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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47

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

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/70/14) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47 on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. 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 7 December 2015.
2. In paragraph 2 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that, under the terms of paragraph 41 of draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution by the Syrian authorities within 45 days of its adoption.
3. In paragraph 4 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that the translation and processing of the report on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic would constitute an addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of a pre-session document of 8,500 words in all six official languages in 2016 amounting to \$50,900.
4. According to the Secretary-General, at the current stage, it is not possible to identify activities within section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for



the biennium 2016-2017 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium. According to the Secretary-General, it is therefore necessary that the additional resources in the amount of \$50,900 be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2016-2017, which would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

5. In the context of its consideration of the revised estimates resulting from the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 69/2, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the cost of processing one document of 8,500 words in the six official languages of the United Nations across the four duty stations was as follows: New York (\$50,900), Geneva (\$30,600), Vienna (\$33,485) and Nairobi (\$26,619) (see A/70/7, table I.5; see also A/69/656, paras. 6-9 and annex). A related matter concerns standard unit costs for the processing of documentation at each duty station and the costing methodology applied for documentation. At the time of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for 2016-2017, the Committee was informed that a working group on costing had been established in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to develop a unified methodology and coherent process for updating costings across all duty stations, and that the results and conclusions of the working group would be reported to the General Assembly at the main part of its seventieth session (see A/70/7, para. I.62). As at the date of issuance of the present report, the conclusions of the working group had not yet been provided to the General Assembly. **The Committee notes that the question of the cost of the processing of documentation by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has broad implications across all budget sections. The Committee stresses the need for reliable information on the standard unit costs for the processing of documentation at each duty station for proper assessment of proposals for resource requirements. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide to it, before the end of the main part of its seventieth session, information on the conclusions of the above-mentioned working group on costing on a unified methodology and coherent process for updating costings, including information on the unit costs for processing documentation (see A/70/7/Add.28, paras. 17-20).**

6. Upon enquiry as to the reason for presenting a request for an additional appropriation in the amount of \$50,900 at an early stage in the budget process, the Advisory Committee was informed that the budget for the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management for the biennium 2016-2017 had yet to be approved and that the approved appropriation, including the new mandates, was unknown at this point in time.

7. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to make every effort to absorb the additional requirements (\$50,900) requested under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017; if, despite efforts, the requirements cannot be absorbed, the additional expenditures related to the implementation of the activities arising from draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.47 should be reflected in the relevant performance report for the biennium.**