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Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Revised estimates relating to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization under section 5, Peacekeeping operations

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates relating to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) under section 5, Peacekeeping operations, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 ([A/73/402](#)), in which the additional amount of \$2,315,400 (net) is proposed. During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 26 October 2018.

2. The report of the Secretary-General is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2361 \(2017\)](#) and [2394 \(2017\)](#),¹ in which the Council, inter alia, welcomed the progress made towards the gradual re-establishment of the United Nations presence on the Bravo side of the Golan, following improvements in the security situation.

3. UNTSO was established pursuant to Security Council resolution 50 (1948). In accordance with Council resolution 73 (1949), the overall purpose of UNTSO is to observe and maintain the unconditional ceasefire and assist the parties to the 1949 Armistice Agreements in the supervision of the application and observance of the terms of those Agreements. In the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, under section 5, Peacekeeping operations, information is provided regarding UNTSO activities for the current biennium, which continue to include liaison with regional authorities and observer deployment to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (see [A/72/6 \(Sect. 5\)](#) and [A/72/6 \(Sect. 5\)/Corr.1](#), paras. 5.85–5.89).

¹ The Advisory Committee notes subsequent related Security Council resolution [2426 \(2018\)](#), adopted on 29 June 2018.



4. In his report on revised estimates, the Secretary-General indicates that UNTSO has deployed military observers serving in Observer Group Golan to UNDOF since 1974 to conduct observation activities in support of the UNDOF mandate. The Secretary-General further indicates that, while Observer Group Golan has served under the operational control of the UNDOF Force Commander, it remains under the administrative responsibility of UNTSO (see [A/73/402](#), para. 1). **The Advisory Committee recalls its previous comment in relation to UNDOF on the importance of cooperation among United Nations peacekeeping missions and other entities in the region (see [A/71/836/Add.2](#), para. 43). In this respect, the Committee stresses the need to avoid overlap and duplication, whenever feasible.**

5. The Secretary-General indicates that, with the escalation of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2014, the security situation on the ground deteriorated, leading UNDOF and Observer Group Golan to withdraw temporarily from some of their positions on the Bravo side of the ceasefire line. Owing to their rapid withdrawal, the UNDOF Camp Faouar headquarters and observation posts manned by Observer Group Golan were left unprotected and sustained considerable loss of equipment and facility damage (see [A/73/402](#), para. 4). In particular, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the overall value of the losses related to observation posts 71 and 72, for which resources are presently requested by the Secretary-General (see para. 7 below), amounted to approximately \$1.1 million, comprising \$830,000 in damage to facilities, \$220,000 in lost equipment and \$70,000 in lost expendable items.

6. Following improvements in the security situation, UNDOF developed a phased plan, currently under implementation, to re-establish its presence in the vacated areas and resume operations on the Bravo side (see [S/2018/244](#), paras. 22–25). In this respect, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that approximately \$1.2 million had been spent in 2017 and \$1.4 million in 2018 under the terms of General Assembly resolution [72/264](#) on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses for the biennium 2018–2019, mainly for the renovation of hard-walled structures, the acquisition and construction of prefabricated accommodation and the purchase of four armoured vehicles, to support the return of UNTSO military observers and the resumption of mobile patrol activities.

7. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed revised estimates relating to UNTSO in the amount of \$2,315,400 (net of staff assessment) followed the technical assessment completed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in May 2018, which provided the basis for the reoccupation of observation posts 71 and 72, as envisaged in the third phase of the UNDOF plan. Those requirements would provide for non-post resources necessary for the gradual resumption of activities on the Bravo side, primarily through the reconstruction and rehabilitation of observation posts 71 and 72 in the light of the damage and losses incurred. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that those additional requirements were not included in the initial programme budget proposal for section 5 (including UNTSO), owing to the timeline for the preparation of the budget and the uncertain security situation at that time. Upon enquiry, the Committee received clarification that the financial implications of the report of the Secretary-General relate only to 2019. Detailed information is contained in section III of that report.

8. With regard to the amount of \$1,272,600 requested under improvement of premises, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that it would provide for a reinforced concrete shelter, reinforced concrete T-walls, prefabricated buildings for accommodation and offices, septic tanks and soak pits, and security installations, among other needed works. The Committee was also informed that an amount of \$305,200 would provide for the replacement of equipment at observation posts 71

and 72, including self-supporting towers with enhanced communications equipment and capabilities. With regard to the pattern of expenditures against the approved budget for improvement of premises for the biennium 2018–2019, the Committee notes that only \$30,000, or 3.6 per cent, of the appropriation of \$818,400 had been spent as at 30 September 2018. **The Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide to the General Assembly, at the time of its consideration of his report, additional information on the amount being sought for the improvement of premises, particularly in the light of the low rate of expenditure under this budget line.**

9. Subject to its observations in paragraphs 4 and 8 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the additional resources in the amount of \$2,315,400 for UNTSO.
