



General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 November 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session

Agenda item 134

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen

Seventeenth 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 report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (thematic cluster I, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen) ([A/70/348/Add.6](#)).¹ During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 4 November 2015.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General ([A/70/348](#)) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2016 for 35 special political missions and related cross-cutting issues, and the five addenda to the main report cover the specific requirements for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) ([A/70/348/Add.1-5](#)). Issues of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions will be contained in

¹ The Secretary-General provides the explanation for the separate addendum in paragraph 10 of his report ([A/70/348](#)).



the main report of the Advisory Committee ([A/70/7/Add.10](#)), while the budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III and UNAMA and UNAMI will be presented in its related reports ([A/70/7/Add.11-15](#)).

3. The Advisory Committee recalls that a biennial provision of \$1,124.4 million for special political missions was included in section 3, Political affairs, of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for 2016-2017 ([A/70/7](#), para. II.2). The comments and recommendations of the Committee on the level of the biennial provision, in particular a proposed reduction of \$6 million attributed to "efficiencies" ([A/70/7](#), para. II.3 (c)), will be included in its main report ([A/70/7/Add.10](#)), along with other cross-cutting issues relating to the proposed resource requirements, including air operations, travel and security arrangements and ratios for, inter alia, vehicles and computing devices.

II. Resource requirements for 2016

4. The resource requirements proposed for 2016 for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (thematic cluster I) amount to \$6,932,900 (net), representing an increase of \$1,580,600, compared with the resources approved for 2015.

Table 1
Summary of resource requirements

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015</i>			<i>Requirements for 2016</i>		<i>Variance 2015-2016</i>	
<i>Appropriations</i>	<i>Estimated expenditures</i>	<i>Variance under- (over-) expenditures</i>	<i>Total requirements</i>	<i>Non-recurrent requirements</i>	<i>Approved budget 2015</i>	<i>Variance</i>
<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)=(1)-(2)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>	<i>(7)=(4)-(6)</i>
Total requirements	10 544.4	10 427.5	6 932.9	168.0	5 352.3	1 580.6

5. The Secretary-General indicates that the anticipated unencumbered balance of \$116,900 for 2014-2015 is attributable primarily to the escalation of the political and security situation, which resulted in the non-utilization of planned consultancies and reduced communications requirements, partly offset by higher-than-budgeted expenditure for staff costs and increased costs for official travel and air transportation, owing to increased diplomatic efforts and the non-availability of commercial flights to Sana'a ([A/70/348/Add.6](#), para. 29).

6. The proposed increase of \$1,580,600 for 2016 is attributable mainly to the proposed increase in the number and level of positions, the new requirement for air transportation services in the light of the unavailability of commercial flights to Sana'a and increased travel requirements, partly offset by discontinued requirements for consultants (*ibid.*, para. 33 and see paras. 9 and 14 below).

Comments and recommendations on staffing requirements

7. Table 2 presents the positions approved for 2015, the vacancy situation as at 30 September 2015 and the proposed staffing requirements for 2016 for the Office.

Table 2
Staffing requirements

	<i>Approved for 2015</i>	<i>Vacant positions as at 30 September</i>	<i>Proposed for 2016</i>	<i>New positions</i>	<i>Abolitions</i>	<i>Reclassifications</i>
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	34 (1 ASG, 1 D-1, 3 P-5, 2 P-4, 3 P-3, 12 FS, 1 GS (OL), 1 NPO, 10 LL)	9 (2 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 FS)	39 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 4 P-5, 5 P-4, ^a 3 P-3, 13 FS, 1 GS (OL), 2 NPO, 9 LL)	7 (1 P-5, 3 P-4, 1 FS, 1 NPO, 1 LL)	2 (2 LL)	2 (1 ASG to 1 USG, 1 D-1 to 1 D-2)

Abbreviations: ASG, Assistant Secretary-General; FS, Field Service; GS (OL), General Service (Other level); LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer; UNV, United Nations Volunteer; USG, Under-Secretary-General.

^a The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen proposes the redeployment of one P-4 position from Sana'a to New York.

8. A total of 39 positions are proposed for the Office of the Special Envoy for 2016. Information on the number of staff of the Office to be located in New York and Sana'a is as follows:

(a) New York (a total of six positions):

(i) Office of the Special Envoy (1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 General Service (Other level));

(ii) Department of Political Affairs (one P-4 for the provision of backstopping support);

(b) Sana'a (a total of 33 positions):

(i) Office of Political Support (10 positions, 1 D-2, 3 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 National Professional Officer, 1 Field Service and 1 Local level);

(ii) Mission Support Section (10 positions, 1 P-4, 1 Field Service, 1 National Professional Officer and 7 Local level);

(iii) Safety and Security Section (13 positions, 1 P-3, 11 Field Service and 1 Local level).

9. Compared with the 34 positions approved for 2015, the proposal for 39 positions for 2016 reflects a net increase of 5 positions (7 establishments and 2 abolishments). The staffing changes proposed for 2016 are explained in paragraph 32 (a) to (j) of the budget (A/70/348/Add.6) and listed in annex V to the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/348). A summary of the changes proposed is presented below:

(a) Two reclassifications (1 position of ASG to USG in New York, and 1 position of D-1 to D-2 in Sana'a);

(b) Seven new positions (6 in Sana'a and 1 in the Department of Political Affairs in New York): 1 P-5 (Senior Security Sector Reform Officer), 3 P-4

(1 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Officer, 1 Political Affairs Officer and 1 Administrative Officer), 1 FS (Administrative Assistant), 1 NPO (Finance and Budget Officer), 1 LL (Public Information Assistant);

(c) One redeployment from Sana'a to New York: 1 P-4 position, Political Affairs Officer;

(d) Two abolishments in Sana'a: 2 Local level positions (1 Research Assistant and 1 Finance and Budget Assistant).

10. With respect to the proposed reclassification of the position of Assistant Secretary-General to Under-Secretary-General, the Secretary-General indicates that he established the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen in accordance with an exchange of letters with the President of the Security Council in June 2012 ([S/2012/469](#) and [S/2012/470](#)). Furthermore, the Security Council, in its resolution 2216 (2015), requested him to intensify his good offices role, in order to enable the resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led transition process. To that end, a new special envoy was appointed at the Under-Secretary-General level (see [A/70/348/Add.6](#), paras. 2, 7 and 8). The justification provided by the Secretary-General for the present proposal also includes the increasing complexity of anticipated developments in Yemen (*ibid.*, para. 32 (a)). The Advisory Committee notes that the Council also requested the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts in order to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and evacuation (Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), para. 12). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the position of the Special Adviser had not been abolished but had been renamed as Special Envoy in early 2015 and that the change in the title itself did not prompt any reclassification of the post, as both special advisers and special envoys could be appointed at the level of Under-Secretary-General. The Committee was further informed that the adjustment in the title was separate from the proposed reclassification of the post in 2016.

11. Concerning the proposed reclassification of the position of Principal Political Affairs Officer (D-1) to Director (D-2), it is indicated that this proposal is due to the elevated level of responsibility following the revised role of the Special Envoy and that the Special Envoy requires increased high-level support in the country and the region to facilitate negotiations for moving forward and completing the political transition process in Yemen (*ibid.*, para. 32 (b)). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed reclassification from D-1 to D-2 was not triggered by the reclassification of the position from Assistant Secretary-General to Under-Secretary-General, but reflected the increased challenges and complexities related to implementation of the tasks set by the Security Council for the Special Envoy and for the Office as a whole. **The Advisory Committee is nonetheless of the view that the proposal to reclassify the position from D-1 to D-2 has not been adequately explained and justified, and does not therefore recommend approval of the proposed reclassification. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

12. **The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the staffing changes proposed by the Secretary-General for the Office of his Special Envoy for Yemen, subject to its recommendation in paragraph 11 above. Furthermore, the Committee reiterates its recommendation that the General Assembly apply the vacancy rates of 50 per cent for new Professional positions and 35 per cent for**

new General Service positions in the budget for 2016 for the special political missions (see A/70/7, para. 57).

Operational costs

13. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the operational costs for the Office, which is shown in table 3 below, including the appropriation and estimated expenditure for 2014-2015 and the projected requirements for 2016.

Table 3

Operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015			Requirements for 2016		Variance 2015-2016	
	Appropriations	Estimated expenditures	Variance under- (over-) expenditures	Approved budget 2015	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	Variance
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)-(2)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(5)-(4)
Operational costs							
1. Consultants	368.5	—	368.5	190.8	—	—	(190.8)
2. Official travel	1 745.3	1 865.1	(119.8)	685.4	1 135.0	—	449.6
3. Facilities and infrastructure	1 635.8	1 729.5	(93.7)	497.0	659.8	—	162.8
4. Ground transportation	187.5	206.3	(18.8)	105.6	53.8	—	(51.8)
5. Air transportation	—	150.0	(150.0)	—	492.8	—	492.8
6. Communications	477.9	239.2	238.7	244.8	260.7	44.3	15.9
7. Information technology	122.0	66.1	55.9	48.4	169.3	123.7	120.9
8. Medical	—	14.3	(14.3)	—	—	—	—
9. Other supplies, services and equipment	220.5	106.4	114.1	115.8	153.9	—	38.1
Total	4 757.5	4 376.9	380.6	1 887.8	2 925.3	168.0	1 037.5

14. Concerning the proposed increases under official travel and air transportation, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that in response to the request of the Security Council for the Secretary-General to intensify his good offices role in resolution 2216 (2015), the number and frequency of consultations with stakeholders outside Yemen and in particular with regional counterparts, had significantly increased since May 2015, and that it was anticipated that such consultations would remain at a high level during 2016. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that all commercial airlines that previously operated flights to and from Yemen had discontinued their operations citing security concerns (only the national airline has recommenced commercial flights with irregular flight schedules and other limitations). The Committee was informed that the Office would continue to monitor the availability and safety of commercial flights, if any, and to regularly assess options for utilizing such flights for staff movements wherever possible. **The Advisory Committee expects that information related to**

the availability of commercial flights will be provided in the next budget proposal for the Office.

III. Recommendation

15. The Secretary-General's budgetary proposals for the 35 special political missions for 2016, which require action to be taken by the General Assembly, are set out in paragraph 74 of his main report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council ([A/70/348](#)). The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2016 for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen under thematic cluster I, subject to its recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 and 12 above and the recommendations in the main report of the Advisory Committee ([A/70/7/Add.10](#)).
