

27 December 2013



General Assembly

GA/AB/4096

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Sixty-eighth General Assembly
Fifth Committee
26th Meeting (AM)

FIFTH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS \$5.53 BILLION BUDGET FOR 2014-2015 BIENNIUM

AS IT CONCLUDES MAIN PART OF SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION

After heated negotiations that stretched beyond Christmas Day, the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) concluded the main part of the sixty-eighth session today, recommending a \$5.53 billion budget for the 2014-2015 biennium.

That number was \$126.35 million higher than the proposed budget unveiled by the Secretary-General in October and \$34.72 million lower than the final 2012-2013 budget figure of \$5.565 billion that the Committee recommended today for the General Assembly's approval. Most of the savings in the new biennium's budget would come from a net reduction in staff posts.

The tendency to revise the budget upward through recosting — last-minute revisions for inflation, currency exchange fluctuations and added costs — was a contentious point during the Committee's negotiations for both budget cycles. Developed countries had argued that budget increases were financially and morally irresponsible as Governments around the world tightened their fiscal belts. Yet many developing countries worried that the proposed abolishment of hundreds of posts would threaten the Organization's vital development agenda at the expense of their citizens' welfare.

With the surging costs of special political missions now capturing 20 per cent of the Organization's regular budget, another thorny question during the session, many delegates called for the operating expenses of such missions to be separated from the world body's regular budget, and the Committee finally agreed today to recommend a \$596.83 million budget for 36 missions in the coming biennium.

Oversight of the Secretariat's management of tens of thousands of employees worldwide is the Fifth Committee's other core function, and delegates tackled question of staff mobility. However, they failed to reach agreement today on the financing for the Secretary-General's mobility initiative, deferring the matter until March.

The Committee also sent recommendations to the Assembly relating to the salary scales of staff in the professional and higher categories; the financing of the Capital Master Plan — the Organization's ambitious multi-year renovation of its New York Headquarters — and the administrative expenses of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, among other "special subjects".

Funding for peacekeeping operations also attracted the attention of delegates, who approved financing for the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSA) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).

Further, the Committee took action on several substantial programme budget implications resulting from the actions of the Assembly's Main Committees. It approved texts on the cost of implementing draft resolutions on human rights in Myanmar, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, and developments in information and communications technology in the context of international security, among other topics.

The Committee also approved texts on pattern of conferences; scale of assessments; financing of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda, the Former Yugoslavia and the International Residual Mechanism; and the administration of justice, among other things.

At the end of the meeting, the Committee adopted its draft report for the session.

The Committee also heard from Maria Eugenia Casar, Assistant Secretary-General and Controller.

Janne Taalas (Finland), Committee Chair, made closing remarks, as did the representatives of Fiji (on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China) and Japan.

Also speaking today were representatives of Canada, Israel, Australia, United States, Saudi Arabia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Syria, Qatar, Haiti, Benin, Cuba (also on behalf of Bolivia and Ecuador), Ireland, Nicaragua (also on behalf of Venezuela), Lithuania (on behalf of the European Union) and Iran.

Background

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) met this morning to conclude its work for the session by taking action on outstanding draft resolutions.

Action on Draft Resolutions

The Committee first took up a draft resolution titled "Pattern of conferences" (document A/C.5/68/L.11). By its terms, the General Assembly would authorize the Committee on Conferences to make any necessary adjustments to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2014 and 2015 that may become necessary as a result of actions and decisions taken during the Assembly's sixty–eighth session. Noting that the overall utilization of conference-servicing resources at the four main duty stations was 84 per cent in 2012, as compared with 85 per cent in 2011 and 2010 — above the established benchmark of 80 per cent — the Assembly would urge those intergovernmental bodies with an average utilization factor below 80 per cent for the past 10 years to take that factor into account when planning future sessions with a view to attaining that benchmark.

Also by the text, the Assembly would note that, for the duration of the implementation of the Capital Master Plan, a part of the conference-servicing staff and information technology resources of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had been temporarily located to swing spaces. It would request the Secretary-General to continue to provide adequate support, within the Department's existing resources, to ensure continued maintenance of departmental information technology facilities, implementation of the global information technology initiative and delivery of high-quality conference services.

In terms of integrated global management, the Assembly would emphasize, by further terms, that the Department's major goal was to provide high-quality documents in a timely manner, in all official languages of the United Nations and in accordance with established regulations. In the area of documents and publications, the Assembly would emphasize the paramount importance of equality among the six official languages and reaffirm its decision in section IV of its resolution 64/230 that all reports adopted by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council be issued as documents

in all official languages and in a timely manner, prior to their consideration by the Council.

The Assembly would note with concern that only 55 per cent of the author departments reached the compliance rate of 90 per cent in the submission of their reports to the Department, and request the Secretary-General to report to its sixty-ninth session on the concrete measures taken with author departments and to improve the predictability of document delivery while ensuring accountability for meeting deadlines in order to ensure the timely issuance of documentation.

The Committee approved that draft without a vote.

It then took up a draft decision on the “Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations” (document A/C.5/68/L.10). By its terms, the Assembly would decide that, in accordance with financial regulation 3.9, the State of Palestine, which was not a member of the United Nations but which participated in certain of its activities, should be called upon to contribute towards the Organization’s expenses for 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 on the basis of a notional assessment rate of 0.005 per cent. The Assembly would also decide that the State of Palestine should contribute one twelfth of that rate for each full month as a non-member observer State in 2012.

The Committee approved the draft decision without a vote.

The representative of Canada said his delegation did not acknowledge a State of Palestine and supported a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, achieved through negotiations.

The representative of Israel said his delegation regretted and objected to the use of the misleading terminology “State of Palestine”. It was counter-productive to use that term when no such State existed and when such a State could only be established through negotiations.

The representative of Australia said her delegation supported the draft decision and reiterated its support for a two-State solution through negotiations.

The representative of the United States recalled the statements made by her delegation during previous meetings of the Assembly.

The representative of Saudi Arabia said her delegation welcomed the contribution of the State of Palestine.

The Committee then took up a text titled “Human resources management” (document A/C.5/68/L.25).

JANNE TAALAS (Finland), Committee Chair, said the Secretary-General had expressed disappointment with the Committee’s inability to reach a decision on management mobility during the current session, which had compelled him to defer the item until March 2014. The Organization’s mobility initiative was of great importance and must be addressed as a priority, he emphasized, expressing confidence that the Committee could swiftly return to the topic and come to a successful conclusion.

The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed deep regret that agreement had not been reached on the management mobility proposal. Hopefully the Committee would be able to make a decision in March, and the Secretariat would do its best to address the concerns of Member States. On that basis, the Republic of Korea would not stand in the way of the consensus on the current text, she said.

The Committee then approved, without a vote, the draft resolution “Human resources management”, by which the General Assembly would endorse the conclusions of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), as contained in its related reports (documents [A/68/523](#) and [A/68/580](#)), subject to the provisions of the present text.

By other terms, the Assembly would ask the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive performance management proposal, including all necessary modalities and recommendations, for consideration during its sixty-ninth session and to report on progress in preparing the proposal via an information briefing no later than the end of the second resumed part of the sixty-eighth session. The Assembly would urge the Secretary-General to clarify and simplify policies and procedures relating to underperformance, ensure that lessons learned from implementing previous reforms were considered when formulating new proposals, ensure the equal treatment of candidates with equivalent educational backgrounds during the recruitment process, develop a workforce planning system as a matter of priority and keep the management of disciplinary cases under close review.

Further by the text, the Assembly would approve the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and note the amendments to the Staff Rules, as set out in annexes to the Secretary-General's report (document [A/68/129](#)). It would ask the Secretary-General to extend for three more years the exceptional measures authorized in paragraph 21 of Assembly resolution 67/287 and to intensify engagement with Member States in order to identify alternative solutions for addressing the conflicts between national legislation and United Nations regulations and rules on the secondment of active-duty military and police personnel.

The Assembly would, by other terms, take note of paragraph 8 of ACABQ's report on the placement of United Nations staff members who have fallen victim to natural disasters, malicious acts and critical incidents (document [A/68/580](#)) and decide that the scope of the proposal under consideration, or of any future proposals in that regard, should not expand to include issues such as workplace harassment, for which relevant procedures already existed. Lastly, the Assembly would decide to defer consideration of the Secretary-General's proposal on mobility to the first part of its resumed sixty-eighth session.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution "United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission" (document [A/C.5/68/L.17](#)). By that text, the Assembly would reaffirm its commitment to a single, unified common system as the cornerstone for the regulation and coordination of conditions of service. It would also express its deep concern about the long-term sustainability of after-service health insurance within the United Nations system and invite the Commission to review, in the framework of its annual report, the apportionment of health insurance premiums between United Nations entities and participation in both United States and non-United States plans.

The Assembly would, by other terms, decide to defer its decision on the Commission's recommendation to raise the mandatory age of separation to 65 years, without prejudice to its proposed time frame, and request the Commission to undertake further analysis in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. It would also approve, with effect from 1 January 2014, as recommended by the Commission, the revised base/floor scale of gross and net salaries for staff in the professional and higher categories. The Assembly would reaffirm the Noblemaire principle as the basis for determining the level of remuneration for staff in the professional and higher categories in New York, the base city for the post adjustment system, and in other duty stations.

Acting without a vote, the Committee approved the text.

By the terms of a consensus text, "Administration of justice at the United Nations" (document [A/C.5/68/L.7](#)), the General Assembly would endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in the related ACABQ report. It would ask the Secretary-General to submit at the Assembly's sixty-ninth session a revised proposal for conducting an interim independent assessment of the administrative justice system by independent experts, including those familiar with internal labour dispute mechanisms. Noting with concern that performance management was still highlighted as the most important cross-cutting issue, the Assembly would encourage the further use of approaches that served to systematically address performance management issues at the highest levels.

Also by the text, the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to recommend to its sixty-ninth

session additional innovative measures to encourage recourse to the informal resolution of disputes, to continue to track the data on the number of cases received by the Management Evaluation Unit and the Dispute Tribunal in order to identify emerging trends, and to propose an amendment to the statute of the Appeals Tribunal, taking into account the recommendations of the Internal Justice Council on the qualifications of Appeals Tribunal judges.

The Assembly would decide, by further terms, that the funding of the Office of Staff Legal Assistance shall be supplemented by a voluntary payroll deduction not exceeding 0.05 per cent of a staff member's monthly net base salary, and that that funding mechanism shall be implemented on an experimental basis from 1 January 2014 until 31 December 2015. The Assembly would request the Secretary-General to track on a monthly basis the opt-out rate and the amount of revenue generated under the supplementary funding mechanism mentioned in paragraph 33 and authorize him to enter into commitments for that period in an amount from that revenue to finance additional resources for the Office.

The Assembly, regretting that the Secretary-General had deemed it necessary to submit the matter of the overpayment of four judges to the Assembly, would decide that the Secretary-General should investigate how that administrative error had remained undetected for almost two years and institute measures to ensure the situation did not recur. The Assembly would request the Secretary-General to recover the overpayment and to recognize that the judges' salary should remain fixed at the equivalent of the D-2 step 4 level.

Taking up a draft resolution on "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda" (document A/C.5/68/L.14), the Committee approved the text without a vote. By its terms, the Assembly would decide to appropriate \$93.6 million gross (\$87.19 million net) for the biennium 2014-2015 to the Special Account for the Tribunal, and that the total assessment for 2014 under the Special Account would amount to \$46.8 million, or half of the estimated appropriation approved for that biennium. It would apportion \$23.4 million gross (\$21.8 million net) among Member States, in line with the scale of assessments applicable to the Organization's 2014 regular budget and to peacekeeping operations for 2014. Further, it would decide that there shall be set off against the apportionment among Member States their respective shares in the Tax Equalization Fund of the estimated staff assessment income of \$3.2 million approved for the Tribunal during 2014.

The Committee went on to approve, without a vote, a two-part draft resolution on "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991" (document A/C.5/68/L.15). By its terms, the General Assembly would decide to readjust the \$283,067,700 gross (\$251,736,900 net) approved in its resolution 67/243 for the Tribunal's financing by \$4,074,200 gross (\$4,476,100 net) for a total of \$278,993,500 gross (\$247,260,800 net).

Part II of the text, concerning the court's budget for the coming biennium, would have the Assembly take note of the revised estimates arising from changes in exchange rates and inflation; endorse the related conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ; decide that the recosting would be calculated in accordance with the formula agreed in the resolution on the Programme Budget for 2014-2015; and emphasize the importance of continued efforts to implement the completion strategy.

The Assembly would, by other terms, request the Secretary-General to ensure that the Tribunal adhered to the revised travel plan and travel policy and reflect any resultant cost savings in the second performance report. It would decide to appropriate to the Special Account for the Tribunal a total of \$201,688,200 gross (\$179,998,600 net) for the coming biennium, as detailed in the annex to the present text. It would also decide that financing the appropriation under the Special Account should take into consideration the estimated income of \$285,500 for the biennium, which should be set off against the aggregate amount of that appropriation. It would apportion \$50,350,675 gross (\$44,928,275 net) among Member States in accordance with the scale of assessments applicable to the regular budget and in line with the scale of assessments applicable to peacekeeping operations for 2014.

By a related two-part draft resolution, “Financing of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals” (document A/C.5/68/L.16), the Assembly would endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in section IV.A of the ACABQ report, and resolve that the amount approved for the biennium 2012-2013 of \$53,676,500 gross (\$51,085,600 net) should be adjusted by \$34,677,800 gross (\$33,006,900 net) for a total of \$18,998,700 gross (\$18,078,700 net).

Under Part II of the text, the Assembly would decide that the recosting would be calculated in accordance with the formula agreed in the resolution concerning the newest programme budget. Recalling the Advisory Committee’s report, it would request the Secretary-General to ensure that the Tribunal adhered to the revised travel policy and reflected any resulting cost savings in its second performance report. It would appropriate to the Special Account for the Residual Mechanism a total of \$120,296,600 gross (\$112,831,500 net) for the coming biennium.

The draft would also have the Assembly decide that the total assessment for 2014 under the Special Account should consist of: \$60,148,300, being half of the estimated approved appropriation; \$1,500,000, being the increase reflecting the deferred assessment as decided by the Assembly in resolution 67/244; and, for 2014, apportion \$30,824,150 gross (\$28,957,875 net) among Member States, in line with the scale of assessments applicable to the regular budget for 2014. In line with its 1955 resolution, there should be set off against the apportionment among Member States their respective shares in the Tax Equalization Fund of the estimated staff assessment income of \$3,732,550 approved for the Tribunal for 2014.

The representative of the Russian Federation expressed disappointment that an independent assessment of the International Criminal Tribunal had not been taken into consideration. Emphasizing the importance of transparency and accountability, he called for decisive measures, including a comprehensive assessment of the court’s work.

Acting again without a vote, the Committee approved a draft resolution titled “Financing of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei”, by which the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to make full use of predefined modules and service packages, including to expedite deployment of the Joint Border Monitoring and Verification Mechanism to full operating capability. It would appropriate to the Special Account for the Interim Security Force the amount of \$38,468,600 to maintain the Force from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, in addition to the \$307,058,200 already appropriated for that period.

To finance the appropriation, the Assembly would, taking into account the amount already apportioned under resolution 67/270, apportion among Member States the additional \$35,262,883, in line with the levels updated in its resolution 67/239 and taking into account the scale of assessments for 2013 and 2014. It would decide further that there should be set off against the apportionment among Member States their respective shares in the Tax Equalization Fund of \$86,350, representing the increase in the estimated staff assessment income approved for the Force for the period covered by the text. It would also apportion among Member States the additional amount of \$3.2 million, in line with resolution 67/239 and taking into account the scale of assessments for 2014, subject to a decision of the Security Council to extend the Force’s mandate. Finally, it would decide that there should be set off against the apportionment Member States’ respective shares in the Tax Equalization Fund of \$7,850, representing the increase in the estimated staff assessment income approved for the Force for the period under consideration.

By a draft on “Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali” (document A/C.5/68/L.13), the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to entrust the Head of the Mission with formulating future budget proposals. It would take note of the status of contributions to the Mission as of 30 November, including the outstanding contributions of \$12.7 million, representing some 32 per cent of the total assessed contributions. In that connection, the Assembly would note with concern that only 64 Member States had paid their assessed contributions in full.

Further by the text, the Assembly would take note of the expenditure report for the Mission through

30 June 2013 and decide to appropriate to its Special Account \$81,976,400 for its maintenance for the period from 25 April to 30 June 2013. It would also decide, taking into account the \$75,321,180 already apportioned for that period, to apportion among Member States the additional \$6,655,220 for the Mission's maintenance for the same period. It would further decide that there should be set off against their apportionment the amount of \$400 representing other income in respect of the financial period which ended 30 June 2013. It would reduce by \$728,000 the amount of estimated staff assessment income set off against the apportionment among Member States for the Mission's maintenance for the period under consideration from the total amount of \$769,300 to \$41,300 and add that reduction to the apportionment among Member States.

Additionally, according to the text, the Assembly would decide to appropriate to the Mission's Special Account the amount of \$602,000,000 to maintain it from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, inclusive of \$366,774,500 previously authorized for the Mission for the same period. It would approve the additional support account requirements of \$2,273,100 (net requirement of \$2,058,200) for the same period. It would apportion among Member States the additional amount of \$271,902,950 to maintain the Mission. There should be set off against their respective share in the Tax Equalization Fund of \$2,410,200 representing the balance of the estimated staff assessment income of \$6,071,700 approved for the Mission.

Further by the text, the Assembly would emphasize that "no peacekeeping mission shall be financed by borrowing funds from other active peacekeeping missions". At the same time, it would encourage the Secretary-General to take additional measures to ensure the safety and security of all personnel participating in the Mission, while inviting voluntary contributions to the operation in cash and in services and supplies acceptable to him.

The Committee then took up a draft on "Financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (document A/C.5/68/L.8). By its terms, the General Assembly would appropriate to the special account for the Force \$12.64 million for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 to maintain the Force, in addition to the \$50.74 million previously appropriated for the same period by resolution 67/278, inclusive of \$48.02 million for maintenance, \$2.28 million for the support account for peacekeeping operations and \$439,800 for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy.

Regarding the financing of that appropriation, the Assembly would further decide that, taking into account the \$50.74 million already apportioned under resolution 67/278 for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, to apportion among Member States the additional amount of \$6.32 million for the same period. There shall be set off against the apportionment among Member States their respective shares in the Tax Equalization Fund of \$56,700, which is the estimated staff assessment income approved for the operation.

The representative of Syria said responsibility for funding the Force should be borne by Israel, the aggressor and occupying Power in the Syrian Golan.

The representative of Israel said Syria had killed more than 100,000 of its own people and should therefore not lecture the Committee on terrorism.

The representative of Syria said Israel had a long record of terrorism and murder that had not been contained anywhere. Syria could not hear Israel's lies without responding. Israel should stay silent and respect the Committee, particularly when speaking of United Nations Disengagement Force (UNDOF), which had been deployed in the first place due to Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan.

The representative of Israel said Syria was launching missiles at innocent civilians.

The representative of Syria said Israel's occupation of the Golan was the reason for UNDOF; and therefore, Israel should finance it.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution without a vote.

By the terms of a consensus text titled “Managing after-service health insurance liabilities” (document A/C.5/68/L.6), the General Assembly would endorse the observations in ACABQ’s related report on the subject (document A/68/550) and request the Secretary-General to examine the option of broadening the mandate of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, based on input from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, to include the cost-effective, efficient and sustainable administration of after-service health insurance benefits, and to report thereon at its seventieth session. The Assembly would underline that such a request would not prevent the Secretary-General from considering other options.

The Committee then took up a draft resolution titled “Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 (document A/C.5/68/L.18), by which the General Assembly would take note of the Secretary-General’s second performance report on the programme budget for that biennium and endorse ACABQ’s related observations. It would also request the Secretary-General to further review unliquidated obligations with a view to ensuring that only vital expenditure was ascribed to the programme budget for 2012-2013 and decide accordingly to reduce the resource allocation for such obligations by \$40 million. The Assembly would resolve that for the biennium 2012-2013, the amount of \$5.4 billion appropriated in its resolutions 67/247 A-C of 24 December 2012 and 67/269 of 28 June 2013 shall be increased by \$165.7 million to a total of \$5.565 billion. Of that amount, \$44.7 million shall be assessed according to the scale of assessments applicable to the regular budget.

Further by the text, concerning the final income estimates for the biennium 2012-2013, the Assembly would decide that the estimated income of \$511.93 million approved in its resolutions 67/247 B of 24 December 2012 and 67/269 of 28 June 2013 shall be increased by \$31.11 million.

MARIA EUGENIA CASAR, Assistant Secretary-General and Controller, recalled that during the negotiations, clarification had been sought with regard to the impact of reducing \$40 million in unliquidated obligations. The Secretariat would implement that decision before the end of the year in the best possible manner. Departments would need to make the necessary adjustments to their projected expenditures. The mandates for 2012-2013 had been implemented by now and were not expected to be impacted further. But the adjustments to the 2012-2013 resource levels may imply a deferral of expenditures and could place an extra burden on the 2014-2015 budgets of the respective departments. That was putting the Organization under increasing strain, and while it was not possible to project any specific impact of the decisions at the present stage, the Organization would make every effort to minimize such impacts and to implement the Secretariat’s mandates in full.

The Committee then approved the text without a vote.

The Committee then took up a draft decision on “Programme budget implications concerning the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015” (document A/C.5/68/L.12), which contained implications for six draft resolutions. In section A, relating to the draft on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (document A/C.1/68/L.37), the Committee decided to inform the Assembly that its approval of that draft would require an extra \$1.44 million during the biennium.

Per section B, relating to the text on the Human Rights Committee (document A/C.3/68/L.31/Rev.1), \$1.5 million in extra resources would be required for the biennium. Per section C, relating to the text on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (document A/C.3/68/L.55/Rev.1), \$1.34 million in extra resources would be required in 2014. Per section D, relating to the text on the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region (document A/C.3/68/L.52/Rev.1), \$2.17 million in extra resources would be required in the biennium.

Per section E, relating to the text on implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (document A/C.2/68/L.61), \$2.07 million in extra resources would be required for the biennium. Per section F, concerning the text on follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius

Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States (document A/C.2/68/L.67), a total of \$762,600 in extra resources would be required for the biennium.

The representative of Syria said the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region should have been financed from the regular budget to ensure that it remained impartial in its work. The extra resources proposed for the Centre was too large and the switch to extrabudgetary resources from the regular budget had been done unjustifiably, he said, requesting a recorded vote on section D of the text.

The representative of Qatar called on delegations to vote in favour of the section.

The Committee then approved section D by a recorded vote of 134 in favour to 3 against (Benin, Haiti, Syria), with 2 abstentions (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia).

The representative of Haiti said his delegation's vote was reflected incorrectly, pointing out that he had in fact voted in favour of the text.

The representative of Benin also said his delegation's vote was reflected incorrectly and that he had voted in favour.

The representative of Saudi Arabia said that providing the Centre with resources from the regular budget was vital to promoting and ensuring respect for human rights in the region.

The representative of Qatar said he very much supported the Centre and wanted it to be financed from the regular budget. Qatar was fully committed to its work, including its technical training, outreach and awareness-raising activities. The Centre had held many training sessions in the region, as reflected in Secretary-General's report, and had denounced the human rights violations caused by Syria.

The representative of Syria said he supported financing for the Centre and was not seeking to politicize its work. Syria had not accused anybody of anything and had not politicized the question. Qatar's representative had spoken out of context in discussing Syria's internal affairs, he said, adding that the Qatari authorities had strengthened and bolstered terrorism. Mercenaries and foreigners used by Qatar continued to affect the Syrians. There was "blind hatred" against the Syrian people, and there must be accountability in the region.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution as a whole, without a vote.

The Committee then approved, without a vote, a draft resolution titled "Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015" (document A/C.5/68/L.19). By that text, the General Assembly would, among other things, stress that all Member States should fulfil their financial obligations as set out in the United Nations Charter. It would also request the Secretary-General to commission an independent study on recosting and options for the Organization in dealing with fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation.

Also by that text, the Assembly would decide that a vacancy rate of 8.75 per cent for professional staff and 6.4 per cent for general service staff should be used as a basis for calculating the budget for the 2014-2015 biennium. On overall policymaking, direction and coordination, the Assembly would decide to defer consideration of the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a partnership facility to the first resumed part of its sixty-eighth session and to defer the consideration of operational arrangements and conditions of service of ACABQ to its sixty-ninth session.

The Assembly would also decide, by other terms, to approve a number of posts, and not to abolish several others, in the areas of political affairs, peacekeeping operations, international justice and law,

international cooperation for development, human settlements, regional cooperation for development, human rights and humanitarian affairs, human rights, Palestinian refugees and public information.

Further by the text, the Assembly would approve a 1.45 per cent reduction in non-post resources allocated to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, a 2.35 per cent reduction for the International Court of Justice and a 1.45 per cent reduction for the Department of Public Information, as well as to related offices and jointly financed administrative activities and special expenses.

The Committee then took up the report of the Fifth Committee on the “Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015” as contained in document A/C.5/68/L.24, parts I and II. Comprising two segments, part I of the report contains the narrative of actions taken by the Committee and part II the Committee’s recommendations. The Committee approved Part II of the report without a vote.

The Committee then turned to a draft resolution titled “Special subjects relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015” (document A/C.5/68/L.20), which, in 22 parts, takes up the following: conditions of service and compensation for full-time members of the International Civil Service Commission and the Chair of ACABQ (I); International Public Sector Accounting Standards (II); construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa (III); Capital Master Plan (IV); construction and property management in relation to the Strategic Heritage Plan of the Geneva Office (V); estimates for special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives of the General Assembly or Security Council (VI); administrative expenses of the Joint Staff Pension Fund (VII); strengthening the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (VIII); subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (IX); and International Trade Centre (X).

Additional sections concern revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2013 (XI), from texts adopted by the Human Rights Council at its twenty-second, twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions (XII), relating to the Optional Protocol to the International Convention on Committee for Economic Social and Culture Rights (XIII), and relating to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (XIV).

Others take up the progress report on the implementation of recommendations related to strengthening information and systems security across the Secretariat (XV); 2013 administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (XVI); and the gross jointly finance budget of the Joint Inspection Unit (XVII), International Civil Service Commission (XVIII), United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (XIX) and Department of Safety and Security. Also included was a section on the effects of changes in exchange rates and inflation (XXI); and, finally, the Contingency Fund, which reports a remaining balance of \$22,338,043.

By the terms of Section VI of the report, the Assembly would approve \$596.83 million for the 36 special political missions authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council under section 3, Political affairs, of the 2014-2015 proposed programme budget.

The representative of Cuba, speaking on behalf of Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador, addressed section VI, saying there was no prevention of genocide, and other activities did not have a confirmed definition. Absent any normative foundations for the inclusion of narratives, functions, accomplishments or other indicators for the Special Adviser, Cuba wished to present an oral amendment to be included in section 1 of the draft resolution, which had already been proposed in informal consultations.

The representative of Ireland said her delegation did not support the amendment and called for a recorded vote, saying she would vote against the draft.

The representative of Canada said his delegation supported the call for a recorded vote and encouraged delegates to vote against the proposed amendment.

The representative of Nicaragua said his delegation was concerned about the Special Adviser’s

activities, for which there were no intergovernmental mandates. The Secretary-General should work on honing a definition, as there was none so far, he added.

The representative of Lithuania, speaking on behalf of the European Union, urged members to refrain from political discussions that belonged in other forums. The proposed oral amendment would reduce the capacity of the Office of the Special Adviser, and he would thus vote against the draft.

The representative of Iran said his delegation supported Cuba's proposal.

The Committee then rejected inclusion of the proposed amendment by a recorded vote of 15 in favour to 72 against, with 51 abstentions.

The representative of Nicaragua, speaking on behalf of Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela and Ecuador, requested a separate vote on section VI of the draft.

By a recorded vote of 130 in favour to 8 against (Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Iran, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), with 3 abstentions (Haiti, United Arab Emirates, Zambia), the Committee approved section VI of the text.

The representative of Syria said he had voted in favour of section VI, adding that the Special Adviser did not meet the criteria covered in General Assembly resolutions on occupied territories, among other things. Syria also had reservations about the allocation of resources.

The Committee then approved the text as a whole, without a vote.

Acting without a vote, the Committee then approved a three-part resolution, "Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015" (document A/C.5/68/L.21). Section A of that text recommends an amount of \$5,530,349,800 for disbursement in the following categories: Overall policymaking, direction and coordination (Part I); Political affairs (Part II); International justice and law (Part III); International cooperation for development (Part IV); Regional cooperation for development (Part V); Human rights and humanitarian affairs (Part VI); Public information (Part VII); Internal oversight (Part IX); Jointly financed administrative activities (Part X); Capital expenditures (Part XI); Safety and security (Part XII); Development Account (Part XIII); and Staff assessment (Part XIV).

Section B of the text, concerning income estimates for the biennium 2014–2015, would have the Assembly resolve that, for that biennium, estimates of income other than assessments on Member States totalling \$523,145,000 would be approved as follows: Income from staff assessment — \$491,185,600; General income — \$31,228,200; and Services to the public — \$731,145,000.

Section C sets out the financing of budget appropriations for 2014, consisting of \$2,765,174,900, being half the appropriation of \$5,530,349,800 approved for the biennium, plus \$169,511,300, being the net increase in revised appropriations for the biennium 2012-2013 approved by the Assembly in its resolution 68/xxxA today, and 67/269 of 28 June 2013, in accordance with regulations 3.1 and 3.2 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

Finally, the draft resolution states that there should be set off against the assessment on Member States, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 973 (X) of 15 December 1955, their respective shares in the Tax Equalization Fund in the amount of \$271,692,300, consisting of: \$245,592,800, being half the estimated staff assessment income approved for the biennium 2014-2015 in Section B; \$25,915,500, being the increase in income from staff assessment for the biennium 2012-2013 approved by the Assembly in resolution 68/xxx B; and \$184,000, being the increase in income from staff assessment for the biennium 2012-2013 approved by the Assembly in its resolutions 67/269.

The Committee went on to approve, without a vote, a draft resolution titled "Unforeseen and

extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2014-2015” (document A/C.5/68/L.22). By its terms, the General Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General, with the prior concurrence of ACABQ and in line with the Organization’s financial regulations and rules, to enter into commitments in the coming biennium to meet unforeseen and extraordinary expenses arising either during or subsequent to the biennium, provided that the concurrence of the Advisory Committee not be necessary for: commitments exceeding \$8 million in any one year of the biennium, as certified by the Secretary-General in relation to the maintenance of peace and security; and commitments certified by the President of the International Court of Justice as relating to expenses arising from several items detailed in the text, among them, the designation of ad hoc judges, and the calling of witnesses and experts.

Further by the text, the Secretary-General would report to ACABQ and the Assembly, at its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, all commitments made under the present text and submit supplementary estimates in that regard. If a decision of the Security Council resulted in the need for the Secretary-General to enter into commitments exceeding \$10 million in relation to the maintenance of peace and security, that matter should be brought to the Assembly, and if suspended or not in session, the Secretary-General should convene a resumed or special session to consider the matter.

According to the draft resolution “Working Capital Fund for the biennium” (document A/C.5/68/L.23), the General Assembly would establish the fund for the biennium 2014-2015 in the amount of \$150 million, and Member States would make advances to it in accordance with their scale of assessments for 2014. Those should be set off against the following allocations of advances: credits to Member States resulting from transfers made in 1959 and 1960 from the surplus account to the Working Capital Fund in an adjusted amount of \$1,025,092; and cash advances paid by Member States to the Fund for the biennium 2012-2013, in accordance with Assembly resolution 66/250 of 24 December 2011.

Also by the text, the Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General to advance sums from the Fund for a number of purposes, among them to finance commitments authorized by the Assembly relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses; to continue the revolving fund to finance miscellaneous self-liquidating purchases and activities; to finance payments, with ACABQ’s prior approval, of advance insurance premiums where the period of insurance extended beyond the end of the biennium in which payment was made; and to enable the Tax Equalization Fund to meet current commitments, pending the accumulation of credits. If the \$150 million allotment for the Fund proved inadequate to meet its usual purposes, the Secretary-General would be authorized to utilize cash from special funds and accounts in his custody.

The Committee then approved its draft report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (document A/C.5/68/L.24, parts I and II).

According to a draft decision on questions deferred for future consideration (document A/C.5/68/L.26), the General Assembly would defer, until the first part of its resumed sixty-eighth session, consideration of an item on review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, dedicated specifically to civilian capacity issues and procurement.

Concluding Remarks

The representative of Fiji, speaking on behalf of the “Group of 77” developing countries and China, said the Committee had engaged in intense discussions that had touched on the very fabric of the United Nations. Posts had been cut, affecting the lives of people who worked for the Organization, he noted, adding that the Group of 77 had always tried its best to protect the interests of staff. Recalling the resolution that stated that the introduction of technology should not lead to involuntary separation of staff, he said employees must be able to fill all vacant posts.

The representative of Japan noted that the \$5.53 billion budget just approved was slightly below the revised 2012-2013 budget. The Committee had been able to attain that level, which included amounts for recosting, thanks to a substantial reduction of posts. Such reductions were noteworthy, especially since

they were happening for the first time in 16 years. The independent study on recosting and options for the Organization to address fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation, as agreed this year, should yield meaningful results that could be acted upon in the near future. The focus should be on prioritizing activities and tackling emerging, urgent issues while discontinuing obsolete activities. The comprehensive review of staffing requirements was an ongoing process and should continue into the future, he said, adding that the Secretary-General should not weaken his efforts in reviewing the staffing structure.

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