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Chair: Ms. Bird (Australia)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Ruiz Massieu

Contents

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (*continued*)

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

*Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and
other entities and mechanisms (continued)*

*United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for
Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant*

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 136: Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (continued)

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

Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms (continued)

United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (A/73/352/Add.6, A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.1, A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.2 and A/73/498/Add.6)

1. **Mr. Huisman** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the Secretary-General's report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council under thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms, for the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) (A/73/352/Add.6, A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.1 and A/73/352/Add.6/Corr.2), said that the Security Council, by its resolution 2379 (2017), had requested the Secretary-General to establish an investigative team, headed by a special adviser, to support domestic efforts in Iraq to hold Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that might amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, committed by ISIL in Iraq, and to submit to the Council, for its approval, terms of reference acceptable to the Government of Iraq in order to ensure that the team could fulfil its mandate. The planning and preparatory activities had started following the submission of the terms of reference by the Secretary-General and their approval by the Council in February 2018; the work of UNITAD had commenced in August 2018.

2. In the absence of an appropriation to fund the initial requirements of UNITAD in 2018, in the amount of \$1.3 million, the related resources had been provided under the authority granted to the Secretary-General in General Assembly resolution 72/264, relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2018–2019. An appropriation in that amount was

requested in the Secretary-General's first performance report on the programme budget for that biennium (A/73/493). The proposed resources for UNITAD for 2019 amounted to \$21.5 million and provided for costs related to 135 positions, comprising 130 positions based in Iraq, 3 positions based in Kuwait and 2 backstopping positions based in New York, and for operational costs of \$9.3 million.

3. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/73/498/Add.6), said that, as the deployment of the mission was at an initial stage, it was difficult to fully assess whether the proposed resources reflected optimum levels. The Advisory Committee therefore intended to reassess the organizational structures, staffing levels and operational costs when it considered the Secretary-General's next budget submission for UNITAD, and it recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to incorporate relevant proposals in that submission. Given the challenges of staffing a new mission, which were compounded by the specialized nature of UNITAD and its field location, the Advisory Committee considered it unlikely that the resources requested could be utilized fully, and recommended that the vacancy rates proposed by the Secretary-General be increased to 60 per cent for the Professional positions and 40 per cent for the Field Service and local positions. The administrative support provided by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to UNITAD should be reimbursable.

4. **Mr. Jinana** (Iraq) said that his Government welcomed the international community's support in the war against global terrorism, in particular the gangs of ISIL. From 2014 to 2017, the Iraqi people had, on behalf of the whole world, fought those extremist groups, which had committed serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and acts that could amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Accordingly, at the request of his Government, the Security Council, in its resolution 2379 (2017), had requested the Secretary-General to establish an investigative team, headed by a special adviser, to support domestic efforts to hold ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence in Iraq of such acts committed by ISIL in that country. The Council had also requested that the investigative team should conduct its work to the highest possible standards to ensure the broadest possible use of such evidence before national courts, complementing investigations being carried out by the Iraqi authorities.

5. UNITAD was mandated to conduct independent, impartial investigations into the hideous crimes of ISIL,

would operate extensively in the field and would require the capabilities to discharge that mandate. It would be composed of national and international experts, including those trained in criminal investigations, international criminal law, forensic evidence gathering, conflict-related sexual violence, victim and witness protection and crime scene analysis. Those specialized investigation teams would be deployed across Iraq to collect evidence regarding the crimes of ISIL. For UNITAD to fulfil its mandate it must be highly mobile and have the capacity to conduct investigations in the field, where crimes had been committed and witnesses were located. To that end, in cooperation with the council established by his Government to coordinate and support the work of UNITAD, a field investigations planning operations centre would be established to facilitate the deployment of three field investigation units, and other UNITAD components, across Iraq.

6. To enable UNITAD to implement its activities as mandated by the Security Council, it should be provided with financial and human resources commensurate with the aforementioned tasks. The amount proposed for the 2019 budget, however, might be insufficient to ensure fulfilment of the mandate. His Government was grateful to the United Kingdom for its donation of £1 million, to Qatar for its donation of \$100,000 and to all Member States that had supported the trust fund established to support UNITAD. He urged Member States to make donations to the trust fund in order to support international counter-terrorism efforts and achieve justice for the victims of ISIL in Iraq and elsewhere.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.