to approve his preliminary proposals and to authorize him to enter into commitments for the Mission in an amount not exceeding \$17,640,800 (net of staff assessment) for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2019.

7. The Secretary-General indicates that the Mission is expected to have a nimble presence, designed to monitor the compliance of the parties in an objective manner and to engage with a wide range of counterparts, including at the national and regional levels (ibid., paras. 9–10). According to the Secretary-General, the effective discharge of the Mission's mandate would be premised on, among others: the granting of the authorizations necessary to deploy, transport and utilize the necessary personnel and resources by the appropriate authorities; the non-resumption of major hostilities and military impediments affecting the areas of operation of the Mission; and the availability of appropriate secure infrastructure, assets, medical care and medical and casualty evacuation capacity (ibid., paras. 11–17).

8. **While recognizing the need to ensure the expeditious deployment of the Mission and the challenges in estimating start-up requirements under complex and evolving circumstances, the Advisory Committee notes the incremental approach taken for the funding of the Mission to date. The Committee trusts that the budget proposal will incorporate the most comprehensive and up-to-date information possible, based on actual experience.**

9. Regarding the resources authorized by the Secretary-General in relation to the deployment of the advance team under resolution 2451 (2018) (see para. 3 above) and the commitment authority for the Mission authorized by the Advisory Committee in relation to resolution 2452 (2019) (see para. 5 above), the Committee requested, but was not provided with, a clear response regarding the size of the commitment authority granted to the Secretary-General under resolution 72/264 for 2018 and 2019, the use of that authority to finance the Mission in 2018 and 2019 and actual expenditures incurred in 2018 and 2019 thereunder. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include related information and explanations in the context of the budget proposal for the Mission.**

III. Resource requirements for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2019

10. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the total requirements for the Mission for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2019 amount to \$17,640,800 (net), which would provide for the phased deployment of 75 United Nations monitors, 20 government-provided personnel and 105 civilian staff, as well as start-up costs for accommodation and logistical capacities (A/73/352/Add.8, para. 28).

11. Regarding the deployment of the monitors and the civilian personnel, the Advisory Committee was informed that the estimates included the application of a 40 per cent delayed deployment factor for the monitors and a 50 per cent vacancy rate for both international and national staff over the three-month period ending 30 June 2019. The Committee was also informed that, as at 10 March 2019, 12 monitors (2 recruited and 10 on temporary duty assignment) had been deployed to the Mission and a further 37 were awaiting deployment, pending the issuance of their visas. An additional 17 civilian staff had been deployed as at the same date (the Assistant Secretary-General, as well as 16 staff on temporary duty assignment), with 4 more ready to be deployed, pending travel or the issuance of their visas.

12. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the pace of deployment was affected by the challenges that typically surrounded the establishment of a new mission within a complex and evolving environment. Nevertheless, the Committee was also informed that the Mission was working to address those challenges, including by undertaking recruitment through various modalities and by continuing efforts to engage with the relevant parties with a view to obtaining appropriate authorizations for the deployment, transport and utilization of personnel and resources.

13. In view of the slow pace of deployment thus far and the ongoing challenges affecting the staffing of a new mission in a complex field environment, the Advisory Committee is not convinced that the proposed deployment targets underpinning the funding request through June 2019 are achievable. The Committee, therefore, recommends that more realistic vacancy factors be presented in the future budget submission for the Mission and urges the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to expedite deployments.

14. With respect to the current staffing proposals, the Secretary-General identifies the following positions: 1 Assistant Secretary-General, 1 D-2, 1 D-1, 5 P-5, 11 P-4, 18 P-3, 1 P-2, 31 Field Service, 3 National Professional Officer and 33 General Service (Local level). These comprise 45 positions for the substantive component, 26 for the security component and 34 for the mission support component (see paras. 19–21 below). The Secretary-General indicates that 88 positions would be located in Hudaydah and 6 in Sana'a, while the remainder would be outside of Yemen,

as follows: 7 in Amman, 2 in Djibouti and 2 in New York ([A/73/352/Add.8](#), paras. 29–30).

15. The Advisory Committee notes that the request reflects an increase of 24 positions compared with the 81 identified in the previous funding request (see para. 5 above). While the level of the substantive component remains unchanged, 18 and 6 additional positions have been proposed for the mission support and security components, respectively. The Committee also notes that the number of proposed staff at the national level has nearly doubled compared with the previous request (from 19 to 36). Furthermore, compared with the previous funding request, 24 additional positions are proposed for location within Yemen.

16. The Advisory Committee recognizes the consideration given by the Secretary-General to the utilization of national staff, as well as the importance of locating personnel as close as possible to the Mission’s area of operations, and trusts that these factors will continue to be taken into account in the formulation of future budget submissions, in the light of the requirements of the Mission.

17. Regarding the proposed backstopping positions at Headquarters in New York, the Secretary-General indicates in his report that a Political Affairs Officer (P-4) would be located in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and an Associate Human Resources Officer (P-2) would be embedded in the Department of Operational Support. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed Political Affairs Officer would coordinate planning and support, as well as provide advice and liaison across multiple partners. The proposed Associate Human Resources Officer would provide dedicated human resources assistance, primarily in connection with the Mission’s recruitment surge.

18. The Advisory Committee is not convinced that the proposed P-4 position has been adequately justified, particularly given the existence of a position of Political Affairs Officer (P-4) in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs established to provide backstopping support to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and is of the view that consideration should be given to integrating, to the extent possible, the substantive backstopping support to both missions (see para. 19 below). The Committee is also not convinced that a dedicated position of Associate Human Resources Officer (P-2) would be required beyond the initial start-up period and encourages the Secretary-General to maximize the use of existing capacities within the Department of Operational Support for any additional backstopping support that may be required in this respect.

19. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that, in line with paragraph 4 of resolution [2452 \(2019\)](#) underlining the importance of cooperation across the United Nations system entities operating in Yemen, the Mission works closely with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the United Nations country team in Yemen. In particular, he indicates that the Office of the Special Envoy has provided critical support during the initial work of the Mission in Hudaydah and that the Mission will continue to rely upon the mission support component of the Office, augmented as necessary, with a view to optimizing the use of existing resources ([A/73/352/Add.8](#), para. 18).

20. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, with a view to promoting a unified approach to support, avoiding duplication and benefiting from economies of scale, mission support for the Mission would be integrated operationally within the mission support component of the Office of the Special Envoy. A proposed position of Chief of Mission Support (D-1), funded by the Mission, would oversee all administrative and logistical support for the Mission and the Office. The proposed

single structure would be consolidated into three pillars – operations and resource management, service delivery and supply chain management – and would be reinforced with positions funded by the Mission in view of the additional workload entailed by that Mission. The Committee was further informed that the requirements for the structure would be duly presented as part of the future funding requests for both missions.

21. The Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to continue to review and examine the structures, levels and location of the mission support component to achieve maximum realization of economies of scale, minimize duplication and promote the coherent and effective provision of support services.

22. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the estimated operational costs amount to \$15,304,900 and comprise resources for official travel (\$459,400); facilities and infrastructure (\$6,246,500), including the rental of premises and a marine vessel for the Mission in Hudaydah and security services; ground transportation (\$36,900), including the repairs and maintenance of the Mission's armoured vehicles; air operations (\$3,732,000), including the rental of one fixed-wing aircraft and one rotary-wing aircraft; information and communications technology (\$2,690,200) for the acquisition of the information technology equipment and telecommunications services; medical (\$1,519,400) for the use of a private contractor to provide medical services to mission personnel; and other supplies, services and equipment (\$620,500), including freight and related costs ([A/73/352/Add.8](#), para. 29).

23. The facilities and infrastructure requirements represent approximately 40 per cent of the total operational costs and are attributable mainly to the high rental costs for the Mission's accommodation. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Mission was currently housed in facilities of the United Nations country team, able to accommodate up to 31 people. Given the limited space available and the anticipated level of deployments, the Mission has concluded a turn-key contract for the rental of a marine vessel to be anchored in the port of Hudaydah as from early April 2019, which would serve as the Mission's temporary headquarters, providing a secure office and living space for up to 100 people. The monthly requirements for the rental of the vessel amount to approximately \$1.7 million.

24. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the contracted vessel was considered a short-term solution for a period of three to six months, to allow adequate time to identify, assess, procure and prepare alternative land-based accommodation options. To that end, the funding proposal included \$500,000 for initial construction and alterations, as well as \$544,000 for the rental of potential land-based facilities. Based on the information provided to it, the Committee notes that the costs and timelines for the operationalization of the land-based options have not been finalized.

25. The Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to develop and refine options for secure, cost-efficient and rapid accommodation for the Mission, particularly considering the high costs of the vessel and the remaining uncertainties surrounding the costs and timing of the operationalization of alternative accommodation. The Committee trusts that comprehensive information regarding future land-based accommodation plans will be provided in the context of the next budget submission.

26. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that clear cost-sharing mechanisms will be established with the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen and the United Nations country team, including with regard to air operations and facilities ([A/73/352/Add.8](#), para. 27). **The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that administrative support provided by one United Nations entity to another should be provided on a reimbursable basis (see [A/73/498/Add.6](#), para. 20) and trusts**

that the Secretary-General will provide information on the cost-sharing arrangements in the context of future budget submissions.

IV. Recommendations

27. Taking into account its observations and recommendations in the present report, in particular the slow pace of deployment thus far, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the Mission in an amount not to exceed \$15.6 million for the period from 1 April to 30 June 2019.

28. The Advisory Committee stresses that its recommendation in no way prejudices such comments and recommendations that the Committee may eventually make on the proposed structure, staffing and other resource requirements of the Mission in the context of the budget submission.
