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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

United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Eighteenth 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 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 the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (A/72/371/Add.7). 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 6 December 2017.

2. The main 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 (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 Committee's comments

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.



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 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

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 totalling \$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 this 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 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 ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).

II. Resource requirements for 2017 and 2018

A. Mandate and planning assumptions for 2018

5. The Secretary-General indicates that the Security Council established the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia by its resolution [2366 \(2017\)](#) for 12 months from the commencement of verification activities on 26 September 2017. The report indicates that the Mission undertook a number of preparatory activities to ensure that it would be fully operational as from 26 September, namely, identifying staff and observer requirements, engaging with current contract holders regarding the viability of adapting and transferring contracts to the new mission, undertaking market surveys and pre-contracting activities and working with the Government on updating the status-of-mission agreement. The Secretary-General also indicates that the United Nations Mission in Colombia, established by the Security Council in its resolution [2261 \(2016\)](#), completed its mandate on 25 September 2017 and met its overall objectives of monitoring and verifying the definitive and bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army (FARC-EP), as well as the laying down of arms ([A/72/371/Add.7](#), paras. 1, 10 and 13).

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](#).

6. The Verification Mission is mandated to verify the implementation of two key aspects of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Colombian Government and FARC-EP, namely, the verification of the reintegration of FARC-EP members into political, economic and social life and the implementation of personal and collective security and protection measures and programmes for the communities and organizations in the territories (A/72/371/Add.7, paras. 1–3). The Secretary-General indicates that the Verification Mission will not operate as part of a tripartite mechanism that is supported by the Government’s provision of services but will be responsible for the full range of mission support services (ibid., para. 19). Information with respect to the mandate is provided in paragraphs 1–6 of the report of the Secretary-General. Information relating to planning assumptions for 2018 is provided in paragraphs 14–24 of the report.

B. Requirements for 2017

7. For the period from 26 September to 31 December 2017, the initial requirements of the Verification Mission are being funded under the authority granted to the Secretary-General under paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 70/250 relating to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2016–2017, in a total amount not to exceed \$14 million. The Advisory Committee was provided with information relating to the allocation of the commitment authority for the initial set-up period, as set out in table 1.⁵

Table 1
**Allocation of resources of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia,
26 September–31 December 2017**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

I. Military and police personnel	
Observers	1 475.5
Subtotal	1 475.5
II. Civilian personnel	
International staff	4 006.9
National staff	1 110.4
United Nations Volunteers	397.8
Subtotal	5 515.1
III. Operational costs	
Consultants	110.5
Official travel	800.0
Facilities and infrastructure	2 287.0
Ground transportation	903.9
Air transportation	1 129.2
Naval transportation	98.1

⁵ The Advisory Committee authorized the Secretary-General to incur expenses under two commitment authorities up to a total amount not exceeding \$14 million in relation to Security Council resolutions 2366 (2017) and 2381 (2017).

Communications	1 325.6
Information technology	168.7
Medical	136.4
Other supplies, services and equipment	50.0
Subtotal	7 009.4
Total (net of staff assessment)	14 000.0

C. Requirements for 2018

8. The proposed resource requirements for the Verification Mission for 2018 amount to \$73,571,400 (net) (see table 2), which would provide for 393 positions (see table 3).

Table 2
Proposed resources, 2018

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	Requirements for 2018		Approved budget, 2017	Variance increase/ (decrease) 2017–2018
	Total	Non-recurrent		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)=(1)–(3)
I. Military and police personnel				
Military observers	4 016.1	–	–	4 016.1
Military contingents	–	–	–	–
United Nations police	–	–	–	–
Formed police units	–	–	–	–
Subtotal	4 016.1	–	–	4 016.1
II. Civilian personnel				
International staff	18 359.8	–	–	18 359.8
National staff	6 154.1	–	–	6 154.1
United Nations Volunteers	2 216.8	–	–	2 216.8
General temporary assistance	–	–	–	–
Government-provided personnel	–	–	–	–
Subtotal	26 730.7	–	–	26 730.7
III. Operational costs				
Experts	–	–	–	–
Consultants	591.7	–	–	591.7
Official travel	2 445.4	–	–	2 445.4
Facilities and infrastructure	14 184.9	6 100.0	–	14 184.9
Ground transportation	3 627.7	–	–	3 627.7
Air transportation	8 367.9	–	–	8 367.9
Naval transportation	392.4	–	–	392.4
Communications	7 877.9	206.5	–	7 877.9

Category of expenditure	Requirements for 2018		Approved budget, 2017	Variance increase/ (decrease) 2017–2018
	Total	Non-recurrent		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)=(1)–(3)
Information technology	3 025.6	272.8	–	3 025.6
Medical	575.8	10.0	–	575.8
Special equipment	–	–	–	–
Other supplies, services and equipment	1 735.3	–	–	1 735.3
Quick-impact projects	–	–	–	–
Subtotal	42 824.6	6 589.3	–	42 824.6
Total (net of staff assessment)	73 571.4	6 589.3	–	73 571.4

1. Military and police personnel

9. The estimated requirements for military and police personnel for 2018 amount to \$4,016,100, representing the requirements for 120 unarmed international observers (ibid., para. 27).

2. Civilian personnel

Table 3
Proposed positions, 2018

Professional and higher categories									General Service and related categories			National staff			United Nations Volunteers	
USG	ASG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	Subtotal	Field/ Security Services	General Service	Total inter-national	National Officer	Local level	United Nations Volunteers	Total	
1	1	1	6	20	40	45	1	115	38	1	154	72	82	85	393	

10. The estimated requirements for the 393 civilian staff proposed for the Verification Mission for 2018 amount to \$26,730,700. The Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of the functions and responsibilities of the 393 positions. As set out in table 3, the Secretary-General proposes 154 international staffing positions, 154 national staff positions and 85 United Nations Volunteers. The Committee notes that the ratio of international to national staff is 1:1 in the Mission and welcomes the reliance on national staff.

Staffing requirements

11. The Secretary-General indicates that in order to ensure a seamless transition from the United Nations Mission in Colombia to the Verification Mission and to ensure that the Verification Mission would be at full operational efficiency on its first day of operations, the preparatory activities included identifying staff for the Verification Mission (ibid., para. 13). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that in the planning and start-up phase, the Verification Mission took advantage of transferable skills available in the United Nations Mission in Colombia and that all staffing structures and staff members had been transferred to the new mission except for the Chief Observer (D-2) and one Driver (Local level).

12. The staffing proposed for the Verification Mission by the Secretary-General includes the establishment of three positions of Administrative Assistant (Local level)

in the Office of the Chief of Staff. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the assistants would provide administrative and logistical support, with one providing direct administrative support to the Chief of Staff and the other two serving as team assistants. **The Committee is not convinced of the need for the three positions. The Committee therefore recommends against the establishment of one position of Administrative Assistant (Local level) in the Office of the Chief of Staff. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

13. The Advisory Committee was also informed of the establishment of the following positions in the backstopping team at United Nations Headquarters:

(a) Three positions in the Department of Political Affairs: one Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5), one Political Affairs Officer (P-4) and one Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level));

(b) One position in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Office of Military Affairs: one Military Planning Officer (P-4);

(c) Three positions in the Department of Field Support: one Human Resources Officer (P-4), one Logistics Officer (P-3) and one Planning and Programme Officer (P-3).

14. The Advisory Committee was informed that the position of Human Resources Officer (P-4) is proposed to be established in the Field Personnel Division of the Department of Field Support as a backstopping position to provide advice on recruitment policies and the development and retention of a high-quality civilian workforce for the Verification Mission. **The Committee is not convinced of the need for the Human Resources Officer position, as all staff members, with the exception of two, have been transferred from the United Nations Mission in Colombia to the Verification Mission (see para. 11 above). The Committee therefore recommends against the establishment of one position of Human Resources Officer (P-4) in the Field Personnel Division, Department of Field Support. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

15. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the staffing requirements for 2018 for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 12 and 14 above.**

3. Operational costs

Consultants

16. The Advisory Committee was informed that resources amounting to \$591,700 are proposed to provide for consultants for training (\$140,900) and non-training (\$450,800) purposes. The non-training category includes consultants to provide: (a) expert advice to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Chief of Staff on various aspects of the Colombian administrative system; (b) multimedia designs and communication materials; (c) verification of security guarantees; (d) political analysis of Colombia; (e) legal analysis of the security of FARC-EP members, lessons learned and advice on legal matters with respect to Colombian administrative laws; and (f) a gender-inclusive legal framework of verification and follow-up. The Committee was not provided with sufficient detail regarding the proposed consultancy resources. The Committee also notes that as the majority of personnel of the previous mission were transferred to the new mission (see para. 11 above) and should, therefore, have the skill sets needed to carry out the functions required in the new mission, the requirements proposed for training consultants do not appear justified. **The Committee did not receive sufficient justification and information relating to the consultancy requirements, and in**

the absence of such information, it recommends a reduction in the resources for consultants in the amount of \$295,900.

Official travel

17. The proposed resources for official travel for 2018 amount to \$2,445,400 (see table 2). The Advisory Committee received a late submission of the detailed breakdown of planned trips and cost estimates for 2018. The Committee will make comments and recommendations on official travel in its main report on special political missions ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).

Ground transportation

18. The proposal for ground transportation amounts to \$3,627,700. The Advisory Committee was informed that the resources would provide for the rental of 90 vehicles (\$3,468,000) and for petrol, oil and lubricants (\$159,700). Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with the standard ratios and vehicle requirements pertaining to the Verification Mission. The Committee notes that the number of vehicles proposed for rental was rounded down from 94 to 90 vehicles and that the information relating to specific requirements should be exact. The Committee trusts that clarifying information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia for 2018.

19. Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 12, 14 and 16 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the Secretary-General's proposals relating to operational requirements.

Kuwait Joint Support Office

20. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the United Nations Mission in Colombia had received support services related to payments, accounts, payroll, allowances, approving officer and other budget and finance functions from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The Committee was also informed that once approving authority had been granted to the Chief Finance and Budget Officer of the United Nations Mission in Colombia in June 2017, the support provided previously ended, in accordance with the planned liquidation of MINUSTAH. As a result, national payroll support was reassigned to the Kuwait Joint Support Office effective 1 November 2017, and all other budget and finance functions were assumed by the budget and finance unit of the Verification Mission. The Committee will provide its comments and recommendations regarding the Kuwait Joint Support Office in its main report on special political missions ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).

III. Recommendations

21. 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](#)).

22. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2018 for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia under thematic cluster III, subject to the comments and recommendations above, as well as those to be provided in its main report ([A/72/7/Add.10](#)).