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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 for the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2020/21	\$37,159,200
Expenditure for 2020/21	\$36,284,500
Unencumbered balance for 2020/21	\$874,700
Appropriation for 2021/22	\$40,272,300
Projected expenditure for 2021/22 ^a	\$39,446,200
Projected underexpenditure for 2021/22 ^a	(\$826,100)
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2022/23	\$43,185,600
Adjustment recommended by the Advisory Committee for 2022/23	(\$63,400)
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2022/23	\$43,122,200

^a Estimates as at 31 March 2022.



I. Introduction

1. During its consideration of the financing of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda ([A/76/548](#) and [A/76/685](#)), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions met online with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 24 March 2022. The observations and recommendations of the Committee on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations are contained in its report ([A/76/760](#)), and those pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 are presented in its related report ([A/76/735](#)).

II. Budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

2. By its resolution [74/281](#) and its decision 74/571, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of \$37,159,200 gross (\$33,629,000 net) for the maintenance of the Regional Service Centre for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. Expenditure for the period totalled \$36,284,500 gross (\$32,574,100 net), for a budget implementation rate of approximately 98 per cent. The unencumbered balance of \$874,700 represents 2.4 per cent of the total level of resources and reflects lower-than-budgeted expenditure under civilian personnel (\$231,300, or 0.8 per cent) and under operational costs (\$643,400, or 9.0 per cent). A detailed analysis of variances is provided in section IV of the report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the Regional Service Centre for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 ([A/76/548](#)).

3. The Advisory Committee was informed that unliquidated obligations decreased from \$1,912,900 in 2019/20 to \$800,600 in 2020/21 and, as at 30 June 2021, amounted to \$124,900 for civilian personnel and \$675,700 for operational costs. No funds were redeployed across groups during 2020/21 (*ibid.*, para. 40).

III. Information on performance for the current period

4. With regard to current and projected expenditure for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that, as at 31 March 2022, expenditure amounted to \$29,098,000 (gross). At the end of the current period, the estimated total expenditure would amount to \$39,446,200 (gross), for a budget implementation rate of 97.9 per cent of an appropriation of \$40,272,300.

5. The Advisory Committee was informed that the cash position of the Regional Service Centre was \$15,428,000 as at 14 February 2022, which was sufficient to cover the three-month operating cash reserve of \$10,068,000.

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

A. Mandate and planning assumptions

6. The Regional Service Centre in Entebbe was established in July 2010, following the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution [64/269](#), as a shared service centre for missions in the region under the global field support strategy. In its

resolution [75/294](#), the Assembly approved the budget of the Centre for the 2021/22 period and decided to consider at its seventy-sixth session the question of the financing of the Centre to be charged against the 17 client entities (7 peacekeeping missions, 9 political missions and the United Nations Office to the African Union) that the Centre supports. In addition, the Centre will carry out residual liquidation functions for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi. The Centre will also provide administrative services to a few non-mission client entities, such as the Mine Action Service, the Regional Ombudsman and Mediation Office and the Office of Internal Oversight Services in Entebbe. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the commission of inquiry on the situation in Ethiopia had reached out to the Centre to express interest in accommodation and other services and that related discussions were underway. The planning assumptions and mission support initiatives, as well as the services provided, are provided in detail in section I.B of the proposed budget report ([A/76/685](#)).

Scalability model

7. Detailed information on the scalability model of the Regional Service Centre is provided in the proposed budget (*ibid.*, paras. 34–46). It is indicated that the Centre has developed a revised scalability model that will continue to serve as the basis for budget formulation in 2022/23. It is also indicated that the model was built using a zero-based staffing concept and that it is focused on the transactional elements, which include onboarding and separation, international benefits and payroll, national benefits and payroll, uniformed personnel, travel, claims and education grant services, cashier services, vendor services, internal control and accounts.

8. Regarding recent transactional data, it is indicated in the report that outliers have recently occurred, owing to the dual impact of temporary mission-related surges and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and that those imbalances have been mitigated through a weighted approach for the calculation of transactional volume data, as follows: a 50 per cent weight for 2018/19, a 30 per cent weight for 2019/20 and a 20 per cent weight for 2020/21. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that using a weighted average approach to calculate the baseline transactional data serves to take into consideration the pandemic impact on transactional volumes and the transactional surges over the past three years, whereby more weight is assigned to pre-pandemic data in order to align the upward transaction volume projections. The Committee was also informed that the weighted average approach had not been used prior to the 2022/23 period but would continue to be used in future years in order to minimize the risk of outlier transaction data occurring. In addition, administrative services provided to tenants are customized to the needs of the entity, and the projected reduction by 8.8 per cent of the client population served would result in an overall decrease of 19 posts in the requirements at the Centre for 2022/2023 (see para. 18 below). The Committee was furthermore informed that the aforementioned fluctuations in the 2019/20 volumes had resulted from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and that transaction volumes for 2018/19 were therefore used as a baseline for the scalability model calculations for 2021/22 in order to provide reliable data for a full-year cycle. As the Centre continued to be significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21, it was determined that using the transaction data for that year alone as a baseline to arrive at the staffing requirements would result in a skewed approach, leading to a risk of having inadequate resources in 2022/23. The Committee was informed that annual changes would occur regularly as a result of seasonal activities, other transactions and changes in the Centre's client base.

9. Regarding training as part of the scalability model assumptions, the Secretary-General indicates that a total of 10 days for professional development have been included in the calculation, comprising 5 days as mandated in [ST/SGB/2009/9](#) and 5 days of additional training (*ibid.*, paras. 17 and 43). **The Advisory Committee recognizes the importance of staff training to address the professional development needs of staff members and supports the Organization in fulfilling its mandates and notes that, in accordance with the Secretariat's learning and development policy ([ST/SGB/2009/9](#), para. 2.2), staff members are expected to complete a minimum of five days of mandatory training annually. The Committee considers that the scalability model should track more closely to the expectations and standards specified in the Secretariat's policy and therefore provide for an estimated five days for learning and development opportunities per staff member per year.**

10. The Advisory Committee acknowledges the benefit of the Regional Service Centre's scalability model in identifying the level of resource requirements to perform transactional functions, as well as the need for a weighted approach to measure transactional data to take into account the dual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary mission-related surges. The Committee looks forward to receiving an update, in the next budget reports, on measures taken to reduce or eliminate the need for a weighted approach, in particular as the model factors in known peak periods of work, as well as on Regional Service Centre client entities' gradual transition to a post-pandemic "next normal". The Committee recalls its observations and recommendations regarding the scalability model in its previous reports on the Regional Service Centre (most recently, for example, [A/75/822/Add.9](#), paras. 8–11). Taking into account its observations in the present report, the Committee considers that the model can be refined and stabilized and looks forward to its continued application in future budget reports.

Regional Centre support initiatives

11. Information on the support initiatives of the Regional Service Centre is provided in the report of the Secretary-General ([A/76/685](#), paras. 8–9) and includes the following:

(a) *Robotic process automation in telephone and billing*: provision of consistent, high-level service delivery of regional telephone billing services for 10 client missions and the Centre, by processing approximately 83,211 telephone bills (see also *ibid.*, para. 60 (expected accomplishment 11.1)). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, after the successful implementation of automated telephone billing services in 2021/22, the Centre was analysing the possible use of automating the payroll reports, bank reconciliations and accounts receivable in the Financial Services and Compliance Monitoring Section. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the efforts to automate processes as much as possible and looks forward to further information on progress made and lessons learned, including the related efficiency gains, in future budget reports (see also [A/75/822/Add.9](#), para. 33);**

(b) *Fostering a culture of multilingualism*: expansion to include a combination of web-based, virtual and face-to-face language classes to allow improved service delivery through communication with clients in various United Nations official languages, including English, French and Arabic. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Centre had participated in piloting a language demand and language skills tool based on the United Nations Language Framework. A total of 331 staff members had responded to a self-assessment exercise of language skills, indicating that all respondents (100 per cent) were proficient in English,

53 respondents (16 per cent) were proficient in French and 4 respondents (1.2 per cent) were proficient in Arabic, at various competency levels. **The Advisory Committee recalls that, in its resolutions 75/252, 73/346 and 71/263, the General Assembly emphasized the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations and the importance of multilingualism in the activities of the United Nations. The Committee notes the Centre's efforts to expand the linguistic proficiency of its staff and trusts that, with a view to improving client service and addressing clients' needs, the Centre will redouble its efforts to ensure that more of its staff are proficient in Arabic and French and able to support Arabic and French-speaking clients, and provide updates thereon in future budget reports;**

(c) *Training for regional clients and the Secretariat:* the Regional Training and Conference Centre reopened fully in 2021/22, adhering to COVID-19 protocols. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Centre had hosted 1,268 guests and that 1,239 had participated in in-person training between 23 September 2021 and the end of February 2022. The Committee was also informed that, as the Regional Training and Conference Centre provides only logistical support for the events hosted, assessments and decisions on the mode of delivery remain at the discretion of the substantive organizers of the trainings or events. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic should be applied further and reiterates that greater 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;**

(d) *Client satisfaction level for services provided:* the Centre's most recent annual client satisfaction surveys, conducted in 2020/21 and 2021/22, showed that, during both periods, 75 per cent of clients were satisfied with the services provided and that, for 2022/23, the Centre expects the same level of customer satisfaction. Specific client satisfaction surveys for the services provided by the Regional Field Technology Service, showed that in 2020/21, 93.12 per cent of clients were satisfied with the services provided and, in 2021/22, 80 per cent were satisfied, while for 2022/23, 80 per cent was also expected (A/76/685, paras. 58 (indicator of achievement 9.1.2) and 60 (indicator of achievement 11.4.1)). **The Advisory Committee trusts that, as the overall client satisfaction has remained and is expected to remain at 75 per cent, the Centre will take steps to identify reasons for the stagnant client satisfaction level and to address any deficiencies, in order to increase client satisfaction. The Committee looks forward to detailed information thereon in the next budget report.**

B. Resource requirements

Financial resources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category	Appropriation (2020/21)	Expenditure (2020/21)	Apportionment (2021/22)	Expenditure 31 March 2022	Cost estimates (2022/23)	Variance	
						Amount	Percentage
Civilian personnel	29 983.0	29 751.7	33 049.1	24 315.2	36 341.5	3 291.6	10.0
Operational costs	7 176.2	6 532.8	7 222.8	4 782.8	6 844.5	(378.3)	(5.2)
Gross requirements	37 159.2	36 284.5	40 272.3	29 098.0	43 185.6	2 913.3	7.2

12. The proposed budget in the amount of \$43,185,600 (gross) represents an increase of \$2,913,300 or 7.2 per cent, compared with the apportionment of \$40,272,300 for the 2021/22 period. Information on variances between the apportionment for 2021/22 and the proposed resources for 2022/23 is contained in section III of the proposed budget (*ibid.*).

1. Civilian personnel

<i>Category</i>	<i>Approved 2021/22</i>	<i>Encumbered as at 31 March 2022</i>	<i>Proposed 2022/23</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Posts				
International staff	137	121	133	(4)
National staff	280	239	265	(15)
United Nations Volunteers	7	7	7	–
Total	424	367	405	(19)

Recommendations on posts and positions

13. The proposed resources for civilian personnel for 2022/23 amount to \$36,341,100, reflecting an increase of 10 per cent compared with the apportionment for 2021/22. The increase is the net effect of: (a) a reduced vacancy rate for international staff, from 11 per cent in 2021/22 to 8 per cent in 2022/23; (b) updated salary rates for international staff and an increase in the common staff costs from 89.5 per cent in 2021/22 to 92.4 per cent in 2022/23; (c) the application of a higher step for National Professional Officers to reflect the actual average staff step; (d) an increase in the requirement for common staff costs from 32 per cent to 36 per cent for national staff based on historical trends; (e) the abolishment of 19 posts (2 international and 17 national staff posts); and (f) the nationalization of 2 Field Service posts (*ibid.*, para. 48).

14. A total of 405 civilian posts and positions are proposed for 2022/23, comprising 133 international posts, 265 national posts and 7 United Nations Volunteers, compared with 424 approved posts and positions for 2021/22. Details on the staffing proposals are provided in section I.F of the report of the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee notes that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) does not have plans to reduce its staffing or footprint in Entebbe in 2022/23 and would continue to manage the Entebbe Support Base ([A/76/760/Add.4](#), paras. 16 and 39–40; and paras. 28–31 below).

Conversion

15. Information on the proposed conversion of two posts of Finance Assistant (Field Service) to two posts of Assistant Finance Officer (National Professional Officer) in the Financial Services and Compliance Monitoring Section is provided in the proposed budget ([A/76/685](#), paras. 79–80 and table 14). **The Advisory Committee reiterates the importance of building national capacity and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to present further proposals to nationalize posts and positions in the next budget submission, as operationally feasible (see also [A/75/822](#), para. 45; and para. 22 below).**

Redeployment

16. The report of the Secretary-General proposes seven redeployments, in line with the scalability model, which would not result in a net gain or loss for the Centre against the current authorized staffing levels, as follows:

(a) *From Executive Direction and Management*: five redeployments, comprising one post of Programme Management Officer (P-3) from the Client Relations and Knowledge Management Unit to the Office of the Director; one post of Administrative Assistant (Field Service) from the Communications Unit to the Client Relations and Knowledge Management Unit; and three posts to the Systems, Quality Assurance and Performance Reporting Unit: one post of Human Resources Officer (National Professional Officer) from the international benefits and payroll service line, one post of Finance Assistant (national General Service) from the claims service line and one post of Human Resources Assistant (national General Service) from the education grant service line (A/76/685, para. 67 and table 6). Regarding the redeployment of the aforementioned three posts to the Systems, Quality Assurance and Performance Reporting Unit, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that their Umoja tier 2b support functions would serve to strengthen internal controls, by separating the reporting lines of the staff who performed the day-to-day transactions from those who oversaw the corrective actions and quality assurance aspects of the service line;

(b) *From the Benefits and Payroll Section*: one post of Human Resources Officer (National Professional Officer) to the Systems, Quality Assurance and Performance Reporting Unit to provide Umoja tier 2b support functions (ibid., para. 72 and table 8);

(c) *From the Travel, Grants and Education Grant Section*: one post of Finance Assistant (national General Service) and one post of Human Resources Assistant (national General Service) to the Systems, Quality Assurance and Performance Reporting Unit in the Office of the Deputy Director to provide Umoja tier 2b support functions (ibid., para. 75 and table 10);

(d) *From the Client Services Section*: one post of Administrative Assistant (Field Service) from the Communications Unit in the Office of the Director to the Client Relations and Knowledge Management Unit, to increase the capacity of the Section to implement its mandate, and one post of Programme Management Officer (P-3) from the Client Relations and Knowledge Management Unit to the Office of the Director, to provide oversight on the projects and programmes undertaken by the Centre (ibid., para. 77 and table 12).

Reassignment

17. In his report, the Secretary-General proposes 10 reassignments and 2 reassignments with simultaneous redeployments, to which a 50 per cent vacancy rate would be applied, as follows:

(a) *From Executive Direction and Management*: 10 reassignments comprising one post of Human Resources Officer (National Professional Officer) as Public Information Officer and one post of Administrative Assistant (national General Service) as Communications Assistant in the Communications Unit; one post of Finance Assistant (national General Service) as Data Analysis Assistant and one post of Human Resources Assistant (national General Service) as Information Management Assistant in the Systems, Quality Assurance and Performance Reporting Unit; one post of Team Assistant (national General Service) as Training Assistant in the Regional Training and Conference Centre; and one post of Finance Assistant (Field Service) as Information Management Assistant, three posts of Document

Management Assistant (national General Service) as Archives Assistant and one post of Finance Assistant as Archives Assistant in the Archives and Records Management Unit. Regarding the aforementioned reassignment as Communications Assistant (national General Service), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the function was required to create strategic communication products and multimedia communication content, as well as to undertake proactive engagement with internal and external audiences;

(b) *Reassignment and redeployment from Executive Direction and Management*: one post of Peacekeeping Training Officer (Field Service) in the Regional Training and Conference Centre, to be reassigned as Travel Officer and redeployed to the travel service line; and one post of Travel Assistant (national General Service) in the travel service line to be reassigned as Training Assistant and redeployed to the Regional Training and Conference Centre (ibid., paras. 68–69 and 75 and tables 6 and 10).

Abolishments

18. It is proposed that 19 posts be abolished, in line with the scalability model, as a result of the projected reduction in transaction volumes following the closures of UNAMID, UNIOGBIS, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi and the Office of the United Nations Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator (ibid., para. 27), as follows:

(a) *Benefits and Payroll Section*: abolishment of seven posts, comprising six posts of Human Resources Assistant (national General Service) and one post of Associate Finance Officer (P-2) (ibid., para. 72 and table 8);

(b) *Travel, Claims and Education Grant Section*: abolishment of eight posts, comprising four posts of Human Resource Assistants (national General Service), one post of Travel Assistant (national General Service) and three posts of Finance Assistants (national General Service) (ibid., para. 74 and table 10);

(c) *Financial Services and Compliance Monitoring Section*: abolishment of four posts, comprising two posts of Finance Assistants (national General Service), one post of Finance Officer (P-3) and one post of Travel Assistant (national General Service) (ibid., para. 79 and table 14).

Vacancy rates

19. The table below provides a summary of the vacancy rates for civilian personnel experienced for 2020/21 and 2021/22, as well as those proposed for 2022/23. The Advisory Committee notes the lack of justification for the application of rates that differ from the actual vacancy rates experienced during the current period, as at 31 March 2022, as follows: (a) a vacancy rate of 8.0 per cent is proposed for international staff, when the actual average is 12.1 per cent and the actual rate is 11.7 per cent; and (b) a vacancy rate of 8.0 per cent is proposed for national staff, when the actual average rate is 11.7 per cent and the actual rate is 11.1 per cent for national Professional Officers and the actual average rate is 14.5 per cent and the actual rate is 15.2 per cent for national General Service staff.

Vacancy rates

(Percentage)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Approved 2020/21</i>	<i>Actual 2020/21</i>	<i>Budgeted 2021/22</i>	<i>Actual average 31 March 2022</i>	<i>Actual as at 31 March 2022</i>	<i>Proposed 2022/23</i>
Civilian personnel						
International staff	11.0	14.2	11.0	12.1	11.7	8.0
National staff						
National Professional Officers	8.0	18.2	8.0	11.7	11.1	8.0
National General Service staff	8.0	13.0	8.0	14.5	15.2	8.0
United Nations Volunteers						
International staff	–	–	–	11.1	–	–
National staff	–	–	–	–	–	–

20. The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that proposed vacancy rates should be based, as much as possible, on actual rates. In cases where the proposed rates differ from the actual rates, a clear justification should be provided in the proposed budget and related documents.

Vacant posts

21. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 23 March 2022, 48 posts were vacant, that no posts had been vacant for two years or longer and that the posts proposed for abolishment were vacant.

22. Regarding the recent high turnover of staff at the Regional Service Centre (see also [A/76/548](#), paras. 42–44 (14.2 per cent); and [A/76/685](#), para. 30), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Centre had placed a focus on capacity-building, and staff members with substantive expertise had therefore been offered new opportunities with other entities, a trend that is expected to continue in 2022/23. The Centre continues to create candidate rosters, in order to expedite recruitment, and to fill vacant posts and positions in a timely manner. The Committee recalls that the higher vacancy rates were related, inter alia, to the prolonged national staff recruitment freeze at the Centre in relation to the global service delivery model in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Office of Human Resources, and that the freeze had been lifted at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic ([A/75/822/Add.9](#), para. 26).

23. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has reiterated its concern about the high number of vacancies in civilian staffing. The Committee trusts that an update on the recruitment status of vacant posts will be provided to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report and that the Secretary-General will ensure that vacant posts are filled expeditiously.

24. The Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for civilian personnel.

2. Operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category	Apportionment (2020/21)	Expenditures (2020/21)	Apportionment (2021/22)	Expenditures as at 31 March 2022	Cost estimates (2022/23)	Variance	
						Amount	Percentage
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(4)=(3)-(2)	(5)=(4)÷(2)
Operational costs							
Civilian electoral observers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Consultants and consulting services	131.8	—	2.4	—	100.0	97.6	4 066.7
Official travel	216.2	25.2	238.2	56.7	239.9	1.7	0.7
Facilities and infrastructure	2 309.7	2 412.9	2 169.7	1 039.4	2 269.1	99.4	4.6
Ground transportation	87.1	137.9	102.1	44.3	92.0	(10.1)	(9.9)
Air operations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marine operations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Communications and information technology	3 941.9	3 597.4	4 146.9	3 398.4	3 604.7	(542.2)	(13.1)
Medical	103.5	86.7	108.4	1.5	106.9	(1.5)	(1.4)
Special equipment	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other supplies, services and equipment	386.0	272.9	455.1	242.5	431.9	(23.2)	(5.1)
Quick-impact projects	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	7 176.2	6 532.8	7 222.8	4 782.8	6 844.5	(378.3)	(5.2)

25. The proposed increase for 2022/23 reflects the net effect of: (a) increases under consultants and consulting services, official travel and facilities and infrastructure; and (b) decreases under ground transportation, communications and information technology, medical and other supplies, services and equipment (see [A/76/685](#), sects. II and III).

26. The Advisory Committee is not fully convinced that the justifications provided support some of the requirements listed below and makes the following observations and recommendations:

(a) *Consultants and consulting services*: the proposed resources of \$100,000 reflect an increase of \$97,600 (4,066.7 per cent). As at 31 March 2022, no expenditures were incurred for 2021/22 against the apportionment of \$2,400. The apportionment for 2020/21 was \$131,800, and no expenditure was incurred. It is indicated that the proposed increased requirements are attributable to the low requirements of \$2,400 in 2021/22 and that the new requirement is for a consultant to train the staff on the new query management system to be rolled out in 2022/23. **Considering that no expenditures were incurred in 2020/21 or to date in 2021/22, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 20 per cent (\$19,500) to the increase in the proposed resources under consultants and consulting services;**

(b) *Official travel*: the proposed resources of \$239,900 reflect an increase of \$1,700 (0.7 per cent). As at 31 March 2022, total expenditure for 2021/22 amounted to \$56,700 against an apportionment of \$238,200. The apportionment for 2020/21 was \$216,200, with a total expenditure of \$25,200. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, while the Regional Service Centre has learned lessons and best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the conduct of training

in a manner that preserves the safety and protects the health of participants, the Centre provides only logistical support for the events themselves and that the decisions on the mode of delivery, whether in-person, virtual or hybrid, are at the discretion of the organizing entity. The Committee was also informed that the Centre had implemented physical distancing, temperature monitoring and frequent hand sanitizing protocols and had limited training sessions and events in size and scope in order to adhere to the guidelines of the World Health Organization. Furthermore, the Centre had enforced a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for all participants in physical attendance and had also strengthened its Internet connectivity in support of events in hybrid formats. **The Advisory Committee notes that the Centre has applied lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic when providing logistical support for events and reiterates that, as much as possible, organizing entities should make optimum use 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 further notes the Centre's emphasis on travel to visit client entities and the related possibility for the Centre to rely on mission air assets for inter-mission travel. The Committee therefore recommends a reduction of 10 per cent (\$24,000) to the proposed resources for official travel;**

(c) *Facilities and infrastructure*: the proposed resources of \$2,269,100 reflect an increase of \$99,400 (4.6 per cent). It is indicated that the higher requirements result from an increase in the Centre's share of MONUSCO common shared costs of 63 per cent in 2022/23, compared with 53.8 per cent in 2021/22, following a reduction in the Mission's footprint in Entebbe (see paras. 29–31 below), as well as higher fuel prices. The apportionment for 2020/21 was \$2,309,700, with a total expenditure of \$2,412,900. As at 31 March 2022, total expenditure for 2021/22 amounted to \$1,039,400 against an apportionment of \$2,169,700. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of charges to the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe for the common shared costs for the Entebbe Support Base, which show a trend in increased charges to the Base over the past three budget periods. **The Advisory Committee notes that the impact of the downsizing and transitioning of MONUSCO and its reduced presence in Entebbe (see also paras. 29–31 below) resulted in an increase in the Centre's portion of common shared costs. In view of the projected underexpenditure in 2021/22, the Committee recommends a reduction of 20 per cent (\$19,900) to the increase of the proposed resources under facilities and infrastructure.**

27. Subject to its recommendations in paragraph 26 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for operational costs.

V. Other matters

Downsizing of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

28. The Advisory Committee recalls that, owing to the scaling down of activities of MONUSCO, the Department of Operational Support had conducted a study to address the possibility of the liquidation and withdrawal of MONUSCO from Entebbe ([A/75/822/Add.9](#), para. 39). The Secretary-General indicates that the study was aimed at developing a comprehensive proposal on the future roles and responsibilities of several supply chain entities within the broader framework of the integrated supply chain management, including the Transportation and Movements Integrated Control Centre within the Regional Service Centre, which was restructured in 2021/22 into

the Forward Support and Deployment Hub (see [A/75/822/Add.6](#), paras. 40–42; and [A/75/822](#), paras. 73–74). Furthermore, with the Mission's reduced footprint in Entebbe, it was contemplated that surge capacity for the management of movement of personnel and cargo could be provided through the Forward Support and Deployment Hub. However, at the present time, MONUSCO continues to manage the Entebbe Support Base and does not have plans to further reduce its Entebbe staffing or footprint in 2022/23. It is also indicated that any future revised strategy for the operations of the Entebbe Base could include a new memorandum of understanding in the event of the liquidation and withdrawal of MONUSCO and would be considered, depending on the future mandate of the mission to be decided by the Security Council ([A/76/685](#), sect. V.A.).

29. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the management of the Entebbe Support Base by MONUSCO included support for: (a) MONUSCO, in its supply chain function; (b) logistics and security services for all tenants at the Support Base, including the Regional Service Centre; and (c) other regional missions with regard to troop rotation and the repatriation of human remains (see also [A/76/760/Add.4](#), para. 39). In addition, MONUSCO is utilizing satellite-based internet services that cover the entire Base, including the Centre, at lower costs, which has resulted in reduced requirements under communications and information technology for 2022/23 due to lower projected costs for internet connectivity services ([A/76/685](#), para. 49). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that MONUSCO would continue to lead the occupational and safety risk management activities at Entebbe. Regarding the aforementioned long-term impact of the anticipated downsizing and eventual exit of MONUSCO, including any plans for the Centre to enter into a new memorandum of understanding with the Government of Uganda, no strategic changes to the operations of the Support Base were currently foreseen, but any possible changes would be properly coordinated and planned with tenants and the host country and would be presented to Member States.

30. As discussed in further detail in [A/76/760/Add.4](#) (paras. 22–23), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that an assessment conducted by MONUSCO had concluded that a system should be put in place for the payment of rest and recuperation and that flights for that purpose would therefore be suspended, in view of the expansion and the introduction of international direct flights from the Goma airport, resulting in the discontinuation of flights from Entebbe. The Committee also notes that, as a result of the discontinuation of MONUSCO air operations in Entebbe, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan proposed the establishment of four posts (1 Field Service and 3 national General Service) in order to continue the provision of critical air operations (see [A/76/760/Add.7](#), para. 20 (e)).

31. The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to present, in the budget proposals for 2023/24, a full cost-benefit analysis for the move of MONUSCO air services from Entebbe, including the impact on missions in the region. Furthermore, the Committee considers that, as the downsizing and possible closure of MONUSCO would have an impact on the Regional Service Centre, there is a need to present a comprehensive overview of the estimated related operational and financial implications, including with regard to the repercussions on the Centre as a tenant of the MONUSCO Entebbe Support Base and legal issues related to the memorandum of understanding with the host country, in the next budget report. The Advisory Committee also discusses the withdrawal and transition of MONUSCO in its report on the financing of the Mission ([A/76/760/Add.4](#), paras. 35–40).

Gender representation

32. According to information provided to the Advisory Committee upon enquiry, as at 24 March 2022, a total of 358 staff members were on board, comprising 192 female staff (53.6 per cent) and 166 male staff (46.4 per cent). Within the various categories and levels, the gender representation was as follows: 1 female staff member (33 per cent) at the D-1 level and above; 15 female staff members (34 per cent) at the P-1 to P-5 level; 32 female staff members (44.4 per cent) in the Field Service category; 16 female staff members (48.4 per cent) at the national Professional Officer level; and 128 female staff members (62.1 per cent) at the national General Service level. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Regional Service Centre will pursue further efforts to enhance gender representation and that information thereon will be provided in future reports.** The Advisory Committee discusses gender representation in its related annual reports, most recently in its report entitled “Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics” (A/76/733), and further in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/76/760).

Lessons learned and impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic

33. Details regarding the lessons learned and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are provided in section II.B of the performance report (A/76/548). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with the methodology for the calculation of common staff costs, including education grants and the factors that contributed to the processing of 2019/20 education grant expenses in 2020/21 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee was also informed that the large volume of cases involving special leave with full pay was the result of the deferral of rest and recuperation leave due to the COVID-19 pandemic and of the exceptional granting of leave with full pay for five days for missed rest and recuperation benefits due to the impact of the pandemic. Upon enquiry, the Committee was furthermore informed that the Centre had processed 81 cases of special leave with full pay during 2019/20 and 2,788 cases in 2020/21. The Committee was also informed that the provision on special leave with full pay had been implemented to address situations where staff members remained in their duty stations for extended periods even though they were already eligible for, and would have otherwise travelled on, rest and recuperation leave, but were prevented from doing so owing to travel restrictions and/or quarantine requirements at entry, transit or exit points of their travel itinerary. The Committee was also informed that special leave with full pay was an authorized absence granted for missed or deferred rest and recuperation leave and that telecommuting outside the duty station did not give rise to any special leave with full pay accrual.

Tenant units

34. Information on the tenant units of the Regional Service Centre is provided in the report of the Secretary-General (A/76/685, paras. 12, 50 and 64 and tables 16 and 17). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that a policy had not been promulgated, but was provided with a description of the practice, whereby a tenant unit was designated as such when a headquarters function was performed by a unit located at the Centre, mainly for operational reasons, but maintained a direct reporting line to its parent office at Headquarters, which provided strategic direction and maintained accountability. The Committee was informed that the Administration would seek to develop a policy to guide the establishment of tenant units, setting out criteria, reporting lines and delegations of authority for the establishment of tenant units in United Nations entities. The two tenant units at the Centre, namely, the Global Procurement Support Section and the Forward Support and Deployment Hub, have maintained their reporting lines to the Department of Operational Support at Headquarters. Regarding the Forward Support and Deployment Hub, the Committee

was informed that the 60 per cent satisfaction rate expressed by mission clients with the Hub was considered a conservative benchmark, as it was still being built up. In addition, the Hub's revitalized roles and responsibilities opened up the opportunity to support the requirements of individual missions, while integrating its services into the broader framework of the integrated supply chain, for example, through the oversight and coordination of freight forwarding, the rotation and movement of troops and cargo, support for crisis response, the operationalization of regional deployment stocks and improved inventory management under the guidance of the Office of Supply Chain Management. Regarding the Global Procurement Support Section, the Committee was informed that the Section led the office equipment and supplies category under the guidance of the Procurement Division and played a key role in the implementation of all categories at the regional level, with a strong focus on freight forwarding and security and information technology, and would continue to establish long-term contractual agreements.

35. The Advisory Committee notes the information on the activities of tenant units, and on the practice regarding tenant units provided upon request, and reiterates its view that the designation of tenant units and their reporting lines should be based on clear and consistently applied criteria at Headquarters and support centres. The Committee reiterates its recommendation that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to develop a clear and consistent policy on the criteria, including reporting lines and delegations of authority, for the establishment and maintenance of tenant units in United Nations entities (see also [A/75/822/Add.9](#), para. 16).

VI. Conclusion

36. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly regarding the financing of the Regional Service Centre for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, prorated among the budgets of the Centre's active client peacekeeping operations, are indicated in section V of the performance report ([A/76/548](#)). The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of \$874,700 for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, and other revenue/adjustments amounting to \$427,400 from investment and other revenue (\$47,700) and the cancellation of prior-period obligations (\$379,700) be credited to Member States.

37. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly regarding the financing of the Regional Service Centre for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 are indicated in section IV of the proposed budget ([A/76/685](#)). Subject to its observations and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the proposed resources be reduced by \$63,400 from \$43,185,600 to \$43,122,200. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly:

(a) Appropriate the amount of \$43,122,200 for the maintenance of the Regional Service Centre for the 12-month period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023;

(b) Prorate the amount in subparagraph (a) among the budgets of the Centre's active client peacekeeping operations and against the programme budget for 2023;

(c) Take note of the requirements for the proposed programme budget for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023 for the share of client special political missions of the Centre to meet the financing requirements of the Centre for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.