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Part II

Political affairs

Section 3

Political affairs

Special political missions

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

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

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2020 for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.5 and A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.5/Corr.1). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 16 September 2019.

2. In addendum 1 to section 3, Political affairs, of his report on the proposed programme budget for 2020 (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1), the Secretary-General provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2020 for 37 special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. Detailed information in respect of each special political mission is contained in five addenda to section 3 of the proposed programme budget.¹ The addenda cover the specific requirements for thematic

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



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

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

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

A. Mandate and planning assumptions

4. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the mandate of UNAMA was extended by the Security Council until 17 September 2019, in its resolution 2460 (2019). In its resolution 2489 (2019), the Council renewed the mandate of the Mission until 17 September 2020. The Secretary-General indicates that Afghanistan will continue to face further political, security, socioeconomic, humanitarian and human rights challenges in 2020. The Mission's priorities and planning assumptions for 2020 and cooperation with other entities are described in paragraphs 9 to 12 of the report of the Secretary-General.

5. The Secretary-General indicates that UNAMA is responsible for supporting the people and Government of Afghanistan in achieving peace and stability and will continue to play a role in supporting peace and stability and in coordinating international civilian efforts in support of national priorities, in line with the Transformation Decade (2015–2024) (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.5, paras. 1–2). The strategy of UNAMA for 2020 is focused on supporting the Afghan-owned peace process. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNAMA will promote the development of structures for long-term socioeconomic development and will also increase its support for building the capacity of national institutions (*ibid.*, para. 9). With regard to inter-agency coordination and liaison, UNAMA continues to work with the United Nations country team to reinforce alignment, efficiency and effectiveness among United Nations programmes in Afghanistan (*ibid.*, para. 13). Furthermore, the UNAMA field presence will remain central to the Mission's mandate implementation, including through outreach to populations in remote areas and in challenging security environments (*ibid.*, para. 61).

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

B. Budget performance for 2018 and 2019

6. A summary of the proposed resource requirements for 2020 for UNAMA, compared with the approved resources for 2019, and the expenditure for 2018 is set out in table 1 below.

Table 1

Budget performance and total resource requirements (net of staff assessment)

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	2018	2019	2020		Variance
	Expenditure	Appropriation	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2020 vs. 2019 Increase/(decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(3)-(2)
Military and police personnel costs	111.3	41.5	41.5	–	–
Civilian personnel costs	101 445.3	96 271.2	94 320.9	–	(1 950.3)
Operational costs	38 154.9	44 382.1	41 832.4	444.1	(2 549.7)
Total requirements	139 711.5	140 694.8	136 194.8	444.1	(4 500.0)

7. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with the expenditure for UNAMA for 2019, as at 30 June 2019, which amount to \$64,885,100, as compared with the appropriation of \$140,694,800. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide updated information on the expenditure for 2019 to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

C. Resource requirements for 2020

8. As shown in table 1 above, the resource requirements proposed for UNAMA for 2020 amount to \$136,194,800, reflecting a decrease of \$4,500,000, or 3.2 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2019. A summary of the main factors contributing to the variances between the approved resources for 2019 and the proposed resources for 2020 is provided in section I of the report of the Secretary-General.

1. Military and police personnel

9. The estimated requirements for military and police personnel for 2020 amount to \$41,500, representing no change compared with the appropriation for 2019, for the costs related to the deployment of one senior military adviser (ibid., para. 66). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the proposals of the Secretary-General for military personnel for 2020 for UNAMA.**

2. Civilian personnel

Table 2
Staffing requirements

	<i>No. of positions</i>	<i>Level</i>
Approved positions for 2019	1 211	1 USG, 2 ASG, 1 D-2, 7 D-1, 28 P-5, 57 P-4, 61 P-3, 7 P-2, 145 FS, 1 GS (OL), 124 NPO, 709 LL, 68 UNV
Proposed positions for 2020	1 204	1 USG, 2 ASG, 1 D-2, 7 D-1, 28 P-5, 55 P-4, 58 P-3, 6 P-2, 142 FS, 1 GS (OL), 125 NPO, 710 LL, 68 UNV
Proposed new positions	4	1 P-5, 2 NPO, 1 LL
Proposed abolishments	11	1 P-5, 2 P-4, 3 P-3, 1 P-2, 3 FS, 1 NPO

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

10. A summary of the staffing requirements and the proposed changes is contained in paragraphs 32 to 35 and table 4 of, and annexes I and II to, the report of the Secretary-General. As summarized in table 2 above, the total proposed staffing of 1,204 positions, which comprises 301 international positions (158 Professional and above, 142 Field Service and 1 General Service (Other level)), 835 national positions (125 National Professional Officer and 710 Local level) and 68 United Nations Volunteers, represents a net reduction of 7 positions compared with the approved staffing for 2019. Organizational charts showing the proposed staffing grades and levels are set out in annex III to the report of the Secretary-General. The proposed allocation of the positions by location is presented in annex II to the report and is summarized as follows:

- (a) UNAMA headquarters in Kabul: 746 positions;
- (b) Six regional offices: 273 positions;
- (c) Five provincial offices: 131 positions;
- (d) UNAMA Support Office in Kuwait and Kuwait Joint Support Office: 40 positions;
- (e) Liaison offices in Islamabad and Tehran: 9 positions;
- (f) Backstopping at Headquarters: 5 positions.

11. The Secretary-General indicates that the proposed staffing changes include: (a) abolishment of 11 positions (7 Professional, 3 Field Service and 1 National Professional Officer) (*ibid.*, paras. 28, 34–35, 39, 46, 54, 64, 68 and 70); (b) establishment of 4 positions (1 Professional, 2 National Professional Officer and 1 Local level) (*ibid.*, paras. 27–28, 32, 34–35, 39, 43, 56, 58, 67 and 69–70); and (c) redeployment of 11 positions and the reassignment of 1 position, primarily under the mission support structure (*ibid.*, paras. 34–35, 43, 52, 54, 56 and 58).

12. The aforementioned proposed establishment of four positions includes one Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5), in the Peace and Reconciliation Office, aimed at expanding the good offices role of UNAMA in support of the Afghan peace process (*ibid.*, para. 43 (c)).

13. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, among the 11 proposed abolishments, the responsibilities for three positions, namely, 1 Senior Mission Planning Officer (P-5), 1 Coordination Officer (P-4) and 1 Associate Coordination Officer (National Professional Officer), would subsequently be carried

out by the capacity being established in the resident coordinator's office, to be funded by the special purpose trust fund (see also para. 14 below).

Resident coordinator system

14. The Secretary-General presents the staffing requirements for the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Development) (Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator), part of the development pillar, in table 8 of his report. In annex IV to his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the Office, housed at UNAMA, coordinates United Nations development activities and provides guidance to all agencies, funds and programmes in Afghanistan as part of an integrated structure. As indicated in annex IV to the report of the Secretary-General, the Development Coordination Office, through the special purpose trust fund, is providing an amount of \$1,381,600 in funding for 2019 to support one P-5, one P-4 and three National Professional Officer positions, as well as transition staffing and coordination funding at UNAMA. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts taken by UNAMA to review and adjust its staffing needs as a result of the implementation of the reforms of the resident coordinator system and the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/279.** The Committee provides its comments and recommendations regarding the resident coordinator system in its main report on the estimates in respect of special political missions (A/74/7/Add.1).

Vacant posts

15. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 23 July 2019, a total of 41 positions were vacant, comprising 8 Professional positions (2 P-5, 2 P-4 and 4 P-3), 7 Field Service, 17 Local level (including 2 positions pertaining to the Kuwait Joint Support Office), 5 National Professional Officers and 4 United Nations Volunteers. None of those positions had been vacant for more than two years.

Special post allowance

16. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that five positions were currently encumbered temporarily by staff members receiving a special post allowance, four for more than one year, and that three related job openings had been posted. The Committee discusses the use of special post allowance further in its report on the proposed programme budget for 2020 (A/74/7, chap. I, paras. 90–94). **The Advisory Committee expects that recruitment will be completed without further delay for the positions encumbered for an extended period by staff members receiving a special post allowance.**

17. **Taking into account its comments in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the staffing proposals of the Secretary-General for 2020 for UNAMA.**

3. Operational costs

18. The proposed resource requirements for operational costs for 2020 amount to \$41,832,400, reflecting a decrease of \$2,549,700, or 5.7 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2019. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the operational costs for UNAMA, including the 2018 expenditure, 2019 appropriation and the proposed requirements for 2020, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3
UNAMA: operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	2018	2019	2020		Variance
	Expenditure	Appropriation	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2020 vs. 2019 Increase/(decrease)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(3)-(2)
Operational costs					
1. Experts	–	–	–	–	–
2. Consultants and consulting services	111.4	186.8	176.3	–	(10.5)
3. Official travel	1 282.0	1 406.8	1 333.0	–	(73.8)
4. Facilities and infrastructure	22 595.9	24 326.8	24 051.0	255.0	(275.8)
5. Ground transportation	294.1	730.0	690.5	–	(39.5)
6. Air operations	8 511.3	8 741.9	7 591.0	–	(1 150.9)
7. Marine operations	–	–	–	–	–
8. Communications and information technology	4 436.9	7 116.8	6 498.0	125.0	(618.8)
9. Medical	(24.1)	285.5	227.1	–	(58.4)
10. Special equipment	–	–	–	–	–
11. Other supplies, services and equipment	947.4	1 587.5	1 265.5	64.1	(322.0)
12. Quick-impact projects	–	–	–	–	–
Total	38 154.9	44 382.1	41 832.4	444.1	(2 549.7)

Official travel

19. The proposed resources for official travel amount to \$1,333,000, representing a decrease of \$73,800, or 5.24 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$1,406,800 for 2019. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicated that expenditure for official travel in 2018 amounted to \$1,282,000. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 June 2019, expenditure for 2019 amounted to \$330,500, or 23.5 per cent of the total apportionment. **Given the level of expenditure in 2018 and during the first six months of 2019, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of \$39,990 (3 per cent) to the proposed resources for official travel.**

Facilities and infrastructure

20. The proposed resources for facilities and infrastructure amount to \$24,051,000, representing a decrease of \$275,800, or 1.1 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$24,326,800 for 2019. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicated that expenditure for facilities and infrastructure in 2018 amounted to \$22,595,900. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 June 2019, expenditure for 2019 amounted to \$9,987,700, or 41.1 per cent of the total apportionment. From the information received, the Committee notes significant underexpenditure in a number of instances during the first six months of 2019, including under acquisition of engineering supplies (24.9 per cent expended), office equipment (0.6 per cent expended), maintenance services (20.1 per cent expended) and spare parts and supplies (8 per cent expended). **Given the level of expenditure in 2018 and during the first six months of 2019, and in view of the consistent underutilization of resources since 2014 (see also A/73/498/Add.4, para. 18), the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of \$721,530 (3 per cent) to the proposed resources for facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, the**

Committee reiterates that, considering the recurring underutilization of the apportioned resources under facilities and infrastructure, the accuracy of future budget proposals should be improved.

Ground transportation

21. The proposed resources for ground transportation amount to \$690,500, representing a decrease of \$39,500, or 5.4 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$730,000 for 2019. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicated that expenditure for ground transportation in 2018 amounted to \$294,100. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 June 2019, expenditure for 2019 amounted to \$35,200, or 4.8 per cent of the total apportionment. **Given the level of expenditure in 2018 and during the first six months of 2019, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of \$34,525 (5 per cent) to the proposed resources for ground transportation.**

Communications and information technology

22. The proposed resources for communications and information technology amount to \$6,498,000, representing a decrease of \$618,800, or 8.7 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$7,116,800 for 2019. The Secretary-General indicates that the proposed resources for 2020 include an amount of \$1,110,200 to replace 60 per cent of information technology equipment which is past its useful life expectancy. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicated that expenditure for communications and information technology in 2018 amounted to \$4,436,900. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 June 2019, expenditure for 2019 amounted to \$1,126,400, or 15.8 per cent of the total apportionment. From the information received, the Committee notes significant underexpenditure in a number of instances during the first six months of 2019, including under communications and information technology equipment (3.8 per cent expended), telecommunications and network services (13.7 per cent expended), spare parts (3.3 per cent expended), software, licenses and fees (14.6 per cent expended) and public information and publication services (27.9 per cent expended). **Given the level of expenditure in 2018 and during the first six months of 2019, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of \$194,940 (3 per cent) to the proposed resources for communications and information technology.**

Other supplies, services and equipment

23. The proposed resources for other supplies, services and equipment amount to \$1,265,500, representing a decrease of \$322,000, or 20.3 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$1,587,500 for 2019. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicated that expenditure for other supplies, services and equipment in 2018 amounted to \$947,400. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 June 2019, expenditure for 2019 amounted to \$423,200, or 26.7 per cent of the total apportionment. From the information received, the Committee notes that, under freight and related costs, expenditure for 2018 amounted to \$498,900 and that, during the first six months of 2019, only \$169,200, or 16.5 per cent of the apportioned amount of \$1,024,500, was spent. The proposed resources for 2020 under freight and related costs amount to \$788,100. **Given the level of expenditure in 2018 and during the first six months of 2019, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of \$39,405 (5 per cent) to the proposed resources for other freight and related costs.**

Support Office in Kuwait and Kuwait Joint Support Office

24. Information on the cost-sharing arrangements and collaboration in support areas with regard to the Kuwait Joint Support Office financed under the budget for UNAMA is provided in paragraphs 59 and 60 of the report of the Secretary-General. The resource requirements for the component of the Joint Support Office financed under the budget for UNAMI are contained in that budget fascicle (A/74/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.6). **The Advisory Committee reiterates that the Kuwait Joint Support Office was initially established in response to the security situation in Iraq and later expanded to include certain support functions of UNAMA and other missions (A/72/371, paras. 71–72). The Committee reiterates that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/248 A, any changes to the existing and future service delivery model must be approved by the Assembly (see also A/72/7/Add.47, para. 32).** The Committee provides its comments and recommendations regarding the Joint Support Office in its main report on the estimates in respect of special political missions (A/74/7/Add.1).

25. **Subject to its recommendations contained in paragraphs 19 to 23 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General relating to operational requirements.**

D. Other matters**1. Cost-sharing arrangements**

26. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the requirements for security services are cost-shared between UNAMA and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes at the locations where the services are rendered, namely, Kabul, Faizabad, Gardez and Herat. Furthermore, the costs for the acquisition of medical equipment and medical supplies are cost-shared, based on historical utilization of equipment and supplies by each participating agency, while the proposed costs for medical services are fully budgeted by UNAMA, given that they relate to services which are directly utilized by UNAMA personnel. **The Advisory Committee requests that more information on the modalities of cost-sharing, including past relevant data, with respect to medical services be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

2. Compliance with the policy for advance booking of air travel

27. With regard to compliance with the policy for advance booking of air travel, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 June 2019, only 57 per cent of air tickets were purchased at least two weeks before the commencement of travel. The Committee further discusses compliance with the advance purchase policy under official travel in its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2020 (A/74/7, chap. I, paras. 99–100). **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, on a number of occasions, has expressed concern about the low rate of compliance with the advance purchase policy directive. The Committee reiterates that more efforts are required, in particular in areas where travel can be better planned (see also A/73/779, para. 16).**

III. Recommendation

28. Subject to the comments and recommendations in paragraphs 19 to 23 above, as well as those contained in its main report on the estimates in respect of special political missions ([A/74/7/Add.1](#)), the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposal of the Secretary-General for the resource requirements for 2020 for UNAMA.
