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Proposed programme budget for 2021

Part II

Political affairs

Section 3

Political affairs

Special political missions

Estimates in respect of special political missions

Third report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for 2021



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Special political missions

Thematic cluster I

Special and personal envoys, advisers and representatives of the Secretary-General

Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus

Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide

Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#)

United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions

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

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region

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

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

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar

Thematic cluster II

Sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and other entities and mechanisms

Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Panel of Experts on the Sudan

Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Panel of Experts on Libya

Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic

Panel of Experts on Yemen

Panel of Experts on South Sudan

Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions [1526 \(2004\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities

Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to resolution [1904 \(2009\)](#)

Implementation of Security Council resolution [2231 \(2015\)](#)

Panel of Experts on Mali

Panel of Experts on Somalia

Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate

United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD)

Thematic cluster III

Regional offices, offices in support of political processes and other missions

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS)*

United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)

United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission

Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon

United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)

United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)

United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA)

United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH)

United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS)**

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

* Mission mandate expires on 31 December 2020 (see para. 4 below).

** Mission established during 2020 (see para. 5 below).

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 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met online with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 27 October 2020.

2. The Secretary-General, in addendum 1 to section 3, Political affairs, of his report on the proposed programme budget for 2021 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#)), provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2021 for 39 special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. Detailed information in respect of each special political mission is contained in five addenda to section 3 of the proposed programme budget.¹ The addenda 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). The Secretary-General also indicates that he will present to the General Assembly separate proposals for any additional requirements emanating from additional mandates or changes in mandates ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), para. 3). The report of the Secretary-General on the resource requirements for 2021 for the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) (thematic cluster III), established on 3 June 2020 pursuant to Security Council resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#), is presented in a separate report ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.7](#)). The Committee's comments and recommendations pertaining to the budget proposal for UNITAMS will be contained in its related report ([A/75/7/Add.8](#)).

3. In the present report, the Advisory Committee addresses issues of a cross-cutting nature pertaining to special political missions for which budgetary requirements are requested by the Secretary-General for 2021, while its specific comments and recommendations relating to the budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI are presented in separate related reports.²

Status of mission mandates and missions established in 2020

4. Of the 39 missions for which budgetary requirements are requested by the Secretary-General for 2021 (excluding UNITAMS (see para. 5 below)), the status of their mandates are as follows ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), para. 5; and [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.4](#), para. 37):

- (a) 14 missions have open-ended mandates;
- (b) 10 missions have mandates renewed or extended into 2021 or later;
- (c) 14 missions have mandates that are anticipated to be extended into 2021 or later;
- (d) The mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) was extended until 31 December 2020 by the Security Council in its resolution [2512 \(2020\)](#), in which the Council also decided that the mission should start the liquidation process immediately after the mandate completion date of 31 December 2020, ending no later than 28 February 2021.

¹ [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.2](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.3](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.4](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.5](#), [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.6](#) and [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.6/Corr.1](#).

² [A/75/7/Add.3](#), [A/75/7/Add.4](#), [A/75/7/Add.5](#), [A/75/7/Add.6](#) and [A/75/7/Add.7](#).

5. In addition, the Security Council, in its resolution [2524 \(2020\)](#), decided to establish a special political mission, UNITAMS, upon the adoption of the resolution and for an initial period of 12 months.

Budgeting for special political missions

6. The Advisory Committee discussed the matters related to the budgeting for special political missions in the context of the introduction of an annual programme budget on a trial basis ([A/74/7/Add.1](#), paras. 6–10). With the change from the biennial to the annual programme budget on a trial basis,³ the total resource requirements of special political missions are now derived from the actual resource estimates of the individual missions (included as addenda 2–6 to section 3 of the proposed programme budget for 2021), which are included within the overall resource level proposed for 2021 by the Secretary-General (see [A/75/6 \(Introduction\)](#)). The proposed requirements for UNITAMS in an amount of \$34,327,300 (net) for 2021 will therefore represent additional resource requirements over the level of the proposed programme budget for 2021 (see para. 2 above).⁴

7. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2021 (see [A/75/7](#), chap. I, sects. A–C), the Advisory Committee made comments and recommendations, including those on the budget methodology, format and presentation, as well as others on policy matters, which also apply to the reports of the Secretary-General on the estimates in respect of special political missions ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1–7](#)).

II. Overview of resource requirements for 2021

A. Budget performance for 2019 and 2020

8. Information on the budget performance for 2019 is provided in table 7 of the main report of the Secretary-General ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#)). Total expenditure amounted to \$706,211,800 (or 98.7 per cent) against the approved resources of \$715,297,100 for the year. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with additional information on the main contributing factors for the variances between approved resources and actual expenditures for 2019 for each mission. The Committee made specific comments and recommendations on proposed requirements under operational costs for 2021 for individual missions, which are provided in its related reports.

9. The Advisory Committee has noted that, under the annual programme budget, the reports of the Secretary-General on the estimates in respect of special political missions, which are submitted in June, no longer contain information on budget performance for the current period, such as projected expenditures and variances against appropriations. The related information was available in previous budget proposals under the biennial programme budget, when those reports were submitted in the third quarter of a year (see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), paras. 10 and 11).

³ The biennial envelope for special political missions was discontinued by the General Assembly (see resolution [74/263](#), section XVIII, para. 7).

⁴ On 27 July 2020, the Secretary-General, under the authority granted to him by the General Assembly in its resolution [74/265](#) of 27 December 2019, provided initial funding related to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses in the total amount of \$933,300 (net) for the period from 20 July to 30 September 2020. On 30 September 2020, the Advisory Committee authorized the Secretary-General, under the terms of General Assembly resolution [74/265](#), to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed \$1,818,600 (gross) (\$1,702,100 net) to meet the resource requirements of UNITAMS for the period from 1 October to 31 December 2020.

10. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee received information on the budget performance for 2020 for the special political missions, including revised tables on resource requirements to include 2020 expenditures. As at 30 September 2020, total expenditures amounted to \$462,799,390 (or 65 per cent) against the appropriation of \$711,781,800 for the period. Information on the liquidity situation of the Organization and its impact on budget implementation (including a recruitment freeze and the minimizing of non-post expenditures), as well as the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, is contained in the first report of the Committee on the proposed programme budget for 2021 (A/75/7, chap. I, paras. 17 and 18). **The Advisory Committee trusts that updated information on the actual budget performance, including information by mission and by major component, will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and in the context of future budget submissions.**

B. Resource requirements for 2021

11. The Secretary-General provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements of \$706,772,600 net for 2021 for 39 special political missions in his main report, inclusive of the provision of \$1,511,000 for the share of special political missions in the budget of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, for the 2020/21 peacekeeping financial period (see para. 13 below). According to the Secretary-General, the resource level proposed for 2021 represents a decrease of \$5,009,200 (or 0.7 per cent), compared with the approved resources for 2020 (see A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, sect. II). The resource estimates proposed for 2021 do not take into account the requirements of UNITAMS (see para. 6 above). The Committee notes that, with the inclusion of the proposed requirements (\$34,327,300) for 2021 for UNITAMS, the overall resource requirements for the 40 special political missions will be \$741,099,900 for 2021, representing an increase of \$29,318,100 (or 4.1 per cent) against the appropriation of \$711,781,800 for 2020.

12. Taking into account the completion of the UNIOGBIS mandate on 31 December 2020, as authorized by the Security Council (see para. 4 (d) above), the Advisory Committee requested a revised table 4 in the report of the Secretary-General to present resource changes proposed for 2021 for the 38 continuing special political missions, excluding UNIOGBIS, together with 2019 appropriation and expenditure (see table 1). The Committee notes that increases in resources for 2021 are proposed for clusters I to III and UNAMA, offset in part by a decrease for UNAMI. **The Advisory Committee notes from table 1 that the proposed resources for 2021 for the 38 continuing missions reflect an increase of \$9,285,000 (or 1.3 per cent), compared with the approved resources for 2020.**

Table 1
Summary of requirements for the period 2019–2021 by thematic cluster
(excluding UNIOGBIS and UNITAMS)

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2019		2020		2021		Variance
	Appropriation	Expenditure	Appropriation	Estimate	Amount	Percentage	
Mission	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(4)-(3)	(6)=(5)/(3)	
Cluster I	54 999.7	51 365.7	56 793.1	57 365.3	572.2	1.0	
Cluster II	56 673.7	53 723.5	57 453.2	62 188.9	4 735.7	8.2	
Cluster III	339 670.2	332 563.4	345 456.4	346 755.4	1 299.0	0.4	
UNAMA	140 694.8	143 711.9	134 790.2	137 921.0	3 130.8	2.3	

Mission	2019		2020	2021	Variance	
	Appropriation	Expenditure	Appropriation	Estimate	Amount	Percentage
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)=(4)-(3)	(6)=(5)/(3)
UNAMI	105 794.4	108 115.0	100 546.3	100 007.0	(539.3)	(0.5)
Subtotal	697 832.8	689 479.5	695 039.2	704 237.6	9 198.4	1.3
Provision for the share of special political missions for the Regional Service Centre	595.5	595.5	1 424.4	1 511.0 ^a	86.6	6.1
Total (net requirements)	698 428.3	690 075.0	696 463.6	705 748.6	9 285.0	1.3

^a See para. 13 below.

13. Concerning the proposed provision of \$1,511,000 as the share of special political missions in the budget of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe for the 2020/21 peacekeeping financial period, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that in its resolution [74/281](#), the General Assembly had approved resources in the amount of \$1,412,400 for the contribution of special political missions for the Centre (see also para. 55 below). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the share of special political missions in the budget of the Regional Service Centre for 2020/21 be adjusted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/281](#) (a reduction of \$98,600).**

14. The main report of the Secretary-General also contains a summary of the variances between the approved resources for 2020 and the proposed resources for 2021 by mission (table 5), mission-by-mission estimates (table 6) and a summary of requirements by major component (table 7). Information with respect to the resource changes for 2021 by thematic cluster and mission is discussed in paragraphs 77 to 81 of the report of the Secretary-General ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#)).

Coronavirus disease pandemic

15. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, while special political missions were originally not deployed to provide direct support to national authorities in their response to a pandemic, the missions remained fully committed to continuing their essential work in the host countries, and they had also stepped up, where needed and as required, their support to host authorities in that area. Support was provided within the mandates and capacity of the respective missions, and in accordance with the actual needs and particular circumstances of the respective host countries. In the light of the threat to the stability and the ongoing political processes posed by the pandemic in a number of settings, some missions had also engaged with host countries and authorities to support the national and local responses.

16. With respect to political meetings and interactions conducted in person or remotely by special political missions during the pandemic, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that making an estimate based on the information available was not a straightforward process. While, at Headquarters, the interactions had solely been virtual, in missions, some meetings or visits had taken place, in particular where the security and climatic conditions had allowed outdoor encounters and movements. In other contexts, missions had been forced to interact only virtually with host authorities and concerned parties. The Committee was also informed that the travel restrictions during the pandemic had resulted in the postponement of meetings and conferences for some missions, and the pandemic had created a challenging environment for carrying out some of the activities. In addition, the Committee was informed that the missions had utilized funds to meet immediate

requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, such as procuring disinfectants, personal protective equipment and other medical supplies.

17. **The Advisory Committee recalls that it made comments and recommendations on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2021 (A/75/7, chap. I, paras. 12–16).**

Staffing requirements for 2021

18. The Secretary-General proposes that the number of civilian personnel be decreased from 4,323 for 2020 to 4,187 for 2021, representing a net decrease of 136 positions (or 3.1 per cent) for the 39 special political missions (excluding UNITAMS) (see A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, table 8). The Advisory Committee notes that, with the inclusion of UNITAMS, the overall number of civilian positions for 2021 will be 4,456, representing a net increase of 132 positions (or 3.0 per cent) compared with the 4,324 approved for 2020. A summary of the proposed changes in the number and level of civilian positions for 2021 is provided in annex XIII to the main report of the Secretary-General. The comments and recommendations of the Committee on the proposed staffing requirements for individual missions are contained in its related reports (A/75/7/Add.3-7).

19. The net decrease of 136 positions under civilian personnel proposed for 2021 (excluding UNITAMS) reflects staffing changes for the following missions:

(a) Abolishment of 166 positions, comprising the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi (1), Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (2), UNIOGBIS (a total of 121, of which 93 are effective on 1 January 2021 and 28 are effective on 1 March 2021), UNAMA (41) and UNAMI (1);

(b) Establishment of 30 positions, comprising the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide (1), the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (1), the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi (1), the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (2), the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) (1), the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (12), the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) (7) and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (5).

20. The Advisory Committee requested a revised table 8 in the report of the Secretary-General to present staffing changes proposed for 2021 for the 38 continuing special political missions, excluding UNIOGBIS (see table 2). The Advisory Committee notes from table 2 that the proposed staffing for 2021 for the 38 continuing missions reflects a decrease of 15 positions (or 0.4 per cent), compared with the approved staffing level for 2020.

Table 2

Summary of proposed civilian staffing for 38 continuing missions (excluding UNIOGBIS and UNITAMS)

	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Variance (percentage)</i>
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)=(2)-(1)</i>	<i>(4)=(3)/(1)</i>
Cluster I	304	306	2	0.7
Cluster II	264	265	1	0.4
Cluster III	1 622	1 646	24	1.5

	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Variance (percentage)</i>
	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)=(2)-(1)</i>	<i>(4)=(3)/(1)</i>
UNAMA	1 204	1 163	(41)	(3.4)
UNAMI	808	807	(1)	(0.1)
Total	4 202	4 187	(15)	(0.4)

Budgeting for the positions of support capacity in integrated missions

21. The Advisory Committee made comments and recommendations concerning the budgeting for the positions of resident coordinators in the reinvigorated system and related support capacity in six structurally integrated special political missions, for which the double- or triple-hatted Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General continued to serve as resident coordinators and/or humanitarian coordinators. At that time, considering the proposal for the 2020 period for UNAMA and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM),⁵ the Committee was not convinced of the continuation of the existing support capacity levels in the offices of the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General or Deputy Special Coordinator in the other missions concerned, in particular UNAMI ([A/74/7/Add.1](#), paras. 26–34).

22. The Secretary-General indicates that, during the preparation of the proposed budget for 2021, the six structurally integrated missions, namely, UNSOM, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), UNAMA and UNAMI (excluding UNITAMS),⁶ have reviewed the staffing and capacities in the respective offices of the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (Deputy Special Coordinator in the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon). In 2021, for UNAMI, it is proposed that one position of P-4 be abolished, and that one position be reclassified from P-5 to P-4. However, the Secretary-General states that other missions have not identified further adjustments to staffing in 2021 in view of the continual needs for such capacities ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), paras. 86–89).

23. **The Advisory Committee reiterates that the Secretary-General should ensure that the arrangements proposed for the double- or triple-hatted Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the related support capacity in the integrated missions are consistent with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/279. The Committee recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to review, and adjust as appropriate, the relevant organizational structures and support capacity in the offices of the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in the integrated special political missions (see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 34).**

⁵ Abolishment of three positions (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 National Professional Officer) in UNAMA and the reclassification of one position from the P-5 to the P-4 level in UNSOM.

⁶ For 2020, such missions also include UNIOGBIS (see [A/74/7/Add.1](#), table 2). For 2021, as part of an integrated and unified United Nations structure, a Deputy Special Representative of UNITAMS should be appointed to serve as United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (Security Council resolution 2524 (2020), paras. 2 and 4).

Vacancy rates, vacant positions and special post allowance

24. The main report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1) contains information on vacancy rates experienced in 2019, approved for 2020 and experienced as at 29 February 2020, and proposed for 2021 (annex X). Updated vacancy rates for 2020 were provided, upon enquiry, and have been reflected for individual missions in the related reports of the Advisory Committee (A/75/7/Add.3-7). **The Advisory Committee trusts that updated information on vacancy rates experienced during 2020 will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

25. The main report of the Secretary-General also contains information on positions that have been vacant for over one year (annex XI), in line with the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 19 of its resolution 74/262 (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, para. 91). As reflected in annex XI, a total of 10 positions were vacant for over two years as at 30 September 2020 in three missions: the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria (8), the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (1) and UNAMA (1), with information on recruitment status provided in the annex. Of the 10 positions, 1 position had been vacant since 2015 and another since 2016 (both in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria), 6 since 2017 (5 in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and 1 in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen) and 2 since 2018 (1 in UNAMA and 1 in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria). **While the Advisory Committee acknowledges the constraints imposed by the liquidity situation and the COVID-19 pandemic on the recruitment process, it notes that not all of the vacancies are due to the recruitment freeze. The Committee reiterates its recommendations, endorsed by the General Assembly, that vacant posts should be filled expeditiously (see also A/75/7, chap. I, para. 46).**

26. Information on positions with incumbents in receipt of special post allowances for one year or more, as at 29 February 2020, is included in annex XII to the main report of the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee notes from the annex that, of the total of 17 such positions, 1 had been receiving a special post allowance since 2015 (Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria), 6 since 2017 (2 in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, 1 in UNSOM, 2 in the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and 1 in UNAMA), 9 since 2018 (1 each in the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Cyprus, the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, the Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and UNSOM; and 2 each in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and UNAMA) and 1 since 2019 (Office of the Ombudsperson established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1904 (2009)). **The Advisory Committee reiterates its concern regarding cases of "temporary" assignments of staff members to higher-level positions for lengthy periods (A/75/7, chap. I, para. 57). The Committee recalls that the General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to promptly complete the recruitment process for those positions presently encumbered by the use of special post allowances (resolution 74/263, sect. XVIII, para. 10).**

27. With respect to recruitment time, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the average number of days (from the date a job opening is posted to the date a selection is made) taken in 2019 to fill a position in special political missions was 67 days for recruitments from rosters and 207 days for standard recruitments. However, the Committee was informed that there were no data that measured the number of days from the date of the establishment of a post to the date the incumbent

actually started work. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2021, the Advisory Committee has made comments and recommendations relating to long-vacant posts and special post allowances (A/75/7, chap. I, paras. 45 and 46, 56 and 57), which, as policy matters, also apply to the special political missions. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to collect data on the number of days from the date of the establishment of posts and positions to the date of actual incumbencies and report in the context of his future reports on human resources management, as well as in budget submissions. In addition, the Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will continue to monitor and report the average number of days of recruitment from rosters and from standard recruitments in future related reports. The Committee trusts that every effort will be made to ensure equal opportunities for external and internal candidates in the recruitment process.**

Operational costs for 2021

28. As shown in table 7 of the main report of the Secretary-General (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1), the proposed resources under operational costs amount to \$256,630,000 for 2021 (excluding UNITAMS), representing a decrease of \$12,754,900 (or 4.7 per cent) compared with the provision for 2020. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a revised table on operational costs for the 38 continuing missions for 2021, excluding UNIOGBIS (see table 3). The Committee notes from the table that, for the 38 continuing missions, the proposed resource requirements for operational costs amount to \$256,113,700, a decrease of \$9,096,600 (or 3.4 per cent), compared with the provision of \$265,210,300 for 2020.

Table 3

Information on the operational costs for 38 continuing missions for 2021 (excluding UNIOGBIS and UNITAMS)

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	2019		2020		2021		Variance
	Appropriation	Expenditure	Appropriation	1 January–30 September expenditure	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2021 budget vs. 2020 appropriation
Operational costs							
1. Experts	13 837.1	11 007.0	13 844.6	10 449.2	13 367.5	–	(477.1)
2. Consultants and consulting services	3 903.5	3 290.9	4 162.6	1 709.3	3 642.0	–	(520.6)
3. Official travel	19 442.9	15 140.5	18 436.3	4 547.4	17 977.0	114.0	(459.3)
4. Facilities and infrastructure	112 756.2	108 634.8	99 863.9	71 374.2	96 430.5	319.1	(3 433.4)
5. Ground transportation	14 913.5	20 535.7	10 814.5	6 009.4	8 919.5	111.9	(1 895.0)
6. Air operations	52 361.8	48 675.9	53 601.6	35 175.2	49 728.0	–	(3 873.6)
7. Marine operations	540.0	153.9	402.0	76.7	325.5	–	(76.5)
8. Communications and information technology	39 533.7	47 184.3	36 634.1	20 566.5	35 624.1	46.8	(1 010.0)
9. Medical	10 348.4	7 483.5	9 108.8	4 615.8	11 278.3	5.1	2 169.5
10. Special equipment	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Category of expenditure	2019		2020		2021		Variance
	Appropriation	Expenditure	Appropriation	1 January–30 September expenditure	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2021 budget vs. 2020 appropriation
11. Other supplies, services and equipment	22 191.9	14 667.4	18 341.9	8 097.9	18 821.3	167.0	479.4
Subtotal	289 829.0	276 773.9	265 210.3	162 621.6	256 113.7	763.9	(9 096.6)

29. The Advisory Committee discusses cross-cutting issues in the present section, and its specific comments and recommendations on proposed requirements under operational costs for 2021 for individual missions are provided in its related reports ([A/75/7/Add.3-7](#)).

Official travel and compliance with the policy for advance booking of air travel

30. Annexes VI and VII to the main report of the Secretary-General provide information on the proposed official travel resources for 2021 and the annual rates of compliance with the advance booking policy by mission, as requested by the Advisory Committee. The overall resources proposed for official travel for 2021 amount to \$18,022,500, representing a decrease of \$940,800 (or 5.0 per cent), compared with the approved resources for 2020. The proposed overall resources for 2021 reflect: (a) decreases for 17 missions, owing mainly to reduced requirements on the basis of the planned travel, with 3 missions indicating increased use of videoconferencing (BINUH, UNAMA and UNAMI); (b) increases for 12 missions (4 under cluster I, 2 under cluster II and 6 under cluster III); and (c) the same levels of resources for 10 missions (5 under cluster I and 5 under cluster II). The Committee makes specific comments and recommendations relating to travel resources for individual missions in its related reports ([A/75/7/Add.3-7](#)). **The Advisory Committee reiterates that more use should be made of virtual meetings and online training tools, and that travel for workshops, conferences or meetings should be kept to a minimum, and, if proposed, detailed justifications should be provided. The Committee also considers that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to continue to have an impact on travel in 2021 ([A/75/7](#), chap. I, para. 62).**

31. The Advisory Committee has discussed the persistent low rates of compliance with the 16-day advance booking policy for the purchase of air tickets by special political missions ([A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 42; [A/73/498](#), paras. 32–34; [A/72/7/Add.10](#), para. 37; [A/71/595](#), para. 32; and [A/70/7/Add.10](#), para. 37). The Committee notes from annex VII that, for 2019, only 5 of the 39 missions reached compliance rates of 50 per cent or higher, compared with 7 missions for 2018 and 5 for 2017. Upon enquiry, the Committee also received information on compliance rates by category of staff for 2019 and 2020 (see table 4).

Table 4

Compliance rate with the advance booking policy for special political missions

(Percentage)

Category of staff	Compliance rates in 2019	Compliance rates as of September 2020
Professional and higher	19	16
Field Service	26	16
National Professional Officer	14	10
Local level	20	18

<i>Category of staff</i>	<i>Compliance rates in 2019</i>	<i>Compliance rates as of September 2020</i>
United Nations Volunteer	7	7
Government-provided personnel	24	33

32. In its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2021, the Advisory Committee has made comments and recommendations on travel and compliance with the policy for advance booking of air travel (A/75/7, chap. I, paras. 61–64). **The Advisory Committee notes with concern the decreasing rates of compliance with the advance purchase policy directive by the special political missions for 2019 and 2020. The Committee further recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 74/262, expressed concern at the low rate of compliance with the advance purchase policy directive and requested the Secretary-General to make stronger efforts to further enhance the rate of compliance with the advance purchase policy directive across all travel categories, taking into account the patterns and nature of official travel and the reasons for non-compliance by each department, office and field mission.**

Air operations

33. The proposed resource requirements for air operations amount to \$49,784,400, reflecting an overall decrease of \$4,548,700, or 8.4 per cent, compared with the provision of \$54,333,100 for 2020. It is indicated that 8 of the 13 missions with air operations resources reflect decreases for 2021, while 2 missions (the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia) reflect increases for 2021, compared with 2020. Resource requirements for the air operations of UNOWAS, UNSOM, UNSMIL, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) and UNAMA represent 90 per cent of overall air operations resources proposed for 2021 (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, para. 61). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed reduction in resources for air operations was based on the review by the missions of their operational requirements for 2021. The Committee was further informed that it was envisaged that the proposed reduction would not affect mandate implementation or the safety and security of staff and the premises of the missions concerned.

34. The Advisory Committee sought information on the use of special flights⁷ by missions and was provided with additional information on flight costs, durations and destinations, and number of passengers and crew. The Committee notes from the information it received that eight special political missions requested special flights both in 2019 and 2020, as follows: Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, UNITAD, UNSOM, UNOCA, United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, UNMHA, UNAMA and UNAMI. In addition, UNSMIL requested special flights in 2019. **Noting the absence of such information in the proposed budget for 2021, the Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide detailed information, along with justifications, on special flights requested in the performance and current periods, as well as special flights planned for the budget period, in the context of the next budget proposals for special political missions and peacekeeping operations.**

Communications and information technology

35. A provision of \$35,737,400 is proposed for 2021, reflecting a reduction of \$2,141,600 (or 5.6 per cent), compared with the resources of \$37,879,000 approved

⁷ A special flight is an unscheduled flight, which requires special authorization from the Chief or Director of Mission Support, according to the Aviation Manual.

for 2020 (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, table 7). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee received a table on overall resources for communications and information technology, by clusters, UNAMA and UNAMI, with the 2019 budget and actual expenditure, the 2020 budget and expenditure as at 30 September, and the 2021 proposal (see table 5).

Table 5

Resource requirements for communications and information technology, 2019–2021 (excluding UNITAMS)

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	2019		2020		2021		Variance
	Appropriation	Expenditure	Appropriation	1 January–30 September expenditure	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	2021 budget vs. 2020 appropriation
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(5)-(3)
Cluster I	2 011.4	1 937.8	2 058.1	1 314.4	2 039.7	2.4	(18.4)
Cluster II	4 778.2	4 159.2	4 055.3	1 342.1	4 345.6	23.4	290.3
Cluster III	22 390.3	27 245.1	22 026.2	10 711.5	19 698.4	21.0	(2 327.8)
UNAMA	7 116.8	6 493.6	6 303.0	3 552.8	6 271.6	–	(31.4)
UNAMI	4 414.7	8 476.4	3 436.4	1 578.4	3 382.1	–	(54.3)
Total	40 712.0	48 312.1	37 879.0	21 249.4	35 737.4	46.8	(2 141.6)

36. The Advisory Committee has made comments and recommendations concerning communications and information technology in its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2021 (A/75/7, chap. I, para. 67). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide consolidated resources for communications and information technology for special political missions, along with detailed justifications, in his next main report in respect of special political missions (see also A/75/7, chap. I, para. 67). The Committee discusses the matter further in its report on the fourth annual progress report of the Board of Auditors on the implementation of the information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations (A/75/564).**

37. On a related matter, the Advisory Committee recalls that it discussed the use and acquisition of satellite imagery in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations. Observing that various missions obtained satellite imagery by various means and that there were financial implications for each mode of procurement, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to undertake an analysis of the costs and benefits of each mode of procurement in order to maximize its utilization in all the peacekeeping missions and submit his findings in the next overview report (A/74/737, paras. 49 and 50). The Committee notes that, while the expenses for satellite imagery service are usually integrated into the budgets of the peacekeeping missions under the category of expenditure of communications and information technology, it appears that the expenses are also budgeted under the category of other supplies, services and equipment for some of the special political missions owing to different modes of procurement. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide more detailed and consolidated information on the budgeting and acquisition of satellite imagery, along with justifications, by special political missions in his next budget proposal.**

Standard ratio of vehicles and information technology equipment

38. In section XVIII of its resolution 74/263, the General Assembly recalled paragraph 39 of the report of the Advisory Committee,⁸ and requested the Secretary-General to report the ratios of allocations of vehicles and information technology equipment and to provide specific justification for higher allocations by missions in the context of future budget submissions.

39. In table 2 of the main report of the Secretary-General, information is provided on the proposed allocation of vehicles for special political missions for 2021. The Advisory Committee notes that the overall allocation of vehicles proposed for 2021 is 10.0 per cent lower than the standard ratio, compared with higher-than-standard ratios of 5.1 per cent and 16.4 per cent proposed for 2020 and 2019, respectively (see also A/74/7/Add.1, para. 37). The Committee further notes that the overall lower-than-standard ratio for 2021 reflects: (a) lower or standard ratios proposed for 13 missions; and (b) higher-than-standard ratios for 7 missions,⁹ for which justifications for each mission are provided in paragraph 57 of the main report of the Secretary-General. **The Advisory Committee notes the proposed overall lower-than-standard ratio for the allocation of vehicles for the special political missions for 2021, as well as the provision of a justification for each of the missions with a higher-than-standard ratio for vehicle allocation.**

40. As reflected in table 3 of the main report of the Secretary-General, the overall allocation of information technology equipment proposed for 2021 is 4.6 per cent higher than the standard ratio, compared with 5.6 per cent and 4.9 per cent higher proposed for 2020 and 2019, respectively (ibid.). The Advisory Committee notes that the reduced overall ratio for 2021 reflects the application of standard ratios for 27 missions, with higher ratios proposed for 11 missions (4 in cluster I, 1 in cluster II and 6 in cluster III).¹⁰ It is indicated that the 4.6 per cent higher-than-standard allocation for 2021 is owing mainly to the fact that computers are needed for consultants, training facilities, Internet cafés, information technology maintenance services, CarLog systems, programming of the radios and other fieldwork, as well as the slightly higher-than-normal number of spares maintained owing to the harsh operating conditions, time required to repair the equipment and procurement lead time (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, para. 59).

41. With respect to the policy on regulating spare parts maintained by the missions, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the latest guidance is defined in the “Standard Operating Procedure on the Monitoring of Key Performance Indicators for Property Management” issued by the then Department of Field Support in February 2017. In the case of non-expendable property (under which computing devices fall), the percentage has been set to 20 per cent, with a tolerance rate of 5 per cent for items held in stock, to take into consideration possible variance in the operational demand of equipment. In addition, the Committee was informed that, in accordance with budget guidelines for field technology operations issued by the Office of Information and

⁸ The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that actual allocations of vehicles and information technology equipment would be regularly reviewed and aligned with the standard ratios, and that specific justification for higher allocations by missions would be provided in the context of his future budget submissions (A/74/7/Add.1, para. 39).

⁹ United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, UNITAD, UNIOGBIS, United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and BINUH.

¹⁰ Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, UNITAD, UNIOGBIS, UNSOM, UNSMIL, United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, UNMHA and BINUH.

Communications Technology concerning consumable spare parts, maintaining approximately 4 per cent of the overall holdings is the recommended practice.

42. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee received information on the proposed resources for the procurement of computing devices for 2021 covered by the standard allocation ratios (see table 6).

Table 6

Resources for procurement of computing devices for 2021 covered by the standard allocation ratios

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Cluster I	
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus	6 900
Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide	1 544
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	28 000
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	23 000
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi	17 500
Subtotal, cluster I	76 944
Cluster II	
Support to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction	21 000
Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate	1 800
UNITAD	4 500
Subtotal, cluster II	27 300
Cluster III	
UNOWAS	12 641
United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia	3 000
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon	12 300
UNSMIL	39 120
United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia	296 800
Subtotal, cluster III	363 861
UNAMA	264 000
UNAMI	6 525
Subtotal, UNAMA and UNAMI	270 525
Total	738 630

43. The Advisory Committee trusts that, as requested by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General will continue to ensure that actual allocations of vehicles and information technology equipment will be regularly reviewed and aligned with the standard ratios, and that specific justification for higher allocations by missions will be provided in the context of future budget submissions (resolution [74/263](#), sect. XVIII, para. 12; see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 39).

Medical services

44. The proposed provision of \$11,317,200 for 2021 for medical services represents an increase of \$2,028,700 (or 22 per cent) compared with the approved resources of \$9,288,500 for 2020. The proposed increase is mainly attributable to increased requirements in an amount of \$2,234,400 for UNMHA, offset in part by decreases in a number of missions. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on resources approved for 2020 and proposed for 2021 by mission (see table 7).

Table 7

Medical services for 2020 and 2021

	<i>Number of medical-related positions</i>		<i>Other medical-related resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>			<i>Remarks</i>
	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Jan.–Sept. 2020 expenditure</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	–	–	–	9.8	5.1	Paramedics and trauma bags.
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa	–	–	3.3	3.1	3.3	Contribution to medical services provided by the Health Centre Clinic in Addis Ababa.
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region	–	–	8.6	21.3	19.3	Contribution to medical services provided by the United Nations Office at Nairobi.
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	1	1	143.0	70.5	210.5	Acquisition of trauma bags and individual first aid kits; aeromedical evacuations, specialist consultations, lab test, X-ray, hospitalization and mortuary services; cost share of the United Nations medical clinic operated by the United Nations Development Programme; medical supplies, including vaccines and medical drugs.
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi	–	–	56.9	43.8	48.6	Medical services provided by commercial vendor or through a cost-sharing arrangement with United Nations entities.
Subtotal	1	1	211.8	148.5	286.8	
Panel of Experts on Yemen	–	–	8.0	–	8.0	
United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant	1	1	157.6	19.1	242.6	The post is embedded in UNAMI, which provided mission support to UNITAD pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2379 (2017) and 2470 (2019) . Non-post resources cover medical evacuations and medical services in external facilities.
Subtotal	1	1	165.6	19.1	250.6	

	<i>Number of medical-related positions</i>		<i>Other medical-related resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>			<i>Remarks</i>
	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Jan.–Sept. 2020 expenditure</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	
United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau	4 (1 P-4, 1 FS, 2 UNV)	2 (1 P-4, 1 FS)	179.8	96.5	38.9	The resource requirement for 2021 is for 2 months of liquidation period, compared with 12 months in 2020.
United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia	UNSOM receives medical support services provided by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia		1 637.1	906.7	1 483.8	The reduction for 2021 is attributable mainly to lower requirements for medical supplies owing to projected availability of stocks from 2020.
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon	–	–	4.0	6.8	6.8	The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon receives medical services from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, based on a memorandum of understanding.
United Nations Support Mission in Libya	5	5	414.0	248.9	288.6	Reduction owing to lower number of projected aeromedical evacuations based on recent experience.
United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia	2 staff (1 NPO and 1 LL)	2 staff (1 NPO and 1 LL)	392.2	368.4	479.3	Additional requirements are related to the deployment of paramedics through a third party provided to reinforce medical coverage in the remote subregional offices.
United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement	1	1	5 570.1	1 956.3	7 804.5	Acquisition of trauma bags and individual first aid kits; forward surgical team with damage control surgery and aeromedical evacuation capabilities in Hudaydah and Djibouti; emergency medical services at level 2 hospital in Djibouti; cost share of United Nations medical clinic operated by the United Nations Development Programme; mortuary services owing to high-risk environment in Yemen; and medical supplies, including vaccines, blood and consumables.
United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti	5	5	276.0	119.5	183.5	Decrease is attributable mainly to a lower volume of acquisition of medical supplies owing to stocks transferred from the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti.
Subtotal	17	15	8 473.2	3 703.1	10 285.4	

	<i>Number of medical-related positions</i>		<i>Other medical-related resources (thousands of United States dollars)</i>			<i>Remarks</i>
	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	<i>Approved 2020</i>	<i>Jan.–Sept. 2020 expenditure</i>	<i>Proposed 2021</i>	
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan	22	21	227.1	199.2	214.4	Approximately the same provision has been requested in 2021 as compared with 2020, with a minor reduction for medical equipment.
United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq	13	13	210.9	517.0	280.0	Increased requirement owing to the need to replace ageing medical equipment.
Subtotal	35	34	438.0	716.2	494.4	
Total	54	51	9 288.5	4 586.9	11 317.2	

Abbreviations: FS, Field Service; LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer; UNV, United Nations Volunteers.

45. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was also provided with additional information on types of medical services provided to special political missions and the related service providers. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide more information on the criteria for the selection of medical service providers to special political missions, and provide updated information on opportunities to national and international service providers, as appropriate, in the context of his next budget proposal.**

III. General observations and recommendations

Backstopping support to special political missions at Headquarters

46. Annex II to the main report of the Secretary-General contains information on the lead departments that would provide support to the special political missions in 2021, with information on the mandates of the missions. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs leads and provides substantive backstopping to 36 of the 39 special political missions. Information concerning the substantive and administrative support provided to the missions in 2020 and in 2021 is also provided in paragraph 68 of the report.

47. Consolidated information on backstopping support positions at Headquarters funded from special political mission budgets is presented in annex VIII to the main report of the Secretary-General, including positions approved for 2020 and proposed for 2021 for each department, with a summary of the proposed changes for 2021 (excluding UNITAMS). A total of 49 such positions are proposed for 2021, compared with the 48 positions approved for 2020, reflecting the proposed redeployment of one position of Legal Officer (P-4) within UNITAD from the field to Headquarters, as a backstopping position (see also [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), para. 69). The Advisory Committee discussed the proposed redeployment of the position of Legal Officer (P-4) within UNITAD from the field to Headquarters in its related report ([A/75/7/Add.4](#), para. 13).

48. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the differences in mandates, size, operational requirements and staffing composition of special political missions make every mission a unique case with regard to backstopping capacity. It was indicated to the Committee that best judgment is applied as to which missions are significantly large and complex enough to be able to support a backstopping

position. Such a position is designated to serve the mission that bears its costs first and foremost, but it also provides support to other missions that do not have the funds for backstopping positions in their budget. **The Advisory Committee reiterates its expectation that consolidated information on backstopping positions at Headquarters will continue to be provided in future budget submissions. The Committee continues to believe that the existing backstopping positions at Headquarters should be reviewed annually in order to realign the capacities when changes in the mandates of the missions occur (A/74/7/Add.1, para. 44).**

Nationalization of positions

49. The Advisory Committee has noted the decreasing number of positions nationalized in recent years by the special political missions (compared with 12 for 2016, 1 for 2017, 2 for 2018 and 5 for 2019) (see also A/74/7/Add.1, paras. 47–49). The Committee also notes that, while a total of seven positions were proposed for nationalization for 2020, it is proposed that four positions be nationalized for 2021 in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, UNMHA and UNAMI (A/75/6 (Sect. 3)/Add.1, para. 50; see also A/75/7/Add.7, para. 13).

50. The Advisory Committee requested an update on the number of positions that had been nationalized since 2016 and proposed for 2021 (see table 8). The Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that in terms of United Nations Volunteers, three missions had national United Nations Volunteer positions. A comparison of the costs of international and national United Nations Volunteer positions in those missions is provided in table 9.

Table 8
Number of nationalized positions, 2016 to 2021

Budget year	Mission	Number of positions	Details of positions
2016	UNIOGBIS	1	Gender Police Officer (P-3) to Security Sector Reform Officer (NPO)
	UNSMIL	7	1 P-3 to NPO (Human Resources Officer); 6 FS to LL (2 Human Resources Assistant, 1 Travel Officer, 1 Finance Officer, 1 Finance Assistant and 1 Procurement Officer)
	UNAMI	4	2 FS (Security Officer) to 1 NPO (Security Officer) and 1 LL (Security Assistant); 1 P-3 to NPO (Procurement Officer); and 1 FS to NPO (Air Operations Officer)
2017	UNAMI	1	FS to LL (Travel Assistant)
2018	UNSMIL	1	FS to LL (Mail Assistant)
	UNAMA	–	Badakhshan (Faizabad) office: abolishment of 5 international positions, redeployment of the remaining international position to the Elections Support Office and establishment of 1 position of Political Affairs Officer (NPO) to serve as Head of Office
	UNAMI	1	Security Officer (FS) to Research Analysis Officer (NPO)
2019	UNSMIL	1	FS to NPO (Assistant Political Affairs Officer)
	United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia	1	Air Operations Assistant (FS) to Air Operations Officer (NPO)
	UNAMI	3	FS to LL (Administrative Assistant, Telecommunications Assistant and Information Technology Assistant)
2020	UNAMI	7	1 P-3 to NPO (Information Analyst); 6 FS to LL (5 Security Assistant and 1 Supply Assistant)

<i>Budget year</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Number of positions</i>	<i>Details of positions</i>
2021 ^a	Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen	1	P-3 to NPO (Medical Officer)
	Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon	1	P-2 to NPO (Associate Political Affairs Officer)
	UNMHA	1	Engineering Technician (FS) to Associate Engineer (NPO)
	UNAMI	1	Movement Control Assistant (FS) to Movement Control Officer (NPO)

Abbreviations: FS, Field Service; LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer.

^a Positions proposed for conversion.

Table 9

Costs of international and national United Nations Volunteer positions in special political missions

<i>Mission</i>	<i>International United Nations Volunteers</i>		<i>National United Nations Volunteers</i>	
	<i>Number of positions</i>	<i>Unit cost (US dollars)</i>	<i>Number of positions</i>	<i>Unit cost (US dollars)</i>
United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia	109	43 500	22	20 500
UNAMA	68	68 894	30 ^a	12 087
UNAMI	–	72 504	2	32 774

^a UNAMA implemented a project, funded from extrabudgetary resources, for 30 national female United Nations Youth Volunteers who, in addition to performing junior-level roles in areas where the Mission can benefit from their knowledge of the communities that they represent, also contribute to improving the national staff gender balance.

51. The Secretary-General indicates that, in addition to the nationalization of positions proposed by other missions, for UNOWAS and UNOCA, which have expanded mandates, the proposals for the establishment of additional positions in 2021 include National Professional Officer and Local level positions (see [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), annex I). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that recruitment to fill national staff positions and the seeking of additional opportunities to nationalize international positions have been a priority for the special political missions, although some challenges remain, namely: (a) sourcing qualified and experienced candidates remains challenging in some locations; (b) the security environment could present difficulties with regard to the hiring of national staff; and (c) the implementation of mandates in some missions requires a balanced composition of staff, thus limiting opportunities for nationalization. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that the empowerment of national staff could also be implemented through the abolishment of international positions and by having national staff take on functions of progressively greater responsibility, such as in the 10 field offices in UNAMA, where national staff have taken on more management responsibilities from international staff. Moreover, the Committee was informed that the special political missions are committed to building national staff capacity through training and career support as steps towards the nationalization of positions.

52. The Advisory Committee recalls that the Secretary-General indicated that workforce planning guidelines on nationalization in peace operations were developed and promulgated to missions in February 2018 (see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 48). **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide detailed information on the development of mission-specific planning for national staff**

capacity development, including the nationalization of positions, for different phases of mission deployment, in the context of his next budget proposal for special political missions. The Committee also discussed the matter in its related reports on special political missions under thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI ([A/75/7/Add.3–7](#)).

53. The Advisory Committee recalls that, further to its resolutions [61/276](#) and [66/264](#), the General Assembly, in its resolution [74/263](#), requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to promote the nationalization of positions, whenever appropriate, as well as to build local capacity within the special political missions and to report thereon in the context of future budget submissions (resolution [74/263](#), sect. XVIII, para. 9).

Support services provided by the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, the Kuwait Joint Support Office and other entities

54. The Advisory Committee has discussed the provision of support services to the special political missions by the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe and the Kuwait Joint Support Office over the years (see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 51; and [A/73/498](#), paras. 49–55). Related information is provided in the main report of the Secretary-General on the estimates in respect of special political missions ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), paras. 40–47).

55. The Advisory Committee recalls that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/279](#) A, the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe has expanded its full-service coverage to all special political missions based in Africa pending the approval and implementation of a global service delivery model (see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 15). **The Advisory Committee reiterates that the Kuwait Joint Support Office is not a shared service centre approved by the General Assembly. Furthermore, in accordance with Assembly resolution [70/248](#) A, any changes to the existing and future service delivery model must be approved by the Assembly (see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 51; [A/73/498](#), paras. 54 and 55; [A/72/7/Add.10](#), paras. 56 and 58; and [A/71/595](#), para. 55).**

56. With regard to support services provided by other entities to special political missions, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that while there is no prescribed mission support concept for special political missions, the size and/or limited capacity of many missions necessitates the provision of administrative or other support services by another Secretariat entity. The Department of Operational Support is mandated to facilitate support for operations across all entities within the global Secretariat, including special political missions. In most steady-state situations, however, the Secretariat looks to leverage the existing framework of service providers across the Secretariat, including the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, the Kuwait Joint Support Office, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Geneva, or a field mission or a regional commission with substantial capacities of its own that is located in close proximity. The United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, is also called on to provide its expertise and available stocks, on a cost-recoverable basis, during the start-up of a special political mission. At times, the Secretariat also enters into service arrangements, usually on a cost-reimbursement basis, with other entities of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme.

57. In terms of support provided for information and communications technology (ICT), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that special political missions receive support services that include, either in full or in part, the procurement and/or rental of ICT equipment and spare parts, the maintenance of ICT equipment and the purchase of software and licences, network services, telephones and mobile phones. Communications and information technology support and

services are provided by: (a) the Office of Information and Communications Technology for missions based in New York; (b) the United Nations Logistic Base at Brindisi for missions that include the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, UNOWAS, UNIOGBIS, the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, UNOCA, UNSMIL and UNMHA; (c) the United Nations Office to the African Union for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa; (d) the United Nations Office at Geneva for the United Nations Representative to the Geneva International Discussions; (e) the United Nations Office at Nairobi for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region; and (f) the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar. In addition, the Committee was informed that missions also utilize the existing systems contracts established by the Procurement Division at Headquarters for their respective maintenance of ICT equipment, provision of ICT spare parts and purchase of software licences, capitalizing on the economies of scale.

58. It was also indicated to the Advisory Committee that the provision of support services to the missions helps to realize the benefits of the Secretary-General's delegation of authority to a location in close proximity to operational decision-making. The Committee notes from the main report of the Secretary-General that given the timeline for the submission of the budget proposals for 2021, the information concerning the self-evaluation on the implementation of the delegation of authority by the special political missions will be provided in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2022 (see [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), annex I; see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 46). The Committee discussed the matter relating to the new system of the delegation of authority in its report on the review of progress in the implementation of the management reform ([A/75/538](#), paras. 5 and 11–14). **The Advisory Committee looks forward to receiving information on the self-evaluation on the implementation of the delegation of authority by the special political missions.**

Gender balance and equitable geographical representation

59. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on gender representation with regard to international staff in special political missions (see table 10). The Committee also notes from the information it received in its review of clusters and missions that the percentages of female staff remain low for some missions. For example, in the case of UNAMI, while gradual progress was made in improving the percentage of female staff in the professional and higher categories (from 25 per cent in 2017 to 37 per cent in 2020), the percentage of female staff who are at the Field Service, National Professional Officer and Local level has hovered around or below 20 per cent, with little improvement in recent years. For UNAMA, the overall percentage of female staff improved from 13 to 17 per cent between 2017 and 2019; however, no progress has been made during 2020 owing to limited opportunities as a result of the temporary suspension of hiring. Lower numbers of female staff are also reflected in UNSMIL (20 per cent), UNMHA (22 per cent) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (22 per cent). For the expert panels under cluster II, the Committee notes that from 2016 to 2020, while the total number of female experts increased slightly, it is still low. The Committee was also provided with information on geographic representation with regard to international positions in the special political missions (see table 11). The Committee was also informed that information on the gender and geographical representation of each Secretariat entity is presented in the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly entitled "Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics". The latest version of that report, to be submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, is scheduled to be published in November 2020.

Table 10

Gender representation in all international positions in special political missions, September 2020

<i>Staff category</i>	<i>Female</i>		<i>Male</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Professional and higher	343	41	503	59
Field Service	171	27	463	73
Total	514	35	966	65

Table 11

Geographical representation in all international positions in special political missions, September 2020

<i>Staff category</i>	<i>African</i>		<i>Asia-Pacific</i>		<i>Eastern European</i>		<i>Latin American and Caribbean</i>		<i>Western European and other States</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Professional and higher	197	23	140	17	61	7	55	7	393	46
Field Service	159	25	207	33	116	18	45	7	107	17
Total	356	24	347	23	177	12	100	7	500	34

60. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to make stronger efforts to improve gender balance and geographical representation in special political missions.** In its first report on the proposed programme budget for 2021, the Committee discussed the matters on gender balance and geographical representation in the Secretariat. The comments and recommendations of the Committee contained therein, as policy matters, also apply to the special political missions in chapter I ([A/75/7](#), chap. I, paras. 50–55). The Committee will further discuss matters on gender balance and geographical representation in the context of its review of the forthcoming annual report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics, as well as the biennial report on the overview of human resources management of the Organization.

Support provided by host countries

61. In paragraph 74 of his report, the Secretary-General indicates that annex IX to that report contains information on support provided free of charge by the host country to special political missions, as requested by the Advisory Committee in its previous report ([A/71/595](#), para. 47). **The Advisory Committee notes with appreciation the contributions to the special political missions by the host countries.**

Other matters*Planning assumptions*

62. The Advisory Committee has commented on the apparent contradiction in the description of the planning assumptions presented for two missions operational in one country (see also [A/74/7/Add.1](#), para. 52). The Committee continues to note such differences in the planning assumptions for two missions operational in the same country (see also [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.2](#), para. 98; and [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.4](#), para. 176). **The Advisory Committee trusts that the missions will refine the**

formulation of the planning assumptions to ensure more consistency in the reflection of their operational environment.

Cost-sharing arrangements

63. In section XVIII of its resolution [74/263](#), the General Assembly recalled paragraph 41 of the report of the Advisory Committee ([A/74/7/Add.1](#)),¹¹ and encouraged the Secretary-General to ensure that the cost-sharing arrangements would be enhanced, with a view to maximizing efficiency. The Secretary-General indicates that the missions continue to review their cost-sharing arrangements, explore new opportunities for cost-reduction through cost-sharing and continually update the arrangements with a view to maximizing efficiency (see [A/75/6 \(Sect. 3\)/Add.1](#), annex I). **The Advisory Committee trusts that information on cost-sharing arrangements will continue to be reviewed and reported for those missions involved in future budget proposals.**

IV. Conclusion

64. As indicated in paragraph 6 above, the total resource requirements of the 39 special political missions (excluding UNITAMS) are included within the overall resource level proposed by the Secretary-General for the proposed programme budget for 2021. **The Advisory Committee therefore notes that its recommendation in paragraph 13 above and those pertaining to the budget proposals for 2021 for the individual missions under thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI, which are presented in separate related reports ([A/75/7/Add.3-7](#)), would require adjustments to the overall resource level proposed by the Secretary-General for the proposed programme budget for 2021 (see [A/75/6 \(Introduction\)](#)).**

¹¹ The Advisory Committee welcomed the cooperation among the special political missions and with the United Nations entities as a means to avoid duplication and maximize organizational efficiency. The Committee trusts that the cost-sharing arrangements in place will be enhanced with a view to maximizing efficient resource use and cost transparency.