cc: Central

DDSG

OPPBA

Note to Mr. Germain

ACABQ's recommendations on the proposed programme budget for biennium2010 – 2011: Request for information on the recruitment process for Rule of Law Unit

1. Resolution A/RES/63/263 approved one P-5, two P-4 and one P-3 posts for the Rule of Law Unit.

2. The recruitment process for both the P-5 and P-3 is in the process of being completed. The applicants have been short-listed, interviewed and successful candidates, as recommended by the Panel, have been approved.

3. With regards to the two P- 4 posts, the process is on-going.

Tuvako Manongi
19 October 2009

29-10353

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United Nations Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

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29-10353
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

TO: Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Chef de Cabinet
A: Executive Office of the Secretary-General

DATE: 30 September 2009

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: Sharon Van Buerle, Director
DE: Programme Planning and Budget Division, OPPBA

ACTION A I
COPY DSG
KWS

SUBJECT: Summary of ACABQ recommendations on the proposed
OBJET: programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

1. Please find attached in Annex I, the extract pertaining to Section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination - Executive Office of the Secretary-General and Rule of Law Unit, from the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/64/7) on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011. It would be appreciated if you could review the material and provide to my office any further justification or clarification as may be necessary that will support your proposals when the item is introduced in the Fifth Committee at its current session. This is particularly relevant in those cases where it has been noted that the Advisory Committee was unable to support the request of the Secretary-General owing to lack of clarification, justification or information it had previously sought.

2. For your information, I have also summarized in Annex II, the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee with regard to cross-cutting issues affecting all budget sections. Should you have any comment, please also submit at the same time as the input requested in paragraph 1 above.

3. As the Secretary-General is expected to introduce the proposed programme budget later in the month of October 2009, your early response would be appreciated to ensure that the proposals contained in the document may be fully defended.

cc: Mr. Yamazaki
Mr. Issa
Ms. Nandkumar

Section 1
Overall policymaking, direction and coordination

The Executive Office of the Secretary-General

Comments and recommendations on posts

I.9 It is also proposed that the following three posts be abolished:

(a) One P-3 and one General Service (Other level) post in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (A/64/6 (Sect. 1), para. 1.46);

(b) One General Service (Other level) post in the Office of the Chef de Cabinet, Office of the Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva, as a result of the rationalization and streamlining of responsibilities among the existing staffing complement of the Office (ibid., para. 1.54).

The Advisory Committee has no objection to the Secretary-General's proposals.

General Comments and Recommendations

I.24 The Advisory Committee notes that the organizational structure and post distribution for the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for the biennium 2010-2011 (see A/64/6 (Sect. 1)/Corr.1) differ significantly from the structure and distribution proposed in 2008-2009. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Office was continuing to support the Secretary-General in providing executive direction and overall policy guidance to line departments and offices. To that end, a new Coordination Unit had been created in order to enhance consistency among the other units in the Office and between the Office and other departments and offices. The Unit coordinated follow-up actions within the Executive Office as a whole and among other senior United Nations officials, as required, in order to provide integrated guidance and advice to the Secretary-General through the Chef de Cabinet and the Deputy Chef de Cabinet. **The Advisory Committee notes that the new Coordination Unit is headed by two officials at the D-2 level and recommends that efforts be made to streamline its structure. The Committee is also of the view that, in future, organization charts should provide a clearer indication of the reporting and other relationships between the various units and offices in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. Furthermore, any changes to the organizational structure of the Office should be explained fully in the narrative of the budget document.**

I.25 The Advisory Committee further notes from table 1.20 of the budget document that the proposed staffing complement of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for 2010-2011 is 97 posts, 77 of which are to be funded from the regular budget and the remaining 20 from extrabudgetary resources. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that, as at 31 May 2009, 20 out of 44 staff members in the Professional and higher categories on board as at that date, or 45 per cent, had been appointed at the discretion of the Secretary-General. The Committee was further informed that the 44 staff members in the Professional and higher categories represented 23 nationalities and that women accounted for 45 per cent. **In this connection, the Committee recalls paragraph 53 of General Assembly resolution 62/236, in which the Assembly emphasized that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General should lead the entire Organization in the context of reflection of geographical distribution and gender balance. The Committee urges the Secretary-General to further intensify his efforts in that regard.**

Rule of Law Unit

Comments and recommendations on posts

I.7 It is proposed that one General Service (Other level) post be established in the Rule of Law Unit in order to provide administrative support to the Unit (A/64/6 (Sect. 1), para. 1.152). **Noting the absence of General Service capacity in the Unit, the Advisory Committee has no objection to the Secretary-General's proposal.**

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I.40 The Advisory Committee was further informed that the Rule of Law Unit was responsible for functions that could not be addressed at the department/agency level, focusing in particular on cross-cutting issues relevant to several actors in the United Nations system. In that context, the Unit helped to produce system-wide guidance on issues relating to the rule of law. It also developed strategic partnerships with internal and external actors, such as Member States, regional and other international organizations and the academic community. According to the Secretary-General, the Unit had an overarching view of all rule of law activities being undertaken in the United Nations system and was therefore ideally placed to identify and prevent potential duplication of work. **In the view of the Advisory Committee, the primary functions of the Rule of Law Unit should be to minimize duplication of work and promote coherence in the development of policy and guidance materials Organization-wide. Future budget submissions should provide a more detailed description of the Unit's activities and expected accomplishments, as well as efficiencies realized, in that regard.**

I.41 With regard to the staffing of the Rule of Law Unit, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the recruitment process for the four newly

1 P-4 from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations). The Office of Legal Affairs had provided one staff member at the P-5 level for a secondment lasting four months (from August to December 2007), and UNDP had provided one, at the P-3 level, for the period from January 2007 to September 2008. The Committee has made comments and recommendations on the use of secondments in paragraph II.28 below. **Updated information on the recruitment process for the Rule of Law Unit should be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of section 1.**

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

General comments, observations and recommendations

"Piecemeal approach to the budget process, which undermines the budgetary system and budget discipline"

10. The Committee recalls paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 62/236, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, for all future proposed programme budgets, to take the necessary steps to avoid a piecemeal approach to the budget process and to ensure the fullest possible picture of the Organization's requirements for future bienniums. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation that, as of the biennium 2010-2011, revised estimates in respect of requirements that were foreseeable at the time of budget preparation include an explanation and justification as to why the related requirements were not included in the proposed programme budget (ibid.).**

Presentation of the logical framework

Presentation of objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement

15. The clear linkage between objectives, expected accomplishments and outputs is a basic requirement of the logical framework. However, in general, it remains difficult to ascertain the extent to which the outputs contribute to the attainment of the expected accomplishments, whether the indicators of achievement are effective measures of progress in achieving expected accomplishments, how the achievement of the expected accomplishments contribute to the fulfillment of the stated objectives, and, conversely, what the impact on expected accomplishments would be if some outputs were not implemented. The Advisory Committee has also stressed that indicators of achievement and performance measures should be improved in conformity with the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable and time-bound) principles. However, it is of the view that indicators of achievement often continue to be formulated in vague and generic terms.

16. Furthermore, the importance of pursuing a coordinated and consistent approach for the formulation and presentation of the elements of the logical framework, based on standards for similar services and a common terminology, cannot be overemphasized. This is essential for objective monitoring and reporting on performance, making meaningful comparisons between departments/offices, measuring progress over time and evaluating the impact of programmes, as well as providing greater transparency and facilitating the setting of priorities. Closer attention should also be paid to more careful and consistent drafting of the elements of the logical framework. The Committee continues to note unevenness and inconsistencies throughout the budget in the presentation of the logical framework. The Committee has highlighted instances of such inconsistencies in chapter II below.

18. The Committee emphasizes that the presentation of the results-based budget should reflect the work programme of the concerned department/office, formulated around a set of predefined objectives and expected accomplishments, along with the activities and outputs required to achieve those accomplishments, and also provide justifications for the resources to be engaged. The presentation should also provide information and explanations of structural change and clearly reflect the objectives, expected accomplishments and activities related to the implementation of new policies and reform initiatives.

Classification and costing of outputs

21. In paragraph 29 of part II of its resolution 56/253, the General Assembly emphasized that a system for the costing of outputs was an important part of an effective and transparent decision-making process. The Committee notes that, up to now, such a system has not been implemented on an Organization-wide basis, partly due the limited capabilities of the existing information systems, as well as the complexities of collecting and recording cost information. However, some departments have explored and/or put into place methodologies and systems for identifying and reporting on the costs of activities and utilization of time for support services. For example, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has a conference costing programme in place for meetings and documentation services, which is currently used to calculate the cost of additions to the calendar of conferences. The General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to continue to improve the methods for calculating costs of support services, (resolution 63/262, part VI, para. 4). **The Committee recommends that this issue be addressed in the context of the implementation of the enterprise resource planning system**

Administrative and support functions

22. A large part of the regular budget is devoted to administrative and support functions **The Committee considers that the application of results-based budgeting to support functions is weak and does not reflect the magnitude of the resources allocated for this purpose. In the logical frameworks, indicators of achievement related to administrative and support activities are often vague and subjective, including measures such as the percentage of respondents expressing satisfaction in client surveys or the percentage of offices reporting. In the opinion of the Committee, the effectiveness of administrative and support functions should be illustrated by workload benchmarks for comparison with industry standards. Expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and objectives of the support component should also be more comprehensive, covering all aspects of the work to be performed, and also include targets for increasing efficiency and productivity, as well as cost-effectiveness. The Committee also believes that a more uniform presentation of support and administrative functions is feasible, and would facilitate assessment of progress over time and comparisons of performance measures between budget sections.**

Discontinued outputs

23. The Secretary-General reports that a total of 4,541 outputs will be discontinued in 2010-2011, reflecting the outcome of a review of the outputs delivered in 2008-2009 (A/64/6 (Introduction), para. 18). **The Committee reiterates its view that information on the discontinued outputs as initiated by the Secretariat or as mandated by the legislative bodies would be more useful if the budget documents were to identify those new outputs and activities that are being proposed in lieu of activities and outputs proposed for termination (A/60/7, para. 15).**

24. In addition, the summary table showing the number of discontinued outputs by budget section (A/64/6 (Introduction), para. 18) should provide the overall number of recurrent and non-recurrent outputs delivered in the current period and planned for in the next biennium. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee reiterates its view that where discontinued outputs are not to be specifically replaced by proposed new outputs, attempts should be made to identify the quantum of resources that would be made available for redeployment as a result of the proposed termination of activities and outputs (see A/60/7, para. 15).

Monitoring and evaluation

26. The Advisory Committee is concerned about the absence of standards as to the appropriate level of resources to be allocated for monitoring and evaluation activities, as well the lack of feedback on the outcomes of those activities. Future budget presentations should make clear how the outcome of evaluations leads to improvements in mandate delivery and affects the proposed allocation of resources. In addition, the Committee remains convinced that there is no substitute for independent evaluation as a source of objective analysis of the achievements and shortcomings of United Nations programmes and activities. It also emphasizes that the linkage of accomplishments to resources is an essential input for the evaluation process.

Effects of reform

29. In the Advisory Committee's view, the proposed programme budget should have provided more information on major management issues and structural changes affecting the resource requirements. In the past several years, the Organization has gone through a number of significant reforms and initiatives, including in such areas as strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations; human resources management reform; strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs; information and communications technology, enterprise resource planning, and security, disaster recovery and business continuity; and development-related activities (see General Assembly resolutions 61/279, 63/250, 63/260, 63/261 and 63/262). **The Advisory Committee is disappointed that the proposed programme budget does not consistently draw a clear link between recent policy initiatives and resource requirements. The Committee expects that the Secretary-General will be monitoring the implementation of these reforms and making adjustments in the light of experience. The proposed**

programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 should provide a clear picture of the reform measures that have been taken, their budgetary implications and the efficiency gains derived from the implementation of these measures, as well as an assessment of progress in accomplishing the objectives.

30. The Advisory Committee points out that the Organization has been in a state of almost continuous reform since the 1990s. The Committee has drawn attention to this on prior occasions. It reiterates its view that sufficient time must be allowed for reform measures to be fully implemented and consolidated in order to provide an opportunity for evaluation to determine if the intended goals of the reform measures have been achieved.

Personnel matters

Conversions

42. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a summary of the proposed conversions for 2010-2011 of positions previously funded under general temporary assistance or extrabudgetary resources to established posts (see annex III below). A total of 19 positions are proposed for conversion from general temporary assistance funding and 9 from extrabudgetary resources. The Advisory Committee notes that not all of these conversions were clearly indicated in the budget fascicles. **The Committee stresses that in those budget sections where conversions are proposed from general temporary assistance, a corresponding reduction should be reflected under non-post resources.**

Vacancies

44. The Advisory Committee was informed that, in line with established procedures, the use of the term "vacancy" in reporting on posts is confined to budgetary purposes only: a post would be defined as vacant only if no person is charged against such post. In terms of human resources management, a vacancy is understood to constitute a post available for recruitment or placement as defined in paragraph 3.1 of administrative instruction ST/AI/1997/7. Therefore, the way vacancies are currently defined understates them. Upon request for a table showing actual vacancies as defined in terms of human resources management, the Advisory Committee was informed that this information could not be provided as it would require manual analysis of data from two disparate systems (Galaxy for vacancy information and IMIS for incumbency information). **It is surprising to the Committee that no entity in the Secretariat has a true picture of the actual vacancies that exist. In the Committee's view, the Office of Human Resources Management should be collecting this type of information in order to support effective workforce and succession planning. The Committee expects that this lacuna will be addressed expeditiously through such means as the introduction of the Enterprise Resource Planning system.**

Geographic representation and gender parity in the staffing of the United Nations

45. The issues of improving the geographic representation of the staff of the United Nations in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United

Nations, as well as improving gender balance, have been of perennial concern and the subject of numerous General Assembly resolutions. The Committee notes that the goals of improved geographic representation and gender balance of staff figure in the human resources compacts of each Department and in the logical frameworks of each budget section. **The Committee expects that efforts will continue to be made in this important area and trusts that the implementation of the talent management system will assist the Secretariat in achieving the goals of improved geographic representation and gender balance in the Secretariat.**

Retirement of staff

46. The Advisory Committee reiterates that the Secretary General should, as part of normal practice, use the opportunity of vacancies due to retirements to examine the continuing need for a post. Further, since scheduled retirements are known well in advance, it should be possible to initiate recruitment procedures, if called for, well in advance of the date on which the post is projected to be vacant.

Non-post objects of expenditure

Consultants and experts

55. The Advisory Committee has commented extensively in the past on the need to limit the use of consultants to specific activities for which necessary expertise is not available within the staff of the Secretariat. As stipulated in General Assembly resolution 53/221 and reflected in ST/AI/1997/7, consultants should be hired for specific time-limited projects and the existing procedures for evaluating their work should be strictly followed.

56. The Advisory Committee has noted in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 that in some cases consultants have been proposed to service expert groups. **While the Committee recognizes that, in some instances, specific technical expertise could be required by such groups, it stresses that, since members of expert groups are chosen for their knowledge in a particular field, recourse to additional expertise should be limited.**

Publications

57. The Advisory Committee sees evidence in a number of the budget fascicles that the publications programme has been subjected to scrutiny. In some cases costs have been reduced through the conversion of hard copies into online publication. **The Committee welcomes this development, at the same time noting the continued need for the use of traditional means of communication (i.e. radio and printed media), which continue to be important in achieving effective promotion of the message of the Organization, particularly in developing countries.**

58. In the context of the United Nations publications programme, the Advisory Committee emphasizes once again the importance of multilingualism.

Information technology

60. The resources allocated for information and communications technology exceed $300 million under the regular budget alone. Comprehensive information on the overall resources devoted by the Organization to ICT under the budgets of peacekeeping missions, the peacekeepng support account and other extrabudgetary funding sources is not available at present. **In this context, the Advisory Committee stresses that effective leadership of the Chief Information Technology Officer and the Office of Information and Communications Technology will be required to ensure successful integration of central information and communications technology functions across the Secretariat and achievement of effective coordination and coherence in the work of the Organization (see General Assembly resolution 63/262, part I, para. 1). An equally essential requirement is the commitment and cooperation with the Office of Information and Communications Technology by heads of departments and offices across the Secretariat. The Committee urges the Secretary-General to foster close collaboration among all relevant entities so as to ensure efficient utilization of the resources made available for the ICT function, and realization of the envisaged benefits, both for Member States and the Secretariat.**

ICT strategy

63. As part of its role in overseeing the global management of information and communications technology, the Office of Information and Communications Technology reviews all budgets from all funding sources for all ICT initiatives and operations of the Secretariat (A/62/793, para. 35(b); A/63/487, para. 21).The Committee notes that a framework for carrying out such a review was put in place for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/64/6 (Introduction), para. 71). However, during its interaction with the representatives of the Secretary-General, the Committee was informed that the Office of Information and Communications Technology had not been able to systematically review the ICT-related proposals of all the departments/offices for the biennium 2010-2011. **The Committee recommends that the Office of Programme Planning Budget and Accounts and the Office of Information and Communications Technology work closely to ensure that appropriate budgetary procedures are established and are fully complied with in the future.**

Enterprise systems

70. The Advisory Committee notes that activities for enhancing the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) or developing interfaces between other systems and IMIS are planned under several budget sections for the biennium 2010-2011. **The Committee recommends that activities related to enhancing or developing systems that are destined to be replaced by the ERP should be kept to the required minimum, and that proposals for strengthening existing applications or introducing new systems for the management of resources should be reviewed and approved in accordance with the procedures of the new ICT management framework.**

Construction and major maintenance

73. The Advisory Committee notes the background information provided in section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, with regard to oversight of overseas projects and notes that the Secretary-General proposes the establishment of two new Professional positions (1 P-5 and 1 P-2) under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, to strengthen management and oversight of major maintenance and new construction projects at offices away from Headquarters. **In the Committee's view, the arrangements for leadership by OCSS have not been adequately elaborated. Furthermore, a suitable mechanism for coordination between Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters should be put in place. The Committee continues to believe that the arrangements for planning, managing and monitoring projects for the development of new facilities and major maintenance, as well as the procedures for approval of such projects, require a thorough review. It therefore reiterates its recommendation that the Secretary-General review these arrangements and procedures, with a view, inter alia, to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all involved in such projects.**

Rule of law activities

75. The Advisory Committee sought clarification concerning the various roles of the entities in the United Nations system involved in rule of law activities. It was informed that the functions of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Rule of Law Unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office of Legal Affairs in this area were distinct but mutually supportive in both their rationale and main responsibilities.

79. The Advisory Committee notes the complementary nature of the work of the entities involved with rule of law activities and stresses the importance of coordination among them.

Extrabudgetary resources

80. Estimates of extrabudgetary resources account for a significant portion of United Nations expenditures. The bulk of extrabudgetary resources are related to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

81. The Committee reiterates its position that all extrabudgetary posts should be administered and managed with the same rigor as regular budget posts.

United Nations Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

OPPBA/ACABQ

TO: Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Chef de Cabinet
A: Executive Office of the Secretary-General

DATE: 30 September 2009

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: Sharon Van Buerle, Director
DE: Programme Planning and Budget Division, OPPBA

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established Professional posts was under way. At present, the Unit was staffed with two individuals on secondment from other departments/entities (1 D-2 from UNDP, 1 P-4 from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations). The Office of Legal Affairs had provided one staff member at the P-5 level for a secondment lasting four months (from August to December 2007), and UNDP had provided one, at the P-3 level, for the period from January 2007 to September 2008. The Committee has made comments and recommendations on the use of secondments in paragraph II.28 below. Updated information on the recruitment process for the Rule of Law Unit should be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of section 1.

ANNEX II

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22. A large part of the regular budget is devoted to administrative and support functions **The Committee considers that the application of results-based budgeting to support functions is weak and does not reflect the magnitude of the resources allocated for this purpose. In the logical frameworks, indicators of achievement related to administrative and support activities are often vague and subjective, including measures such as the percentage of respondents expressing satisfaction in client surveys or the percentage of offices reporting. In the opinion of the Committee, the effectiveness of administrative and support functions should be illustrated by workload benchmarks for comparison with industry standards. Expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and objectives of the support component should also be more comprehensive, covering all aspects of the work to be performed, and also include targets for increasing efficiency and productivity, as well as cost-effectiveness. The Committee also believes that a more uniform presentation of support and administrative functions is feasible, and would facilitate assessment of progress over time and comparisons of performance measures between budget sections.**

Discontinued outputs

23. The Secretary-General reports that a total of 4,541 outputs will be discontinued in 2010-2011, reflecting the outcome of a review of the outputs delivered in 2008-2009 (A/64/6 (Introduction), para. 18). **The Committee reiterates its view that information on the discontinued outputs as initiated by the Secretariat or as mandated by the legislative bodies would be more useful if the budget documents were to identify those new outputs and activities that are being proposed in lieu of activities and outputs proposed for termination (A/60/7, para. 15).**

24. In addition, the summary table showing the number of discontinued outputs by budget section (A/64/6 (Introduction), para. 18) should provide the overall number of recurrent and non-recurrent outputs delivered in the current period and planned for in the next biennium. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee reiterates its view that where discontinued outputs are not to be specifically replaced by proposed new outputs, attempts should be made to identify the quantum of resources that would be made available for redeployment as a result of the proposed termination of activities and outputs (see A/60/7, para. 15).

Monitoring and evaluation

26. The Advisory Committee is concerned about the absence of standards as to the appropriate level of resources to be allocated for monitoring and evaluation activities, as well the lack of feedback on the outcomes of those activities. Future budget presentations should make clear how the outcome of evaluations leads to improvements in mandate delivery and affects the proposed allocation of resources. In addition, the Committee remains convinced that there is no substitute for independent evaluation as a source of objective analysis of the achievements and shortcomings of United Nations programmes and activities. It also emphasizes that the linkage of accomplishments to resources is an essential input for the evaluation process.

Effects of reform

29. In the Advisory Committee's view, the proposed programme budget should have provided more information on major management issues and structural changes affecting the resource requirements. In the past several years, the Organization has gone through a number of significant reforms and initiatives, including in such areas as strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations; human resources management reform; strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs; information and communications technology, enterprise resource planning, and security, disaster recovery and business continuity; and development-related activities (see General Assembly resolutions 61/279, 63/250, 63/260, 63/261 and 63/262). **The Advisory Committee is disappointed that the proposed programme budget does not consistently draw a clear link between recent policy initiatives and resource requirements. The Committee expects that the Secretary-General will be monitoring the implementation of these reforms and making adjustments in the light of experience. The proposed**

programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 should provide a clear picture of the reform measures that have been taken, their budgetary implications and the efficiency gains derived from the implementation of these measures, as well as an assessment of progress in accomplishing the objectives.

30. The Advisory Committee points out that the Organization has been in a state of almost continuous reform since the 1990s. The Committee has drawn attention to this on prior occasions. It reiterates its view that sufficient time must be allowed for reform measures to be fully implemented and consolidated in order to provide an opportunity for evaluation to determine if the intended goals of the reform measures have been achieved.

Personnel matters

Conversions

42. Upon request, the Advisory Committee was provided with a summary of the proposed conversions for 2010-2011 of positions previously funded under general temporary assistance or extrabudgetary resources to established posts (see annex III below). A total of 19 positions are proposed for conversion from general temporary assistance funding and 9 from extrabudgetary resources. The Advisory Committee notes that not all of these conversions were clearly indicated in the budget fascicles. **The Committee stresses that in those budget sections where conversions are proposed from general temporary assistance, a corresponding reduction should be reflected under non-post resources.**

Vacancies

44. The Advisory Committee was informed that, in line with established procedures, the use of the term "vacancy" in reporting on posts is confined to budgetary purposes only: a post would be defined as vacant only if no person is charged against such post. In terms of human resources management, a vacancy is understood to constitute a post available for recruitment or placement as defined in paragraph 3.1 of administrative instruction ST/AI/1997/7. Therefore, the way vacancies are currently defined understates them. Upon request for a table showing actual vacancies as defined in terms of human resources management, the Advisory Committee was informed that this information could not be provided as it would require manual analysis of data from two disparate systems (Galaxy for vacancy information and IMIS for incumbency information). **It is surprising to the Committee that no entity in the Secretariat has a true picture of the actual vacancies that exist. In the Committee's view, the Office of Human Resources Management should be collecting this type of information in order to support effective workforce and succession planning. The Committee expects that this lacuna will be addressed expeditiously through such means as the introduction of the Enterprise Resource Planning system.**

Geographic representation and gender parity in the staffing of the United Nations

45. The issues of improving the geographic representation of the staff of the United Nations in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United

Nations, as well as improving gender balance, have been of perennial concern and the subject of numerous General Assembly resolutions. The Committee notes that the goals of improved geographic representation and gender balance of staff figure in the human resources compacts of each Department and in the logical frameworks of each budget section. **The Committee expects that efforts will continue to be made in this important area and trusts that the implementation of the talent management system will assist the Secretariat in achieving the goals of improved geographic representation and gender balance in the Secretariat.**

Retirement of staff

46. The Advisory Committee reiterates that the Secretary General should, as part of normal practice, use the opportunity of vacancies due to retirements to examine the continuing need for a post. Further, since scheduled retirements are known well in advance, it should be possible to initiate recruitment procedures, if called for, well in advance of the date on which the post is projected to be vacant.

Non-post objects of expenditure

Consultants and experts

55. The Advisory Committee has commented extensively in the past on the need to limit the use of consultants to specific activities for which necessary expertise is not available within the staff of the Secretariat. As stipulated in General Assembly resolution 53/221 and reflected in ST/AI/1997/7, consultants should be hired for specific time-limited projects and the existing procedures for evaluating their work should be strictly followed.

56. The Advisory Committee has noted in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 that in some cases consultants have been proposed to service expert groups. **While the Committee recognizes that, in some instances, specific technical expertise could be required by such groups, it stresses that, since members of expert groups are chosen for their knowledge in a particular field, recourse to additional expertise should be limited.**

Publications

57. The Advisory Committee sees evidence in a number of the budget fascicles that the publications programme has been subjected to scrutiny. In some cases costs have been reduced through the conversion of hard copies into online publication. **The Committee welcomes this development, at the same time noting the continued need for the use of traditional means of communication (i.e. radio and printed media), which continue to be important in achieving effective promotion of the message of the Organization, particularly in developing countries.**

58. In the context of the United Nations publications programme, the Advisory Committee emphasizes once again the importance of multilingualism.

Information technology

60. The resources allocated for information and communications technology exceed $300 million under the regular budget alone. Comprehensive information on the overall resources devoted by the Organization to ICT under the budgets of peacekeeping missions, the peacekeepng support account and other extrabudgetary funding sources is not available at present. **In this context, the Advisory Committee stresses that effective leadership of the Chief Information Technology Officer and the Office of Information and Communications Technology will be required to ensure successful integration of central information and communications technology functions across the Secretariat and achievement of effective coordination and coherence in the work of the Organization (see General Assembly resolution 63/262, part I, para. 1). An equally essential requirement is the commitment and cooperation with the Office of Information and Communications Technology by heads of departments and offices across the Secretariat. The Committee urges the Secretary-General to foster close collaboration among all relevant entities so as to ensure efficient utilization of the resources made available for the ICT function, and realization of the envisaged benefits, both for Member States and the Secretariat.**

ICT strategy

63. As part of its role in overseeing the global management of information and communications technology, the Office of Information and Communications Technology reviews all budgets from all funding sources for all ICT initiatives and operations of the Secretariat (A/62/793, para. 35(b); A/63/487, para. 21).The Committee notes that a framework for carrying out such a review was put in place for the biennium 2010-2011 (A/64/6 (Introduction), para. 71). However, during its interaction with the representatives of the Secretary-General, the Committee was informed that the Office of Information and Communications Technology had not been able to systematically review the ICT-related proposals of all the departments/offices for the biennium 2010-2011. **The Committee recommends that the Office of Programme Planning Budget and Accounts and the Office of Information and Communications Technology work closely to ensure that appropriate budgetary procedures are established and are fully complied with in the future.**

Enterprise systems

70. The Advisory Committee notes that activities for enhancing the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) or developing interfaces between other systems and IMIS are planned under several budget sections for the biennium 2010-2011. **The Committee recommends that activities related to enhancing or developing systems that are destined to be replaced by the ERP should be kept to the required minimum, and that proposals for strengthening existing applications or introducing new systems for the management of resources should be reviewed and approved in accordance with the procedures of the new ICT management framework.**

Construction and major maintenance

73. The Advisory Committee notes the background information provided in section 33, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, with regard to oversight of overseas projects and notes that the Secretary-General proposes the establishment of two new Professional positions (1 P-5 and 1 P-2) under section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, to strengthen management and oversight of major maintenance and new construction projects at offices away from Headquarters. **In the Committee's view, the arrangements for leadership by OCSS have not been adequately elaborated. Furthermore, a suitable mechanism for coordination between Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters should be put in place. The Committee continues to believe that the arrangements for planning, managing and monitoring projects for the development of new facilities and major maintenance, as well as the procedures for approval of such projects, require a thorough review. It therefore reiterates its recommendation that the Secretary-General review these arrangements and procedures, with a view, inter alia, to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all involved in such projects.**

Rule of law activities

75. The Advisory Committee sought clarification concerning the various roles of the entities in the United Nations system involved in rule of law activities. It was informed that the functions of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Rule of Law Unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office of Legal Affairs in this area were distinct but mutually supportive in both their rationale and main responsibilities.

79. The Advisory Committee notes the complementary nature of the work of the entities involved with rule of law activities and stresses the importance of coordination among them.

Extrabudgetary resources

80. Estimates of extrabudgetary resources account for a significant portion of United Nations expenditures. The bulk of extrabudgetary resources are related to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

81. The Committee reiterates its position that all extrabudgetary posts should be administered and managed with the same rigor as regular budget posts.