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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Matters relating to activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.9/Rev.1

Twenty-eighth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General ([A/C.5/70/11](#)) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution [A/C.4/70/L.9/Rev.1](#) on matters relating to activities under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016. During its consideration of the statement, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 24 November 2015.

2. In paragraph 2 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that, under the terms of paragraph 2 of draft resolution [A/C.4/70/L.9/Rev.1](#), the General Assembly would decide that the activities listed in paragraph 1 of draft resolution [A/C.4/70/L.9/Rev.1](#) would be carried out under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016 with the budget that had been allocated to those activities for 2015. The activities referred to in the draft resolution relate to section 6, Peaceful uses of outer space, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 ([A/70/6 \(Sect. 6\)](#)).

* Reissued for technical reasons on 9 December 2015.



II. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented and related financial implications

3. The following activities, listed in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, would be carried out in 2016:

- (a) United Nations/Costa Rica Workshop on Human Space Technology;
- (b) United Nations/South Africa Symposium on Basic Space Technology;
- (c) United Nations/Kenya Workshop on Space Technology and Applications for Wildlife Management and Protecting Biodiversity;
- (d) United Nations/Islamic Republic of Iran Workshop on the Use of Space Technology for Dust Storm and Drought Monitoring in the Middle East Region.

4. The above-mentioned activities would entail additional requirements in the amount of \$197,800 under section 6, Peaceful uses of outer space, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, comprising \$17,800 for the travel of staff and \$180,000 for grants and contributions.

5. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown showing that the provision of \$17,800 for travel would cover the cost of air tickets, daily subsistence allowance for six days per trip and terminal expenses for the travel of one staff member from the Office for Outer Space Affairs in Vienna to each of the countries hosting the activities listed in paragraph 3 above. The Committee was also informed that the participation of any additional staff members would depend on the availability of additional extrabudgetary resources.

6. As for the \$180,000 requested for grants and contributions, the Advisory Committee was informed that \$45,000 had been estimated for each of the four activities listed in paragraph 3 above. It was explained that for each activity, \$45,000 would cover the travel costs (air ticket, daily subsistence allowance for 6 days and terminal expenses) for 22 participants, estimated at an average of \$2,100 each, reflecting the assumption that the host countries would contribute to the cost of accommodation. The Committee was further informed that, depending on the level of in-kind contributions received from the host countries and the level of extrabudgetary contributions received for each of the activities, the Office expected to fund the cost of travel for up to 25 participants from developing countries. In this regard, the Committee was informed that a contribution of \$20,000 towards the cost of the workshops to be held in Costa Rica, South Africa and Kenya (approximately \$6,600 per workshop) was expected and would be utilized to support the travel of participants from developing countries. The Committee was also informed that the Office was in consultation with a donor for authorization to apply a cash contribution received for a workshop in Kenya in 2015 to one of the workshops proposed for 2016.

7. Upon enquiry as to why no provision had been made for conference-servicing requirements, the Advisory Committee was informed that the activities were programmed to be held in English only and that the cost of interpretation in any additional language, should the need arise, would be met by the respective host Governments.

III. Other matters

8. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's statement that, because the activities listed in paragraph 3 above did not take place in 2015, the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 will reflect an underexpenditure in the amount of \$197,800, which will be presented in the second performance report for the biennium 2014-2015. According to the Secretary-General, this amount "would offset the estimated requirements" of the same amount under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. Similarly, in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution it is indicated that the activities "shall be carried out under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in 2016 with the budget that had been allocated to those activities for 2015", which creates the appearance that activities authorized for one biennium are being carried forward for implementation in another biennium. **In the Committee's view, the language used above is not consistent with the provisions of regulations 1.3, 5.2 and 5.3 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, according to which appropriations shall be available for commitment during the budget period to which they relate.**

9. It is the understanding of the Advisory Committee, and this was confirmed by the representatives of the Secretary-General, that, according to the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, underexpenditures in one biennium cannot be carried over to the following biennium. In this connection, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the language used in paragraph 9 of the statement indicated the fact that the non-implementation of these activities would result in an underexpenditure in the biennium 2014-2015. This underexpenditure, according to the Secretary-General, would be presented in the second performance report for the biennium; it would be the same amount as the resources proposed for 2016-2017, as reflected in the statement of programme budget implications. According to the representatives of the Secretary-General, the language had been used for information purposes only to convey relevant background information to Member States and not to establish a procedural precedent. **Notwithstanding the explanation provided, the Committee considers that the language used in the final sentence of paragraph 9 of the statement and paragraph 2 of the draft resolution is not consistent with the relevant provisions of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.**

10. **The Advisory Committee stresses that the correct interpretation of the Financial Regulations and Rules should be reflected in the Secretary-General's reports to the General Assembly and that, in accordance with section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, the Secretary-General should provide all intergovernmental bodies with the required information regarding procedures for administrative and budgetary matters. Furthermore, the Committee recalls that the Assembly, in the same resolution and subsequent resolutions, has reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters.**

IV. Conclusion

11. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution [A/C.4/70/L.9/Rev.1](#), additional resources in the amount of \$197,800 would be required under section 6, Peaceful uses of outer space, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

12. The amount would require an additional appropriation for the biennium to be approved by the General Assembly and, as such, would represent a charge against the contingency fund.
