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Chairman: Mr. Ali. (Malaysia)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 127: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

Second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/62/575 and A/62/589)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/62/575), said that the report provided an estimate of the anticipated final level of expenditures under the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, taking into account changes in parameters for inflation and exchange rates and cost-of-living adjustments compared with the last update of parameters at the time of approval of the first performance report (A/61/593).

2. The report reflected actual budgetary expenditures for the first 22 months of the biennium and projected requirements for the last two months. The estimates reflected a net decrease of \$126.1 million resulting from a decrease of \$113.2 million in expenditures and an increase of \$12.9 million in income. The net decrease of \$113.2 million in expenditures mainly reflected downward adjustments under three sections of the budget: \$15.4 million under section 2, which primarily reflected overall savings achieved with respect to posts in language services and temporary assistance for meetings; \$80.5 million under section 3, relating mainly to reduced requirements for special political missions; and \$23.2 million under section 33, reflecting the pace of recruitment and related operations for the Department of Safety and Security.

3. The factors contributing to vacancies had included the unfavourable exchange-rate experience, which had generated an increased requirement of \$42 million, partially offset by a decrease in inflation of \$8.6 million. Exchange-rate movements relative to the Swiss franc and the euro had amounted to \$20.2 million and \$10.4 million respectively. In addition, vacancies had contributed to underexpenditure for posts in the amount of \$76 million.

4. Unforeseen and extraordinary expenses incurred in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/249 amounted to some \$2.9 million. The bulk of that figure reflected commitments relating to peace and security (\$2.3 million); commitments relating to the operations of the International Court of Justice amounted to \$547,700.

5. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/283, the report addressed the redeployment of posts experiment. By that resolution, the General Assembly had decided that the redeployment of posts experiment would not be extended beyond the current biennium. By the same resolution, the General Assembly had also given the Secretary-General limited discretion in budget implementation. In accordance with resolution 60/283, information on the utilization of all commitments made within the context of the limited discretion in budget implementation was included in paragraph 33 of the performance report.

6. The final estimates for the biennium 2006-2007 amounted to \$4,188.8 million under the expenditure sections and \$505.1 million under the income sections. If approved by the Committee, those figures would be reflected in the final appropriation for 2006-2007.

7. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/62/589), said that the Advisory Committee commended the Secretary-General for presenting a clear and concise report on the financial aspects of performance. The Advisory Committee was concerned, however, that the late issuance of the report hindered the work of the General Assembly. It therefore requested that, in future, efforts should be made to issue both the first and second performance reports in the first week of December.

8. The Advisory Committee noted that realized vacancy rates for both Professional and General Service staff were significantly higher than budgeted. It stressed that such discrepancies indicated a need for careful monitoring of budgetary assumptions and requested that efforts made in that regard should be reported in the context of the second performance report for the biennium 2008-2009.

9. Requirements for travel of staff reflected a net increase of \$8.5 million. In that connection, the Advisory Committee pointed out that 11 budget sections had exceeded the level of appropriation for travel of staff by more than 25 per cent. The Advisory Committee continued to believe that travel could be reduced considerably through greater recourse to videoconferencing and other electronic means of communication. That said, it recognized that there were factors which might lead to an unexpected need for additional travel funds. It therefore recommended

that an analysis should be undertaken of the underlying causes of overexpenditure under that item in cases where it occurred in consecutive bienniums.

10. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

Agenda item 128: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/62/L.27: Oceans and the law of the sea (A/62/7/Add.27; A/C.5/62/16)

11. **Mr. Thatchaichawalit** (Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/62/L.27 on oceans and the law of the sea (A/C.5/62/16), said that, under the terms of paragraphs 26 and 49 of draft resolution A/62/L.27, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to convene a special Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Law of the Sea in New York from 13 to 20 June 2008 and to provide the services required. It would also approve the convening by the Secretary-General of the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in New York from 17 March to 18 April 2008 and from 11 August to 12 September 2008.

12. Under the terms of paragraphs 46 and 47, the Assembly would endorse the request by the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention to the Secretary-General to take timely measures, before the twenty-first session of the Commission, to strengthen the capacity of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, serving as the secretariat of the Commission, in order to ensure enhanced support and assistance to the Commission and its subcommissions. The General Assembly would also urge the Secretary-General to continue to take all necessary actions to ensure that the Commission could fulfil the functions entrusted to it under the Convention.

13. The conference services required for the meetings described in paragraphs 26 and 49 of the draft resolution would result in a net increase of 12 meetings, since some of the meetings had already been included in the 2008 calendar of meetings. Those

requirements, at full cost, had been estimated at \$174,300.

14. The estimated requirements in connection with the enhancement of the capacity of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea would amount to \$1,962,100 for the acquisition of licensed software, data-processing services and infrastructure and related training.

15. Efforts would be made to meet the additional requirements for conference servicing within the provision of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/62/L.27, additional requirements amounting to \$1,962,100 would arise under section 8, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. That would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

16. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/62/7/Add.27), said that the Advisory Committee was recommending that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/62/L.27, additional requirements totalling \$1,962,100 would arise under section 8, Legal affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the additional requirements of \$1,962,100 under section 8 for the biennium 2008-2009, as a charge against the contingency fund.

17. **Mr. Sena** (Brazil) said that his delegation fully supported the resource requests relating to oceans and the law of the sea.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.