



# General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

## Official Records

Distr.: General  
28 July 2014

Original: English

### Fifth Committee

#### Summary record of the 41st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 May 2014, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Taalas ..... (Finland)  
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Ruiz Massieu

### Contents

Agenda item 136: Improving the financial situation of the United Nations  
(*continued*)

Agenda item 158: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Agenda item 160: Financing of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

Agenda item 164: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Agenda item 147: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

*Support account for peacekeeping operations*

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (*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)*

*Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen*

*Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel*

*Panel of Experts on Yemen*

Organization of work

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 136: Improving the financial situation of the United Nations** (*continued*) (A/68/524/Add.1)

1. **The Chair**, recalling that the Under-Secretary-General for Management had briefed the Committee on the current financial situation of the Organization at its 36th meeting, held on 6 May 2014, said that his statement at that meeting had been issued as a report of the Secretary-General (A/68/524/Add.1).

2. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary-General for Management) said that, since 6 May 2014, payments under the different United Nations budgets had been received from a number of Member States. As a result, 83 Member States had now paid their assessed contributions in full for the regular budget, 31 had paid all their contributions for peacekeeping operations, and 57 had paid their contributions in full for the international tribunals. Thanking all those Member States that had made payments, he informed the Committee that 29 Member States had now paid all assessments in full.

3. **Ms. Rios Requena** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group noted with satisfaction that as at 30 April 2014 payments received under the regular budget had been higher, at \$1.68 billion, than the \$1.53 billion received by the same date in 2013, and that there had been a significant reduction in the level of unpaid assessments in the last quarter of 2013, a trend which the Group hoped would continue in 2014.

4. The Group recognized the efforts made to reduce the amount owed by the Organization to Member States that provided troops, formed police units and contingent-owned equipment to peacekeeping operations from \$745 million as at 30 April 2013 to \$513 million as at 31 December 2013. It also noted the decrease expected by the end of 2014; more should be done to ensure that Member States were reimbursed expeditiously and in full. As most troop-contributing countries were also developing countries, they were not in a position to sustain their troop commitments and maintain their equipment for extended periods of time without those payments. The issue was a priority for the Group. Those countries that had not paid their assessments for peacekeeping budgets in full should do so as soon as possible.

5. The Group was pleased to learn that 174 Member States had paid their capital master plan assessments in full as at 30 April 2014, and invited those Member States that had not done so to make their payments.

6. The full, timely and unconditional payment of assessed contributions by all Member States was an obligation set out in the Charter. She urged Member States to settle their arrears in a timely fashion, particularly when they had the capacity to do so, for all must meet their commitments in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations. The Group rejected all unilateral coercive measures contrary to international law that obstructed or impeded payments by its members of their contributions to United Nations budgets.

7. **Mr. Presutti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Liechtenstein and Ukraine, said that the Organization's work relied on the partnership between Member States and the Secretariat, which were required, respectively, to provide and utilize funding in a responsible manner. While more Member States had paid in full their assessments under the regular budget than in 2013, the significant level of unpaid assessments remained a matter of concern. In particular, as at 30 April 2014, only 23 Member States had paid all of their peacekeeping assessments, yet 32 had done so by the same date in 2013.

8. Although the cash position of the Organization was healthy, there was, nevertheless, a need to reduce spending while maintaining the delivery of mandates. Unceasing efforts must be made to spend more wisely and to find new ways of working in order to ensure that the Organization adhered to agreed budget levels, including for peacekeeping, construction and activities under the regular budget, in the interest of effective mandate delivery and sustainable resource use.

9. Noting that the States members of the European Union collectively contributed nearly 35 per cent of the regular budget, far exceeding their share of world gross national income, and approximately 37 per cent of the peacekeeping budgets, he said that it was imperative to find a more balanced and equitable way to share financial responsibilities, based on Member States'

actual capacity to pay, in order to secure a sustainable financing architecture for the United Nations system.

10. **Mr. Harper** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that it was pleasing to see that outstanding assessed contributions had decreased across most budget categories compared with 2013; however, the failure by some Member States to pay their assessments in full and on time was not only unfair to those States which had done so but also delayed reimbursements to troop- and equipment-contributing countries for the costs they had incurred. Member States could be discouraged from contributing their assets to future peacekeeping operations.

11. At the end of 2013, \$513 million had still been owed to Member States for peacekeeping activities. While that figure was projected to decrease to \$500 million by the end of 2014, it was still too high. Payment of amounts owing for troops and formed police units, contingent-owned equipment, letters of assist, and death and disability claims depended on Member States' meeting their obligations to the United Nations in full and on time.

12. Unpaid assessed contributions had a significant adverse impact on cash flow. As at 30 April 2014, \$1.39 billion in regular budget contributions had been outstanding. The Working Capital Fund had been established to provide advances needed to fund budgetary appropriations pending the receipt of contributions, but that liquidity mechanism could function properly only if contributions were paid on time and in full. The Committee must remain vigilant about the use of the Fund: if current trends continued, the Organization's cash position would come under significant stress by the end of 2014.

13. The three delegations for which he spoke would continue to demonstrate their commitment to the work of the United Nations by paying their dues in full, on time and without conditions; he urged all Member States to fulfil their Charter obligations in the same way. Member States in arrears should submit multi-year payment plans.

14. The halcyon financial years that had existed prior to the global financial crisis were long gone and the concept of doing more with less was now entrenched. While all Member States must continue to provide the Organization with the resources it needed, they must also make a collective effort to identify areas where savings could be made or duplication minimized, and

to refine and simplify business processes. To improve the financial situation of the United Nations in the current environment, the resources provided to the Organization must be effectively and astutely managed.

15. **Mr. Sánchez Azcuy** (Cuba) said that as the United Nations played an increasingly important role in maintaining world peace, promoting development and strengthening international cooperation, it was essential for it to have a stable financial basis. Member States should therefore pay their assessments in full, on time and without conditions. It was significant that the largest share of unpaid assessments under all United Nations budgets continued to be owed by a single Member State, one that also benefited from the greatest distortion in the methodology for calculating the scale of assessments. The strict and unconditional payment of assessments was a Charter requirement. The deliberate withholding of payments was short-sighted and irresponsible, and compromised the Organization's financial stability. The United Nations had no independent source of general income and relied on contributions from its Member States in order to prevent disruption of its operations. For its part, the Organization must demonstrate its ability to manage the financial resources entrusted to it effectively by continuing to deliver results while strengthening accountability and transparency, particularly when Member States themselves were adopting strict austerity measures.

16. The permanent members of the Security Council had special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, yet one Member State in particular repeatedly delayed or placed conditions on the payment of its peacekeeping assessments. The accumulation of arrears in assessed contributions had a negative effect on the Organization's ability to fulfil its mandates. The systemic problem of financing peacekeeping operations must be resolved once and for all. For example, the practice of financing active peacekeeping operations from the accounts of closed peacekeeping operations was unsustainable and could not continue. The balance of closed peacekeeping mission accounts must be returned to Member States, in accordance with the Organization's Financial Regulations and Rules. In that connection, his delegation was concerned about the increasing delays in reimbursing Member States that provided troops, police units and equipment to peacekeeping missions. The timely reimbursement of costs incurred by States

that had provided troops and equipment would help to alleviate the financial burden borne by many developing countries. The Secretariat should make greater efforts to reimburse those countries in full and on time; it would be impossible to carry out peacekeeping operations without their participation. Of course, reimbursement required Member States to pay their assessments in full and on time.

17. Many developing countries, including Cuba, had made great efforts to fulfil their financial obligations to the Organization, despite their economic difficulties. Unfortunately, the financial crisis of recent years and its negative impact on developing countries' capacity to pay were not the only difficulties faced by many States that had the political will to pay their assessments. Cuba rejected the use of unilateral coercive measures contrary to international law that obstructed or impeded payments from developing countries; such measures violated long-standing agreements between the Organization and the host country.

18. For more than 50 years Cuba had suffered the consequences of the unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States Government, yet it still managed to discharge its financial obligations and maintain its commitment to multilateralism by paying its budget assessments. As it was unable to use the United States dollar for international transactions, Cuba's payments were subject to currency fluctuations and must be made through third parties. Cuba's bank transfers to international organizations had also been frozen on many occasions, even when denominated in euros or Canadian dollars. The General Assembly had called for an end to the embargo against Cuba on 21 consecutive occasions. That unilateral economic, financial and commercial siege was the main obstacle to his country's sustainable development, and the extraterritorial nature of the policy was a violation of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations. It must end. Lastly, he thanked the Contributions and Policy Coordination Service for its timely assistance in monitoring the status of Cuba's contributions under the budgets of the Organization.

19. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Japan) said that, in recognition of its responsibilities under the Charter, his Government had paid in full all its assessments for the regular budget, peacekeeping operations, the international tribunals and the capital master plan, in spite of

enormous domestic financial difficulties. His Government had also undertaken considerable domestic coordination efforts in order to be able to pay its peacekeeping assessments earlier than in previous years, notwithstanding the difference between its budget cycle and that of the United Nations.

20. While the financial situation at the end of 2013 had been generally sound, he noted the possible impact of resolution 68/247 B on the overall cash position of the General Fund. The Secretariat should monitor the cash position closely and duly inform the General Assembly.

21. The resources contributed by Member States should be utilized efficiently and effectively by the Organization to implement mandates. In that regard, the Secretariat could draw on Member States' domestic experience. The General Assembly should aim for a reasonable and practical solution when discussing the various budget proposals. He hoped that the Committee would be able to achieve consensus on the various items before it before the scheduled end date of the second part of the resumed session.

22. **Mr. Sun Xudong** (China) said that as a result of the positive efforts made by Member States the financial situation of the Organization had improved slightly: as at 30 April 2014, 79 Member States had paid their assessments under the regular budget in full, more than in 2013, and, compared with 2013, the level of unpaid assessments had been \$13 million lower. Despite those improvements, the overall financial situation was still far from satisfactory. As at 30 April 2014, unpaid assessments for the regular budget had totalled \$1.39 billion, for peacekeeping operations they had amounted to \$1.5 billion, and for the international tribunals \$149 million had been outstanding. A robust financial situation was an important reflection and a firm guarantee of a strong, stable and vigorous United Nations; without guaranteed funding, it was very difficult for the Organization to carry out its mandates.

23. In recent years, his country's assessed contribution had increased dramatically to over \$600 million a year. Although China was a developing country with a low capacity to pay, his Government had worked actively and responsibly to raise the funds to pay its contributions. As a result, it had already paid all of its assessments for 2013 in full. In March 2014, it had paid half of its assessed contribution to the regular budget for 2014 and, as at 13 May 2014, it had paid its

assessed contributions for the international tribunals in full and most of its assessed contributions for peacekeeping operations.

24. He appealed to all Member States, in a spirit of political good will, to fulfil their financial obligations under the Charter by paying their assessments in full, on time and without conditions to ensure that the Organization could carry out its mandates. At the same time, the Secretariat should strengthen its administrative and budgetary management, exercise financial discipline, achieve economies, and make effective use of every penny paid by Member States.

**Agenda item 158: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali** ([A/68/782/Add.13](#) and [A/68/823](#))

**Agenda item 160: Financing of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan** ([A/68/616](#), [A/68/782/Add.17](#) and [A/68/828](#))

**Agenda item 164: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur** ([A/68/619](#), [A/68/754](#) and [A/68/782/Add.15](#))

**Agenda item 147: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations** (*continued*)

*Support account for peacekeeping operations*  
([A/68/648](#), [A/68/648/Add.1](#), [A/68/742](#), [A/68/773](#) and [A/68/861](#))

25. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Deputy Controller), introducing the budget for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 ([A/68/823](#)), said that the proposed 2014/15 budget reflected the completion of full operational capacity of the Mission.

26. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 ([A/68/616](#)) and the note on financing for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 ([A/68/828](#)) of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), he said that, owing to the situation in South Sudan, the budget for UNMISS for 2014/15 would be submitted to the General Assembly at the main part of its sixty-ninth session, in order to enable the Mission to develop a comprehensive budget submission that would incorporate fully any decisions taken by the Security Council. In the interim, the Secretary-General was

seeking authority to enter into commitments with assessment to ensure the continuity of UNMISS operations for the initial part of 2014/15.

27. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 ([A/68/619](#)) and the budget for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 ([A/68/754](#)) of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), he said that the 2014/15 budget reflected a lower planned deployment of uniformed personnel, a net reduction of 251 posts and positions, and the conversion of 117 international posts and United Nations Volunteer positions to national posts, pursuant to the civilian staffing review.

28. Turning to the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 ([A/68/648](#) and [A/68/648/Add.1](#)) and the budget for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 ([A/68/742](#)) of the support account for peacekeeping operations, he said that the General Assembly had approved support account requirements in the amount of \$318 million for 2012/13, including \$37.3 million to finance enterprise resource planning. In addition, owing to lower actual vacancy rates and higher-than-budgeted common staff costs, the General Assembly had approved additional support account requirements in the amount of \$13.1 million for the same period, without assessment on Member States. Thus, the total support account requirements approved for the 2012/13 financial period were \$331.1 million. The budget implementation rate was 99.5 per cent.

29. The General Assembly was requested to assess an amount of \$11.7 million, representing the difference between the original approved resources for 2012/13 of \$318 million and actual expenditure of \$329.7 million, as the additional approved resources of \$13.1 million had not been assessed on Member States.

30. Peacekeeping activities, and the need for backstopping, were expected to remain at a high level in 2014/15. Excluding provisions for enterprise resource planning, the proposed budget of \$306.5 million for 2014/15 represented an overall reduction of 0.7 per cent compared with the appropriation of \$308.8 million for 2013/14. That figure, however, did not include requirements for the backstopping of the newly established United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), estimated



at \$6.1 million, as contained in the Secretary-General's note on financing arrangements for the Mission ([A/68/874](#)).

31. The percentage requirement of the support account was expected to remain at broadly the same level as in 2013/14, representing 5 per cent of the total proposed peacekeeping budget for 2014/15. Excluding the additional resources for MINUSCA, staffing resources were proposed at the same level for all departments compared with 2013/14, except for a few areas that needed strengthening, in particular human rights and safety and security.

32. The proposed resource requirements for 2014/15 principally reflected departments' efforts to curtail mobile communication costs; the impact of implementing the new standards of accommodation for air travel; and the absence of one-time provisions budgeted for 2013/14, which were not required for 2014/15. Those reductions were offset in part by the increase in the after-service health insurance costs of peacekeeping retirees.

33. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee on MINUSMA ([A/68/782/Add.13](#)), said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of \$267,400 in the amount proposed for 2014/15.

34. Under civilian staffing, the Advisory Committee recommended against the proposed reclassification of the D-1 post of Principal Security Sector Reform Officer to the D-2 level. It also recommended against the proposed reclassifications of one Human Resources Officer post from the P-3 level to the Field Service level, and one Human Resources Officer post from Field Service level 7 to the P-4 level. Under operational costs, the Advisory Committee recommended a 5 per cent reduction, amounting to \$27,320, in the resources requested under consultants, and a 5 per cent reduction, amounting to \$183,400, in the resources requested for official travel.

35. Turning to the related report of the Advisory Committee on UNMISS ([A/68/782/Add.17](#)), he said that the current period had been marked by the crisis that had started in South Sudan on 15 December 2013 and was still ongoing. With regard to the personnel and assets transferred to UNMISS from other missions under inter-mission cooperation arrangements, the

related costs should be charged to the receiving mission from the date of transfer. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General should present in his next submission on the financing of UNMISS, as well as in the performance reports of UNMISS and the sending missions, clear and transparent reporting of the services, assets and personnel provided to UNMISS in 2013/14 and related cost-recovery charges.

36. With regard to the Secretary-General's request for commitment authority with assessment for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2014, the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of \$13.2 million in the interim resource requirements of \$599.3 million for that period. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed level of resources under the military and police components should be reduced to reflect the deployment of the highest strength of military and police personnel actually authorized. It also recommended a reduction of \$10.9 million under facilities and infrastructure, reflecting a 10 per cent decrease in the resources proposed for construction projects. Full implementation of the envisaged construction plan was not likely to be achieved within the six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2014 given the continuing operational challenges faced by the Mission, which had repeatedly caused delays in the implementation of construction projects.

37. The Advisory Committee noted that, should existing temporary inter-mission cooperation arrangements be extended, any services, assets and personnel provided to UNMISS in 2014/15 by other missions would also be provided for in the proposed budgets of the sending missions. Consequently, when the full UNMISS budget for 2014/15 was presented, the Secretariat would confirm if there were instances of double-funding and propose reductions in the relevant appropriations, and assessment, for previously approved 2014/15 budgets. The Advisory Committee recommended that, should inter-mission cooperation arrangements be continued in 2014/15, the General Assembly should decide that all related costs should be funded from UNMISS, and reduce the relevant appropriations, and assessment, for the previously approved 2014/15 budgets of the missions providing services, assets and personnel to UNMISS. The Advisory Committee stressed the need to ensure that there was no double budgeting and double assessment

of Member States in respect of the same personnel and assets.

38. The Advisory Committee acknowledged the dedicated service of the Mission's military and police personnel, as well as of its civilian staff, in the face of a difficult situation. It regretted the loss of life and injury suffered and recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to ensure that all necessary measures were taken to improve the safety and security of the Mission's personnel. It further recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to ensure that all outstanding death and disability claims were settled expeditiously.

39. Introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee on UNAMID ([A/68/782/Add.15](#)), he said that the Secretary-General's budget proposal for 2014/15 had been developed in anticipation of a decision to be taken by the Security Council. However, the Security Council had not yet considered the budget proposal, which had introduced some uncertainty. Planning assumptions should take into account only those changes in the mandate or the authorized strength of uniformed personnel that had been decided by the Security Council. The Advisory Committee considered it premature to make any recommendations on the Secretary-General's 2014/15 budget proposal and, on that basis, recommended that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of \$667,624,000, or half of the Operation's budget for 2013/14, for the maintenance of UNAMID for the six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2014. In addition, the Secretary-General should be requested to submit a revised budget proposal for 2014/15 reflecting the decision of the Security Council on the renewal of the mandate of UNAMID.

40. Turning to the related report of the Advisory Committee on the support account for peacekeeping operations ([A/68/861](#)), he said that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would entail a reduction of \$6,317,300 in the Secretary-General's proposed budget for the support account for 2014/15.

41. While the Secretary-General had applied the approved vacancy rates for 2013/14 to the estimates for posts and positions for 2014/15, actual average vacancy rates had been higher for the period from July 2013 to January 2014. Budgeted vacancy rates should

be based on actual vacancy rates; the Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the revised rates should be applied to the cost estimates for posts and positions for 2014/15. It had also requested that up-to-date information on incumbency rates should be provided to the General Assembly.

42. The rate for common staff costs for 2014/15 had been estimated at 49.3 per cent of net salaries, based on actual expenditure incurred in 2012/13 and the first six months of 2013/14, compared with 50 per cent for 2013/14. According to the Secretary-General, the impact of the reduced rate represented a decrease of \$1.5 million for 2014/15. The Advisory Committee noted the difference in the rates applied with respect to the support account, at 49.3 per cent, and the regular budget for New York, at 43.5 per cent for 2012-2013 and 2014-2015. It had been informed that the difference was indicative of the different personal situations of staff members, as common staff costs comprised a wide range of staff allowances. The Advisory Committee had no objection to the estimated rate for common staff costs of 49.3 per cent of net salaries for the support account for 2014/15 proposed by the Secretary-General.

43. An amount of \$9,859,900 was proposed for official travel for 2014/15, representing an increase of \$85,600, or 0.9 per cent, over the provision for 2013/14. However, the Advisory Committee noted that, taking into account an amount of \$700,300 for 2013/14 which would not be required for 2014/15, the proposed requirements for official travel for 2014/15 represented an increase of 8.7 per cent. The Advisory Committee had identified reductions in five departments and offices that would lead to a total reduction of \$283,300 in the proposed resources for official travel for 2014/15.

44. The measures recently adopted by the General Assembly on standards of accommodation for air travel should contain costs. In that connection, information on the increases in standard air ticket costs projected for 2014/15 had not been clearly presented in the proposed budget or sufficiently justified. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide detailed information on the financial impact of the revised standards on travel requirements under the support account in the performance report for 2014/15 and in future budget proposals.

45. The Advisory Committee noted the increase in the total number of posts and positions under the support account as well as at the United Nations Logistics Base from 1,702 for 2009/10 to 1,867 for 2014/15, against decreases in the numbers of both military/police personnel and civilian staff in peacekeeping operations over the same period. In addition, the total number of D-1 and D-2 posts had increased from 13 and 5, respectively, in 2005/06 to 27 and 10 in 2013/14. Furthermore, four additional posts at the D-1 level were requested in the proposed budget for 2014/15 for the support account and the Logistics Base.

46. The Advisory Committee recalled that the General Assembly had emphasized that support functions should be scalable to the size and scope of peacekeeping operations, and that there should be a relationship between the level of backstopping capacity provided through the support account and the number, size and complexity of peacekeeping operations. The Assembly had also requested the Secretary-General to review the level of the support account on a regular basis, taking those considerations into account.

47. Lastly, regarding the financial period 2012/13, he recalled that the General Assembly had approved an additional amount of \$13,058,500 which had not been assessed on Member States. In his budget proposal, the Secretary-General requested the Assembly to assess an amount of \$11,692,300, representing the difference between actual expenditure and the original appropriation approved by the Assembly for the period. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should assess the amount proposed by the Secretary-General for 2012/13.

48. **Ms. Rios Requena** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that all peacekeeping missions should be provided with adequate backstopping so that they could perform their growing and multifaceted functions. Although the level of the support account should broadly correspond to the mandate, number, size and complexity of peacekeeping missions, the Secretary-General's proposed budget for the support account for 2014/15 of \$327.4 million might not be sufficient to provide adequate backstopping given the expected surge in the number of mission personnel on the ground.

49. In its resolution [56/253](#) the General Assembly had reaffirmed that management decisions should not be taken to keep a certain number of posts vacant, as such action made the budget process less transparent and management of human and financial resources less efficient. The Group requested a written explanation from the Secretariat in response to the assertion by the Advisory Committee that the information on vacant posts presented in the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for 2014/15 ([A/68/742](#)) lacked transparency.

50. The Group commended the Security Council for entrusting various peacekeeping missions with human rights mandates, thus making such rights an integral part of the flagship activity of the United Nations. It supported the Secretary-General's proposal for two new Professional posts in that domain to be established in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

51. The Group supported the proposal of the Secretary-General that the resources of the United Nations Office to the African Union should be presented separately under the support account, since the Office operated with a high level of independence and had its own expertise and administrative support.

52. The Group also strongly supported all the proposals of the Secretary-General for the redeployment of posts under the support account and the conversion to posts of general temporary assistance positions where the work conducted could be considered of a continuing nature. It encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to rationalize the use of consultants and to use in-house capacity to the fullest.

53. The Group was concerned that the number of staff from troop- and police-contributing countries working in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support had been lower in January 2014 than in February 2013, despite the repeated but unheeded requests by the General Assembly for the Secretary-General to ensure proper representation of those countries in those departments in view of their contribution to United Nations peacekeeping.

54. The representation of troop-contributing countries in all relevant departments, including on the support side at Headquarters, was essential to greater coherence between those who managed, directed and commanded operations and those who provided human



resources on the ground. Close coordination among all Member States, in particular troop- and police-contributing countries, was essential, including through free access by such countries to the Secretariat, in order to ensure a meaningful partnership in peacekeeping-related matters.

55. **Ms. Power** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the member States of the European Union actively supported and participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

56. Although the Secretary-General's proposal in respect of the support account represented a small decrease compared to the appropriation for 2013/14, the number of posts requested had increased, mostly as a result of the proposed conversion of general temporary assistance positions to posts. The proposed increase coincided with a decrease in the numbers of military and police personnel and civilian staff in peacekeeping. Her delegation would therefore closely scrutinize the resources requested. Bearing in mind that support functions should be scalable to the size and scope of peacekeeping operations, and that there should be a relationship between the level of backstopping capacity provided through the support account and the number, size and complexity of peacekeeping operations, she asked how the Secretariat had taken account of those considerations in its review of requirements for 2014/15 and how they were reflected in the budget proposal. The rationale for the conversion of general temporary assistance positions to posts was also of interest.

57. The purpose of the support account as originally envisaged when first implemented must be kept in mind. It should be properly structured, transparent and relevant to evolving mandates so that it could provide the core capacity to support peacekeeping operations.

58. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that his delegation acknowledged the role played by UNAMID in promoting stability in Darfur. He noted with concern, however, that since 2012 there had been a large decrease in the number of national posts in UNAMID, notwithstanding, in particular, General Assembly resolution [66/264](#) calling for the nationalization of

Field Service posts in the context of comprehensive civilian staffing reviews. Neither the budget performance report for 2012/13 ([A/68/619](#)) nor the proposed budget for 2014/15 ([A/68/754](#)) provided detailed or accurate information on the number of national posts and, in particular, vacant posts in UNAMID, or on how those posts could be filled. It was of the utmost importance for the resolution on the funding of UNAMID to include provisions that clearly addressed the issue of national posts and how vacancies would be filled, including the 42 international posts proposed by the Secretary-General for conversion to national posts.

59. Quick-impact projects were essential to the Government's efforts to respond to the concerns of local communities and prepare the ground for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. However, the number of such projects executed in 2012/13 had been modest in comparison with 2011/12. The General Assembly should allocate more resources for such projects, the costs of which were not great compared to the overall proposed budget.

60. UNAMID was a large mission and its many activities had damaged the environment, affecting people's lives, the land and resources. It should do more to mitigate its environmental impact, particularly through better waste disposal, the adoption of environmentally friendly construction techniques, lower fuel consumption, greater reliance on solar power, and more tree-planting projects.

61. Multi-year projects had a direct positive effect on people's lives and facilitated the Operation's performance of its tasks, thus reducing expenditure, particularly on projects related to roads between the main camps and airports and the construction of solar power plants. The recommendations adopted and the projects endorsed by the Darfur International Conference on Water for Sustainable Peace, held in June 2011 in Khartoum, a UNAMID initiative, should be implemented. His Government stressed the importance of large projects that supported its efforts to address the needs and concerns of local communities.

62. UNAMID should procure more products and services from local suppliers. The Sudan was rich in agricultural and animal resources and could meet the food needs of UNAMID in line with United Nations procurement and contracting criteria. He reiterated his

Government's commitment to providing banking services to the Operation.

63. Lastly, he expressed concern regarding the quality of the interpretation of his statement. Although he appreciated the efforts of the interpreters, they should exercise more care in their work.

64. **Mr. Sun Xudong** (China) said that his delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General for the redeployment of nine posts under the support account budget for 2014/15, including four in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, three in the Department of Field Support and two in the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

65. He expressed dissatisfaction regarding the last-minute submission of the report of the Advisory Committee on the support account for peacekeeping operations (A/68/861): it had hindered the Committee's deliberations on the peacekeeping budget and undermined the technical authority of the Advisory Committee. The efficiency of the Advisory Committee's work must be quickly enhanced and its meeting time of nine months per year reduced so as to conserve the resources of Member States.

66. His delegation opposed the Advisory Committee's recommendations contained in paragraph 38 of its report. The explanations put forward demonstrated a lack of understanding of the situation as a whole, were one-sided, reflected the application of double standards, were unscientific, and violated the principles of objectivity and impartiality. The recommendations would have grave consequences. The Advisory Committee should think carefully before it acted. He asked the Chair of the Advisory Committee to relay his comments to the Advisory Committee members.

67. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he would transmit the comments made by delegations to the Advisory Committee members and was available to explain in detail the rationale for any Advisory Committee proposal. With regard to the rejection of the redeployment referred to in paragraph 38 of its report on the support account, the post in question had been backstopping the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), which had been liquidated on 31 December 2012, and the redeployment was therefore unjustifiable. He would provide further details in informal consultations.

Ultimately, the General Assembly would decide whether or not the recommendation was approved.

68. **Mr. Sun Xudong** (China) said that he was not satisfied with the explanation provided by the Chair of the Advisory Committee, who had not understood his contention that the explanations given in the Advisory Committee's report were unscientific, violated the principles of objectivity and impartiality, and reflected double standards. Although UNMIT had indeed been liquidated, three of the redeployments proposed in the budget submission for the support account for 2014/15 (A/68/742) were of posts related to that Mission, and the Advisory Committee had rejected only one while approving the other two. Had it not, therefore, applied a double standard? His delegation was disappointed by the adoption of such a ridiculous recommendation and looked forward to the informal consultations on the matter.

#### **Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (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)*

*Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen*

*Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel*

*Panel of Experts on Yemen*

(A/68/7/Add.27 and A/68/327/Add.11)

69. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Deputy Controller) introduced the Secretary-General's proposed additional resource requirements for 2014 for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, and the 2014 resource requirements for the Panel of Experts on Yemen, established by the Security Council in February 2014 (A/68/327/Add.11). The additional resource requirements for the Office of the Special Adviser on Yemen related mainly to the enhancement of security arrangements, including the proposed establishment of 15 new positions. The report also contained an update on the level of leadership arrangements for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/247 A.

70. The resources requested totalled \$3.9 million net of staff assessment, comprising \$1.5 million for the Office of the Special Adviser on Yemen and \$2.4 million for the Panel of Experts on Yemen, to be charged against the provision for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

71. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee ([A/68/7/Add.27](#)), said that, with regard to the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, the Advisory Committee approved the staffing proposals made by the Secretary-General following a security risk assessment in March 2014. It recommended a vacancy rate of 50 per cent for all positions. In addition, it recommended that a review should be undertaken of the organizational arrangements and related resources for close protection in peacekeeping and special political missions.

72. Turning to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, he said that the Advisory Committee recommended maintaining the position of the Special Envoy at the level of Assistant Secretary-General.

73. Moving on to the Panel of Experts on Yemen, the Advisory Committee approved the Secretary-General's staffing proposals and recommended that a vacancy rate of 50 per cent should be applied to those positions.

74. Taking those recommendations into account, the Advisory Committee recommended the approval of additional resources for 2014 in a total amount of \$3,377,900 for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen and the Panel of Experts on Yemen, and also recommended the approval of a charge totalling the same amount against the provision for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

75. **Ms. Pacunega Manano** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group attached great importance to issues related to the Sahel, and would closely analyse all proposals related to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel.

76. **Mr. Al-Sallal** (Yemen) said that Yemen and its people, with the cooperation of the United Nations and

the international community, had made great progress towards achieving a political settlement based on the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative. The recommendations emanating from the All-Inclusive National Dialogue Conference had been put into effect, including the adoption of a federal system, the division of the country into six federal regions, and the establishment of the Constitution Drafting Committee, which was expected to complete its work in 2014. Preparations were also under way for a referendum on the draft Constitution followed by parliamentary and presidential elections in accordance with the new Constitution. The consolidation of those successes and the achievement of future success would depend on enhanced cooperation between Yemen and the international community and the latter's continued support for the Government of National Unity and the transitional political process.

77. Yemen's financial and economic difficulties made it unstable. It faced mounting security problems, including an increase in acts of terrorism by Al-Qaida, 70 per cent of whose members were foreigners: his Government was waging open war against terrorists. Despite the successes by the security forces and the people's committees, the Government needed material, technical and logistical support if it was to triumph over terrorism, as well as assistance in developing programmes to address its root causes. Although Yemen had developed a national counter-terrorism strategy, it required the support of the international community to implement it. For geographical, social and economic reasons, Yemen had become susceptible to various international threats, including Al-Qaida, organized criminal gangs engaged in trafficking arms, drugs and human beings, and maritime piracy.

78. His Government would make every effort to facilitate the work of the United Nations by supporting the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen. Although his delegation welcomed the recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's report ([A/68/327/Add.11](#)), it drew attention to the need to select local security staff and train them in accordance with the standards established by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security. It also stressed the importance of exploiting the resources at the disposal of the Yemeni security services and the need for cooperation in the protection of United Nations personnel and facilities in Yemen.

### **Organization of work**

79. **Mr. Sánchez Azcué** (Cuba) reiterated the question which he had asked the secretariat at the 39th meeting of the Committee regarding whether the Secretary-General's bulletins on the organization of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations ([ST/SGB/2010/1](#)) and of the Department of Field Support ([ST/SGB/2010/2](#)) authorized the Under-Secretaries-General for those departments to discuss, at private meetings held away from United Nations premises and outside the Committee's programme of work, questions which nevertheless fell within the Committee's remit and were of importance to those departments. He would continue to raise the matter until he received a response.

80. **The Chair** said that the question by the representative of Cuba had been noted.

*The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.*