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Summary record of the 19th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 29 November 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Bird (Australia)
*Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Sene

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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)

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (A/73/352/Add.4 and A/73/498/Add.4)

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (A/73/352/Add.5 and A/73/498/Add.5)

1. **Mr. Ramanathan** (Acting Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (A/73/352/Add.4), said that those requirements amounted to \$141.5 million, reflecting a net decrease of \$7.2 million compared with the approved resources for 2018. The decrease was primarily attributable to lower requirements for national staff owing to the proposed net reduction of 28 Local level positions and to the implementation of a new cost-sharing arrangement between UNAMA and United agencies, funds and programmes. The decrease also reflected the impact of the disengagement of military and police advisers following a strategic review of the Mission.

2. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the proposed resource requirements for 2019 for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (A/73/352/Add.5), he said that those requirements amounted to \$105.8 million, a net decrease of \$2.8 million compared with the approved resources for 2018. The decrease reflected lower requirements for military contingents, attributable primarily to cost recovery from the United Nations country team, and for civilian staff, owing to a net reduction of 52 civilian positions resulting from Mission restructuring and the abolishment of cost-shared security positions.

3. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on UNAMA (A/73/498/Add.4), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the staffing resources requested for the Mission for 2019, while trusting that all vacant positions would be filled expeditiously. It recommended reductions in the proposed requirements for facilities and infrastructure, and for official travel, and trusted that the outsourcing of security services would not affect the safety and

security of staff and premises. The Advisory Committee further noted that information on expenditures and related explanations should be provided in future budget submissions for UNAMA.

4. The Advisory Committee recalled that the Kuwait Joint Support Office had been initially established in response to the security situation in Iraq and had later been expanded to include certain support functions of UNAMA and other missions. It also recalled 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.

5. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on UNAMI (A/73/498/Add.5), he noted that the proposed resources for the Mission for 2019 would provide for the deployment of 245 military personnel, the same number as the previous year, and of 800 civilian personnel, reflecting a decrease of 52 positions. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the staffing requirements for the Mission, with the exception of one of the three proposed Human Rights Officer (National Professional Officer) positions, in the absence of detailed workload information and a clear delineation of the functions of the three positions. The Advisory Committee moreover recommended reductions in the proposed requirements for consultants and official travel. It welcomed the decrease in the requirements for air operations for 2019 compared with the appropriation for 2018, achieved as a result of cost-sharing arrangements with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen.

6. In its main report on the estimates in respect of political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, the Advisory Committee had made comments on the proposed structural changes within the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which reflected a gradual shift in the focus of UNAMI from humanitarian- and emergency-related concerns to a more development-oriented approach. The Advisory Committee moreover stressed that any administrative support provided by UNAMI to the recently established United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (UNITAD) for its operations in Iraq should be provided on a reimbursable basis. Lastly, the Advisory Committee was of the view that certain indicators of achievement could be improved to better reflect what could be achieved by United Nations entities and the activities for which they could be held accountable.

7. **Mr. Al-dabag** (Iraq) said that special political missions played an essential role in achieving the goals of the United Nations. His delegation was grateful to those Member States that contributed to the funding of special political missions in general and of UNAMI in particular, and his Government would continue to support the Mission in carrying out its mandated tasks.

8. UNAMI must be provided with the necessary financial resources and must manage its human resources appropriately in order to be able to perform its duties effectively. His Government would not support any reductions in the financial resources for, or the elimination of national posts within, the Mission, as such measures could cause disruptions to its operations. Indeed, the proposed budget for UNAMI for 2019 could hamper the Mission's ability to carry out its responsibilities and would affect the implementation of section II, paragraph 11, of General Assembly resolution 262 C, in which the Assembly urged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to promote the nationalization of positions within UNAMI. It was regrettable that no progress had been made in implementing that paragraph in 2018 and that the Secretary-General's report ([A/73/352/Add.5](#)) did not contain a detailed plan for its implementation or information on efforts made to strengthen local capacities within the Mission. His Government had requested an extension of the mandate of UNAMI until 31 May 2019, in accordance with Security Council resolution [1770 \(2007\)](#), a request that had been supported by the Council in its resolution [2421 \(2018\)](#).

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.