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Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary questions

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Appropriation for 2019/20 | \$910,057,500 |
| Expenditure for 2019/20 | \$895,690,300 |
| Unencumbered balance for 2019/20 | \$14,367,200 |
| Appropriation for 2020/21 | \$937,711,700 |
| Projected expenditure for 2020/21 ^a | \$932,581,800 |
| Projected underexpenditure for 2020/21 | \$5,129,900 |
| Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2021/22 | \$1,048,692,600 |
| Adjustment recommended by the Advisory Committee for 2021/22 | (\$8,647,000) |
| Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2021/22 | \$1,040,045,600 |

^a Estimates as at 31 March 2021.



I. Introduction

1. During its consideration of the financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) ([A/75/620](#), [A/75/760](#) and [A/75/760/Add.1](#)), the Advisory Committee met online with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 15 April 2021. The comments and recommendations of the Committee on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations are contained in its report ([A/75/822](#)), and those pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 can be found in its related report ([A/75/829](#)).

II. Budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

2. By its resolution [73/312](#) and decision 73/555, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of \$910,057,500 gross (\$896,456,000 net) for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. Expenditures for the period totalled \$895,690,300 gross (\$881,077,200 net), reflecting a budget implementation rate of 98.4 per cent. The resulting unencumbered balance of \$14,367,200, in gross terms, represents 1.6 per cent of the overall level of resources approved for the financial period.

3. The unencumbered balance of \$14,367,200 of the overall level of resources approved for 2019/20 reflects lower-than-budgeted expenditures under military and police personnel (\$13,713,500, or 2.9 per cent) and operational costs (\$4,431,800, or 1.9 per cent), offset in part by higher requirements under civilian personnel (\$3,778,100, or 1.9 per cent). Summary information on the redeployments (\$3,855,000, or 0.4 per cent) from group III to group II is provided in section III.B of the report of the Secretary-General on the budget performance of the Mission for 2019/20 ([A/75/620](#)). A detailed analysis of variances is provided in section IV of that report.

4. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the decrease in the unliquidated obligations from the 2018/19 period (\$161.1 million) to the 2019/20 period (\$159.5 million) was attributable primarily to lower unliquidated obligations for facilities and infrastructure and reimbursement costs for contingent-owned equipment (owing to the improvement in accommodation for military contingent personnel in accordance with the standards of the United Nations (see para. 5 below)), offset in part by higher unliquidated obligations for standard troop reimbursement and goods that were not delivered at the end of the 2019/20 period.

Matters pertaining to the report of the Board of Auditors

5. In considering the reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of MINUSCA, the Advisory Committee also had before it the report of the Board of Auditors on the accounts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the financial period ended 30 June 2020 ([A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), paras. 183, 189, 200–202, 207–209 and 272–275). In its report, the Board made observations and recommendations pertaining to MINUSCA, including with regard to: (a) management of vacancy rates and vacant posts (see paras. 34–35 below); (b) extension of temporary positions; and (c) fuel over-consumption and management (see paras. 41–42 below). In addition, the Board noted the delayed target date of the implementation from fourth quarter of 2018 to January 2021 on its recommendation for the 2018/19 period (to analyse the use of prefabricated buildings to avoid the accommodation of contingents in tents)

(see [A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), paras. 16–18). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed by the Secretariat that the impact of the non-provision of accommodation on the budgets since 2019/20 was estimated at \$1.1 million, which had been reimbursed to troop- and police-contributing countries. Furthermore, the amount of the decrease in proposed requirements for the 2021/22 period attributable to the improved accommodation was approximately \$510,500, and the amendment for requirements for the deployment of the additional uniformed personnel also took into consideration the improved accommodation provided to troop-contributing countries (see para. 12 below). **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and trusts that the recommendations will be implemented in a timely manner.**

6. Concerning the conduct of security patrols, the Board of Auditors was of the view that MINUSCA did not conduct enough patrols to protect civilians, with which the Administration disagreed (see [A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), paras. 111–118). **The Advisory Committee recalls its comment that certain observations and recommendations of the Board of Auditors that relate, among others, to the assessment, tactical deployment and engagement of military units and assets are matters under the purview of Member States and the relevant organs of the United Nations (see [A/75/829](#), para. 14).**

III. Information on performance for the current period

7. With respect to current and projected expenditures for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 March 2021, expenditures amounted to \$740,553,500. At the end of the current financial period, total expenditures were projected at \$932,581,800 against the appropriation of \$937,711,700, leaving an underexpenditure of \$5,129,900 (or 0.5 per cent).

8. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 5 March 2021, a total of \$6,359,450,000 had been assessed on Member States in respect of MINUSCA since its inception. Payments received as at the same date amounted to \$5,871,980,000, leaving an outstanding balance of \$487,470,000. As at 15 March 2021, the cash available to the Mission amounted to \$192,198,000, which was sufficient to cover the three-month operating reserve of \$144,483,000 (excluding reimbursements to troop- and police-contributing countries). **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has repeatedly urged all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations, on time, in full and without conditions.**

9. The Advisory Committee was informed that claims for the reimbursement of troop costs and contingent-owned equipment had been settled up to September 2020, leaving outstanding balances of \$53,310,000 and \$38,209,000, respectively, as at 31 December 2020. With regard to death and disability compensation, as at 1 April 2021, an amount of \$5.8 million had been paid to settle 161 claims since the inception of the Mission, with 11 claims pending. **The Advisory Committee trusts that all outstanding claims will be settled expeditiously.**

Inter-mission cooperation with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

10. It is indicated that the Mission sought and was granted a temporary increase in its forces through inter-mission cooperation with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which will end on 23 April 2021 (see [A/75/760/Add.1](#), para. 8). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Security Council had endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal to the deployment, for an initial period of two months, of two infantry companies and two military utility helicopters from UNMISS, which had arrived in Bangui on 24 December 2020. MINUSCA had

requested and received the approval to extend the deployment up to 23 April 2021. Furthermore, the Mission had requested an additional two-month extension until 23 June 2021, which was pending approval. The Committee was also informed that, under the long-standing cost-sharing arrangements, UNMISS would continue to meet the usual legislated payments associated with the deployment of the units, including reimbursement costs to troop- and police-contributing countries and for contingent-owned equipment, while MINUSCA would be responsible for the relocation and return of the troops and equipment between the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the cost of movements within the Central African Republic, rations, fuel, medical services, temporary rebadging and signage for the units, accommodation, newly required operational sustainment and any differences in mission-specific allowances and reimbursements (totalling \$2,034,800). **Noting the extended temporary deployment of enhancements from UNMISS to MINUSCA, the Advisory Committee trusts that more clarification on the cost-sharing arrangements under inter-mission cooperation between the two missions will be provided to the General Assembly during its consideration of the present report.** The Committee discusses matters concerning inter-mission cooperation in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

A. Mandate and planning assumptions

11. The mandate of the Mission was established by the Security Council in its resolution [2149 \(2014\)](#) and extended most recently, until 15 November 2021, in resolution [2552 \(2020\)](#). The planning assumptions and mission support initiatives for the 2020/21 period are summarized in section I.B of the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed budget for the Mission for the period ([A/75/760](#)).

12. In its resolution [2566 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council decided to increase the authorized size of the Mission's military component by 2,750 and its police component by 940, from the current levels authorized in paragraph 27 of resolution [2552 \(2020\)](#). Subsequent to the adoption of resolution [2566 \(2021\)](#), the Secretary-General submitted an addendum to the budget proposal for 2021/22 ([A/75/760/Add.1](#)).

13. With respect to the exit strategy of MINUSCA indicated in the proposed budget (see [A/75/760](#), para. 56), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Mission was revising its political strategy in the light of the evolving security dynamics and increased troop deployment, which would provide a pathway towards the end state for the United Nations peacekeeping presence in the Central African Republic. In accordance with Security Council resolution [2566 \(2021\)](#), the reinforcements for MINUSCA are not aimed at providing a military solution to the conflict, but rather at opening the space for inclusive political dialogue. In the same resolution, the Council stressed that the reinforcements are aimed at enhancing the Mission's ability to perform its priority mandated tasks in the current evolving context, in particular the protection of civilians and facilitation of humanitarian access, and at enabling the Mission to enhance its capacity to prevent and reverse a further deterioration in the security situation while creating space for the political process to advance. The Council has further stressed that these new capabilities are not a substitute for the national authorities' primary responsibility to advance the peace process and protect the population.

B. Resource requirements

14. The total resource requirements in an amount of \$1,048,692,600 requested for the 2021/22 period represents an increase of \$110,980,900, or 11.8 per cent, compared with the provision of \$937,711,700 approved for the 2020/21 period (see table below). The total requirements comprise: (a) original resource requirements (\$936,258,700) requested in the budget proposal ([A/75/760](#)); and (b) additional resources (\$112,433,900) submitted in the addendum ([A/75/760/Add.1](#)) (see para. 12 above).

Financial resources

(Thousands of United States dollars)

| Category | Expenditure (2019/20) | Apportionment (2020/21) | Expenditure 31 March 2020/21 | Original cost estimate (2021/22) | Additional cost estimate (2021/22) | Total cost estimate (2021/22) | Variance | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | Amount | Percentage |
| Military and police personnel | 467 277.0 | 479 285.4 | 395 531.5 | 476 799.5 | 103 588.9 | 580 388.4 | 101 103.0 | 21.1 |
| Civilian personnel | 199 009.8 | 214 387.0 | 161 134.2 | 221 160.9 | 1 480.7 | 222 641.6 | 8 254.6 | 3.9 |
| Operational costs | 229 403.5 | 244 039.3 | 183 887.8 | 238 298.3 | 7 364.3 | 245 662.6 | 1 623.3 | 0.7 |
| Gross requirements | 895 690.3 | 937 711.7 | 740 553.5 | 936 258.7 | 112 433.9 | 1 048 692.6 | 110 980.9 | 11.8 |

Note: Detailed information on the financial resources proposed and an analysis of variances are provided in sections II and III of the proposed budget and addendum ([A/75/760](#) and [A/75/760/Add.1](#)).

1. Military and police personnel

| Category | Authorized 2020/21 ^a | Proposed 2021/22 (A/75/760) | Addendum 2021/22 (A/75/760/Add.1) | Variance |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|----------|
| Military observers | 169 | 169 | 169 | — |
| Military contingent personnel | 11 437 | 11 437 | 14 187 | 2 750 |
| United Nations police officers | 400 | 400 | 600 | 200 |
| Formed police unit personnel | 1 680 | 1 680 | 2 420 | 740 |

^a Represents the highest level of authorized strength.

15. The proposed resources for military and police personnel for 2021/22 reflect an increase of \$101,103,000, or 21.1 per cent, compared with the apportionment for 2020/21. The proposed increases are mainly due to higher requirements relating to the increase in the uniformed personnel (3,690) authorized by the Security Council (see para. 12 above; see also [A/75/760/Add.1](#), paras. 38–40).

16. In its resolution [2566 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council has that these reinforcements should be sequenced through a phased approach. The Advisory Committee was provided with information on the phased deployment planned for the additional uniformed personnel (see table below). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Department of Peace Operations had identified the military and police units to be deployed during the second half of 2021 from the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, while those deployments that were not generated from the System would be deployed early in 2022. For the military staff officers, military intelligence officers and individual police officers, the deployment is scheduled on a monthly basis from April to September 2021. The Committee was also provided with information on the tentative locations of the deployment, which would be subject to change to respond to the evolving security and operational context. **The Advisory**

Committee trusts that an update on the phased deployment will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.

Deployment schedule

| | <i>Authorized strength</i> | <i>Planned deployment</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | | <i>July 2021</i> | <i>August 2021</i> | <i>September 2021</i> | <i>October 2021</i> | <i>November 2021</i> | <i>December 2021</i> | <i>January 2022</i> | <i>February 2022</i> | <i>March 2022</i> | <i>April 2022</i> | <i>May 2022</i> | <i>June 2022</i> |
| Military contingents | 2 750 | 50 | 100 | 850 | 850 | 1 010 | 2 220 | 2 540 | 2 540 | 2 540 | 2 540 | 2 540 | 2 540 |
| United Nations police | 200 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| Formed police units | 740 | 80 | 200 | 380 | 380 | 560 | 560 | 560 | 560 | 560 | 740 | 740 | 740 |
| Total | 3 690 | 230 | 450 | 1 430 | 1 430 | 1 770 | 2 980 | 3 300 | 3 300 | 3 300 | 3 480 | 3 480 | 3 480 |

17. The Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for military and police personnel.

2. Civilian personnel

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Approved 2020/21</i> | <i>Proposed 2021/22 (A/75/760)</i> | <i>Addendum 2021/22 (A/75/760/Add.1)</i> | <i>Variance</i> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Posts | | | | |
| International staff | 687 | 695 | 703 | 16 |
| National staff ^a | 602 | 604 | 604 | 2 |
| Temporary positions | 69 | 64 | 64 | (5) |
| United Nations Volunteers | 266 | 271 | 282 | 16 |
| Government-provided personnel | 108 | 108 | 108 | – |
| Total | 1 732 | 1 742 | 1 761 | 29 |

^a Includes National Professional Officers and national General Service Staff.

18. The proposed resources for civilian personnel for 2021/22 represent an increase of \$8,254,600, or 3.9 per cent, attributable to higher requirements under international staff, national staff and United Nations Volunteers explained in the proposed budget and addendum (see [A/75/760](#), paras. 131–135 and [A/75/760/Add.1](#), paras. 41 and 42). A summary of the proposed staffing changes is as follows:

(a) The proposed budget for the 2021/22 period ([A/75/760](#)): an increase of 10 posts and positions, comprising 10 establishment, 5 conversion, 4 reclassification, 10 reassignment, 39 redeployment and 75 transfer (see paras. 19–20 and 24–29 below);

(b) The addendum to the proposed budget for the 2021/22 period ([A/75/760/Add.1](#)): establishment of a total of 19 posts and positions (8 Field Service and 11 United Nations Volunteer) in connection to the deployment of additional 3,690 uniformed personnel (see paras. 21–23 below).

Comments and recommendations on post resources

Establishment of 10 posts and positions in the Medical Services Section

19. It is proposed to establish 10 posts and positions in the Medical Services Section (5 posts (3 Field Service and 2 national General Service) and 5 United Nations Volunteer positions (3 international and 2 national)), to enable the Mission to address weakness identified during its response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and enhance its capacity to provide adequate and timely medical services to the military and civilian personnel. The 10 posts and positions consist of the following: Laboratory Technicians (2 Field Service, 1 United Nations Volunteer), Administrative Assistant (1 Field Service), Ambulance Drivers (2 national General Service), Medical Doctors (2 United Nations Volunteer) and Nurses (2 United Nations Volunteer) (see [A/75/760](#), paras. 85–87, table 13). It was indicated to the Advisory Committee that the proposal for the two national United Nations Volunteer positions (Nurses) demonstrated the Mission's effort to recruit nationally for functions that could feasibly be sourced from the local workforce.

20. It is indicated that the Medical Services Section provides medical coverage to all Mission personnel through integrated services that are supplied by United Nations-owned and contingent-owned medical facilities. During the 2021/22 period, the Mission's eight medical facilities will continue to comprise one United Nations-owned level I clinic in Bangui and seven emergency medical posts located in field offices. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on the allocation of the current and proposed medical staff in the medical facilities of the Mission. The Committee was also informed that, in addition to the eight United Nations-owned facilities, the Mission had one level I-plus hospital in Bangui and one level II contingent-owned hospital in each town of Bouar, Bria and Kaga Bandoro, as well as 33 level I contingent-owned clinics in various locations.

Establishment of 19 posts and positions in the support component

21. It is proposed in the addendum to the budget proposal to establish a total of 19 posts and positions (8 Field Service and 11 United Nations Volunteer) in the Mission support component (see [A/75/760/Add.1](#), tables 1–10), to provide support for the deployment of additional 3,690 uniformed personnel outside Bangui, with justification provided in paragraphs 14 to 35 of the addendum. The proposed 19 posts and positions are as follows:

(a) Office of the Chief of Operations and Resource Management: three posts (Field Service) of Administrative Officer to be deployed to each of the three regional offices in Ndélé, Bangassou and Paoua;

(b) Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies Section: one post (Field Service) of Information Systems Assistant to be deployed to Ndélé; and one post (Field Service) of Telecommunications Assistant to be deployed to Bangassou;

(c) Mission Support Centre (Contingent-owned Equipment Unit): 1 post (Field Service) of Contingent-owned Equipment Assistant to be deployed to Kaga Bandoro, and 1 position (United Nations Volunteer) of Contingent-owned Equipment Inspector to be deployed to Bouar;

(d) Occupational, Health, Safety and Environmental Unit: 1 position (United Nations Volunteer) of Environmental Officer to be deployed to Kaga Bandoro;

(e) Transport Unit: 1 position (United Nations Volunteer) of Vehicle Technician to be deployed to Paoua;

(f) Facilities and Engineering Management Section: one post (Field Service) of Engineering Technician and one position (United Nations Volunteer) of Generator Mechanic to be deployed to Bangui; 1 position (United Nations Volunteer) of Civil Engineer to be deployed to Bria;

(g) Aviation Unit: 1 post (Field Service) of Air Operations Assistant to be deployed to Bouar;

(h) Movement Control Unit: 3 positions (United Nations Volunteer) of Movement Control Assistant to be deployed each to Obo, Birao and Paoua;

(i) Integrated Warehouse Section: 3 positions (United Nations Volunteer) of Warehouse Assistant to be deployed each to Bria, Bouar and Kaga Bandoro.

22. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the majority of the proposed posts and positions would be based in regions where the Mission did not have adequate human resources to support the deployment of the additional uniformed personnel. The Mission proposed international staff in the category of Field Services and international United Nations Volunteers, to increase the likelihood of being able to fill those posts and positions as quickly as possible if and when they are approved. The posts and positions would undertake highly specialized functions that were not necessarily readily available on the local market. MINUSCA faced an ongoing challenge of identifying qualified candidates for recruitments against national posts, owing to an acute scarcity of qualified candidates in the local labour market, a direct consequence of prolonged civil conflict within the country over several decades. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that the proposed level of expertise at the Field Service (Field Service-5 and Field Service-6) level entailed that the staff member would already have many years of responsible field experience in dealing with complex and cross-cutting administrative, logistical and technical matters, as applicable (a minimum of 8 and 12 years required for Field Service-5 and Field Service-6 posts, respectively, and a minimum of 2 and 5 years of relevant experience required for posts at the P-2 and P-3 levels, respectively).

23. Taking into account the existing capacity and the number of vacant posts and positions at the Mission (see also para. 34 below), the Advisory Committee recommends against the establishment of the following 4 posts (Field Service) and 1 position (United Nations Volunteer) proposed: 2 posts (Field Service) of Administrative Officer in the Office of the Chief of Operations and Resource Management; 1 of the 2 posts (Field Service) in the Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies Section; and 1 post (Field Service) of Engineering Technician and 1 position (United Nations Volunteer) of Generator Mechanic in the Facilities and Engineering Management Section (see para. 21 (a), (b) and (f) above).

Conversion

24. It is proposed that, in the light of the continuing nature of the responsibilities, five general temporary assistance positions (2 P-3 Procurement Officer and 3 Field Service Procurement Assistant) be converted to posts to strengthen the capacity of the Procurement Section¹ to support the continuing activities (see [A/75/760](#), paras. 100–101, and table 19). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the positions were established during the start-up of the Mission and that regularizing the

¹ The approved staffing establishment of the Procurement Section comprises 19 posts and positions (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 4 P-3 (including 2 general temporary assistance positions), 1 P-2, 5 Field Service (including 3 general temporary assistance positions), 1 National Professional Officer and 6 national General Service staff).

positions would also bring a sense of job security to the staff members currently occupying the positions and may in turn lead to increased productivity.

25. It was indicated to the Advisory Committee that the Mission had not directly engaged the Services of the Global Procurement Support Section at the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, for mission-specific acquisitions. Of the total value of acquisitions in an amount of \$207.3 million for 2019/2020, \$3 million in acquisitions had been raised against Global Procurement Support Section contracts, while the value acquired through system's contracts amounted to \$137 million (66 per cent of the total acquisitions for the period). As at 30 March 2021, of the total value of \$189.7 million procurement conducted by the Mission, only \$1.4 million had been raised against contracts established by the Global Procurement Support Section for other missions. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced of the justification provided and therefore recommends against the proposed conversion of five general temporary assistance positions to posts in the Procurement Section.** The Committee discusses matters related to the functions and staffing requirements of the Global Procurement Support Section in its related report on the proposed budget for 2021/22 for the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe ([A/75/822/Add.9](#)).

Reclassification

26. It is proposed to reclassify the following four posts in the budget proposal (see [A/75/760](#), paras. 47–49, 75–77, 79–81, 91–92):

(a) One post of Administrative Assistant from national General Service to a post of Administrative Officer, National Professional Officer, in the Women's Protection Adviser Unit (along with the proposed reassignment of a post of National Professional Officer from an Administrative Officer to Associate Liaison Officer within the Unit, see also para. 29 below), to support the Unit in strengthening the partnership with national stakeholders for the implementation of the joint communiqué with the Government on the prevention of and the fight against conflict-related sexual violence. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed reclassification and reassignment aimed to better align the tasks and responsibilities of the Unit;

(b) One post of Fuel Officer from P-3 to P-4 level in the Life Support Section, in response to a recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to ensure the allocation of adequate resources and the effective management of the Fuel Unit, and in accordance with the Organization's guideline for fuel management, under which the chiefs of fuel units in large peacekeeping missions are required to have qualifications at the P-4 level (see also paras. 41 and 42 below);

(c) One post of Administrative Officer from P-3 to P-4 level in the Office of the Chief of the Operations and Resource Management Service, to strengthen the administrative functions and in the light of the complexity of the administrative responsibilities of the Service;

(d) One post of Associate Finance and Budget Officer (P-2) to a post of Finance and Budget Officer (P-3) in the Finance and Budget Section, as the working methods and required skill sets of the Section have evolved with the continued implementation of reform initiatives and Umoja implementation and enhancements.

27. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced of the justification provided and, taking into account the existing capacity of the Office of the Chief of the Operations and Resource Management Service² and the Finance and Budget**

² The approved staffing establishment of the immediate Office of the Chief of the Operations and Resource Management Service comprises 10 posts (1 D-1, 1 P-3, 6 Field Service, 1 National Professional Officer and 1 national General Service staff).

Section,³ it recommends against the proposed reclassification of one post of Administrative Officer from P-3 to P-4 level and one post of Associate Finance and Budget Officer (P-2) to a post of Finance and Budget Officer (P-3).

Reassignment, redeployment and transfer

28. The proposed staffing changes of reassignment (10), redeployment (39) and transfer (75) are related mainly to the harmonization of field mission support structure (see [A/75/760](#), paras. 78, 88–90, 93–99, and tables 10 and 14–18). The Advisory Committee recalls, that after the issuance by Headquarters of initial guidance on the restructuring in 2014 and supplementary guidance in 2017, missions were requested to standardize their support structures over two financial periods (2018/19 and 2019/20) (see [A/72/789](#), paras. 66–69). It is indicated in the budget proposal that, in the context of the harmonization of the support structure in field missions, MINUSCA had reported at the time that it would not implement the new structure as an early adopter but would follow a phased implementation. This prudent approach allowed the Mission to stabilize and analyse the efficacy of the extensive staffing and structural changes that were approved during the preceding period (see [A/75/760](#), para. 88). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed restructuring of the mission support structure completed the implementation of the above-mentioned guidance and that the Mission did not intend to make any further changes in the mission support structure in relation to the guidance.

29. In addition to the proposed changes under the harmonization of field mission support structure, it is also proposed: (a) to reassign one National Professional Officer post of Water and Sanitation Officer to Associate Administrative Officer within the Facilities and Engineering Management Section; (b) to reassign one National Professional Officer post of Administrative Officer to Associate Liaison Officer within the Women's Protection Adviser Unit; and (c) to transfer the Audit, Risk Management and Compliance Unit (3 posts) to the Office of the Chief of Staff from the Office of the Director of Mission Support, in accordance with the recommendation of OIOS (see [A/75/760](#), paras. 47–51 and 82–84).

Proposed change in the reporting line of the Political Affairs Division

30. It is proposed that the Political Affairs Division, which reports to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Political), report directly to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (*ibid.*, paras. 65–67). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Mission's revised 2018 mandate had emphasized enhanced support for the political process and that, in the light of the risks posed by the ongoing insecurity across the country on the political process, the Mission had informally moved the Political Affairs Division under the reporting line of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General owing to the urgent and critical need to ensure a coordinated high-level approach to the Mission's good offices for the implementation of the peace agreement. The Committee was further informed that the proposed staffing for 2021/22 included the post of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, which still maintained a political portfolio, in support of the wider vision of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Mission continued to assess and monitor the shift of the reporting line of the Political Affairs Division and its influence on the terms of reference of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General. **The Advisory Committee trusts that more clarification on the proposed**

³ The approved staffing establishment of the Finance and Budget Section comprises 22 posts (1 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 P-2, 11 Field Service, 2 National Professional Officer and 5 national General Service staff).

change in the reporting line of the Political Affairs Division will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.

Electoral support

31. It is indicated that, in line with the expanded electoral support mandate by the Security Council in its resolution [2499 \(2019\)](#), the Mission has assisted the authorities in the preparation and delivery of presidential, legislative and local elections in 2020 and 2021 through the provision of good offices and security, operational, logistical and technical support (*ibid.*, para. 9). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that an amount of \$15,270,100 was included for the 2021/22 period to support the elections, representing a decrease of \$2,518,700 compared with the provision approved for the 2020/21 period. The Committee was also provided with a detailed breakdown and analysis of resource requirements for 2020/21 and 2021/22 (as summarized in the table below).

Resource requirements for electoral support for 2020/21 and 2021/22

(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Class</i> | <i>2020/21 Approved</i> | <i>2021/22 Proposed</i> | <i>Increase (decrease)</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| United Nations Volunteers | 2 794.2 | 3 486.4 | 692.2 |
| General temporary assistance | 6 760.0 | 7 298.6 | 538.6 |
| Consultants | 84.0 | 85.7 | 1.7 |
| Official travel | 187.6 | 122.2 | (65.4) |
| Facilities and infrastructure | 678.1 | — | (678.1) |
| Ground transportation | 489.0 | 215.7 | (273.3) |
| Air operations | 2 455.0 | 2 370.9 | (84.1) |
| Communications and information technology | 3 817.4 | 1 672.3 | (2 145.1) |
| Other supplies, services and equipment | 523.5 | 18.3 | (505.2) |
| Total | 17 788.8 | 15 270.1 | (2 518.7) |

32. With respect to the retention for the 2021/22 period of a total of 68 positions⁴ in the Electoral Affairs Service approved for 2020/21, upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the continuation of the approved positions would enable the Mission to implement its reinforced electoral assistance mandate authorized by the Security Council in its resolution [2552 \(2020\)](#) until mid-November 2021. The Committee was further informed that, following the presidential and legislative elections, the support of the Mission was still required for the holding of local elections, which had not been held since 1988, making their organization in late 2021 or in the first quarter of 2022 a highly anticipated event. MINUSCA support for the local elections would also span the entire country, as it had done during the preparation and organization of the presidential and legislative elections. Local elections would be held in all the same polling stations (5,408) as the legislative elections.

Vacancy rates

33. The table below provides a summary of the vacancy rates for civilian personnel during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 periods, as well as those proposed for the 2021/22

⁴ Comprising 37 positions of United Nations Volunteer and 31 positions under general temporary assistance (1 D-1, 6 P-4, 22 P-3, 1 Field Service, 1 national General Service (see [A/74/737/Add.10](#), para. 13 (a) (iv)).

period. The Advisory Committee notes that most of the rates proposed for 2021/22 are based on the actual vacancy rates during the current period, with the exception of the proposed rates of 5 per cent and 2 per cent for international and national United Nations Volunteers, respectively, compared with the actual rates of 6.3 per cent and 7.0 per cent, and actual average rates of 6.7 per cent and 2.3 per cent, respectively, as at 31 March 2021.

(Percentage)

| Category | Actual 2019/20 | Approved 2020/21 | Actual 28 February 2021 | Actual 31 March 2021 | Actual average 31 March 2021 | Proposed 2021/22 |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Civilian personnel | | | | | | |
| International staff | 12.7 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 12.7 | 13.0 | 13.0 |
| National staff | | | | | | |
| National Professional Officers | 8.4 | 8.5 | 11.3 | 12.3 | 10.4 | 10.5 |
| National General Service staff | 5.4 | 6.5 | 3.8 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 4.0 |
| United Nations Volunteers (international) | 1.6 | 12.5 | 7.2 | 6.3 | 6.7 | 5.0 |
| United Nations Volunteers (national) | — | 2.0 | 4.7 | 7.0 | 2.3 | 2.0 |
| Temporary positions | | | | | | |
| International staff | 6.3 | 16.5 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 14.8 | 10.0 |
| National Professional Officers | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| National General Service staff | 42.9 | 25.0 | 28.6 | 14.3 | 28.6 | 28.5 |
| Government-provided personnel | 8.3 | 3.0 | 0.9 | — | 1.9 | 3.0 |

Vacant posts

34. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 2 March 2021, a total of 114 posts and positions were vacant (2 D-2, 3 D-1, 9 P-5, 17 P-4, 25 P-3, 5 P-2, 22 Field Service, 12 National Professional Officers and 19 national General Service). Of that total, 14 posts had been vacant for more than two years (1 P-4, 4 P-3, 2 Field Service, 5 National Professional Officers and 2 national General Service). The Committee was informed that, of the two posts (P-3) of Security Coordination Officer that had been vacant for more than three years (1,369 and 1,418 days, respectively) following the job opening in April 2019 with the intention of recruiting female staff, the hiring manager was still exploring ways to fill the two posts with female candidates as at 2 March 2021. For another post (National Professional Officer) of Associate Information Analyst, Political Affairs that had been vacant for more than four years (1,580 days), while a long list generated from the job opening had been sent to the hiring manager in September 2019, a short list was still pending as at 2 March 2021.

35. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has reiterated its concern about the high number of vacancies in civilian staffing and its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that vacant posts are filled expeditiously (see General Assembly resolution 74/284, para. 25). In the same resolution, the Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to review the posts that have been vacant for 24 months or longer and to propose in his next budget submission either their retention, with clear justification of need, or their abolishment (*ibid.*, para. 28). Taking into account the extended long vacancies and lack of action and progress in recruitment since 2019, the Committee recommends the abolishment for the 2021/22 period of one of the two posts (P-3) of Security Coordination Officer vacant for more than three years, and the post (National Professional Officer) of Associate Information Analyst, Political Affairs vacant for more than four years (see para. 34 above).

Common staff costs under general temporary assistance

36. The proposed provision for common staff costs for international general temporary assistance amounts to \$5,495,300 for 2021/22, while expenditures amounted to \$3,175,600 against the provision of \$5,505,000 for 2020/21. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the variance between the actual expenditure and proposed resource requirements for common staff costs was attributable primarily to the establishment of 31 international temporary positions approved for the 2020/21 period to support the electoral process in the Central African Republic (see para. 32 above). The relatively low expenditure for common staff costs for the 2020/21 period was attributable to the delay in the recruitment of personnel and the lower costs of entitlements for common staff costs in connection with restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was indicated to the Committee that the proposed requirements for 2021/22 assumed that most COVID-19-related restrictions would no longer exist and that staff members would be eligible for their normal entitlements. **Taking into account the underexpenditure for 2020/21 and the likely continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Advisory Committee considers that the proposed provision for common staff costs for 2021/22 for international general temporary assistance may not be realistic. The Committee trusts that more clarification will be provided to the General Assembly during the consideration of the present report and detailed justifications will be included in the next budget submission.**

37. **Subject to its recommendations contained in paragraphs 23, 25, 27 and 35 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for civilian personnel. Any related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.**

3. Operational costs

(Thousands of United States dollars)

| Category | Expenditure (2019/20) | Apportionment (2020/21) | Expenditure 31 March 2021 | Original cost estimate | Additional cost estimate | Total cost estimate | Variance | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| | | | | (2021/22) | | | Amount | Percentage |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7)=(6)-(2) | (8)=(7)÷(2) |
| Consultants and consulting services | 959.9 | 1 075.6 | 1 342.1 | 1 125.8 | — | 1 125.8 | 50.2 | 4.7 |
| Official travel | 3 197.9 | 3 745.9 | 1 544.3 | 3 651.1 | — | 3 651.1 | (94.8) | (2.5) |
| Facilities and infrastructure | 71 266.6 | 68 254.3 | 53 027.8 | 68 880.1 | 4 598.2 | 73 478.3 | 5 224.0 | 7.7 |
| Ground transportation | 20 196.4 | 16 416.5 | 15 324.9 | 15 128.7 | 1 621.4 | 16 750.1 | 333.6 | 2.0 |
| Air operations | 42 121.0 | 64 946.9 | 33 166.2 | 63 255.2 | — | 63 255.2 | (1 691.7) | (2.6) |
| Marine operations | 1 816.9 | 500.0 | 343.3 | 500.0 | — | 500.0 | — | — |
| Communications and information technology | 39 543.9 | 45 554.8 | 37 427.6 | 41 741.8 | 786.4 | 42 528.2 | (3 026.6) | (6.6) |
| Medical | 6 227.7 | 1 803.8 | 2 096.5 | 3 443.4 | 358.3 | 3 801.7 | 1 997.9 | 110.8 |
| Other supplies, services and equipment | 41 048.9 | 38 741.5 | 37 675.6 | 37 572.2 | — | 37 572.2 | (1 169.3) | (3.0) |
| Quick-impact projects | 3 024.3 | 3 000.0 | 1 939.5 | 3 000.0 | — | 3 000.0 | — | — |
| Total, operational costs | 229 403.5 | 244 039.3 | 183 887.8 | 238 298.3 | 7 364.3 | 245 662.6 | 1 623.3 | 0.7 |

38. The proposed resources for the 2021/22 period represent an increase of \$1,623,300, or 0.7 per cent, compared with the resources approved for the 2020/21 period. The proposed increase for 2021/22 reflects the combined effect of the resource requirements requested in the budget proposal (A/75/760) and the addendum (A/75/760/Add.1), as follows:

(a) The budget proposal (A/75/760): proposed decrease of \$5,741,000, or 2.4 per cent, for 2021/22 for operational costs reflects lower requirements under official travel, ground transportation, air operations, communications and information technology and other supplies, services and equipment, offset in part by higher requirements under consultants and consulting services, facilities and infrastructure, and medical (see A/75/760, paras. 136–144);

(b) The addendum to the budget proposal (A/75/760/Add.1): proposed increase of \$7,364,300 due to higher requirements under facilities and infrastructure, ground transportation, communications and information technology, and medical (see A/75/760/Add.1, paras. 43–48).

Resource requirements for the deployment of additional uniformed personnel

39. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed resources reflected in the addendum to the proposed budget for the 2021/22 period related to resources required to support the deployment of additional military and police personnel authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 2566 (2021), consisting of:

(a) Facilities and infrastructure and ground transportation: the provisions for petrol, oil and lubricants in the amounts of \$4,598,200 and \$1,621,400, respectively, for an additional 3.3 million litres (for generators) and 1.2 million litres (for vehicles) of petrol, respectively, at an average cost of \$1.401;

(b) Communications and information technology (\$786,400): provisions for (i) telecommunications and network services (\$342,600), given the higher costs for services owing to the additional bandwidth required for communications; (ii) maintenance of communications and information technology equipment and support services (\$329,100), given the higher costs owing to the additional user accounts and hardware required to support the additional uniformed personnel; and (iii) software licenses and fees (\$114,700), given the higher costs owing to the additional user accounts and licenses;

(c) Medical services: additional requirements in the amount of \$358,300 to provide medical services for the deployment of the additional uniformed personnel.

40. The Advisory Committee was further informed that requirements in the total amount of \$16,005,000 in connection with the deployment of the additional uniformed personnel would be absorbed within the approved resources for the 2020/21 period. The resources would be allocated under facilities and infrastructure (\$7,936,900), ground transportation (\$3,219,000), communications and information technology (\$2,741,000) and medical (\$20,500) for the acquisition of prefabricated buildings, other engineering supplies for accommodation, additional vehicles, communications and information technology equipment, and medical first-aid kits. It was indicated to the Committee that the Mission would be able to absorb the additional requirements owing primarily to: (a) reduced requirements under air transportation, due to the delayed deployment of two rotary-wing aircraft from March to May 2021; (b) reduced requirements under military contingent, attributable: (i) to lower reimbursement costs for contingent-owned equipment, owing to the anticipated completion of hard-wall accommodation and the anticipated higher rate of unserviceability based on recent trends; and (ii) to lower costs for travel on

emplacement resulting from the suspension of rotations of military contingents in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic; and (c) reduced requirements under official travel, attributable to the continued travel restrictions in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comments and recommendations on operational costs

Petrol, oil and lubricants

41. The Board of Auditors noted significant irregularities in fuel consumption at the Mission, including fuel consumption exceeding tank capacity, fuel consumption exceeding energy produced and fuel consumption exceeding standard fuel consumption unit, as well as refuelling with no odometer records. For example, the Board found: (a) 42 vehicles that had been provided with more fuel than the recorded tank capacity (33,823 litres of diesel in the financial year 2019/20); (b) 2,277 transactions relating to 1,452 vehicles that revealed higher fuel consumption rates than the standard fuel consumption unit (considering a 10 per cent tolerance over the standard fuel consumption unit, the Board noted a total overconsumption amount of 1,112,395 litres of diesel in the financial year 2019/20); and (c) 12 vehicles that had been refuelled with 13,865 litres of diesel with an odometer reading of zero. The Board was informed by the missions that data irregularities were due to a lack of training for users of the electronic fuel management system and a lack of dedicated staff members to carry out timely reviews of system data. The Board expressed concern that insufficient resources deployed to review and analyse the electronic fuel management system data and missing reviews themselves might defeat the system's purpose to provide strong control over fuel issuance and fuel overconsumption and increase the risk of fuel fraud in the missions (see [A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), paras. 272–275).

42. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that given the fact that the Mission was at a relatively stable phase of its establishment, the fuel consumption projection for 2021/22 was based on the actual fuel consumption for the previous six months at the time of the budget preparation, which also applied to the projected fuel requirements for the deployment of additional uniformed personnel (see para. 39 (a) above). **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendation of the Board of Auditors that the Administration provide training to staff members responsible to ensure the proper recording of fuel data, and regularly monitor and analyse fuel consumption to identify and investigate irregular fuel consumption (see [A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), para. 275). The Committee stresses that the Mission should enhance its internal control over fuel management, including through the proposed reclassification of one post of Fuel Officer from P-3 to P-4 level (see para. 26 (b) above). The Committee recommends a reduction of 5 per cent (\$2,927,100) to the total provision of \$58,542,000 proposed for petrol, oil and lubricants under facilities and infrastructure (\$32,399,200), ground transportation (\$12,880,800) and air operations (\$13,262,000).**

Consultant and consulting services

43. The proposed resource requirements for the 2021/22 period amount to \$1,125,800, representing an increase of \$50,200 (or 4.7 per cent), compared with the provision approved for the 2020/21 period. Information provided to the Advisory Committee shows that expenditures amounted to \$959,900 for 2019/20 and \$1,342,100 as at 31 March 2021. **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed that the use of consultants should be kept to an absolute minimum and stressed the need for using the in-house capacity of the Organization to perform core activities or to fulfil functions that are recurrent over the long term (see General Assembly resolution [73/308](#), para. 11). The Committee is therefore not convinced of the proposed increase in the**

requirements and recommends a reduction of 10 per cent (\$112,600) to the resources proposed under consultants and consultancy services.

Official travel

44. A provision of \$3,651,100 is proposed for 2021/22, representing a decrease of \$94,800 (or 2.5 per cent), compared with the resources approved for 2020/21. Actual expenditures amounted to \$3,197,900 for 2019/20 and \$1,544,300 as at 31 March 2021. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the budgetary assumption for the requested resources for official travel was that the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, such as restrictions related to travel, movement and access, would no longer apply considering the collaborative and coordinated effort to fight against the pandemic worldwide, including by launching massive vaccination campaigns. In addition, for the budget performance period of 2019/20, information provided to the Committee shows that an official trip was made by a Senior Political Affairs Officer to attend an intensive English language training course in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for close to two months, with a daily subsistence allowance. The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the related airfare ticket cost was \$6,676, under official travel. **The Advisory Committee is concerned by the high amount for the above-mentioned trip and is of the view that intensive language courses are part of the learning and development (training) activities, and that participations in such courses should therefore not be classified and budgeted as official business travel, and that related travel costs should be minimized through advance planning.**

45. **The Advisory Committee 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. The Committee also emphasizes that travel should be budgeted in full accordance with the provisions of [ST/SGB/2009/9](#) and [ST/AI/2013/3](#). Taking into account the underexpenditures for 2019/20 and 2020/21 and the likely continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee recommends a reduction of 15 per cent (\$547,700) to the proposed provision for official travel.**

Facilities and infrastructures

46. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that: (a) for spare parts and supplies, the requested resources amount to \$2,323,200 for 2021/22 (an increase of \$35,000, or 1.5 per cent, compared with the approved provision for 2020/21), while expenditures amounted to \$2,018,800 for 2019/20 and \$360,800 as at 31 March 2021; and (b) for construction materials and field defence supplies, the resource requirements amount to \$3,004,500 for 2021/22 (a decrease of \$385,300, or 11.4 per cent, compared with the approved provision for 2020/21, owing to the sufficient inventory acquired in previous periods). Expenditures amounted to \$2,854,800 for 2019/20 and \$1,398,100 as at 31 March 2021. **The Advisory Committee considers that the requested resources are not fully justified. Taking into account the underexpenditures for 2019/20 and 2020/21, the Committee recommends a reduction of 10 per cent (\$232,300 and \$300,500, respectively) to the proposed provisions for spare parts and supplies, and construction materials and field defence supplies.**

Unmanned aircraft systems

47. For security services under facilities and infrastructures, the proposed resources amount to \$16,923,300 for 2021/22 (an increase of \$5,482,000, or 47.9 per cent), owing to the enhancement of one of the two existing and the deployment of two

additional mini tactical unmanned aircraft systems, to strengthen capabilities to assist in the planning of operational requirements and the protection of civilians and mission personnel (see [A/75/760](#), paras. 37 and 136 (a)). Expenditures amounted to \$12,335,300 against the apportionment of \$15,098,700 for 2019/20 and \$8,398,800 against the apportionment of \$11,411,300 as at 31 March 2021. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the two existing unmanned aircraft systems had been provided under a letter of assist, under which the Mission had an option to upgrade the existing and add additional systems on the basis of operational requirements. In the light of the continued worsening security situation, in November 2020, the Mission had exercised the option to upgrade one existing and deploy two unmanned systems prior to the presidential and legislative elections. The Committee was also provided with a breakdown of the proposed requirements for 2021/22 (see table below). **Taking into account its recommendation for the application of a deduction for the underutilization of the unmanned aircraft systems (see para. 49 below), the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 10 per cent (\$1,692,300) to the proposed provision for security services for 2021/22.**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Description</i> | <i>Monthly rate</i> | <i>Number of months</i> | <i>Annual costs</i> |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Service costs for existing Orbiter 2 and Orbiter 3 | 446.2 | 12 | 5 354.4 |
| Estimated incremental cost for the upgrade of the existing Orbiter 3 | 74.4 | 12 | 892.8 |
| Service costs for 2 new Orbiter 3 | 470.6 | 12 | 5 647.2 |
| Operating services | 60.8 | 12 | 729.6 |
| Total | | | 12 624.0 |

48. With respect to the existing letter of assist, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that MINUSCA pays for the time that the unmanned aircraft vehicles are available for use by the service provider whether or not they are tasked or grounded. It is stipulated therein that deductions are based on inherent availability lower than 90 per cent and not on actual flight time. The letter of assist does not include any clause for penalty or deduction from payments for underutilization. The Committee was also provided with information with regard to the utilization of the unmanned aerial vehicles for the 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 periods (see table below).

Utilization of unmanned aerial vehicles for the 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 periods

| <i>Period</i> | <i>Total availability in hours for the period</i> | <i>Inherent availability in hours</i> | <i>Percentage of inherent availability</i> | <i>Actual hours of operation</i> | <i>Utilization rate (percentage)</i> |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>(1)</i> | <i>(2)</i> | <i>(3) = (2)/(1)</i> | <i>(4)</i> | <i>(5) = (4)/(2)</i> | |
| 2018/19 | 8 760 | 8 505 | 97 | 5 369 | 63 |
| 2019/20 | 8 784 | 8 457 | 97 | 5 124 | 60 |
| 2020/21 | 6 576 | 6 228 | 95 | 2 543 | 41 |

49. The Board of Audit has reviewed contracts and letters of assist for unmanned aircraft systems (see [A/75/5 \(Vol. II\)](#), paras. 146–155). While acknowledging that the Administration had replaced the lump sum payment in contracts with a performance-

related payment, the Board has held that the Administration should continue to include clauses into unmanned aircraft system contracts and letters of assist in which it is stated that payments are made according to key performance indicators such as reliability and tasked sensor time and flight hours. The Board has recommended that the Administration include provisions for payment or reimbursement deduction in unmanned aircraft system contracts and letters of assist as a standard. **The Advisory Committee concurs with the recommendation of the Board of Auditors. The Committee notes that, under the existing letter of assist at MINUSCA, a financial deduction is only applied when the inherent availability rate is below 90 per cent, while no deduction is applied for underutilization of the unmanned aircraft systems. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to evaluate the performance and utilization of the unmanned aircraft systems, to apply lessons learned from their underutilization and to review the contractual arrangement to include a provision for deduction due to underutilization, and provide an update thereon in the context of the next budget submission (see [A/75/822/Add.6](#), para. 35; and [A/75/822/Add.8](#), para. 34).** The Advisory Committee discusses matters concerning unmanned aerial systems in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

50. In paragraph 21 of its resolution [74/284](#), the General Assembly has also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping mission staff has the capacity to provide technical oversight of the use of unmanned aircraft systems technologies. It is indicated that the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Cell and the Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies Section of MINUSCA provide such technical oversight and that the personnel responsible have been adequately trained and have the requisite technical qualifications (see [A/75/760](#), sect. V.A).

Communication and information technology

51. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that: (a) for telecommunications and network services, the requested resources for 2021/22 amounts to \$10,937,800 (an increase of \$1,371,100, or 14.3 per cent, compared with the approved provision for 2020/21), due to the expansion of the bandwidth and the services for the deployment of the additional uniformed personnel. Expenditures amounted to \$4,798,400 against the provision of \$7,043,300 approved for 2019/20 and \$7,510,200 against the provision of \$9,566,700 approved as at 31 March 2021; and (b) for public information and publication services, an amount of \$3,475,300 is requested for 2021/22 (a decrease of \$920,300, or 20.9 per cent, compared with the approved provision for 2020/21), while expenditures amounted to \$1,398,400 for 2019/20 and \$2,500,000 as at 31 March 2021. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that the provided justifications fully support the requirements. Taking into account the expenditures, the Committee therefore recommends a reduction of 15 per cent (\$1,640,700) to the proposed provision for telecommunications and network services and a reduction of 10 per cent (\$347,500) to the proposed provision for public information and publication services.**

United Nations Mine Action Service and United Nations Office for Project Services

52. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that there had been no significant mine threat in the Central African Republic. Since the inception of the Mission in 2014, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) had been providing services to the Mission with respect to explosive ordnance disposal, threat mitigation for improvised explosive devices, weapons and ammunition management activities, and training of the Central African Armed Forces, through contractual arrangements with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Since

the 2018/19 period, UNMAS had refocused its activities solely on weapons and ammunition management in support of the national authorities and explosive ordnance disposal training for the Central African Armed Forces, while MINUSCA military contingents had assumed responsibility with respect to explosive ordnance disposal activities within the Mission area, on a self-sustainment basis, to address operational requirements. The Committee was also informed that UNOPS provided the Mission with technical support services in various fields through individual contractors. The Advisory Committee discusses the matters concerning mine action and the functions of UNMAS and UNOPS in its related report pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 (see [A/75/829](#), paras. 25–32) and in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/75/822).

Programmatic activities

53. The General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to include, in his next budget submission and performance report, detailed information on the programmatic activities of the Mission, including on how those activities have contributed to the implementation of mission mandates, on the linkage to the mandates, on the implementing entities and on the performance by the Mission of appropriate oversight (see General Assembly resolution [74/284](#), para. 19). Information on the substantive and other programmatic activities is provided in the reports on the budget performance and budget proposal (see [A/75/620](#), paras. 32–33; and [A/75/760](#), paras. 111–122), including activities under justice and corrections (Special Criminal Court, penitentiary system/support for the judiciary). **The Advisory Committee trusts that detailed information on the programmatic activities, including support to the Special Criminal Court, will be provided in the context of the next budget proposal.**

54. **The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has underlined the important contribution that programmatic activities make to the implementation of the mandates of the Mission, including for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and that all such activities must be directly linked to the mandates of the Mission. In the same resolution, the Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Mission is responsible and accountable for the use of its programmatic funds, in line with relevant guidance and bearing in mind the specific context in which the Mission operates (see General Assembly resolution [74/284](#), paras. 18–19).**

55. Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 37, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47 and 51 above, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for operational costs.

V. Other matters

COVID-19 pandemic

56. The General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to include in his next performance report information on how the Mission has responded and on lessons learned from past and present epidemics and pandemics, and to propose options for improving future preparedness for epidemics and pandemics, including for business continuity (*ibid.*, para. 16). It is reported that, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mission prioritized activities such as the establishment of isolation sites for Mission personnel in Bangui and the regions. At the request of the Government, MINUSCA also provided support for the strengthening and control of

border entry points through mixed patrols with the Central African Republic defence forces, the rehabilitation of health facilities and isolation sites, the provision of hand-washing products and fabric masks to vulnerable populations, and the donation of tests kits and personal protective equipment and medical equipment (see [A/75/620](#), paras. 35–37).

57. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the Secretariat and the 13 largest specialized United Nations agencies, funds and programmes participating in the arrangements for COVID-19 medical evacuation had agreed to an overall cost-sharing mechanism on the basis of their share of the population eligible for evacuation in the field. Of the total estimated cost of \$102.1 million, the Secretariat's share amounted to \$28.5 million, of which the share of MINUSCA amounted to \$2,836,880 for the 2019/20 period.

58. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has noted with grave concern the threat to life, health, safety and security caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of ensuring the safety, security and health of peacekeeping personnel, maintaining the continuity of critical mandate delivery, including protection of civilians, minimizing the risk of mission activities causing the virus to spread and, where appropriate and within mandates, supporting national authorities, upon their request, in their response to COVID-19, in collaboration with the Resident Coordinator and other United Nations entities in the country (see General Assembly resolution [74/284](#), para. 15). The Committee trusts that updated information will be provided in the context of the next budget submission.

Safety and security

59. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, since 1 October 2020, 196 security incidents involving United Nations personnel had been recorded and 12 personnel had died, including 7 peacekeepers killed during operations. It was indicated to the Committee that the Mission had maintained a number of consistent and coordinated measures to protect all Mission personnel in the evolving security context. The Mission had also strengthened advocacy with national authorities for the ratification of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel to ensure accountability and the end of impunity. The Committee was further informed that the Central African Republic judiciary had held trials in January and February 2020 that had led to the conviction of six individuals for the murders of a total of 11 peacekeepers. A total of 30 investigations had been opened, all of which were cases of attacks against peacekeepers. In one case, an investigation could not be conducted owing to the unstable security situation in the area where the attack had occurred. As of March 2021, 113 suspects of crimes against peacekeepers had been identified, of whom 79 had been arrested.

60. The Advisory Committee recognizes the extremely difficult environment in which MINUSCA operates and expresses its appreciation to the Mission personnel in fulfilling the mandated activities. The Committee pays tribute to the Mission personnel who lost their lives in the service of peace. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly has recognized the increasing security challenges faced by United Nations peacekeepers, reaffirms its commitment to the improvement of the safety and security of Mission personnel, in particular uniformed personnel, and requests the Secretary-General to further strengthen the measures (*ibid.*, para. 22). The Committee trusts that an update will be provided in the context of the next budget proposal.

Cost recovery

61. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that an amount of 2,243,700 for 2019/20 has been recovered from support provided to the United Nations and non-United Nations entities in the mission area and credited back to the mission allotment account. **The Advisory Committee notes that all the recoveries in the 2019/20 period were credited to the Mission allotment account and there is no clarity on whether any amounts have been recorded as non-spendable and proposed to be returned to Member States.** The Advisory Committee has made comments and recommendations on cost recovery in its related report pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 (see [A/75/829](#), paras. 33–36) and discusses the matter further in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

Environmental initiatives

62. It is indicated that the Mission continues to shift its energy production to renewable sources of energy, including the proposed acquisition of three diesel hybrid solar systems to be installed in Birao, Obo and Bangassou; the establishment of 57 wastewater treatment plants at various locations; and the implementation of the Kolongo landfill remediation project, together with the acquisition of the 21 incinerators for the establishment of a waste management yard (see [A/75/760](#), para. 40; and section V.B). **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Mission will make further efforts in environmental management and provide more information on progress, including tangible results and the impact on energy consumption from the installation of diesel hybrid solar systems and other efficiency measures, in future budget proposals. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly has noted the progress made in the implementation of the multi-year environmental strategy to reduce the footprint of peacekeeping operations, and requests the Secretary-General to enhance measures for the implementation of the strategy in all peacekeeping missions, in line with the five pillars of the strategy, in accordance with particular conditions on the ground and in full compliance with the relevant rules and regulations (see General Assembly resolution 74/284, para. 17).** The Committee makes further observations on environmental activities in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations ([A/75/822](#)).

Gender balance

63. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Mission had policies that required hiring managers to strive to provide a gender-balanced list of candidates at each stage of the recruitment process. Building on its prior efforts to expedite the recruitment of national staff, the Mission had also implemented various additional measures to address the challenges related to the recruitment of female candidates, including by conducting advocacy events to attract more female candidates and establishing rosters of national candidates. The Committee also requested and received information on female staff representation for the periods from 2016/17 to 2019/20, which showed that female representations at all levels of civilian staff had improved over the four-year period, with the exception of that for the Field Service category. The percentage of female staff members in the P-5 and above category had improved from 21 per cent in the 2016/17 period to 31 per cent in the 2019/20 period, and that of the P-1 to P-4 category had improved from 27 per cent to 32 per cent over the same period. For both international and national United Nations Volunteers, the percentages had increased from 34 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, to 40 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively over the period. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the**

overall increased percentages of female staff representation at MINUSCA and trusts that the Mission will pursue further efforts to increase female representation for personnel of all categories.

Nationalization

64. As discussed in paragraphs 19 and 26 (a) above, the Mission proposes the establishment of two national United Nations Volunteer positions and the conversion of a post from national General Service to National Professional Officer for the 2021/22 period. It is also stated that the Mission faces an ongoing challenge of identifying qualified candidates for recruitments against national posts (see para. 22 above). Consequently, some vacancies were re-advertised multiple times with no successful recruitments. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Mission will make further efforts to recruit national staff. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to consider options for greater nationalization of functions when formulating budget submissions, commensurate with mission mandates and requirements (see General Assembly resolution [74/284](#), para. 24).**

Language skills

65. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that approximately 65 per cent of the international staff members at MINUSCA speak French fluently and 35 per cent of the national staff are fluent in English. **The Advisory Committee trusts that every effort will be made to attract the staff with the appropriate language skills needed in the Mission (see also para. 44 above).**

VI. Conclusion

66. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with respect to the financing of Mission for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 are indicated in section V of the performance report ([A/75/620](#)). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of \$14,367,200 for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, as well as other revenue/adjustments amounting to \$27,955,700 for the period ended 30 June 2020, be credited to Member States.**

67. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly with respect to the financing of Mission for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 are indicated in section IV of the addendum to the proposed budget ([A/75/760/Add.1](#)). **Taking into account its observations and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the proposed resources be reduced by \$8,647,000 from \$1,048,692,600 to \$1,040,045,600. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the amount of \$1,040,045,600 for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.**