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Summary record of the 18th meeting

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Chair: Mr. Mavroyiannis. (Cyprus)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Terzi

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 135: Proposed programme budget for 2020 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/74/L.20: Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him (A/74/7/Add.30; A/C.5/74/13)

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1. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/74/L.20: Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him (A/C.5/74/13), said that the General Assembly, in its draft resolution A/74/L.20, had requested the Secretary-General to continue to review the information received and possible new information made available by Member States, to assess its probative value and to draw conclusions from the investigations already conducted. In addition, it had requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly before the end of its seventy-fifth session on any progress made. To implement those requests, additional resources in the amount of \$145,700 would be required under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, of the proposed programme budget for 2020; those resources would represent a charge against the contingency fund. Additional resources in the amount of \$207,300 would also be included in the proposed programme budget for 2021 under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, and section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management.

2. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/74/14), he said that the potential new charges

against the contingency fund for 2020 amounted to \$64,520,500. That exceeded the approved level of the fund, which had been set by the General Assembly in its resolution 73/279 A at \$21,794,200. It was proposed that the level of the fund for 2021 should be set at 0.75 per cent of the approved programme budget for 2020.

3. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates: effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (A/74/585), he said that the report contained the updated projections for inflation and the effect of the evolution of rates of exchange in 2019, updated standard costs and updated vacancy rates on the proposed programme budget for 2020. In its resolution 69/274 A, the General Assembly had requested that shortcomings regarding the visibility and internal flow of information be addressed with the deployment of Umoja Extension 2. The resulting increased visibility of data on exchange rates and standard costs had been used to determine the revised projections. The report reflected the impact of the updated recosting parameters on the initial proposed programme budget, as well as the revised estimates and statements of programme budget implications for 2020. After those changes, the requirements under the expenditure sections for 2020 would amount to \$3,065.0 million and estimates of income would amount to \$286.8 million, if the recommendations of the Advisory Committee were applied to the Secretary-General's proposals.

4. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals: effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation (A/74/586), he said that the report contained the updated projections for inflation and the effect of the evolution of rates of exchange in 2019, updated standard costs and vacancy rates on the proposed budget for the Mechanism for 2020. After recosting, the resource requirements for the Mechanism for 2020, as proposed by the Secretary-General, would amount to \$102,566,500 gross.

5. **Mr. Terzi** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/74/L.20: Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him (A/74/7/Add.30), said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should the Assembly adopt the draft resolution, an additional appropriation of \$145,700 would be required under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination, under the

proposed programme budget for 2020, representing a charge against the contingency fund.

6. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/74/7/Add.29), he said that, in the report, the Advisory Committee noted that the potential new charges against the contingency fund exceeded the approved level of the fund by almost 300 per cent. It also reiterated its view that the contingency fund was an essential budgetary instrument for addressing additional resource requirements and emphasized the need to adhere to the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 concerning its use. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly consider the potential charges related to new and expanded mandates against the contingency fund, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/74/14), and offer appropriate guidance in that regard. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the Assembly approve the Secretary-General's proposal that, for the programme budget for 2021, the level of the contingency fund should be set at 0.75 per cent of the approved programme budget for 2020.

7. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on revised estimates: effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation and its report on revised estimates for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals: effect of changes in rates of exchange and inflation, which were contained in a single document (A/74/7/Add.31), he said that the Advisory Committee noted that the recosting had been prepared using expenditure analyses based on data gathered in Umoja to improve the assumptions applied to the recosting parameters. That was a positive development, and the Advisory Committee encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to refine his analyses. The Advisory Committee had not received the advance versions of the Secretary-General's reports on the revised estimates and some of the responses to its questions in sufficient time to allow for a detailed examination of the content prior to the finalization of its report. It had therefore requested the Secretary-General to provide further clarification on a number of elements to the General Assembly when that body considered the Secretary-General's reports.

8. **Ms. Ozaki** (Japan) said that the Secretary-General had indicated in his report (A/C.5/74/14) potential new charges against the contingency fund for 2020 of \$64.5 million, which was nearly 300 per cent of the approved level of the fund for the year, thus presenting Member States with a difficult decision. Her delegation noted with concern that, since the biennium 2012–2013, the total amount of such charges had continually

exceeded the approved level of the fund for the respective biennium and that the gap had continued to grow over the years. Indeed, in 2020, the first year in which the new annual budget cycle was being implemented, on a trial basis, the gap was greater than ever, notwithstanding the shorter period to be covered by the contingency fund. That showed a rapid weakening of budgetary discipline, which was deeply worrying.

9. As part of its efforts to address that trend, Japan had called for greater communication and coordination between Secretariat entities in New York and Geneva and between Member State delegations at both duty stations. It would engage in discussion of reform in various forums, including in consultations on increasing the efficiency of the Human Rights Council, and in the 2020 review of the human rights treaty body system and the 2021 review of the Council. In those forums, Member States and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights could discuss constructively how to improve working methods and avoid duplication so that resources were used more effectively to achieve the ultimate goal of promoting and protecting universal human rights.

10. In addition to those efforts, Member States must ensure that the contingency fund was operated in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. Her delegation called on all Member States to give serious consideration to a review of current practices pertaining to the contingency fund. In addition, they should consider measures such as setting priorities for additional expenditures and ruling out the use of the contingency fund to cover foreseeable expenditure, with a view to restoring budgetary discipline.

Agenda item 163: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (A/74/562 and A/74/592)

11. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Controller), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2020 (A/74/562), said that the Security Council, in its resolution 2495 (2019), had requested the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to provide the Council with a special report, no later than 31 January 2020, containing: an assessment of the situation on the ground, an update on the peace process, information on the status of previously handed-over UNAMID team sites and recommendations on the appropriate course of action regarding the drawdown of UNAMID; and options for a

follow-on presence to UNAMID, based on the views and the needs of the Government of the Sudan. In the same resolution, the Council had expressed its intention, taking into account the findings of the special report, to decide, by 31 March 2020, on courses of action regarding the responsible drawdown and exit of UNAMID, and, at the same time, to adopt a new resolution establishing a follow-on presence to UNAMID.

12. In the report before the Committee, the Secretary-General proposed financing arrangements for UNAMID for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2020 in the amount of \$130.2 million to provide the Operation with adequate resources to continue to fulfil its mandate pending the decisions of the Council. A detailed budget proposal for the 2019/20 period, which would supersede the commitment authorities approved, would be prepared for consideration during the first part of the resumed seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

13. **Mr. Terzi** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/74/592), said that the Secretary-General's request for authority to enter into commitments in the amount of \$130.2 million for the maintenance of UNAMID for the first three months of 2020 followed a previous request for a commitment authority for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2019. The Advisory Committee considered that the Secretary-General should have proposed a budget for the 12-month period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, rather than request successive commitment authorities based on the same assumptions.

14. The Advisory Committee reiterated the need for capacity-building activities to support national staff during the downsizing of the operation. It considered that additional clarification was needed regarding the delineation and monitoring of the different programmatic activities undertaken in Darfur, together with more realistic projections, and it trusted that updated information in that regard would be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the Advisory Committee's report.

15. The Advisory Committee stressed the importance of compliance with the United Nations environmental and waste management policy and procedures, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 31 of its resolution 70/286. It was of the view that lessons learned from closed peacekeeping operations with respect to environmental clearance activities should be applied by the Operation. It trusted that the General Assembly would be provided with updated information

on the matter when it considered the Advisory Committee's report.

16. **Mr. Yeboah** (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group wished to recall that, in its resolution 2495 (2019), the Security Council had decided to extend the mandate of UNAMID until 31 October 2020 and had further decided that the Operation should continue to implement its mandate as set out in resolution 2429 (2018). While the Group remained cognizant of the special reports of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission presenting a whole-of-system approach for Darfur, including adjusted priorities for UNAMID and a transition concept, it nevertheless urged the Organization to maintain a responsible approach towards drawdown and exit. In that connection, it wished to reiterate that the Operation's mandate was to help the Council achieve the overall objective of a lasting political solution and sustained security in Darfur.

17. The Group welcomed the critical operational activities being undertaken by UNAMID, including environmental clean-up and bioremediation activities and efforts to ensure the safe disposal of solid waste through UNAMID tipping sites. It also welcomed the implementation of programmatic activities – in such areas as rule of law, resilience and livelihood solutions for the displaced population and host communities, and immediate service delivery for internally displaced persons – in collaboration with the United Nations country team.

18. The Group wished to remind the Secretary-General of the Organization's obligation under the exit plan to reduce the Operation's overall environmental footprint, including through the timely and appropriate treatment of contaminated soil. It looked forward to receiving information on the progress made with respect to the greening initiative, which involved, inter alia, the planting of drought-resistant tree species. It reiterated its call for the Secretary-General to draw on the experience gained in the liquidation of recently closed peacekeeping missions, such as the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), while using the Liquidation Manual as a guide during the drawdown phase. The drawdown would entail the abolishment of posts and positions, particularly of national staff. Those affected should be assisted through capacity-building, job fairs and other measures to prepare them for a competitive job market.

19. Lastly, the Group supported the approval of the three-month budgetary requirements of \$130,227,800

requested by the Secretary-General. In that regard, it wished to stress the importance of adequate and timely funding at such a critical phase in the life of UNAMID.

20. **Mr. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that his Government was grateful to the members of the Security Council for their continued support for the Sudan, as evidenced by the adoption of resolution [2495 \(2019\)](#), in which the Council had decided – at his Government’s request – to extend the mandate of UNAMID for an additional 12 months, until 31 October 2020, and maintain the Operation’s geographical presence and troop ceiling until 31 March 2020, with a view to creating the conditions necessary for achieving comprehensive peace throughout the Sudan. It was important to find sustainable solutions to the critical drivers of conflict so as to prevent relapse and enable the national authorities, the United Nations country team, civil society partners and international actors to prepare for the exit of UNAMID. The Operation, for its part, should cooperate with the African Union to provide support to the ongoing peace talks. It should also support the national Peace Commission by such means as advocacy, policy development, capacity-building and logistical support.

21. Following the transition to civilian rule, the Sudan needed the support of the international community and the United Nations to implement the priorities his Government had identified, namely, establishing sustainable peace, addressing the impact of conflict and laying the foundations for democratic rule at the end of the current three-year transition phase. His Government was fully aware of the scale of the challenges it faced. For that reason, it was studying available options for a mechanism to succeed UNAMID and, in that connection, was developing a comprehensive concept that would facilitate the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and promote development, stability and recovery, taking into account the continuing efforts to bring peace to all parts of the country. It wished to stress the importance of maintaining cooperation with the United Nations and all other partners in order to support that process. It noted the organization in September 2019 of a high-level event on the Sudan, in the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly. It also wished to draw attention to the recent meeting it had co-hosted in Khartoum in preparation for the donor conference to be held in 2020.

22. It was important to approve the Secretary-General’s request to allocate the necessary resources to enable the United Nations country team to carry out its tasks after the exit of UNAMID. There was a need to reduce the Operation’s environmental footprint by, inter alia, ensuring the safe disposal of waste and undertaking the required clean-up activities. His delegation wished

to reiterate its request for a comprehensive environmental assessment of all UNAMID sites. That request had yet to meet with a satisfactory response, although such an assessment had been referred to time and again in the Advisory Committee’s reports. The assessment should be conducted jointly with the national authorities. The assessment team should apply lessons learned from closed peacekeeping missions and report on its findings in the detailed budget proposal for the 2019/20 period. Regarding staffing requirements, international posts should be converted to national posts in order to make savings, and the number of international staff should be cut as the Operation’s staffing was reduced. National staff, who had performed high-level tasks in UNAMID for years, could carry out the work currently done by international staff; affording them such opportunities should be an integral part of capacity-building efforts.

23. His Government would continue to cooperate with UNAMID and the African Union to ensure a seamless transition following the exit of the Operation, and to achieve peace and enhance development in the Sudan.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.