



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
6 July 2017

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 31st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 5 May 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. King (St. Vincent and the Grenadines)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Ruiz Massieu

Contents

Agenda item 150: Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

Agenda item 152: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
(*continued*)

Agenda item 164: Financing of the activities arising from Security Council
resolution [1863 \(2009\)](#)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

17-07294 (E)



Please recycle



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

Agenda item 150: Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei ([A/71/624](#), [A/71/767](#) and [A/71/836/Add.13](#))

Agenda item 152: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (*continued*) ([A/71/732](#) and [A/71/886](#))

Agenda item 164: Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 1863 (2009) ([A/71/630](#), [A/71/788](#) and [A/71/836/Add.6](#))

1. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 ([A/71/624](#)) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 ([A/71/767](#)) for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), said that the proposed 2017/18 budget of \$278 million was 3.5 per cent higher than the approved 2016/17 resources. The Force would support mediation and inter-community dialogue and would support the work of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism to improve relations between the Sudan and South Sudan.

2. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) ([A/71/732](#)), she said that the actions to be taken by the General Assembly were set out in paragraph 74 of the report. The Operation had transferred its essential activities to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations country team and other partners. In accordance with Security Council resolution [2284 \(2016\)](#), UNOCI would be closed and liquidated by 30 June 2017. All military and police contingents had left Côte d'Ivoire by mid-February 2017 and the civilian staff had been reduced to a small complement that would finalize residual tasks associated with the liquidation until the end of June 2017. The Operation had established a programme to help staff, particularly national staff, find employment after the closure. The withdrawal plan had helped reduce the mission's footprint and had enabled such liquidation activities as the timely and environmentally responsible closure of camps.

3. Introducing the budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 ([A/71/630](#)) and the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 ([A/71/788](#)) for the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), she said that the proposed 2017/18 budget of \$619.3 million was 7.8 per cent greater than the 2016/17 approved resources. The Office would support the African Union

Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), including by expanding to all sectors its mission enabling units, which were embedded in AMISOM and included heavy transport, combat engineering, explosive hazard management and security elements. Additional mentors would be included in the units, which would help AMISOM address the threat of improvised explosive devices.

4. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on UNISFA ([A/71/836/Add.13](#)), said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would entail a reduction of \$3.6 million in the proposed budget for the Force, including in relation to the reassignment of posts, the conversion of positions funded under general temporary assistance, construction projects, external consultants and official travel.

5. Introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee on UNOCI ([A/71/886](#)), he said that the budget implementation rate for the Operation was 88 per cent. The incorrect recording of expenditure had hindered the comparison and analysis of expenditure patterns. The Advisory Committee had not received the information it had requested regarding the reasons for the 22 per cent overexpenditure on national staff. It was not convinced of the need for the Operation to retain the unencumbered balance of \$48.7 million for 2015/16 and other income amounting to \$16.5 million, as recommended by the Secretary-General, and recommended that those amounts should be credited to Member States in full and without delay.

6. Introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee on UNSOS ([A/71/836/Add.6](#)), he said that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee would entail a reduction of \$40.4 million in the proposed budget. Under military and police personnel, the Advisory Committee was concerned that the information regarding the increases of \$18.7 million in reimbursement for self-sustainment and \$7.4 million as a result of the amendment of the rations contract during the 2015/16 period lacked clarity, justification and consistency.

7. With regard to the proposed redeployment and reassignment of posts and positions, UNSOS had conducted a comprehensive staffing review in 2015/16 and a reorganization in 2016/17, and the General Assembly had approved the establishment of 112 posts and positions for the Office for 2016/17. Recognizing that UNSOS operated in a challenging environment and needed to adjust to operational requirements, the

Advisory Committee recommended the approval of the proposed redeployment of 112 posts and positions, but was not convinced by the reasons provided for the reassignment of 42 posts and positions for which the current functions were no longer required, and therefore recommended their abolishment. The Advisory Committee commented on the Office's long-standing dependency on consultants and individual contractors in conjunction with its significantly strengthened staff, and noted the significant increase in the number of consultants to be engaged in 2017/18. The Secretary-General should provide more clarity with respect to the functions and locations of staff, consultants and individual contractors.

8. The Advisory Committee made other observations and recommendations related to operational costs, including for air operations and medical services. Since the actual number of passengers per flight had been significantly lower than the full capacity of the Office's fixed-wing aircraft in 2016, the Advisory Committee questioned the need for UNSOS to replace those aircraft with higher-capacity fixed-wing aircraft, thereby increasing the resource requirements.

9. **Ms. Guadey** (Ethiopia) said that Ethiopia had assumed an exceptionally heavy responsibility for UNISFA. The Force had won the trust of the Sudan and South Sudan, which it had brought from the brink of conflict to sustainable cooperation. Its success had resulted from the heroic sacrifices of the Ethiopian armed forces and the resilience of the mechanisms implemented to address risk factors, and the United Nations should therefore provide the resources required for 2017/18. Her delegation would seek an explanation for the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General's proposed budget should be reduced. Maximum resource utilization and efficiency were essential, but the drive to make savings should not impede the fulfilment of peacekeeping mandates. Hard-won gains must not be undermined, particularly in view of the lives lost in the implementation of mandates. Better facilities and infrastructure and the redeployment of civilian personnel would improve living conditions in the mission's camps. The infrastructure work would enable more cost-effective transport and ensure that critical services were not interrupted.

10. The mission's cash balance must improve and outstanding claims should be settled within a reasonable time frame to ease the burden on the troop-contributing countries. If the Force was to help return displaced people, protect civilians and support the

peaceful administration of the Abyei area, its civilian capacity must be strengthened.

11. The Force was required under its mandate to work closely with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan and with local communities. The cooperation achieved despite some political deadlocks must be consolidated by the international community. The interrelated components of the mandate must be maintained pending the results of the Secretary-General's strategic review of UNISFA, and the full implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement must be supported to ensure reconciliation in the border areas.

12. With regard to UNSOS, the proposed budget cuts would affect the activities of the Life Support Services Section and should be reconsidered. The Secretary-General's proposal, which reflected the gravity of the logistical challenges in Somalia, should be supported, and the Committee should not reduce resources at the expense of the Office's security. The Committee should allocate enough resources to support mission mandates.

13. **Mr. Youssef Aden Moussa** (Djibouti) said that the increase in the proposed 2017/18 budget for UNSOS resulted from Security Council resolution [2245 \(2015\)](#), in which the Office was requested to provide additional logistical support to AMISOM troop- and police-contributing countries. The mission was essential to stability in the region. In conjunction with AMISOM and the Somali security forces, UNSOS had ensured that the first democratic elections in Somalia, held two months previously, after two decades of civil war, had been successful. To preserve that progress, the Office needed adequate funding and more cooperation among the African Union, the United Nations and troop-contributing countries. The security environment was increasingly dangerous, and the humanitarian crisis in Somalia further constrained UNSOS in performing its mission.

14. The Committee must respond to the deficiencies set out in the reports of the Secretary-General ([A/71/788](#)) and the Advisory Committee ([A/71/836/Add.6](#)) in relation to UNSOS construction projects and the delivery of rations to troops. His delegation was surprised by the proposed reassignment of 42 posts and positions less than a year after the Office's administrative and financial reorganization, and sought clarification regarding the reorganization's effect on the implementation of the mandate.

15. To preserve the slight improvements in security in Somalia, the United Nations must give high priority to the question of the financing of AMISOM, an African

Union Mission which operated under Chapter VII of the Charter but had been described by the Secretary-General as underequipped and underfinanced. The Organization should fully finance the Mission's uniformed personnel through assessed contributions and transform AMISOM into a fully-fledged peacekeeping operation.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.