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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

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 III: regional offices, offices in support of political processes and other missions

Fourteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered an advance version of 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 that contains the proposed resource requirements for 2018 for thematic cluster III ([A/72/371/Add.3](#)). 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 30 November 2017.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General ([A/72/371](#)) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2018 for special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. As in previous years, 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).¹ The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to all special political missions are contained in its main report ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)), while the

¹ [A/72/371/Add.1](#), [A/72/371/Add.2](#), [A/72/371/Add.3](#), [A/72/371/Add.4](#) and [A/72/371/Add.5](#).



budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI are covered in its related reports.²

3. The budget proposals of the Secretary-General for the Panel of Experts on Mali (cluster II), the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (both under cluster III) are contained in separate addenda³ and the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee are contained in its related reports.⁴ The report of the Committee on cluster III, therefore, contains comments and recommendations related to seven of the nine special political missions contained in this cluster.

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that a biennial provision of \$1,109.6 million for special political missions was included in section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2018–2019, representing a reduction of \$14.8 million compared with the amount of \$1,124.4 million provided for in the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2018–2019 (see General Assembly resolution 71/274). The Secretary-General attributes the reduction of \$14.8 million to planned efficiency gains across all special political missions, as part of the reductions of \$58.9 million under “other changes” in the proposed programme budget. The Committee recalls that it requested, but was not provided with, a consolidated list of the reductions categorized under other resource changes across all budget sections, along with an explanation of how they were to be achieved and the extent to which they could be considered efficiencies. The Committee made comments in that regard in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (see A/72/7, chap. I). In this connection, the Committee notes that no reductions pertaining to Umoja, the Secretariat’s enterprise resource planning system, or other efficiencies are reported for the special political missions for 2018, except for an amount of \$698,900 for UNAMA (see A/72/371, para. 111). The comments and recommendations of the Committee on the level of the biennial provision proposed by the Secretary-General will be included in its main report.

II. Budget performance for 2016–2017 and resource requirements for 2018

5. Table 1 below provides information on the proposed resources for 2018 for the seven special political missions grouped under cluster III (see also para. 3 above) compared with the approved resources for 2017 and the biennial provision and projected expenditure for 2016–2017, which is also presented in the report of the Secretary-General (see A/72/371/Add.3, table 1).

² A/72/7/Add.11, A/72/7/Add.12, A/72/7/Add.13, A/72/7/Add.14 and A/72/7/Add.15.

³ A/72/371/Add.6, A/72/371/Add.7 and A/72/371/Add.8.

⁴ A/72/7/Add.16, A/72/7/Add.17 and A/72/7/Add.18.

Table 1
Summary of resource requirements by mission

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2016–2017			Requirements for 2018 ^a		Variance	
	<i>Appropriation</i>	<i>Estimated expenditure</i>	<i>Estimated variance</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Non-recurrent</i>	<i>Approved budget for 2017</i>	<i>Variance Increase/(decrease) 2017–2018</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(2)–(1)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(4)–(6)
United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel	26 338.6	26 839.5	500.9	14 542.6	13.9	13 283.3	1 259.3
United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau	36 250.6	36 617.4	366.8	17 916.8	220.4	18 033.3	(116.5)
United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia	186 875.3	186 875.3	–	96 478.2	1 726.3	94 164.3	2 313.9
United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia	5 988.1	6 210.1	222.0	3 019.6	83.0	3 075.1	(55.5)
United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission	9 136.0	9 033.4	(102.6)	3 951.1	5.5	4 385.1	(434.0)
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon	16 638.8	16 623.9	(14.9)	8 228.1	48.0	8 217.5	10.6
United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa	13 703.7	14 587.5	883.8	7 304.8	34.5	6 686.9	617.9
Total	294 931.1	296 787.1	1 856.0	151 441.2	2 131.6	147 845.5	3 595.7

^a Excludes resources proposed for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (see para. 3 above).

Budget performance for 2016–2017

6. For the biennium 2016–2017, expenditure through 31 December 2017 is projected at \$296,787,100 for the seven continuing missions under thematic cluster III, compared with the appropriation of \$294,931,100 for the biennium, leading to a projected overexpenditure of \$1,856,000. A summary of significant variances between the 2016–2017 appropriation and projected expenditure for the missions continuing into 2018 is provided in table 4 in the main report of the Secretary-General (A/72/371).

Overall requirements for 2018

7. The resources proposed for 2018 for the seven missions grouped in cluster III amount to \$151,441,200 (net), representing an increase of \$3,595,700 (2.4 per cent) compared with the resources approved for 2017. A summary of the main factors contributing to the variances between the approved resources for 2017 and the proposed resources for 2018 for continuing missions under cluster III is contained in table 6 of the main report of the Secretary-General.

A. Comments and recommendations on staffing requirements

8. Table 2 below presents the approved positions under cluster III for 2017, vacant positions as at 30 September 2017 and the proposed staffing requirements for

2018. The Advisory Committee was informed that a total of three positions were vacant for two years or longer under cluster III (see para. 17 below).

Table 2

Thematic cluster III: summary of staffing requirements by mission

	<i>Approved for 2017</i>	<i>Vacant positions as at 30 September</i>	<i>Proposed for 2018</i>	<i>New positions</i>	<i>Abolishment</i>	<i>Reclassifications</i>	<i>Relocation/ redeployment</i>
United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel	63 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 2 D-1, 7 P-5, 13 P-4, 7 P-3, 7 FS, 6 NPO, 19 LL)	3 (1 ASG, 1 P-4, 1 P-3)	63 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 2 D-1, 7 P-5, 13 P-4, 7 P-3, 7 FS, 6 NPO, 19 LL)	—	—	—	—
United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau	140 (1 USG, 2 D-2, 2 D-1, 6 P-5, 15 P-4, 9 P-3, 28 FS, 26 NPO, 40 LL, 11 UNV)	8 (1 P-5, 3 P-4, 2 P-3, 2 NPO)	142 (1 USG, 1 D-2, 3 D-1, 7 P-5, 14 P-4, 9 P-3, 28 FS, 26 NPO, 42 LL, 11 UNV)	4 (1 D-1, 1 P-5, 2 LL)	2 (1 D-2, 1 P-4)	—	2 (1 P-3, 1 FS) ^a
United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia	273 (1 USG, 2 ASG, 1 D-2, 7 D-1, 30 P-5, 39 P-4, 29 P-3, 1 P-2, 49 FS, 69 NPO, 41 LL, 4 UNV)	67 (5 P-5, 9 P-4, 6 P-3, 8 FS, 22 NPO, 17 LL)	281 (1 USG, 2 ASG, 1 D-2, 7 D-1, 31 P-5, 40 P-4, 29 P-3, 1 P-2, 49 FS, 75 NPO, 41 LL, 4 UNV)	8 (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 6 NPO)	—	1 P-5 to P-4; 1 P-4 to P-5	From Nairobi to Mogadishu (1 P-5, 1 P-3) From Mogadishu to Nairobi (1 P-4) From Hargeysa to Mogadishu (1 P-5) From Mogadishu to Hargeysa (1 P-5) From Garoowe to Mogadishu (1 FS) ^b
United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia	30 (1 ASG, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3, 2 FS, 4 NPO, 18 LL)	2 (1 ASG, 1 LL)	30 (1 ASG, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 2 P-3, 2 FS, 4 NPO, 18 LL)	—	—	—	—
United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission	12 (3 P-5, 6 P-4, 1 FS, 2 LL)	—	12 (3 P-5, 6 P-4, 1 FS, 2 LL)	—	—	—	—

	<i>Approved for 2017</i>	<i>Vacant positions as at 30 September</i>	<i>Proposed for 2018</i>	<i>New positions</i>	<i>Abolishment</i>	<i>Reclassifications</i>	<i>Relocation/ redeployment</i>
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon	82 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 D-1, 2 P-5, 6 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2, 7 FS, 4 NPO, 58 LL)	7 (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3, 4 LL)	82 (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 D-1, 2 P-5, 6 P-4, 1 P-3, 1 P-2, 7 FS, 4 NPO, 58 LL)	–	–	–	–
United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa	41 (1 USG, 2 D-1, 4 P-5, 11 P-4, 4 P-3, 7 FS, 4 NPO, 8 LL)	3 (1 P-4, 2 NPO)	41 (1 USG, 2 D-1, 4 P-5, 11 P-4, 4 P-3, 7 FS, 3 NPO, 9 LL)	1 (1 LL)	1 (1 NPO)	–	–

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 1 P-3 (Political Affairs Officer) and 1 FS (Administrative Assistant) from the Office of the Deputy Special Representative (Political) to the Political Affairs Section.

^b 1 P-5 (Senior Political Affairs Officer) and 1 P-3 (Political Affairs Officer) from Nairobi to Mogadishu;
1 P-4 (Political Affairs Officer) from Mogadishu to the Regional Liaison Office in Nairobi;
1 P-5 (Senior Political Affairs Officer) from the Regional Liaison Office in Hargeysa to Mogadishu;
1 P-5 (Senior Coordination Officer) from Mogadishu to Hargeysa;
1 FS (Administrative Officer) from the Regional and Liaison Office in Garoowe to Mogadishu.

9. Staffing changes for 2018 are proposed for three missions under cluster III, namely, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) (see paras. 10–12 below), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) (see paras. 13–17 below) and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA).

United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

10. It is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General that the Security Council has endorsed the recommendations of the strategic review mission of December 2016, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of UNIOGBIS (S/2017/111), regarding the need for UNIOGBIS to refocus its existing efforts on political capacities in support of the good offices and political facilitation role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and to streamline its management structure (see A/72/371/Add.3, paras. 36–40). It is also indicated that some of the proposed staffing changes are related to the recommendations resulting from the strategic review and the renewed mandate (ibid., para. 61).

11. The staffing changes proposed for UNIOGBIS are indicated in paragraphs 58 to 62 of the report of the Secretary-General and include the following:

(a) The abolishment of two positions: 1 Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (D-2) and 1 Rule of Law Officer (P-4);

(b) The establishment of four new positions: 1 Chief of Political Affairs (D-1), to provide substantive guidance and overall management of the section, as well as to facilitate and directly support the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General; 1 Senior Political/Electoral Officer (P-5), to support the coordination function of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General as it relates to the electoral process; and 2 Local level positions (1 Auto Mechanic Assistant and 1 Electrical Assistant) in the Transport Unit, to provide support;

(c) The redeployment of two positions, 1 Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and 1 Administrative Assistant (Field Service), from the Office of Deputy Special Representative (Political) to the Political Affairs Section, to carry out electoral functions.

12. In terms of the proposed establishment of the position of Senior Political/Electoral Officer (P-5), the Advisory Committee notes from the information it received upon request that the position would support the coordination function of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General as it relates to the electoral process and provide specific electoral expertise to allow for the Mission's oversight and coordination of the United Nations system electoral support with regards to the timely conduct of legislative and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019. **The Committee recommends the approval of the proposed position of Senior Political/Electoral Officer (P-5) for 2018. Any further requirement for this position should be fully explained and justified in the proposed programme budget for 2019.**

United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

13. It is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General that, in order to implement the mandate of UNSOM in accordance with Security Council resolution [2275 \(2016\)](#) and the recommendations adopted by the Council as outlined in the United Nations strategic assessment on Somalia (see [S/2017/404](#)), in particular at the regional level (see [A/72/371/Add.3](#), para. 69), the Mission has proposed to take a number of measures. These include a reconfiguration and modifications of the Mission (*ibid.*, para. 91) and the downsizing of the Nairobi office.

14. The staffing changes proposed for UNSOM by the Secretary-General include the establishment of eight new positions (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 6 National Professional Officers) for the Mission in 2018, namely: (a) one position of Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5), to be located in Mogadishu, to provide advice and strategic guidance on prevention and countering of violent extremism; (b) one position of Political Affairs Officer (P-4), to be located in Mogadishu, to provide technical expertise on the comprehensive approach to security and to enhance the support role of the United Nations with respect to the Comprehensive Approach to Security Executive Group; and (c) six positions of Human Rights Officer (National Professional Officer), to be located in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Dhuusamarreeb, Garoowe, Kismaayo and Mogadishu, to enhance the Mission's capacity to support the system-wide implementation of the human rights due diligence policy (see [A/72/371/Add.3](#), para. 96).

15. The Advisory Committee was also informed of the following staffing changes:

(a) The reclassification of two positions: 1 Special Assistant from P-5 to P-4 level and 1 Police Planning Officer (P-4) to Senior Police Planning Officer (P-5), both in Mogadishu;

(b) The redeployment of the following six positions:

(i) 1 Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) and 1 Political Affairs Officer (P-3) from Nairobi to Mogadishu;

(ii) 1 Political Affairs Officer (P-4) from Mogadishu to the Regional Liaison Office in Nairobi;

(iii) 1 Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) from the Regional Liaison Office in Hargeysa to Mogadishu;

(iv) 1 Senior Coordination Officer (P-5) from Mogadishu to Hargeysa;

(v) 1 Administrative Officer (Field Service) from the Regional and Liaison Office in Garoowe to the Office of the Chief of Staff in Mogadishu.

16. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the six positions of Human Rights Officer (National Professional Officer) proposed for establishment would expand the human rights due diligence policy work to the regions and to the increasing number of United Nations agencies and UNSOM sections involved, including the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Rule of Law and Security Institutions Group of UNSOM, and non-United Nations actors (such as the Somali police force, the Somali National Army and regional forces identified for integration, e.g. the Puntland Defence Forces), that receive support. The workload arising from the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy in each regional office would be addressed through the addition of one national Human Rights Officer in each of the six field offices. **The Committee observes that, while the Human Rights Officers are budgeted under the United Nations regular budget, the range of due diligence functions to be carried out will benefit a number of differently funded United Nations entities. In this regard, the Committee is of the view that greater information and clarification are required regarding the necessary cost-sharing arrangements for services provided to other entities and trusts that this information will be provided in the next budget submission.**

Vacant positions

17. With respect to positions vacant for two years or longer, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as of September 2017, three positions were still vacant: 1 P-5 (Special Assistant), 1 P-4 (Child Protection Officer) and 1 Local level position (Administrative Assistant). While the job openings had been advertised for the P-5 and P-4 positions, the recruitment for the Local level position was in the pre-posting phase. Upon clarification, the Committee was informed that, as at 30 September 2017, the job openings had not been filled and the P-5 and P-4 had been included in the 2017 Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network exercise as “recruit from roster” job openings. **The Committee reiterates the view that, as a matter of overall policy, the continuing requirement for posts that have been vacant for two years or longer should be reviewed and justifications provided for their retention. Otherwise, they should be proposed for abolishment (see [A/71/595](#), para. 22). The Committee therefore recommends the abolishment of the positions of Special Assistant, Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator) (P-5), Child Protection Officer (P-4) and Administrative Assistant, Political Affairs and Mediation Group (LL). Related operational costs should be reduced accordingly.**

18. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the Secretary-General’s staffing proposals for 2018 subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 12 and 17 above.**

B. Comments and recommendations on operational costs

19. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the operational costs for cluster III, which is shown in table 3 below, including the appropriation and estimated expenditure for the biennium 2016–2017 and the projected requirements for 2018.

Table 3
Thematic cluster III: operational costs^a

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Object of expenditure	2016–2017			Requirements for 2018 ^a		Variance	
	Appropriation	Estimated expenditure	Estimated variance	Total	Non-recurrent	Approved budget for 2017	Variance Increase/(decrease) 2017–2018
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(2)–(1)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(4)–(6)
Experts	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Consultants	4 607.2	3 822.4	(784.8)	1 910.3	–	2 023.3	(113.0)
Official travel	9 981.5	9 867.9	(113.6)	4 673.9	–	4 500.2	173.7
Facilities and infrastructure	47 729.3	48 616.1	886.8	25 008.6	1 292.8	24 847.5	161.1
Ground transportation	8 402.1	6 778.7	(1 623.4)	2 706.4	383.5	3 885.5	(1 179.1)
Air transportation	31 785.2	31 806.9	21.7	17 125.2	–	14 885.4	2 239.8
Naval transportation	54.8	54.8	–	27.4	–	27.4	–
Communications	17 047.3	15 943.3	(1 104.0)	8 339.3	174.9	8 592.0	(252.7)
Information technology	7 471.0	7 871.4	400.4	2 744.0	277.2	3 077.4	(333.4)
Medical	7 485.2	6 890.8	(594.4)	2 094.4	3.2	4 160.6	(2 066.2)
Special equipment	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other supplies, services and equipment	10 350.7	9 953.8	(396.9)	4 986.2	–	5 057.3	(71.1)
Quick impact projects	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	144 914.3	141 606.1	(3 308.2)	69 615.7	2 131.6	71 056.6	(1 440.9)

^a Excludes resources proposed for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (see para. 3 above).

20. The proposed resources for operational costs for the seven special political missions under thematic cluster III in 2018 amount to \$69,615,700, reflecting a decrease of \$1,440,900 (2.0 per cent) compared with the appropriation of \$71,056,600 for 2017.

Operational costs

21. The Advisory Committee notes, from the information it received upon request, that the actual expenditure under operational costs for 2017 (as at 31 August) indicates a low utilization rate under operational costs of the 2017 appropriation for the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) (58 per cent), UNIOGBIS (64 per cent), the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (62 per cent) and the United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (58 per cent). Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with updated information (as at 30 September) and notes an underutilization of resources as well as a high level of projected expenditure occurring in the last quarter of 2017. In the case of UNSOM, the Committee notes that the estimated underexpenditure for the biennium (as at 31 August 2017) amounted to \$3,060,700 (2.9 per cent) and that the number of categories of underexpenditure increased from four to seven in the data provided as at 31 August and 30 September 2017. The original four categories were ground transportation, communications, medical and other supplies, services and equipment, while the additional three were facilities and infrastructure, air transportation and information technology. **Taking into account the low expenditure incurred during the first**

three quarters of 2017 and the projected expenditure in the last quarter of 2017, the Advisory Committee is concerned that the resource estimates for 2018 may not be realistic. The Committee recommends that information relating to actual and projected expenditure be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for special political missions for 2018.

Official travel

22. The proposed resources for official travel for 2018 amount to \$4,673,900, representing an increase of \$173,700, or 3.9 per cent, compared with the approved resources of \$4,500,200 for 2017 under cluster III (see table 3 above). Of the seven missions under the cluster, the requirements for 2018 decreased for three missions (United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and UNOCA) and increased for four missions, namely:

- (a) UNOWAS (with an increase of \$82,700, or 9.0 per cent);
- (b) United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (with an increase of \$12,700, or 5.1 per cent);
- (c) UNIOGBIS (with an increase of \$47,400, or 7.1 per cent);
- (d) UNSOM (with an increase of \$134,200, or 10.8 per cent).

23. The Advisory Committee requested a detailed breakdown of official travel undertaken during 2016–2017, including the number of trips and the expenditure incurred, as well as information relating to the use of other means of communication, including videoconferencing and teleconferencing, for the seven political missions in cluster III. Upon request, the Committee was also provided with a detailed breakdown of planned trips and cost estimates for 2018. The Committee notes discrepancies in the airfare estimates for itineraries with the same points of origin and final destinations among various missions and in the use of standardized airfares from one location to various destinations. In the case of UNOWAS, a standard fare of \$1,350 is used for an extensive number of destinations in Africa for travel originating in Dakar. The Committee also notes that, compared with the other special political missions in cluster III, UNSOM has utilized an oversimplified approach in calculating airfares with an approach based on a \$0 or \$1,000 calculation for airfare estimates to a number of destinations. The Committee will make comments and recommendations on official travel in its main report on special political missions ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).

Facilities and infrastructure

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

24. The Advisory Committee was provided with information relating to the resources required under facilities and infrastructure in the amount of \$372,900. The Committee was informed that the increase in the amount of \$84,700 was due to additional requirements in the office of the Liaison Cell in Nouakchott, including rental of premises, utilities and provision for security services. The Liaison Cell, which is temporarily accommodated by UNDP in 2017, would thus require its own office space in 2018 owing to the limited office space available within UNDP. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Liaison Cell was comprised of one Political Affairs Officer (P-5) and that it hosted consultants recruited to support joint projects of UNOWAS and the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), as well as UNOWAS staff and delegations on mission to Nouakchott. Upon enquiry, the Committee was also informed that, although UNOWAS had engaged in discussions

with UNDP, the G-5 Sahel secretariat, the International Labour Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the United Nations Children's Fund to seek solutions to the office space limitations, no other space had been located. **The Committee is not convinced of the unavailability of other office space that may be shared, given that the Liaison Cell is comprised of one Political Affairs Officer and that the premises would only be required periodically for consultants and visiting delegations. The Committee therefore recommends a reduction in the amount of \$84,700 to the proposed resource requirements for facilities and infrastructure.**

United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

25. The Advisory Committee notes, from the information it received upon request, that resources amounting to \$3,384,900 are proposed for petrol, oil and lubricants for 13 generators. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that UNSOM relied on 13 generators to generate electricity in five locations in Somalia and that the proposed fuel consumption for the generators had been estimated at 10.8 million litres on the basis of historical consumption trends. UNSOM pays for 30 per cent of the total, equivalent to 3.2 million litres or \$2.64 million at \$0.81 per litre, as well as \$485,000 for fuel service management fee and \$260,000 for oil and lubricants. In the view of the Committee, the amount indicated for fuel is not sufficiently justified. **The Committee therefore recommends a reduction in the amount of \$110,000 to the proposed resource requirements for facilities and infrastructure.**

26. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with information regarding the resources amounting to \$5,400,000 proposed for alteration and construction services. The Committee notes that the information requested regarding the cost-sharing arrangement and related cost distribution between UNSOM and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) was not clearly indicated for a number of resource-intensive projects. Although the Committee was provided with details of the construction projects in a number of locations, including hard-wall buildings for living accommodation in Mogadishu, security enhancements at Mogadishu International Airport, double-container living accommodation and construction and maintenance in four sector hub camps, the breakdown of costs between UNSOM and UNSOS was not provided. The cost-sharing details for works relating to cleaning, environmental, building and maintenance services were provided. **The Committee recommends that information relating to the actual cost-sharing arrangement and related expenditure between UNSOM and UNSOS be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for 2018 for special political missions.**

Ground transportation

United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

27. The proposal for ground transportation in UNSOM amounts to \$2,134,000, with a decrease of \$1,223,300 compared with the approved requirements for 2017. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as a result of the implementation of an internal administrative instruction in January 2017 relating to vehicle utilization in family duty stations, 6 out of 12 vehicles were withdrawn from UNSOM service. This results in an annual saving of \$8,600 for maintenance and fuel. The Committee notes that all related savings resulting from repairs, spare parts, insurance and other related costs were not fully factored into the estimated savings.

Air transportation

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission and United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

28. The Advisory Committee notes, from the information it received upon request, that resources amounting to \$4,216,400 are proposed to provide for a fixed-wing aircraft, including equipment and supplies, fees and charges and other expenses for UNOWAS. Upon request, the Committee was informed that the increase in requirements for UNOWAS in the amount of \$138,200 was due to the increase in rental and operation costs of the fixed-wing aircraft, based on the guaranteed fleet cost amount and the anticipated pattern of the use of the aircraft in 2017. Resources are also proposed for UNIOGBIS in the amount of \$1,156,400 and for the United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission in the amount of \$322,300. The Committee was informed that the amounts reflected the proportional shares of the cost-sharing ratio of 75 per cent, 20 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively, among UNOWAS, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission.

29. The Advisory Committee was also provided with information relating to the budgeted and actual flight hours, as well as the budgeted and actual expenditure (as at 31 August 2017). The Committee notes that UNOWAS accumulated 165.4 actual flight hours, compared with a budgeted 450 budgeted hours, while UNIOGBIS accumulated 41.2 flight actual hours, compared with 120 budgeted hours. The Committee observes that, while the budgeted flight hours are projected to remain constant between 2017 and 2018, the increase in proposed requirements under air transportation does not appear justified on the basis of the lower number of actual flight hours, and that the most efficient use of shared assets should be assured. The Committee also notes that the arrangement to share the fixed-wing aircraft among the three offices should not necessarily give rise to automatic contractual increases and corresponding increases in requirements. **The Committee therefore recommends that a review of the use of the shared asset for air operations be conducted in terms of the existing cost-sharing arrangement, contractual provisions, future projected needs and possible efficiencies. The Committee recommends maintaining the resources at the level of the approved budget for 2017 under air transportation for UNOWAS, the United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission and UNIOGBIS in 2018.**

Consultants

United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

30. The Advisory Committee was provided with information indicating that resources amounting to \$60,000 were proposed to support UNOCA in the development of a strategy and programme of support for revitalizing the Mediation and Preventive Diplomacy Unit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in line with the UNOCA mediation and preventive diplomacy mandate (\$25,800), and to prepare and deliver workshops in 11 ECCAS member States in order to establish and coordinate civil society early warning and conflict prevention networks (\$34,200). Upon enquiring as to whether it was possible for United Nations Headquarters staff, rather than consultants, to provide such support to UNOCA, the Committee was informed that, owing to the thematic areas to be covered and the amount of time required that support would not be possible. The Committee was also informed that consultancies initiated in 2017 regarding the regional strategy for the implementation in Central Africa of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women, peace and security and of other projects would

require two consultants in 2018 to examine those issues in greater depth and ensure the sustainability of the results achieved. The Committee notes, however, that Headquarters staff would be able to provide support related to the mediation and preventive diplomacy mandate and that recruitment of mission staff with the necessary skill set to provide substantive capacity support should have already taken place, given the increase in substantive capacity in UNOCA. **The Committee recalls the stipulation of the General Assembly that the use of external consultants should be kept to an absolute minimum and that the Organization should use its in-house capacity to perform core activities or to fulfil functions that are recurrent over the long term (see General Assembly resolutions 70/247, para. 45, and 71/263, para. 34). The Committee therefore recommends a reduction in the amount of \$25,800 in the proposed resource requirements for consultants.**

Other supplies, services and equipment

United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

31. The Advisory Committee was provided with information indicating that resources amounting to \$188,300 were proposed to provide for other supplies, services and equipment, compared with requirements of \$68,900 in 2017. The Committee was informed that an amount of \$109,100 was to provide for three individual contractors to support mission support activities during peak activity periods, as well as for the cost of procurement services provided by the United Nations Global Service Centre under the comprehensive operational mission procurement and acquisition support service. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, following the increase in UNOCA staffing in 2016, the imbalance in the distribution of the additional staffing resources between the Mission's substantive and support components had resulted in a significant increase in the workload of the Mission's support component and the need for individual contractors to supplement staffing capacity during peak activity periods. **The Committee is not convinced of the need for the additional resources given the differing nature between substantive and support activities. The Committee also notes that an increase in substantive staffing does not automatically result in a corresponding increase in support activities. The Committee therefore recommends against the resources in the amount of \$109,100 for individual contractors under other supplies, services and equipment.**

United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

32. The Advisory Committee was provided with information indicating that resources under other supplies, services and equipment amounting to \$1,248,000 were proposed to provide for mine action services managed by the Mine Action Service. Upon request, the Committee was provided with additional information relating to the positions to be funded through the UNSOM budget. **The Committee stresses the need for greater transparency and that sufficient information should be provided in future budget submissions by UNSOM regarding the nature of the mine action activities to be undertaken.**

33. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 17, 24, 25 and 29 to 31 above, the Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposals relating for operational costs for 2018.**

III. Recommendation

34. The Secretary-General's budgetary proposals for the special political missions for 2018, which require action to be taken by the General Assembly, are set out in paragraph 120 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/72/371](#)).

35. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2018 for the seven special political missions under thematic cluster III, subject to the comments and recommendations above, as well as those in its main report ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).
