Chapter III

Administrative and staff matters

In 2015, the United Nations continued its efforts to strengthen the organizational and administrative functioning of the Organization, with a view to implementing the decisions and mandates of its legislative bodies more efficiently. The General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, including the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the Independent Audit Advisory Committee and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) examined issues of managerial reform and external and internal oversight. The Assembly approved the recommendations of those bodies for improving internal controls, accountability mechanisms and organizational efficiency, including for promoting effective information and technology governance and procurement.

The year marked the tenth year of planning and implementation of a new enterprise resource planning system (Umoja) throughout the Secretariat, a complex, high-value project aimed at modernizing a wide range of business processes and systems that were crucial to the efficient and effective management of the Organization. The Secretary-General put forward a status update on the implementation of the revised information and communications technology (ICT) strategy endorsed by the General Assembly in 2014. The use of new communications platforms was at the focus of the discussion in the Committee on Information. In line with his goal of creating a truly global UN Secretariat, the Secretary-General proposed the development of a global service delivery model that would deliver high-quality, timely and standardized administrative services under one common set of rules.

The Capital Master Plan (CMP), the project to renovate the United Nations Headquarters complex, was almost completed in 2015, although some residual works still needed to be done and the renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and of the South Annex Building remained still outstanding. The Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to the renovation of both buildings, requesting the Secretary-General to ensure the commemorative value of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

Planning moved forward on the strategic heritage plan project, which aimed to renovate the facilities at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and to construct a new building on the premises. Welcoming the continued support of the Government of Switzerland for the project, the General Assembly approved the proposed project scope, schedule and estimated cost in the maximum amount of 836,500,000 Swiss francs for the period from 2014 to 2023, authorizing the renovation and construction phase to begin. The Assembly also approved the project scope, schedule and maximum overall cost for the renovation of the conference facilities of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, including Africa Hall, in the amount of $56.9 million.

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) considered the conditions of service applicable to Professional and General Service categories of staff, locally recruited staff and staff in the field by, among others, continuing its review of the common system compensation package.

Reform of human resources management continued, encompassing a number of issues that included the new mobility and career development framework, the assessment of the system of desirable ranges and performance management. The General Assembly approved a refined managed mobility framework, and preparations continued for its phased implementation slated to begin in 2016. To promote multilingualism and strengthen efforts to ensure parity among the six official languages, the Secretary-General in June appointed the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for General Assembly and Conference Management as the new Coordinator for Multilingualism.

Staff of the UN Secretariat and related entities of the UN system totalled 76,115, with the number of global Secretariat staff numbering 41,081 as at 30 June, comprising all categories of staff holding permanent/continuing, fixed-term and temporary contracts, recruited both internationally and locally from 189 Member States.

United Nations personnel continued to work in environments with unprecedented significant security challenges as armed conflict had become intertwined with terrorism and violent extremism. The evolving global security environment had profound impacts on the Organization, both in terms of risks to personnel and programme implementation. Although the number of attacks against UN premises had risen in the first six months of 2015, enhanced security measures and practices had strengthened the safety and security of personnel around the globe, thereby enabling the United Nations to stay and deliver its programmes. A significantly improved security risk management process was nearly complete, with its roll-out set for December 2015.
Despite a general downward trend in the number of allegations, instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel persisted, but sustained efforts were made to implement the policy of zero tolerance and strengthen inter-agency activities to prevent acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Secretary-General remained fully committed to a zero-tolerance policy and put forward a number of proposals for strengthening protective and preventative measures, based on wide-ranging recommendations of an interdepartmental and inter-agency working group whose report was considered in January 2015 at a high-level meeting of UN senior leaders.

The Ethics Office continued to promote the highest standards of integrity and to foster a culture of respect, transparency and accountability across the Organization. The Office also administered the financial disclosure programme; as at 31 July, a total of 5,488 staff members of the Secretariat, peacekeeping missions and UN entities were enrolled in the programme.

The UN system of justice, which became operational in 2009, served the staff in the Secretariat and the separately administered funds and programmes. The system offered an informal (Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services) and a formal (Management Evaluation Unit, Dispute Tribunal, Appeals Tribunal, Office of Staff Legal Assistance) option to address grievances and solve staff-management disputes. An Interim Independent Assessment Panel, appointed in March 2015, found that the new system to a great extent met the objectives set by the General Assembly, but further improvement was possible and necessary.

To examine and assess the probative value of new information regarding the investigation into the death and circumstances resulting in the tragic death in 1961 of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him, the Secretary-General in March appointed an independent panel of experts. The panel found significant new information as having sufficient probative value to further pursue the hypothesis of aerial attack or other interference as the possible cause of the crash.

The United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) recorded 126,892 active participants at the end of 2015.

Administrative matters

Managerial reform and oversight

Procurement

Report of Secretary-General. Pursuant to resolution 68/263 [YUN 2014, p. 1657], the Secretary-General submitted a comprehensive report [A/69/710] on UN procurement activities. The Secretary-General described the transformation of UN procurement from transactional purchasing to supply chain management, which entailed strategic interaction across departments, locations, operational mandates and budget cycles. It was expected that the full implementation of Umoja, the enterprise resource planning system, throughout the Secretariat would complement this procurement strategy by enhancing the coordination of several interrelated business processes, resulting in improved efficiency and a reduction in duplicative administrative processes. The Secretary-General indicated that the Procurement Division was undertaking several key initiatives that would further advance the strategic approach to UN procurement and modernize the acquisition process. Those initiatives included: using Umoja business intelligence as a strategic business tool; changing the procurement process for air charter services, in order to increase competition and ensure alignment with industry best practices; continuously professionalizing the Procurement Practice Group; implementing an electronic tendering (e-tendering) option; and planning a tailored procurement strategy for modularization of global field support.

The report also dealt with the next generation of mission-critical contracts for food rations and fuel, and featured the Regional Procurement Office, which had been established in 2013 as a pilot project in Entebbe, Uganda to consolidate procurement requirements of several UN peacekeeping missions.

The Secretary-General noted that there was a need for further consideration of sustainable procurement, one which would integrated requirements, specifications and criteria compatible with and supportive of the protection of the environment, social progress and economic development, by seeking resource efficiency, improving the quality of products and services and ultimately optimizing costs. In order to effectively move forward towards implementing sustainable procurement, the thorough analysis of cost and non-cost benefits had to be undertaken, and segments of the UN procurement market had to be defined; should Member States approve this approach in principle, the Procurement Division would, in cooperation with other Secretariat stakeholders, initiate a low-impact pilot project. The Secretary-General also highlighted existing tools and a vision for rapid response, which allowed for emergency delegation of procurement authority to speed up the delivery of urgently needed goods and services in force majeure situations.

The Secretary-General observed that the Procurement Division operations were in transition from a more transactional to a strategic partner in procurement and supply chain management. Such a strategic shift would result in greater efficiencies, a more intelligent use of resources and enhanced capability to respond to crisis situations, and would foster a greater
degree of professionalization of procurement staff. In its leadership capacity, the Procurement Division would continue to extend its support and guidance to global procurement activities and identify areas for inter-agency cooperation.

In March [A/69/809], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (acabq) commented on the Secretary-General’s report and made a number of recommendations.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 2 April [meeting 84], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee [A/69/702/Add.1], adopted resolution 69/273 (Procurement) without vote [agenda item 131].

**Oversight**

**Internal oversight**

OIOS activities


During the reporting period, oios issued 324 oversight reports, including 12 reports to the Assembly and 46 closure reports. The reports included 1,031 recommendations to improve internal controls, accountability mechanisms and organizational efficiency and effectiveness, of which 109 were classified as critical to the Organization.

The financial implications of oios recommendations issued during the reporting period amounted to approximately $10.5 million. The recommendations were aimed at cost savings, recovery of overpayments, efficiency gains and other improvements. The financial implications of recommendations issued in prior periods that were satisfactorily implemented during the reporting period totalled approximately $90,000. An addendum to the report [A/70/318 (Part I)/Add.1] provided an analysis of the status of implementation of the recommendations, a breakdown of recommendations with financial implications and a list of all reports issued for all areas of oios work issued between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015, including those relating to peacekeeping.

**Independent Audit Advisory Committee report.** In an August report [A/70/284] on its activities from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015 (see p. 000), the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, as per Assembly resolution 68/21 [YUN 2013, p. 1473], provided comments, views and opinions on the audit activities and other functions of oios, focusing its assessment on the operational independence, effectiveness, internal management and efficiency of the Office.

The Committee recommended that oios finalize the investigation manual without delay as the lack of such a manual could create confusion about the Office’s procedures and methods of operation. It considered it important that all involved, namely oios, management, the General Assembly and other interested parties, had a common and clear understanding of how the Office operated across the full range of services that it offered and the important contributions that it made. Progress needed to be made in two areas: advice and public comments, and investigations procedures.

The Committee was not aware of any formal reviews, other than the Committee’s own work, that had systematically examined oios as a whole and the working relationship across the divisions. It believed that a central intake system was essential in ensuring the completeness of reporting of the universe of all potential and actual investigations; this would contribute to a more accurate reporting of fraud and presumptive fraud, an issue that the Board of Auditors, the Joint Inspection Unit (jiu) and oios had raised as a serious problem. The Committee recommended that the Assembly mandate a holistic review of the Office, which should have a strong implementation mandate to strengthen and streamline the operations and structure of all three oios divisions, and assess long-standing issues such as opportunities to improve collaboration across the investigation, audit and inspection and evaluation functions; the high vacancy rate; and inter- and intra-office dynamics, particularly in the Investigations Division.

The Advisory Committee reported that it had been engaged in discussions with the Board of Auditors, the Under-Secretary-General (usg) for Management, the Controller and the Project Director of Umoja on a number of related issues, such as: the status of implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (ipssas) in the United Nations; benefit realization plans for both ipssas and Umoja; implementation of Umoja, the interdependence of Umoja and full ipssas implementation, the progress made following the launch of Umoja cluster 3 and the challenges ahead, including the launch of Umoja cluster 4; and internal control system and UN fraud policy.

The Committee welcomed the progress that the Secretariat had made in implementing ipssas and Umoja. It looked forward to receiving details of the benefits from ipssas, which were to be realized in conjunction with the full implementation of Umoja,
and reiterated its recommendation that management continue to monitor rigorously key milestones and the overall timeline for Umoja implementation by identifying and managing current and any emerging key risks to the achievement of the objectives of the Umoja project.

The Committee commended the progress made in improving the internal control system and stressed the significance of educating managers and all affected staff on the importance of strong internal controls. It urged management to draft a manual on internal control to provide guidance to managers and staff on implementing and maintaining the forthcoming framework.

With regard to the coordination among UN oversight bodies, the Committee, having reviewed the oios report “Thematic evaluation of monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals: lessons learned for the post-2015 era” [see p. 000], was encouraged that such monitoring and evaluation efforts appeared to be well under way. The Committee urged oios, as part of the central role that it played in the Meeting of Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations and Multilateral Financial Institutions and the United Nations Evaluation Group, to work with its counterparts in other UN audit and evaluation organizations to develop a coordinated strategy for monitoring and assessment of UN performance in delivering on its commitments as part of the implementation of the forthcoming sustainable development goals.

The Committee believed that opportunities might exist for UN internal audit and evaluation organizations to coordinate with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions and interested member institutions, so that individual reviews would provide the United Nations and national decision makers with a more complete picture of progress towards the sustainable development goals.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 14 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/70/563], adopted resolution 70/111 (Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services) without vote [agenda items 132 & 142].

On 23 December (decision 70/554), the Assembly decided that the agenda items on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations and on the report on the activities of oios, would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2015) session.

OIOS programme budget for 2016–2017

In a May report [A/70/86], the Independent Audit Advisory Committee presented its comments, advice and recommendations on the proposed programme budget of oios for the 2016–2017 biennium.

Projected resources for 2016–2017 from the regular budget, combined with other assessed and extrabudgetary funds, totalled $126,906,300, compared with $122,657,100 for the previous biennium, which was an increase of 3.5 per cent. The Committee noted that while the total budget had increased overall, the extrabudgetary component had increased by a higher rate, of 8.8 per cent, from $20,109,500 for 2014–2015 to an estimated $21,869,300 for 2016–2017. This was largely owing to the proposed increase in funding from other UN organizations (3.8 per cent) and support for substantive activities (34.3 per cent).

The proposed regular programme budget was estimated at $42,520,000 (after recosting), which was an increase of $1,887,900, or 4.6 per cent, compared with the 2014–2015 appropriation. The regular budget for 2016–2017 was estimated at $41,482,600 before recosting, which was an increase of $850,500, or 2.1 per cent, compared with the previous biennium, primarily due to a proposed transfer of the resident auditor functions for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (unama) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (unami) to the Internal Audit Division of oios. The Committee noted the efforts that oios had been putting into the recruitment process, but reiterated that particular attention should be made to address vacancy rates.

The proposed budget for programme support for 2016–2017 amounted to $2,540,400 (before recosting), which represented a net decrease of $130,200, or 4.9 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $2,670,600 for 2014–2015, a reduction that was mainly attributable to the reduction of the number of posts from eight to seven.

The Committee welcomed the progress made by oios in implementing the web-based tracking and audit management system. It believed that combating fraud, especially by implementing partners, should feature prominently in the workplan of the Office.

The Committee endorsed the workplan and related budget for the Inspection and Evaluation Division, which called for the maintenance of the same level of resources as during the previous biennium.

Taking into account that the proposed programme budget for investigations for 2016–2017 continued to be based on the five-year trend analysis of the intake rather than a combination that would include a risk-based workplan, as the Committee had long advanced, as well as the high vacancy rate, and without prejudice to the ongoing process of strengthening the investigation function in the Secretariat, the Committee could not provide an overall assurance as to the adequacy of the proposed level of investigation resources.
External oversight
Joint Inspection Unit

At its resumed sixty-ninth (2015) session, the Assembly had before it JIU’s 2014 annual report [YUN 2014, p. 1661], including its programme of work for 2015.

Note of Secretary-General. In response to Assembly resolution 65/270 [YUN 2011, p. 1409], the Secretary-General in January submitted a note [A/69/747] on support provided by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) member organizations in the preparation of JIU reports, notes and confidential letters. The Secretary-General, in his capacity as chair of CEB and through the CEB secretariat, provided substantive support to the Unit.

The CEB secretariat continued to work closely with JIU on the preparation of its annual work programme and maintained a constant dialogue with the Unit to ensure a smooth report preparation and to identify methods for enhancing the value of JIU reports.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 2 April [meeting 84], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/69/846], adopted resolution 69/275 (Joint Inspection Unit) without vote [agenda item 138].

At its seventieth (2015) session, the Assembly on 18 September (decision 70/504) adopted its agenda items and allocated item 140 on JIU to the Fifth Committee.

JIU activities. In its annual report to the Assembly [A/70/34], JIU reviewed its activities in 2015, during which it published five system-wide reports, one covering several organizations, on the following topics: mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work [A/70/678, JIU/REP/2015/1]; parameters of a comprehensive UN system support for small island developing States [A/69/921, JIU/REP/2015/2]; public information and communications policies and practices in the UN system [JIU/REP/2015/4]; review of activities and resources devoted to address climate change in the UN system organizations [A/70/627, JIU/REP/2015/5]; and review of the organizational ombudsman services across the UN system [JIU/REP/2015/6]. One report was prepared to review the cooperation among the UN regional commissions [JIU/REP/2015/3]. A series of management letters were issued on: staff safety and security [JIU/ML/2015/1]; the World Tourism Organization’s (UNWTO) efforts towards IPSAS compliance [JIU/ML/2015/2]; assessment of post-award contract management processes in 14 UN system organizations; and review of the acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations [JIU/ML/2015/3–5].

The Unit carried out a number of other activities, including the continuation of the reform process, strengthening the outreach and resource mobilization activities and enhancing its cooperation with various management and oversight forums. JIU also undertook two pilot projects mandated by the Assembly for independent system-wide evaluation in the context of the quadrennial policy review of the operational activities of the development system.

In selecting and carrying out its work programme over the year, the Unit focused both on the strategic and the operational dimensions of the activities of the participating organizations. The paramount objectives of enhancing efficiency and effectiveness within the organizations themselves and coordination among them were kept in mind, as was the need for making practical and actionable recommendations to the legislative/governing bodies and the executive heads of the participating organizations.

The value of the web-based tracking system developed and used by JIU for monitoring the acceptance and implementation of its recommendations had been recognized by Member States and the year witnessed an increase in the number of its users. The issue of ongoing support for its periodic upgrade and maintenance, however, remained a challenge.

The Unit also maintained the momentum of its internal reform by updating its internal working procedures. The revised version contained several new features, such as strengthening the quality assurance; paying greater attention to the need for more effective management; oversight and accountability practices and procedures; suggesting new ways for the presentation of reports to the legislative/governing bodies; and defining the guidelines for dealing systematically with comments and observations from participating organizations.

In resolution 70/247 of 23 December (see p. 000), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consider options for hosting the JIU website in-house and to report on this matter in the context of the forthcoming report on the implementation of the information and communications strategy for the Secretariat.

On the same date (decision 70/554), the Assembly decided that the agenda item on JIU would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2015) session.

Conference management

Committee on Conferences

The Committee on Conferences held its organizational session on 22 April (reconvened on 29 June), and its substantive session from 8 to 14 September [A/70/32]. At its organizational session, the Committee elected its officers to serve in 2015 and adopted its provisional agenda [A/AC.172/2015/L.1] and decided to include in its programme of work for the
year, prior to its substantive session or upon request, informal briefings by the Secretariat on issues relating to conference management of interest to Member States.

At the same session, the Committee reviewed the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields for 2016 and 2017 [E/2015/L.8] and recommended its adoption to the Economic and Social Council. The Chair transmitted the Committee’s recommendation by a letter of 1 July [E/2015/85] to the President of the Council.

On 8 September, the Committee adopted the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2016 and 2017 [A/AC.172/2015/L.2]. Following approval by the Assembly in resolution 69/250 [YUN 2014, p. 1665], the revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations in 2015 was issued in February as a Committee document [A/AC.172/2015/2].

At its substantive session, the Committee also discussed meetings management, including the utilization of conference-serving resources and facilities and the impact of the capital master plan (CMP) (phased approach) [YUN 2005, p. 1555] on meetings held at UN Headquarters; integrated global management; matters related to documentation and publications; and matters related to translation and interpretation.

The Committee approved requests from four bodies for additional meetings, extended meetings, an extended session and a meeting outside of regular meeting hours. It recommended that the General Assembly explicitly authorize six bodies to meet in New York during the main part of its seventieth (2015) session, on the understanding that all such meetings would be allocated conference services on an “as available” basis, in such a way that the work of the Assembly and its Main Committees would not be impeded. Those bodies were listed in a letter dated 8 September [A/70/366] from the Committee Chair to the Assembly President.

On 15 September (decision 70/501), the Assembly authorized those subsidiary organs to meet as requested.

Meetings management

In his July report on the pattern of conferences [A/70/122], the Secretary-General provided statistical data and an analysis of the utilization of conference resources allocated to a core sample of bodies that met in Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna, as well as supplementary information. He noted that the overall utilization for the meetings of the core sample with interpretation at all four duty stations in 2014 was 86 per cent, an improvement of 4 percentage points over 2013, as a result of fewer cancellations and less time lost owing to late starts and early conclusions, in addition to more successful reassignments in 2014. At the four duty stations, the number of meetings with interpretation in the core sample increased by 8 per cent, from 1,846 in 2013 to 1,996 in 2014.

The total number of meetings with interpretation increased by 6 per cent, from 6,695 in 2013 to 7,114 in 2014. The utilization factor for all meetings with interpretation serviced by the four duty stations increased from 77 per cent in 2013 to 80 per cent in 2014. This was attributed to a decrease in cancellations by 11 per cent and a reduction in time lost by 8 per cent.

On 8 September, the Committee on Conferences considered the data and analysis presented in the Secretary-General’s report. The Committee also heard a report by the Chair on the consultations held with the intergovernmental bodies whose utilization rate had fallen below the 80 per cent benchmark over the past three years, namely, the Committee on Information, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group, the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, and the Executive Board of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the letter sent to the President of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), outlining possible measures for improving utilization rates. As a result of those efforts, the Committee on Information and the President of the UNICEF Board agreed to make greater efforts to improve their utilization rate, and notable improvements were recorded in the utilization rates of UNCITRAL, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.

The Committee also considered the provision of services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet “as required” and meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States, and the utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office of Nairobi (UNON) and of the conference centre of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

The Advisory Committee, in its October report [A/70/432], commented on the Secretary-General’s report and made a number of recommendations.

Integrated global management

As indicated by the Secretary-General [A/70/122], single information technology (IT) systems were operational, with maintenance work and enhancements continuing as part of the stabilization phase [YUN 2014, p. 1663].

A governance mechanism had been established to coordinate IT initiatives by cultivating effective relationships between the business and IT units at the four major duty stations. A steering group, chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for General Assembly and Conference Management and compris-
ing senior management at all duty stations, had been established to approach priority issues systematically. Its responsibilities included overseeing the harmonization of workflows and the exchange of best practices within and among duty stations, the mainstreaming of global IT systems and the streamlining of global reporting structures and procedures to ensure clarity and to contribute to the achievement of the Department’s integrated global management objectives.

In response to Assembly resolutions 68/251 [YUN 2013, p. 1478] and 69/250, the USC for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Directors General of the UN Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna had agreed on a clear delineation of their responsibilities concerning conference management policies, operations and resource utilization and had proposed revisions to the bulletins of the Secretary-General that defined the organization of the Department and of the Offices.

The report noted that the total amount of translation work shared continued to be modest owing to limited space capacity at the four main duty stations. The Department adhered scrupulously to the principle of equal treatment of all language services in terms of working conditions and allocation of resources, while taking due account of the specificities of each service.

New initiatives to strengthen integrated global management included centralization of the roster of contractual translators to which all duty stations would have access henceforth. The steering group had also endorsed the recommendation that all duty stations be invited to participate in the organization and conduct of the language competitive examinations. Recommendations had been made to harmonize work processes and standardize best practices across duty stations. Estimated savings through implementation of the integrated global management rule were $1,735,000, which accrued most often to the host countries or to the substantive departments.

The report noted that the Umoja was launched at UN on 1 June, while the Department prepared for the launch of Umoja on 1 November.

The bulletins of the Secretary-General on the organization of the Department and the UN Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna had been submitted to the Department of Management for review and consultation; they would be completed by the end of 2015.

Performance measurement

**E-survey.** The Secretary-General reported [A/70/122] that the global e-survey captured feedback from Member States on common indicators covering meeting services, translation and interpretation services and the overall quality of conference services at the four major duty stations. In New York, additional information and ratings were collected on technical Secretariat services, though the response rate remained low. To complement the e-survey, the Division of Conference Management of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) identified six meetings at which participants were invited to provide additional views and comments. More than 93 per cent of the 62 respondents gave a rating of “good” or “very good” for the overall quality of conference services in Geneva.

**Documents management and digitization**

The Secretary-General reported [A/70/122] on the timely submission of documents in New York, where the overall rate of timely submission by author departments was 92 per cent, although only 71 per cent of the submitter met the benchmark of 90 per cent, given that many offices responsible for relatively few documents fell short. Of the documents submitted on time and within word limits, 98 per cent were processed in a timely manner. Consequently, 75 per cent of all pre-session documents issued in New York met the mandated timely issuance benchmarks, up from 71 per cent in 2013 and 72 per cent in 2012.

At UNOG, the timely submission rate was 88 per cent, up from 87 per cent in 2013 and 85 per cent in 2012. Owing to capacity constraints, however, the timely processing rate fell to 41 per cent for Secretariat reports and 21 per cent for non-Secretariat reports, compared with 50 and 22 per cent, respectively, in 2013.

UNOV recorded a timely submission rate of 93 per cent in 2014, down from 98 per cent in 2013. The number of slotted documents increased markedly, from 162 in 2013 to 214 in 2014, while timely processing rate rose to 76 per cent. Consequently, overall compliance with the mandated time frame was 88 per cent, compared with 77 per cent in 2013.

At UNON, the rate of timely submission rose sharply from 22 per cent in 2013 to 73 per cent in 2014. In total, 22 documents were slotted for the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which was the only calendar meeting serviced by the Environment Programme. The processing compliance rate was 81 per cent. Only 3 of 16 documents submitted on time and within their word limit missed their processing deadlines owing to the high vacancy rates and consequent lack of capacity in some language units.

Regarding compliance with the simultaneous distribution policy, in New York official documents were generally distributed both electronically and in hard copy only when they were available in all the official languages. UNOG, however, was yet to overcome the systemic challenges created by the establishment of the universal periodic review process. The situation required careful analysis aimed at reducing the rate of non-simultaneous issuance without significantly increasing costs.
The Secretary-General also reported that the Department of Public Information (DPI) and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) were working together to increase online access to historical UN documents. An estimated 17 million paper documents existed in UN repositories, mostly from the pre-digital era before 1993; some 3 million of those had been identified as particularly important and in need of urgent digitization. The complementary skills and resources of both Departments had been melded into a single team to address this challenge. As at April 2015, 360,000 documents had been digitized, catalogued and made available.

Multilingualism

In response to Assembly resolution 69/250, the Secretary-General in 2015 appointed the USG for General Assembly and Conference Management as the new Coordinator for Multilingualism. The role of the Coordinator was defined in Assembly resolutions 54/64 [YUN 1999, p. 1335] and 61/266 [YUN 2007, p. 1515] and set out in a 2006 report of the Secretary-General [YUN 2006, p. 1701]. The responsibility of the Coordinator was based on the cooperation of all the departments concerned and the availability of the necessary input that needed to be defined in the context of the agenda item on the pattern of conferences.

The Department continued to focus on supporting multilingualism by concentrating on the simultaneous and timely issuance of high-quality parliamentary documentation in the official languages, and providing interpretation services to the meetings of bodies entitled thereto. DPI and other departments and offices continued to manage and monitor the public UN websites to ensure their adherence to the principle of multilingualism.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 11 September [meeting 103], the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/324 [draft A/69/L.86 & Add.1] (Multilingualism) without vote [agenda item 122].

Translation and interpretation

Enhancing the capacity of language professionals

In his report [A/70/122], the Secretary-General stated that competitive examinations for the recruitment of candidates to fill language posts were held as needed, depending on the status of the rosters of successful candidates and the projected staffing needs of the service or section in question.

Collaboration with partner universities in the memorandum of understanding network continued to be strengthened, culminating in the holding of the Fourth Conference of Memorandum of Understanding Universities (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, April). Potential candidates for traineeships continued to be identified through ad hoc testing and outreach efforts.

Other initiatives included enhancement of the form and content of the online careers portal, with support from the universities in the memorandum of understanding network in translating content into all the official languages; use of social media to announce the holding of language competitive examinations; initiatives to raise the Department’s profile; targeting of prospective freelancers through professional bodies such as the International Association of Conference Translators; and more frequent exchanges of staff with sister international organizations. An analysis of the outreach programme showed that 56 per cent of the successful examination candidates in 2010–2014 had attended at least one of the universities in the network.

Further expansion of the network of universities would be governed by the projected staffing needs of individual language services, the capacity of those services to provide cooperation and support to additional universities and the desirability of ensuring equitable geographical coverage of the network. Outreach to universities in Africa was continuing under the Africa project and with pedagogical and other forms of assistance from UNODC. In order to identify potential partner universities in other regions, including Central America and the Caribbean, the assistance of permanent missions had been solicited.

DGACM ensured the quality, and in particular the accuracy, of its translation output by maintaining a rigorous selection process for its language staff, providing intensive in-house training and mentoring to new recruits during a two-year probationary period, editing all documents submitted in English to facilitate accurate translation into the other official languages and providing written guidelines and instructions, terminological databases, reference support and computer-assisted and machine translation tools.

In October [A/70/432], ACABQ commented on translation and interpretation activities and made a number of recommendations.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 13 November [meeting 52], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/70/450], adopted resolution 70/9 (Pattern of conferences) without vote [agenda item 137].

On 21 December (decision 70/554), the Assembly decided that the agenda item on pattern of conferences would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2015) session.

UN information systems

Information and communications technology

Report of Secretary-General. In September [A/70/564 & Corr.1], the Secretary-General reported on
the status of implementation of the information and communications technology (ICT) strategy for the United Nations. The revised ICT strategy submitted by the Secretary-General in 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 1672] had been endorsed by Assembly resolution 69/262 [ibid., p. 1631]. The Secretary-General’s report responded to the Assembly’s decisions as set out in that resolution.

The Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) had conducted a comprehensive assessment to determine the baseline of ICT assets and resources; all ICT entities across the Secretariat had been asked to participate in surveys and interviews. The output of the assessment informed the exhaustive project management of the ICT strategy, its benchmarking and governance, and its five-year investment forecast. The results enabled the development of the human capital management strategy and investment planning and the plan for system retirements, standardization, consolidation and harmonization; they also informed the strategy’s risk management for ICT in the United Nations.

In his status update on key initiatives, the Secretary-General reported on the mainstreaming of Umoja. The Office and the Umoja team continued to ensure a successful transition and was conducting a detailed assessment to identify the total cost of operation for ICT. As a result of the assessment, the five-year budget planning assumptions for 2015–2019 had been determined, taking into account staffing and support, connectivity, upgrades and enhancements, and software licence and maintenance. The assessment identified 461 applications for decommissioning through Umoja deployment; over five years, the potential reduction from assessment decommissioning was estimated at $37.6 million.

The Secretary-General also put forward a 10-point action plan to strengthen information security, which included an updated standard security configuration for all workstations; a comprehensive email gateway filtering system; mandatory information security awareness training; segmentation of network zones; deployment of an intrusion detection system; subscription to a cybersecurity service/feedback; approval and promulgation of pending draft policies; a high-level policy on information sensitivity, classification and handling; implementation of minimum requirements for public websites; and mandatory reporting of information security incidents.

Turning to the implementation of operational resilience management across the Secretariat, the Secretary-General reported that 171 critical systems and applications supporting critical processes had been identified. An internal review in July 2015 had revealed a systemic weakness in disaster recovery. Most duty stations had basic disaster recovery that allowed for local recovery of critical systems in 24 hours; this capability was fragmented and inefficient and did not consistently ensure resilience. A small number of enterprise applications, including Umoja, were hosted in enterprise data centres, with successful annual disaster recovery tests. Continued efforts were being made to improve disaster recovery in the enterprise data centres and the number of critical applications would be reduced. Significant investment and substantially increased annual operations and maintenance costs would be required to provide advanced disaster recovery capabilities.

Inroads had been made to harmonize UN websites, with the goal to move towards a customer-centric approach in which websites had full accessibility across a wide range of devices globally, while migrating to a shared secure platform approach that would reduce costs and ensure standards. A technology platform had been established that ensured that websites could be multilingual and that all official languages could readily be used.

Work had proceeded rapidly on migrating from the unmanaged legacy network to the standardized global network, which serviced 106 Secretariat site locations and 15,025 users. Peacekeeping missions, due to their environment, operated a different satellite-based network which, when coupled with the standardized global network, formed the integrated network for the Secretariat.

The regional technology centres had been established and were partially operational, complementing the regions established for peacekeeping operations. They played a pivotal role in facilitating the cohesive implementation of the Organization’s strategic initiatives. Regional technology centres adhered to a governance model and an annual regional technology centre work plan with goals to implement information security initiatives; harmonize service delivery; standardize the global ICT network; support successful Umoja delivery; and establish procedures to better utilize global contracts. Existing capacities at UN Headquarters and at key offices away from Headquarters had been leveraged to assign regional technology centre status to the existing regional centres at UNON (for Africa), in New York (for the Americas), at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (for Asia) and at UNOG (for Europe).

With regard to global monitoring, enterprise network monitoring centres had been established and would be staffed to provide an end-to-end, around-the-clock visibility of the global network across technical and administrative domains. Comprehensive ICT and infrastructure monitoring across the Organization would be achieved in a phased manner over the next four years. Network monitoring had already been deployed for the Department of Field Support (DFS) networks.

The enterprise data centres were fully operational with data-hosting capacity. The information security
infrastructure had been migrated and fully upgraded and was being administered from the enterprise data centres. Core enterprise systems servicing ICT across the Secretariat had been established at the enterprise service data centres. Umoja, iNeed and e-mail secure gateways had also been established, with disaster recovery and business continuity in place and tested. The provisioning and operations of and support for core infrastructure services had been centralized. The Enterprise Service Desk provided global, around-the-clock coverage from five enterprise service desks located in Bangkok; Brindisi, Italy; Geneva; Nairobi; and New York. The principal objectives of the Enterprise Service Desk were to constitute a cost-effective and more efficient shared-service global model, serve as a single point of contact for service requests, and achieve scale and facilitate in-house development of Umoja support expertise. All application help desks were being consolidated into the Enterprise Service Desk, which would allow for target reductions to be reached.

The Secretary-General reported that during the 2014–2015 biennium, the United Nations was spending $5,427 per user, if 10,278 regular budget posts and 123,945 personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations were taken into account. Exclusive of the resources allocated to Umoja, the Organization would be spending 2.9 per cent of its regular budget, 5.5 per cent of its peacekeeping budget, 4.3 per cent of resources allocated to special political missions, 0.1 per cent of extrabudgetary resources and 9.1 per cent of support account resources towards ICT during the 2016–2017 biennium. The planning assumptions for 2018–2019 used the 2016–2017 biennium baseline, in which the United Nations would be spending approximately 3.0 per cent of its budget financed from various sources towards ICT programmes and activities. The benchmarking data would be considered in the creation of future state (both short- and long-term) objectives to quantify 2018–2019 ICT budget proposals, subject to a budget outline to be established by Member States.

The Secretary-General estimated that, with the implementation of the road map and measures outlined in the strategy, the increase in ICT investment requirements would be contained to between plus 13 per cent and plus 27 per cent over the 2016–2017 budget proposals.

The Secretary-General observed that progress had been made in less than a year to modernize and transform ICT in the United Nations. Governance and project assurance frameworks were firmly in place; the mainstreaming of Umoja was proceeding on schedule; activities to strengthen information security and disaster recovery had advanced; improvements had been made to application management, the network and infrastructure, and global engineering and conferencing; the enterprise application centres, regional technology centres, Enterprise Service Desk and global monitoring were established; the consolidation of ICT functions across the Organization was ongoing; and business intelligence and analytics had been inaugurated. The assessment of ICT budget and resources indicated future investment requirements, and a joint analysis of the ICT workforce had taken place ahead of the development of proposals, which would be presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-first (2016) session. Implementation of the strategy in its first year had positioned ICT as an active partner in aligning with the goals of the United Nations to achieve fully the strategy’s mission of a unified global provision of ICT to enable the successful delivery of UN mandates.

In November [A/70/7/Add.18], ACABQ commented on the Secretary-General’s report and made a number of recommendations.

**Report of Board of Auditors.** In a December note [A/70/581], the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly a report of the Board of Auditors on progress in the handling of ICT affairs in the Secretariat. The report provided a succinct list of key facts of ICT, such as time line, budget and resources, and strategy. The estimated annualized ICT budget, excluding Umoja, amounted to $663.7 million during the biennium 2014–2015, 72 per cent of which related to peacekeeping operations. Estimated total ICT workforce was 4,398. Applications in use across the United Nations were 2,200, down from 2,400 in 2013. Locations in which ICT was used numbered 376, and estimated users of ICT were 70,030.

The Board noted that the Administration had taken action to respond to the Board’s 2012 report and recommendations [YUN 2012, p. 1472]. It had developed and agreed to a revised ICT strategy and had begun restructuring ICT to support its implementation. The strategy was a pragmatic first step in responding to the Board’s concerns. It focused on standardization of ICT policies, applications and procedures, and harmonization of various support structures. Such activities had been necessary as ICT sought to establish the governance, infrastructure and technical ability required for the Administration to implement the strategy successfully. Important steps, however, had been taken to improve information security, and progress had been made in defining structures and policies. Work had also been undertaken to examine the budget baseline for the existing ICT landscape, to provide an indicative five-year budget projection and to begin establishing the Organization’s future ICT funding priorities.

The Administration had reported that implementation of critical ICT projects was 45 per cent complete only eight months into strategy implementation. The figure of 45 per cent, however, related only to those projects and phases of projects
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underway in 2015 and did not represent overall progress. While some initiatives had been implemented, for example establishing an enterprise data centre and a global service help desk, in the main, delivery of the strategy had yet to fully move beyond the preparatory phase into implementation and realization of benefits. Overall progress towards achieving its three main aims had been limited. All projects being run by OICT in support of Umoja were expected to finish later than originally planned in 2013. Regional structures had been established and harmonization activities were progressing but considerably slower than planned, and innovation remained a lower-priority future aspiration.

Any revised ICT strategy would need to evolve and adapt over time, and a global ICT strategy would unlikely be successful without the full collaboration and support of all heads of business units. The strategy itself recognized that it was dependent on clear governance, strong leadership and optimal use of resources. Significant improvements were needed in all three of these areas.

The Board identified the following key findings: the revised ICT strategy was pragmatic and focused on standardization of ICT policies, applications and procedures, and harmonization of various support structures; the Board was unable to assure that overall implementation of the revised strategy was on schedule and within budget; governance and management structures for ICT affairs had been revised, but accountability and authorities had not been formally updated; the Administration had taken steps to improve information security, but there was a lack of formal authority and capacity to ensure compliance with policies and procedures, particularly beyond Headquarters; the Administration had attempted a five-year indicative budget projection for ICT, but it was based on incomplete data.

To maximize the chances of successful implementation of the strategy and the achievement of its aims, the Board made a number of recommendations, all of which had been accepted by the Administration: clarify the role and authority of the Chief Information Technology Officer in field operations by setting out clearly the activities that required strong central control and those that required or merited operational freedom; reassess the realism of the timetable for implementing the strategy and strengthen the project management approach, including the introduction of independent assurance arrangements; as a matter of urgency, formalize corporate ICT policies and procedures, including governance structures and appropriate delegations of authority, to ensure that the necessary authorities and accountabilities were in place to support implementation of the strategy; establish a robust compliance framework with the necessary authorities to ensure adherence to Secretariat-wide ICT policies, including peacekeeping operations; further refine and improve the quality of data underpinning the five-year forecast of ICT expenditure by increasing visibility of actual expenditure and the status of ICT assets across the Secretariat, including peacekeeping operations; develop a statement of the expected costs and benefits of implementing the revised strategy, to enable strategic activities to be prioritized and resourced appropriately; and increase the visibility of senior management in leading ICT strategy implementation, to ensure that all departments were committed to implementing the revised strategy as mandated by the General Assembly, and that any disagreements or impediments were addressed and resolved in a timely manner.

Report of Secretary-General. In December [A/70/607], the Secretary-General reported on the implementation of the Board’s recommendations (see above). He noted that the Administration recognized that a number of differences remained between the Department of Management and DPS as to the scope and implementation of the ICT strategy. There were, however, ongoing and active efforts by both Departments to reach agreement on the areas in question and to move forward with implementing the strategy as mandated by General Assembly resolution 69/262 [YUN 2014, p. 1631].

The Secretary-General reported that the Administration had accepted all of the Board’s recommendations (one partially). The Administration expressed its sincere appreciation to the Board for its comprehensive audit, in particular the spirit of cooperation with which it had conducted the audit. The Administration also appreciated the Board’s efforts to advance and accelerate the time frame for the audit with a view to enabling a better synchronization of its report issuance with the consideration of the Secretary-General’s report on the status of the ICT strategy implementation (see p. 000).

In response to the Board’s recommendation that the Administration clarify the role and authority of the Chief Information Technology Officer, the Secretary-General said that the Administration partially accepted the recommendation and concurred that a more detailed articulation of specific functions related to the day-to-day operations should be promulgated.

The Administration accepted the recommendation that it assess the realism of the timetable for implementing the strategy and strengthen the project management approach; specific actions in line with the recommendation were already under way and would be continued throughout strategy implementation, and the timetable for implementation would be reassessed.

In response to the recommendation regarding the formalization of ICT policies and procedures, a com-
enterprise set of guidelines, policies and technical procedures had been formulated and documentation establishing ICT governance arrangements was being prepared. A compliance framework had been developed in accordance with another of the Board’s recommendations. As to a forecast of expenditures and the status of ICT assets, the Administration had started eliciting the information required and would include a refined forecast, inclusive of peacekeeping operations and missions. Further, specific actions in line with the recommendation to develop a statement of expected costs and benefits had been initiated; the costs associated with enabling strategic activities had been included in the regular budget submission for the 2014–2015 (see p. 000) fiscal period and were consistent with the estimates provided in the revised ICT strategy. A statement of benefits would be submitted as part of subsequent progress reports on the strategy. Lastly, the Administration had taken steps in response to the Board’s recommendation that senior management play a more visible role in leading ICT strategy implementation by having it included in senior managers’ compacts. ICT governance bodies, such as the ICT Executive Committee and the Management Committee, provided effective forums for addressing and overcoming impediments to strategy implementation. Significant communications and change management efforts had been undertaken and would continue to ensure understanding of the strategy.

In resolution 70/248 A (sect. V) of 23 December (see p. 000), the Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ and underlined the importance of ICT in strengthening oversight and accountability and in increasing the availability of accurate and timely information to support decision-making. It noted the progress in implementing elements of the ICT strategy and emphasized the importance of its implementation across the Organization, but expressed concern at the lack of information and analysis on ICT resources for peacekeeping, and underlined the need for full application of a common security policy, with enhanced disaster recovery capabilities. It requested the Secretary-General to continue to foster deeper coordination and collaboration in implementing the strategy and emphasized the importance of ensuring the availability of appropriate in-house expertise.

**Enterprise resource planning**

In resolution 69/247 (sect. VI) of 2 April (see p. 000), the General Assembly took note of the Secretary-General’s sixth annual progress report on Umoja’s enterprise resource planning (ERP) project, submitted in September 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 1675]. It approved the recommendations of the Board of Auditors in its third annual progress report on the implementation of Umoja [ibid., p. 1676] and endorsed the conclusions and recommendations in the related ACABQ report [ibid.]. The Assembly welcomed the progress made in the implementation of Umoja, but expressed concern about delays and the additional funding requirements. It stressed the centrality of the leadership and oversight of the Secretary-General and senior management and of the commitment by all departments to complete the project and requested the Secretary-General to take proactive measures to address the remaining challenges and risks relating to Umoja implementation and to ensure that the project was fully deployed by December 2018, in line with the revised timeline approved by the Assembly. The Assembly further noted with concern the significant increase over the initially approved budget and the additional resource requirements of $54.3 million for the biennium 2016–2017. It decided to appropriate $5,538,200 of the 2014–2015 programme budget, representing the regular budget share for the additional Umoja project costs to 31 December 2015, and noted that the resource requirements of $22,891,500 would be included in the subsequent requirements for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, and that requirements of $8,492,100 would be funded from extrabudgetary resources in the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015.

**Board of Auditors report.** By a July note [A/70/158], the Secretary-General transmitted to the Assembly the fourth progress report of the Board of Auditors on the implementation of the new UN enterprise resource planning system (Umoja). Annexes to the report provided an overview of the status of implementation of the Board’s recommendations; of the organizations deploying Umoja; and of the functionalities being deployed through Umoja.

The report noted that 2015 marked the tenth year of planning and implementation of Umoja. Difficulties had been encountered at the start of the project, as noted by the Board of Auditors (see below), and implementation plans had been substantially revised on several occasions. The deployment strategy was to roll out the system to different parts of the Organization (clusters) in three functional phases: foundation, a phase which comprised mainly finance and procurement processes essential to supporting the requirements of the International Public Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and which had been implemented in peacekeeping operations from November 2013 and in 17 field-based special political missions as from March 2014, and would be implemented in the remaining UN entities starting in June 2015; extension 1, a phase which mainly involved payroll and human resources management processes, including travel, due to be implemented across UN entities and peacekeeping operations in two clusters, as from
June and November 2015; extension 2, a phase that involved other important administrative processes to be implemented as from early 2016, including budget formulation, force planning and programme management, supply chain planning, and conference and event management.

The Board observed that the United Nations was delivering Umoja in accordance with the schedule set out in the Secretary-General’s sixth progress report. It had improved project governance and management structures and demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to achieving the project schedule. In order to achieve the aggressive implementation timetable for clusters 3 and 4, however, some key project activities had been curtailed, including testing routines and data conversion exercises. Significant challenges were encountered with previous deployments of Umoja owing to a lack of organizational readiness, and there was a high risk that similar problems would emerge in 2015. The Administration was therefore bearing an unknown overall level of risk in deploying Umoja in 2015.

Notwithstanding the risks related to implementation, the Board said, Umoja continued to represent a unique opportunity to drive more cost-efficient delivery of mandates by increasing the operational effectiveness of administrative functions through modern, improved ways of working and improved decision-making by exploiting better management information.

In order to maximize the chances of successfully completing the project and achieving its aims, the Board made a number of recommendations, including increasing the degree to which Umoja was actively led by all heads of business units, with support from process owners and Umoja project management and assessing the risks attached to Umoja’s deployment schedule in order to consider contingency and other measures to mitigate those risks.

**Report of Secretary-General.** In September [A/70/369 & Corr.1, 2], pursuant to Assembly resolution 64/243 [YUN 2009, p. 1395], the Secretary-General submitted his seventh progress report on the enterprise resource planning project. Steady progress had been made, with the roll-out of the Umoja real estate functionality to all Secretariat entities completed by November 2014, while Umoja’s Integration solution (Umoja Foundation and Extension 1) was deployed to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials, UNEP, the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN Habitat) and UNON.

The project to complete the implementation of the Umoja Integration solution throughout the Secretariat by the end of 2015 remained on track.

Given the tight timeline between the June and November 2015 roll-outs and the large number of entities to roll out to in November, a new approach was adopted, in which responsibilities were extended to a broader base of stakeholders throughout the Organization. Development groups had been constituted at Headquarters, in Geneva and Vienna and by IRS for its field missions. The groups were leading their entities towards readiness to go live and ensuring the proper adoption and stabilization of the common operating model.

The Umoja training approach had been reviewed and further improved after every roll-out. The Umoja Academy continued to deliver training to managers, process experts and local process experts to ensure that the users gained comprehensive knowledge of Umoja. Business intelligence “power users” were being trained to harness the data made available by Umoja and support fact-based, data-driven decision-making throughout the Organization.

The Secretary-General’s report provided an update of the projected direct resource requirements for the project until 31 December 2015, which remained unchanged at $385,060,300. The resource requirements for the biennium 2016–2017 also remained unchanged at $54,291,700.

Following consideration of the Secretary-General’s November report [A/70/7/Add.19], the Advisory Committee, made a number of recommendations.

In resolution 70/248 A (sect. XVII) of 23 December (see p. 000), the Assembly endorsed ACABQ’s recommendations, subject to the provision of the present resolution and approved the recommendations of the Board of Auditors. It welcomed the progress in implementing Umoja, but regretted the delays in the implementation of extension 2 and cluster 5. It requested the Secretary-General to continue to implement the project within the approved timeline and budget, to conduct an objective assessment of the organizations readiness for business change and to ensure that the project was fully deployed by December 2018. The Assembly reiterated its request for clear and transparent procedures and for a detailed accounting of indirect costs, which should be absorbed within the approved budget of each department, and requested the Secretary-General to avoid any further upward revision of the budget. It reiterated that the successful implementation of Umoja required the full support and commitment of senior management as well as close engagement with key stakeholders and stressed the importance of effective training. The Assembly noted that insufficient progress had been made in developing benefit realization plans and requested the Secretary-General to accelerate their development. It authorized the Secretary-General to postpone the downsizing of the Umoja project team until 31 December 2016 and approved an amount of $8,143,700,
representing the regular budget share for the Umoja project for 2016–2017. It noted that requirements in the amount of $12,487,100 would be funded from extrabudgetary resources in the financial period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017.

**United Nations records and archives**

**JIU report.** By an August note [A/70/280], the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly the JIU report on records and archives management (RAM) in the United Nations. JIU found that UN policies and procedures and the related organizational arrangements did not allow for effective RAM either at Headquarters or in the field. It had looked into the issue not only in terms of preserving institutional memory, but also from the perspective of efficiency of working processes, accountability and transparency of business transactions, decision-making and risk management.

One of the main challenges was to ensure that the policy and procedures in place allowed for all records (paper-based, digital and those based on other technologies) to be processed in accordance with the same principles, despite the obvious differences in their format and features. The tools necessary to capture, manage and store them were quite different, but in order to ensure corporate consistency in their use, all records had to be subject to the same processing principles. This had been achieved by some international organizations because of a strong commitment on the part of both their senior management and Member States.

Practices for both physical paper and digital records needed to be improved significantly. RAM arrangements were fragmented and policy principles were inconsistently implemented. It was not clear whether or not records of substantive, administrative, legal or historical value were captured and transformed to a corporate repository to preserve them adequately, or whether they were simply lost.

The absence of dynamic management of digital records and the lack of application of RAM principles to such records (unless they were printed), exposed the entities concerned to major risks in terms of integrity. Significant improvement was indispensable in the deployment of electronic document and records management systems to ensure dynamic management of those records (recommendation 4). In order to build the future archives of UN entities, digital preservation was a key issue for immediate conservation.

The Inspector recommended undertaking a coherent project to establish the appropriate conditions for the implementation of a RAM programme at the corporate level of each entity. The principles of such a project had to include key dimensions, such as: approval of Member States, convinced by a solid cost-benefit analysis of the direct and/or medium- and long-term benefits of the project, including terms of easy retrieval of related records, which would enhance administrative efficiency, organizational effectiveness and financial savings; commitment from senior management to foster a culture of compliance among all managers and staff; project governance at an appropriate level to provide overall vision, responsibility and authority on the various components of information management and to ensure a multidisciplinary approach (RAM, knowledge management and ICT); entity-wide coverage at headquarters and field offices to ensure meaningful and timely dialogue on RAM requirements.

The Inspector also encouraged the UN system organizations and entities to merge their efforts and resources on a voluntary basis to ensure a common approach to RAM matters, particularly with regard to the key issue of digital preservation of records (recommendation 5).

**Note of Secretary-General.** In September [A/70/280/Add.1], the Secretary-General transmitted to the Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (Ceb) on the JIU report. UN organizations viewed the report as a valuable contribution to strengthening the RAM process through improved governance, increased accountability and transparency and enhanced knowledge management, including better records preservation and institutional memory, which would lead to stronger, more efficient decision-making and risk management. The organizations noted, however, that the report would have been strengthened by additional elaboration on context and cost-benefit considerations and risk mitigation measures put in place. The organizations agreed with JIU on the viability of the survey results used to derive some conclusions, which incorporated a potential bias that might have affected the results. They also noted that a further limitation of the methodology and scope of the report was its focus on institutional arrangements and management, as acknowledged in the report, digital records were not addressed, even though they made up 98 per cent of the total number of records. In addition, organizations noted that the report would have benefited from highlighting good practices, especially in the area of internal control mechanisms in decentralized operational contexts. They agreed with the suggestion set out in the report calling for such measures, adding that specific examples of organizations having implemented those measures would have made the recommendations more concrete and constructive.

The organizations agreed that the recommendations provided a road map for improvement in the core operational functions and, if effectively implemented and monitored, would help improve the
records management and archives practices across all UN entities that participated in the evaluation. They also generally agreed that the recommendations be addressed as joint projects, in line with the High-level Committee on Management Strategic Plan 2013–2016, with the voluntary merging of resources and efforts to tackle such challenges as digital preservation. That would be especially critical because resources for RAM functions were extremely limited.

Some organizations, however, noted that business requirements were driving the adoption of information systems that were compatible with RAM on a timetable that might not be compatible with the development of a common UN approach. They also stressed that the RAM process reflected just one essential element of a business solution intended to meet the broader needs of an organization as a whole and that, therefore, RAM solutions adopted by any individual organization should also be viewed from a holistic perspective. That approach would ensure that the adopted solution was fully integrated within the broader IT systems already in place, specifically enterprise resource planning, messaging and collaboration platforms. Such a broad perspective was considered essential to ensuring that RAM was mainstreamed in order to capture all aspects of documents, communications and records. In such an approach, RAM would be mainstreamed into existing systems rather than considered a peripheral, even secondary, activity.

Lastly, organizations agreed with JIU that RAM was a critical component of a wider information management framework and that the commitment to information management practices had to remain strong.

**Global service delivery model**

*Report of Secretary-General.* In August [A/70/323], pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/246 [YUN 2012, p. 1434], the Secretary-General submitted a report outlining a framework for a global service delivery model of the UN Secretariat. The enterprise-wide approach would deliver high-quality, timely and standardized administrative services across the Secretariat under one common set of Financial and Staff Regulations and Rules. Administrative support functions would be organized to put client needs, operational imperatives and results first, while also ensuring control, oversight and cost-effectiveness. Modular solutions would accommodate diverse business needs and the complexities of different operating environments at Headquarters and in the field.

Subject to Member States’ approval of the framework, the Secretary-General would present a detailed proposal for administrative support services, including a business case and location options, for consideration by the Assembly at its seventy-first (2016) session. In the meantime, the Assembly was requested to authorize resources to establish a small temporary project team and secure expert consultancy to develop the proposal in full.

The Secretary-General requested the Assembly: to endorse the framework as a basis for the preparation of a full business case, with a detailed proposal to be submitted at the Assembly’s seventy-first session; to approve the establishment of two temporary positions, at the D-1 and at the P-5 level, respectively, in the Office of the use for Management with effect from 1 January 2016, initially for a one-year period; and to approve an additional appropriation of $1,162,600 in the proposed programme budget for the 2016–2017 biennium, as project costs for the preparation of a business case.

In October [A/70/438], ACABQ commented on the Secretary-General’s report and made recommendations.

On 23 December, the Assembly, in resolution 70/248 A (sect. XIX) (see p. 000), endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ, and noted with appreciation the Secretary-General’s initiative to establish a global service delivery model. The Assembly stressed that the development of the global service delivery model should be limited to the provision of administrative support services, and that functions primarily involving direct interactions with Member States, including troop-contributing countries, would continue to be located at Headquarters. It recalled that any changes to the existing and future service delivery model had to be approved by it, and emphasized the importance of drawing on the experience and knowledge of the Umoja team, as well as the need to develop and maintain in-house capacity with regard to shared service delivery. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to review his proposal for taking February 2016 as a baseline for the development of the global service delivery model business case, taking into account the necessary stabilization period for Umoja, and to report on the development of the model at the main part of the seventy-first Assembly session, taking into account the use of all existing UN infrastructure and providing proposals for a cost-sharing formula for future requirements related to the implementation of the model.

**UN premises and property**

**Capital master plan**

On 2 April, the General Assembly in resolution 69/274 A (sect. VIII) (see p. 000), dealt with the Capital Master Plan (CMP), taking note of the Secretary-General’s twelfth progress report [YUN 2014, p. 1678], the report of the Board of Auditors on CMP for the year ended 31 December 2013 [ibid.] and the
Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of the Auditors’ recommendations [ibid.] as well as the related report of ACABQ [ibid.]. The Assembly endorsed the Advisory Committee’s conclusions and recommendations and approved the Auditors’ recommendations. It noted the final costs of CMP as presented by the Secretary-General, in the amount of $2,304.8 million and, recognizing the need to fund the final shortfall of $154,852,400, appropriated that amount to the General Fund, to be financed through contributions by Member States ($85,239,000); applying the credit of $33 million resulting from the cancellation of prior-period obligations corresponding to the biennium 2012–2013; and by authorizing the Secretary-General to credit from the Special Account established by resolution 3049 A (XXVII) [YUN 1972, p. 710] on an exceptional basis $36,613,000 to the General Fund. The Assembly further authorized the Secretary-General to credit to the CMP fund $154,852,400 from the General Fund.

Review of CMP

Report of Board of Auditors. In its report on CMP for the year ended 31 December 2014 [A/70/5 (Vol. V)], the Board of Auditors said that substantial completion of CMP by September 2014 was a significant achievement given the project’s complexity and difficult size. The impact of unforeseen events and a history of inaccurate cost estimates had contributed to significant cost and time overruns over the life of the project. The Administration needed to manage closely the remaining $49 million of works for completion by December 2016. Issues regarding financing of the remaining cost overrun had been resolved by the General Assembly. The Administration had developed a plan to retain staff from the Office of the Capital Master Plan to help deliver the remaining scope.

The Auditors noted, however, that the Administration had not quantified the financial and other benefits expected from CMP, nor were benefit realization plans in place to manage and secure their achievement. The Administration was confident that in the short term expected energy savings would be achieved but that was not yet evidenced. To derive full benefit from the investment, the Board considered it necessary to exploit fully the medium- and long-term savings that could be obtained from more effective utilization of space and flexible working practices.

Among the Board’s key findings were that the decision of the Assembly to remove the Library and South Annex Buildings from the projects’ scope reduced the total anticipated final cost of CMP to $2,309 million and anticipated construction costs to amount to $2,150 million. The $65 million budgeted for the Library and South Annex Buildings was used to meet cost increases of other buildings that remained in scope to avoid an additional assessment on Member States. The project had exhausted the available contingency funds and was therefore reliant on financial savings from contracts to meet any unforeseen costs arising in the future. As at June, the Board noted, the Administration estimated an overall savings of $39.5 million from obligations to the main contractor, which would be applied or was already earmarked to meet construction costs. Until all contracts were finalized and work completed, it was likely that anticipated final costs would fluctuate, but the Administration was confident that sufficient funds were in place to complete the remaining scope.

As planned, the general debate in 2014 was held in the refurbished General Assembly Building, which was a significant achievement given the disruption caused by earlier project delays and the impact of Storm Sandy in 2012. Against a compressed timetable the Administration was able to substantially complete the building in September 2014, with residual work on the north basement area substantially completed in December 2014. As at March 2015, the contract value of renovating the building was $186 million against an estimated cost of $143 million.

The project, including all residual capital work, was now expected to be completed in December 2016, approximately three years later than originally planned in accelerated strategy IV. The Office of the Capital Master Plan would close in July 2015, having substantially completed the three main buildings, while the Office of Central Support Services would assume responsibility for completing the remaining elements. These included the demolition of the North Lawn Building and landscaping, which were affected by the decision to retain the temporary building for the general debate of the seventieth Assembly session and by delays in receiving planning permits. Those residual works had an estimated total cost of $35 million.

The Board noted that the project would end without renovating the Library and South Annex Buildings as initially envisaged, but interim proposals had been submitted. The Assembly, in resolution 69/274 A (see p. 000), had requested that their renovation be undertaken as separate projects through established procedures. The proposed interim arrangements for relocation the functions of the South Annex Building, which included the cafeteria, and for limited works to the Library Building, at an estimated cost of $14 million, would be met from within the existing CMP budget.

With regard to handover arrangements, the Board stated that the Administration was following comprehensive processes and procedures for handing over the refurbished buildings; a well-managed handover was essential to securing the benefits of the newly refurbished buildings. The Board noted that as at June
2015, 11 of 24 contracts remained open, which the Administration expected to close by October 2015, four months later than planned.

Among the benefits of CMP, the Board considered that the strategic capital review, a 20-year rolling plan for asset maintenance, was a significant step towards developing a proactive long-term asset management strategy. The renovated campus offered a great opportunity to apply flexible workplace strategies and secure further benefits from the significant investment in CMP. The Board noted that the Administration had not yet produced a benefits statement which confirmed to the General Assembly that the stated outcomes of the project had been achieved. With the project coming to a close, the next progress report of the Secretary-General would be a good opportunity to confirm to Member States that the renovated campus was energy-efficient; free of hazardous materials; compliant with the host city’s building, fire and safety codes; provided full accessibility to all persons; met all reasonable, modern-day security requirements; and preserved the original architecture to the greatest extent possible.

The Board recommended that the Administration manage CMP to successful completion by: continuing to manage the remaining works to ensure delivery by December 2016 within the $49 million budget; managing and reporting that the project’s outcomes had been delivered, including financial and non-financial benefits expected and achieved from the investment in CMP; accelerating closure of the remaining CMP contracts to increase certainty regarding final project costs and to release any potential savings; reporting the full amount of any savings arising from contract closure and introducing appropriate governance mechanisms to determine the use that could be made of such savings, including specific consideration of returning savings to Member States; and applying wider learning from CMP.

Lastly, the Board stated that the Administration had accepted all of the Board’s recommendations.

Report of Secretary-General. In August [A/70/338 & Corr.1], the Secretary-General reported in detail on the Administration’s response to and implementation of the Board’s recommendations. The report also contained updated information on the status of implementation of recommendations for prior periods that were reported by the Board as not having been fully implemented.

In October [A/70/444], following consideration of the report of the Board of Auditors and the related report of the Secretary-General, ACABQ made a number of recommendations.

Implementation of CMP

Report of Secretary-General. In August [A/70/343], the Secretary-General, pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/274 A (see p. 000), submitted his thirteenth annual progress report on the implementation of CMP. CMP was substantially completed in September 2014, in time for the opening of the sixty-ninth Assembly session. Since then, the Office of the Capital Master Plan had continued with the post-renovation activities and the financial and administrative close-out of the project.

Following the closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan in July 2015, responsibility for implementing the remaining activities of CMP—the removal of the North Lawn Building, final landscaping and the security-related work at two street entrances—and any remaining financial and administrative close-out tasks had been transferred to the Office of Central Support Services. The cost of all the post-renovation construction and close-out activities would be met from within the existing approved resources of the CMP project.

CMP had achieved its objective of renovating and modernizing the Headquarters compound during the construction phase, which ran from 2008 to 2014, despite the challenge of engineering a major upgrade of security standards in 2010, which required an additional year of redesign and construction work. The project also had to cope with the effects of Storm Sandy in 2012. The renovation of the Headquarters substantially completed by September 2014, rather than in mid-2013 as originally planned, meant a delay of one year, which reflected the enhanced security upgrade as well as the time spent to address the effects of Storm Sandy.

As at 30 June 2015, the cost to complete the CMP project was projected to be $2,150.4 million (excluding the renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building), in line with approved resources in the same amount. Approved resources comprised the original budget of $1,876.7 million and donations of $114.3 million, plus interest income and the working capital reserve fund of $159.4 million, excluding associated costs and the cost of the secondary data centre in the amount of $158.9 million. At the time of the closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan, and with over 99 per cent of the funds expended, the final cost overrun of CMP was $159.4, representing an 8 per cent overrun compared to the approved original budget and donations.

Following review of the Secretary-General’s progress report, the Advisory Committee, in October [A/70/441], made a number of recommendations to the General Assembly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 23 December [meeting 82], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/70/631], adopted resolution 70/239 (Capital master plan) without vote [agenda item 133].
Headquarters accommodation needs

**Report of Secretary-General.** Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/262 [YUN 2014, p. 1631], the Secretary-General, in September [A/70/398], provided information on the long-term accommodation needs of the United Nations in New York, as well as a comprehensive analysis of options deemed to be viable by the Assembly.

The report described the key assumptions and estimated space requirements used in the financial analysis over a 50-year period, including population projections and the possible impact of flexible workplace strategies, Umoja and the global service delivery model in New York. It also described other factors included in the study, such as the architectural integrity of the UN Headquarters complex, schedule considerations and credit rating.

The options deemed viable by the Assembly included: the North Lawn, funded through an assessment; the North Lawn, funded through financing; the United Nations Development Corporation (DC-5), funded through a lease-to-own arrangement; and the status quo (commercial leasing). The Secretary-General noted that the DC-5 option was the most effective, providing the Organization with the opportunity to consolidate in one building the vast majority of its staff currently housed in commercial leasing space and offering ownership rights and a saleable asset at the end of a 30-year lease term.

Following consideration of the Secretary-General’s report, the Advisory Committee, in November [A/70/7/Add.22], made a number of recommendations to the General Assembly.

On 23 December, the Assembly, in **resolution 70/248 A** (sect. XVIII) (see p. 000), endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ.

**Application of flexible workplace strategies**

**Report of Secretary-General.** In a January report [A/69/749], submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution 68/247 B [YUN 2014, p. 1639], the Secretary-General provided a comprehensive business case for the application of flexible workplace arrangements at UN Headquarters. The report summarized the main findings of a flexible workplace study undertaken during 2014, including the results of a flexible workplace pilot project at UN Headquarters and the findings of a review by external consultations, as well as a detailed cost-benefit analysis and an implementation proposal.

By defining work as an activity rather than a place, the vision of a flexible workplace directly supported the wider management goal of the Secretary-General to create a modern, agile business model for the Secretariat, and one that increased effectiveness across different work processes. A flexible workplace would provide staff the necessary flexibility to work where they would be most effective. Furthermore, giving staff the tools and flexibility they needed to work in different locations would have the added benefit of enhancing the Organization’s business continuity preparedness.

By implementing a flexible workplace, the United Nations would work to allocate space in such a way as to maximize the effectiveness and well-being of its staff. The types of space provided should be appropriate to the work that staff performed. Flexible workplace strategies required a coherent and integrated approach to staff management, technology and workspace needs. The business case provided in the report addressed each of these components.

The Secretary-General noted that he had established an interdisciplinary working group to ensure that the flexible workplace programme was developed in a holistic way, taking fully into consideration the human resources technology and facilities aspects.

The Secretary-General recommended, among other things, that the Assembly: approve the proposed scope of the UN Headquarters flexible workplace project, including the implementation schedule for the period from 2015 to 2018; authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the amount of $5,819,000 in respect of the project costs through 2015; authorize the Secretary-General, on an exceptional basis, to make use of the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account established by Assembly resolution 3049 A (XXVII) [YUN 1972, p. 710] to fund the project in the above amount, on a cash-flow basis.

Following review of the Secretary-General’s report, the Advisory Committee, in March [A/69/810], made a number of recommendations to the General Assembly.

On 2 April, the Assembly, in **resolution 69/274 A** (sect. VII) (see p. 000), took note of the Secretary-General’s report and endorsed the Advisory-Committee’s conclusions and recommendations. The Assembly noted the progress made since the issuance of the 2013 report [YUN 2013, p. 1489] on the implementation of a flexible workplace at UN Headquarters and commended his efforts. It requested the Secretary-General to review the costs of implementation of the project and present information on the possibilities of cost recovery. It encouraged the Secretary-General to seek complementarities between flexible workplace strategies and flexible working arrangements, and requested him to provide information on arrangements for staff to work in remote locations, with an emphasis on addressing the requirements of staff with special needs. It further requested him to incorporate flexible workplace strategies in the ongoing design of the strategic heritage plan (see p. 000). The Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to an amount of $5,819,000 in respect of project costs.
through 2015, making every effort to seek efficiencies with the aim of reducing costs.

Other office/conference facilities

Geneva

In September [A/70/394 & Corr.1], pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/262 [YUN 2014, p. 1631], the Secretary-General submitted his second annual progress report on the strategic heritage plan of the United Nation Office at Geneva (unog). He also provided revised cost estimates for the project and information on the results of the negotiations with the host country in relation to the loan package offer, as well as on possible alternative funding mechanisms, including utilization of future rental income and valorisation of United Nations-owned land.

Several key project tasks had been accomplished during the reporting period, including completion of in-depth size assessment and surveys; confirmation of the project scope; completion of the design master plan and feasibility study; completion of the project design; and completion of a revised cost estimate based on the aforementioned tasks.

The Secretary-General was pleased to report that the feasibility of the project had been confirmed and was proceeding in accordance with the time, cost and scope targets described in his previous report [YUN 2014, p. 1680]. In order to ensure that the project proceeded within the cost estimates and proposed schedule, it was recommended that the General Assembly approve the project during the year.

The Assembly was requested to approve the project scope, schedule and estimated cost in the amount of CHF 836.5 million (of which CHF 41.2 million was projected expenditure under the regular budget for the biennium 2014–2015; to make a decision on the loan package offered by the host country; and to decide on the scheme of appropriation and currency of assessment. The Assembly was also requested to establish a multi-year special account for the project and a working capital reserve in the amount of $20 million.

Report of Board of Auditors. By a November note [A/70/569], the Secretary-General transmitted to the Assembly a report of the Board of Auditors on the strategic heritage plan.

The Board noted that the project was projected to cost CHF 836.5 million ($869.5 million) and was expected to be completed in 2023. It was proposed to be implemented in two phases: the construction of the new building was targeted to commence in 2017 and to be completed by 2019, and the renovation of the existing buildings would be completed in 2023.

Among the key findings were that deliverables targeted for completion in 2015 had not been fully achieved. There were significant gaps in respect of the concept design and certain essentials remained to be delivered. The detailed design stage commenced on 28 September 2015 and initiation of preparatory activity for tender documentation was expected to commence in May 2016; such slippages might have an adverse effect in terms of project timelines and firming up of the cost estimates.

In view of the delays in the completion of several activities, such as completion of the design master plan (by 28 days), concept design completion (by 45 days), initiation of a detailed design for phase I of the new building (by 42 days) and initiation of a detailed design for phase I of the renovation (by 56 days), the Board underlined the imperative need for a robust mechanism of internal control in order to reduce the overall impact on the cost and schedule of the project. Development of a project manual was in progress. The existence of an updated manual was an important element of internal control and was extremely significant for creating documentation with respect to such critical issues as justifications, procedures and mechanisms adopted for changes with respect to project scope, cost and schedule.

The strategic heritage plan being a major construction and renovation project, involved a variety of risks, the Board stated. Risk assessment and mitigation thus became a project area of concern. The primary risks identified currently included: management of foreign currency exposure, since two currencies were involved in project funding and execution; maintenance strategy for the assets created; the stringent timelines, which involved coordinated actions by various inter-related parties; scope control, contingency spending and management of change orders; and protection and preservation of art works.

On the basis of its review, the Board recommended, in order to strengthen the process going forward and to mitigate the risks, that the Administration: monitor the implementation of various activities to minimize the overrun and take proactive remedial measures to meet project timelines without any dilution of quality and scope of the project deliverables; expedite such activities as the development of project manuals, including change control, ensure the inclusion of security standards at the design stage, and maintain a consultation process with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition; formulate specific risk mitigation plans for each identified risk area; refine and update the preliminary budget estimates on the basis of a standard schedule and proper analysis of rates; refine the terms of reference of the Advisory Board and the Steering Committee, with clear definition of their responsibilities and jurisdiction; and ensure adherence to the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and the Procurement Manual. If deviations were deemed necessary, there had to be clear and transparent justification along with approval by the competent authorities.
The Board noted that the Administration concurred with its recommendations and had accordingly initiated various actions.

Following consideration of the Secretary-General’s progress report, the Advisory Committee, in November [A/70/7/Add.8], made a number of recommendations.

**Report of Secretary-General.** In December [A/70/585], the Secretary-General reported on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

The Secretary-General reported that the Project Manual was substantially complete; the development of the overall procurement strategy was in progress; the security standards that were within the scope of the new and existing buildings had been included in the design; and extensive consultations with stakeholders had taken place and would continue during the entire length of the project. Specific risk mitigation plans had either been or were being developed for all identified risks in the project risk register. Responding to the Board’s recommendation to refine and update the preliminary budget estimates on the basis of a standard schedule and proper analysis of rates, the Administration clarified that a professional cost consultant, in line with industry guidelines and practices, had developed a comprehensive project cost estimate using actual pricing data from nearby projects.

The Secretary-General reported that a donation policy had been included in his second annual report which, if approved by the General Assembly, would be used as a framework to manage future donations that might help offset project costs. While a maintenance fund had been proposed as part of the donation policy, it had not yet been approved.

The Administration intended to continue to refine further the terms of reference of the Advisory Board and the Steering Committee once the project was approved by the Assembly and over time as the project moved from preliminary design into rendering and construction.

Following review of the Secretary-General’s report, the Advisory Committee, in December [A/70/608], made a number of recommendations.

On 23 December, the Assembly, in resolution 70/248 A (sect. X) (see p. 000), welcomed the continued support of the Government of Switzerland for the strategic heritage project, and approved the proposed project scope, schedule and estimated cost in the maximum amount of 836,500,000 Swiss francs for the period from 2014 to 2023, and authorized the renovation and construction phase to begin.

**Addis Ababa**

In September [A/70/363 & Corr.1], pursuant to Assembly resolution 63/263 [YUN 2008, p. 1545], the Secretary-General provided an update on the construction of the new office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, and provided an update on the renovation of conference facilities there. The Secretary-General reported that the construction of the new office facilities was substantially completed in June 2014. Immediately following, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Liaison Office to the African Union (AU) and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (see p. 000), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) moved into the new premises, which were fully occupied and operational by August 2014. The building, which housed 650 staff, was renamed the Zambezi Building in early 2015.

The majority of the ancillary projects, approved by the Assembly in resolutions 56/270 [YUN 2002, p. 1458] and 62/238 [YUN 2007, p. 1451] and related to access, safety and functionality of the new office facilities were completed in 2014. The remainder was substantially completed in August 2015.

The updated estimated costs to complete the new office facilities and ancillary projects remained unchanged as compared to those presented in the Secretary-General’s 2014 report [YUN 2014, p. 1681].

The report also covered different aspects of the Africa-Hall renovation project, including its scope and schedule, governance structure, cost estimates, resource requirements and steps for the biennium 2016–2017. For the renovation project, the Secretary-General requested approval by the General Assembly of the overall project scope, schedule and estimated cost of $56.9 million, including approval of the establishment of a multi-year construction-in-progress account for the expenditures related to the project.

In November [A/70/7/Add.21], following review of the Secretary-General’s report, ACABQ made a number of recommendations to the General Assembly. On 23 December, the Assembly, in resolution 70/248 A (sect. IX) (see p. 000), endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ, subject to the provisions of the resolution. It approved the project scope, schedule and maximum overall cost for the Africa-Hall renovation in the amount of $56.9 million.

**Staff matters**

**Selection of Secretary-General**

By a joint letter dated 15 December [A/70/623-S/2015/988] to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers in the United Nations, the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, in line with Assembly resolution 69/321 (see p. 000), solicited candidates to set in motion the process of se-
lecting and appointing the next Secretary-General of the United Nations, in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations and guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity.

The position of Secretary-General was one of great importance and required the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter. Candidates had to possess proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations and strong diplomatic, communication and multilingual skills.

Convinced of the need to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men in gaining access to senior decision-making positions, Member States were encouraged to consider presenting women as candidates, as well as men. Also noted was the regional diversity in the selection of previous Secretaries-General.

Noting that some candidates had already emerged, Member States were invited to present candidates in a letter to the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, who would then jointly circulate to all Member States, on an ongoing basis, the names of individuals who had been submitted for consideration. The Presidents would offer the candidates opportunities for informal dialogues or meetings with the members of their respective bodies. The informal dialogues or meetings could be held before the Council began its selection by the end of July 2016 and might continue throughout the selection process.

**Conditions of service**

**International Civil Service Commission**

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), a 15-member body established in 1974 by General Assembly resolution 3357(XXIX) [YUN 1974, p. 875] to regulate and coordinate the conditions of service and the salaries and allowances of the UN common system, held its eightieth (New York, 16–27 March) and eighty-first (Vienna, 27 July–7 August) sessions to examine issues that derived from decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly as well as from its own statute. ICSC deliberations, recommendations and decisions were detailed in its annual report to the Assembly for the year 2015 [A/70/30].

**Conditions of service applicable to both categories of staff**

**Mandatory age of separation**

Pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/251 [YUN 2014, p. 1685], by which the Assembly decided to raise the mandatory age of separation to 65 years for staff recruited before 1 January 2014, taking into account the acquired rights of staff, ICSC reverted to the issue at its 2015 session to discuss an implementation date.

The executive heads of the organizations pointed to the negative impact that an increase in the mandatory age of separation for staff would have on efforts to rejuvenate and reprofile their workforce in terms of skills, gender parity and geographical distribution, as well as efforts to reduce staff costs. They considered a range of implementation dates from 2017 to 2020, with the majority stating that the date could not be earlier than 1 January 2018, given that the budgets and work programmes for 2016 and 2017 had already been approved.

ACABQ, in its October report on ICSC decisions and recommendations [A/70/7/Add.4], recommended that the implementation date for raising the mandatory age of separation to 65 for staff recruited before 1 January 2014 should be in 2016 and at the latest by 1 January 2017.

**Conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories**

**Base/floor salary scale**

The concept of the base/floor salary was introduced by Assembly resolution 44/198 [UN 1989, p. 886], with effect from 1 January 1990. The scale was set by reference to the General Schedule salary scale of the comparator civil service, which was the United States federal civil service, excluding any locality pay. Periodic adjustments were made on the basis of a comparison of net base salaries of UN officials at the midpoint of the scale (P-4, step VI, of the dependency rate), with the corresponding salaries of their counterparts in the United States federal civil service. The adjustments were implemented by means of a standard method of consolidating post adjustment points into the base/floor salary, namely, by increasing base salary while commensurately reducing post adjustment. ICSC was informed that a 1 per cent increase had been implemented in the comparator’s General Schedule effective 1 January 2015.

The Commission, subject to the Assembly’s decision on a unified salary scale, decided to recommend to the Assembly for approval with effect from 1 January 2016 the revised base/floor salary scale for the Professional and higher categories, reflecting a 1.08 per cent post adjustment, to be implemented by increasing the base salary and commensurately reducing post adjustment multiplier points, resulting in no change in net take-home pay.

Subject to the decision on the unified salary scale with the implementation date of 1 January 2017, ACABQ in its October report [A/70/7/Add.4] noted that the Secretary-General estimated the related financial implications for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017 at an increase of $232,100 for the year 2016 and for peacekeeping operations at an increase of $83,600 for the financial period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (six months).
Evolution of the net remuneration margin

Under a standing mandate from the Assembly, ICSC continued to review the relationship between the net remuneration of UN officials in the Professional and higher categories in New York and that of the United States federal civil service officials in comparable positions in Washington, D.C. For that purpose, the Commission annually tracked changes in the remuneration levels of both civil services.

The Commission noted that a 1.0 per cent increase was granted as at 1 January 2015 in the comparator civil service. Other developments relevant to the comparison were: revisions to the federal tax bracket and standard and personal deductions (see p. 000), a post adjustment multiplier of 66.7 in New York for the period from January to December 2015 and the new base/floor salary scale, which became effective on 1 January 2015.

On that basis, the Commission decided to report to the General Assembly that the margin between the net remuneration of UN officials in the Professional and higher categories in New York and that of officials in comparable positions in the United States federal civil service in Washington, D.C., amounted to 117.2 both for the calendar year 2015 and for the five-year (2011–2015) average.

Post adjustment

Pursuant to article 11 of its statute, ICSC continued to keep under review the operation of the post adjustment system and, in that context, considered the report of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) on the work of its thirty-seventh session in 2015. Convened as part of the review of the common system compensation package (see p. 000), as well as the methodological preparation for the 2016 round of cost-of-living survey, ACPAQ reviewed pertinent studies and made a number of recommendations for the Commission’s consideration.

ICSC reviewed the recommendations, which covered the list of items and specifications in the market basket to be used for price data collection in the next round of place-to-place surveys, the redesign of all survey data-collection forms, the modus operandi for the use of price data collected under the European Comparison Programme for purposes of establishing post adjustment for the covered group I duty stations; proposals for modifications to the operational rules governing the post adjustment system; a review of the rental subsidy scheme in the context of the restoration of the trade-off between rental subsidy and post adjustment; and a review of the operation of the post adjustment system for New York in the context of the United Nations/United States net remuneration margin management mechanism.

Following discussion, ICSC decided: to retain the 5 per cent rule to account for excessive inflation in group I duty stations in a more timely manner. The reference date for monitoring inflation should be reset at the time of the statutory review of the post adjustment classification, whether or not there was a change in classification. The rule should be implemented only if triggered more than three months before the date of statutory review of the post adjustment classification; to modify the gap closure measures in determining the post adjustment multiplier applicable to a duty station by abolishing the 5 per cent augmentation of the post adjustment index derived from negative place-to-place survey results; to continue to apply the 0.5 per cent rule, in accordance with existing operational rules; and to establish rental subsidy thresholds by applying the threshold calculated using the proposed unified salary scale to staff with no dependants and dividing it by the factor 1.06 to derive the threshold for staff dependants, with effect from the date of promulgation of the unified salary scale for staff in the Professional and higher categories.

Conditions of service of the General Service and other categories of staff

Conditions of employment in Kingston

Following the entry of the International Seabed Authority (see p. 000) into the United Nations common system, ICSC conducted a survey of best prevailing conditions in Kingston, Jamaica, with a reference date of September 2014. The Commission proposed to the Kingston-based organizations a 5.1 per cent increase in net salary scales for staff in the General Service and related categories, resulting in total annual financial implications estimated at $143,415 at the September 2014 exchange rate. A non-pensionable component of 3.7 per cent would also be established on the basis of the findings of the survey. The Commission also recommended a 9.5 per cent salary scale increase for National Professional Officers.

In resolution 68/253 [YUN 2013 p. 1491], in which the Assembly requested the Commission not to increase any of the allowances under its purview until the comprehensive review of the common system compensation package (see p. 000) had been submitted to the Assembly for its consideration, the Commission did not recommend any adjustment to the dependency allowances.

The Secretary-General [A/57/10/3] and ACABQ [A/70/Add.4] noted that as there were no General Service and other locally recruited staff in Kingston funded from the programme budgets or peacekeeping operations budgets, there were no financial implications for the proposed programme or peacekeeping budgets with respect to Commission’s recommendations.

Conditions of employment in New York

On the basis of the methodology for surveys of best prevailing conditions of the General Service and
other locally recruited staff at headquarters and similar duty stations, the Commission conducted a survey in New York, with a reference date of November 2014. There were five categories of locally recruited staff in New York: General Service, Security Service, Trades and Crafts, Language Teachers and Public Information Assistants. In accordance with an earlier ICSC decision, salary levels for four categories should be adjusted with the same percentage as that agreed for the General Service category.

The recommended salary scales for all five categories of locally recruited staff in New York were 5.8 per cent lower than the current scales, ICSC said. The notional annual savings as a result of implementing the salary scales were estimated at $12.13 million. Since the recommended scales, however, were expected to be implemented only with regard to staff recruited on or after the date of promulgation by the New York-based organizations, there were no immediate savings associated with the recommendation.

In resolution 68/253 [YUN 2013, p. 1491], in which the Assembly requested the Commission not to increase any of the allowances until the comprehensive review of the common system compensation package (see p. 000) had been submitted to the Assembly for consideration, ICSC decided to recommend that dependency allowances for staff in the General Service and related categories of the common system organizations in New York be maintained at the same levels.

ACABQ, in its October report [A/70/7/Add.4], noted that the recommended salary scales were expected to be implemented only with respect to staff recruited on or after the date of promulgation by the New York-based organizations, while the salary scales would be frozen for existing staff. The financial implications resulting from the freeze of the salary scales for existing staff were estimated to be a reduction of approximately $16 million, with no financial implications for the budgets of peacekeeping operations for the financial period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016.

Conditions of employment in London

On the basis of the methodology for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment of General Service and other locally recruited staff at headquarters and similar duty stations (survey methodology 1), ICSC conducted a survey in London, with a reference date of May 2015. The revised net salary scale for staff in the General Service category was annexed to the Commission’s report [A/70/30].

ICSC noted that the revised scale called for a 3.5 per cent increase. Taking into account Assembly resolution 68/253, the Commission did not recommend any adjustment to the allowance for the first dependent child of staff in the General Service category in London, but did, however, recommend that the allowance for each additional child be revised from 952 pounds to 614 pounds on the basis of the data collected during the survey.

Total annual financial implications of implementing the recommended salary scale were estimated at $243,202, while notional annual savings as a result of implementing the revised allowance for each additional child after the first dependent child were estimated at $12,499. Given that the recommended level of allowance was expected to be implemented only with regard to staff recruited on or after the date of promulgation by the London-based organizations, the immediate savings would not be significant.

The Secretary-General [A/57/3] and ACABQ [A/70/7/Add.4] noted that as there were no General Service and other locally recruited staff in London funded from the programme budget or peacekeeping operations budget, there were no financial implications for the proposed programme or peacekeeping budgets with respect to the Commission’s recommendations.

Compensation package

In 2015, ICSC continued its review of the UN common system compensation package begun in 2013 [YUN 2013, p. 1494], in accordance with Assembly resolutions 67/257 [ibid., p. 1493], 68/253 [ibid., p. 1491] and 69/251 [YUN 2014, p. 1685]. The Commission observed that compensation was a major vehicle for staff motivation and engagement and played a significant role in aligning staff behaviours. Therefore, designing a remuneration system that reflected and promoted the values of the common system could be best achieved if a linkage was formed with the frameworks for human resources management and performance management.

Following a process of analysis and consideration in three working groups, ICSC at its eighty-first session finalized a proposal that called for a number of important changes to the compensation package of staff in the Professional and higher categories, namely, the introduction of a single salary scale, a stronger linkage between performance and progression through the salary scale, and the redesign and simplification of specific allowances and benefits, such as the education grant, relocation-related elements, and field allowances and benefits. Some decisions and recommendations, such as those on the performance framework and the introduction of recruitment incentives, would provide organizations with more flexibility to adjust the package to their specific programmatic needs. The proposed package was cohesive and transparent, while contributing to overall cost containment and sustainability.

As a result of the comprehensive review, the Commission submitted recommendations with proposed transitional measures for existing staff, as well
as overall financial implications, which would amount to a net reduction of $113,200,000 per annum for the United Nations and other organizations once the proposed transitional measures had been phased out and the proposed system was fully implemented. Icsc envisaged that the full realization of this reduction would occur in the sixth year of implementation.

**Statement by Secretary-General.** In his October statement [A/C.5/70/3] on the administrative and financial recommendations of icsc, the Secretary-General noted that should the effective implementation date of the Commission’s recommendations be 1 January 2016, the full net reduction would only be realized from 1 January 2021 onward, after the transitional measures ended. Of the overall estimated reduction, the financial impact on the UN programme budget and the peacekeeping budgets would amount to a net reduction of $42,830,000 per year from the sixth year of implementation onward.

Should the General Assembly approve the recommendations, several actions would be required to implement the elements of the proposed system, including amendments to staff rules and regulations, and modifications required in the enterprise resource planning software (Umoja). As such, it was projected that the earliest implementation date would be on 1 July 2016 for the recommendations related to hardship allowance, additional hardship allowance/non-family service allowance, mobility incentive and relocation-related entitlements, which would require changes to the staff rules and relevant administrative instructions. Other elements, including the unified salary scale, spouse allowance, accelerated home leave, and repatriation grant, could only be implemented on 1 January 2017, owing to related amendments to the staff regulations requiring Assembly approval. The education grant scheme was projected to be implemented for most staff on 1 September 2017. The Secretary-General said, that the modifications required in Umoja were expected to entail additional costs, which would be determined after the Assembly had made the decision on the icsc recommendations.

Following consideration of the Secretary-General’s statement, ACABQ, in October [A/70/7/Add.4], noted that the financial impact on the proposed programme budget for 2016–2017 under the comprehensive review of the common system compensation package was estimated at a reduction of $1,060,000. He presented the data gathered through a survey mandated by General Assembly resolution 68/244 [YUN 2013, p. 1497] and prepared by the Working Group on ashi of the Finance and Budget Network of the High-level Committee on Management.

The working group undertook quantitative and qualitative analysis of the design of plans, eligibility, coverage offered, demographics, costs and valuation assumptions. The result was a specific set of 23 plans, grouped into 3 types: self-insured self-administered plans, self-insured third-party administered plans, and insured third-party administered plans. Based on that analysis, the working group developed a set of complementary recommendations which would result in cost and operational benefits across the UN system.

Those recommendations consisted in undertaking collective negotiations with third-party administrators and health-care providers, underwriting reviews and negotiations with insurers, depending on the type of administration and insurance of the plans. Another recommendation was to use, where possible, national health plans as primary coverage for retirees and dependants and leave UN plans as supplementary coverage without decreasing the benefits.

### Administrative and financial implications

**Statement by Secretary-General.** In an October statement [A/C.5/70/3], the Secretary-General described the administrative and financial implications arising from the decisions and recommendations of icsc, in particular for the 2016–2017 programme budget, as well as implications for the budgets of peacekeeping operations for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial periods. Should the Assembly approve the Commission’s recommendations, the budgetary implications were estimated at a net reduction of approximately $16,827,900 under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017. The budgetary implications for peacekeeping operations for the financial period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 were estimated at a net increase of $83,600 and would be considered in the context of the performance reports for the period; the resource requirements for the peacekeeping financial period 2016/17 were estimated at a net increase of $40,000 and would be taken into account in the preparation of the related proposed budgets.

The Advisory Committee, in an October report [A/70/7/Add.4], took note of the financial implications and proposals by the Secretary-General.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 23 December [meeting 82], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/70/635], adopted resolution 70/244 (United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission) without vote [agenda item 141].
On the same date, in resolution 70/248 A (sect. XIII) (see p. 000), the Assembly took note of the Secretary-General’s statement (see p. 000) on the administrative and financial implications arising from the decisions and recommendations of ICSC, as well as implications for the budgets of peacekeeping operations. It endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ in its related report (see p. 000).

Also, on 23 December, (decision 70/544), the Assembly decided that the agenda item on the UN common system would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2015) session.

**Human resources management**

On 24 March [meeting 26], the Fifth Committee rejected a draft decision tabled by the Russian Federation in 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 1690], entitled “Human resources management”, by a recorded vote of 80 to 43, with 37 abstentions. By the draft, the General Assembly would have requested the Secretary-General to withdraw document ST/SGB/2004/13/Rev.1, entitled “Personal status for the purposes of United Nations entitlements”, and to submit a report at the Assembly’s seventieth session on the implementation of resolution 58/285 [YUN 2004, p. 1426] in all its aspects.

On 2 April (decision 69/553 B), the General Assembly deferred until its resumed seventieth (2016) session consideration of a number of reports by the Secretary-General, issued in 2014, as well as the related report of ACABQ, under the agenda item “Human resources management”.

On 23 December (decision 70/554), the Assembly decided that the agenda item on human resources management would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2015) session.

**Staff composition**

**Staff demographics**


Giving an overview of the demographic trends from 2011 to 2015, the Secretary-General stated that the number of staff of the Secretariat and related entities in the UN system had increased by less than 1 per cent; the slight increase from 2014 (74,960 staff) to 2015 (76,115 staff) was due mainly to increases in the staff of UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. During the same time frame, the staff of the Secretariat had decreased by 6 per cent. The decrease from 2012 to 2013 was attributable mainly to a reduction of 1,180 staff of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). The very slight decrease from 2014 to 2015 of less than 1 per cent, or 345 staff, was the result of a decrease in UNAMID staff and 29 other entities, while 52 entities either had no change or increased. The ratio of staff in the Professional and higher categories had increased from 28 per cent to 31 per cent over the past five years, while the ratio of Field Service category staff to total staff had remained at approximately 10 per cent since 2011, and the ratio of General Service category staff had decreased from 62 per cent to 59 per cent.

The ratio of staff on permanent/continuing appointments to total staff increased from 16 per cent to 23 per cent, while staff on fixed-term appointments had decreased by a similar ratio, from 79 per cent to 71 per cent, as a result mainly of the one-time permanent conversion exercise and the first continuing appointment exercise.

Total population of the Secretariat staff as at 30 June 2015 was 41,081, comprising all categories of staff holding permanent/continuing, fixed-term and temporary contracts; recruited both internationally and locally from 189 Member States.

As at 30 June 2015, the overall percentage of female staff was 34.4 per cent, with the percentages in non-field operations (departments/offices, regional commissions, tribunals) being 47.4 per cent and in field operations 21.7 per cent. The average age for all staff as at 30 June was 44.2 years. The number of Professional staff and higher was 12,590, among them 78 Under-Secretaries-General (USG), 88 Assistant-Secretaries-General (ASG), while 163 and 533 staff were at the Director-2 level and Director-1 level, respectively. The highest number of staff was concentrated at the P-3 level (4,265), followed by staff at the P-4 level (3,771). Field level staff totalled 4,142, while General Staff and related staff numbered 24,349.

Of the entire Secretariat workforce, 38,376 staff were forecast to retire from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2020.

Between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015, there were 4,406 appointments (2,176 of whom were women), 75.6 per cent of which were in non-field operations. Most appointed staff were in the 30- to 34-year old age group. Of the 4,378 separations during that same period, 73.8 per cent took place in non-field operations. Of the total number of separations, 2,776 were due to appointment expiration, while 754 staff resigned and 463 retired. Agreed termination led to separation in 75 cases, while death, termination for health reasons and other were the cause for separation in 263 cases. Staff members who transferred to other

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UN organizations numbered 47 and reappointments totalled 1,639.

The report showed the representation of Member States under the system of desirable ranges from 2011 to 2015 and provided a detailed breakdown of Secretariat staff with geographical status by nationality, grade and gender, including information on appointments, separations and balances as at 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015, and provided a breakdown of staff in posts with special language requirements by nationality, grade and gender. In 2019, among the 193 Member States 18 were unrepresented, 37 underrepresented, 116 within range and 23 were overrepresented; the corresponding numbers in 2011 were 20, 56, 109 and 7, respectively. Staff at the P-4 level were the largest group of staff with geographical status.

From 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, 179 Secretariat staff, having gone through the selection process, were appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution. During the same period, 76 staff were appointed through national competitive examinations or the young professionals programme, with 73 being appointed against posts subject to geographical distribution. The number of Member States that participated in the young professionals programme in 2014 was 54: they were unrepresented or underrepresented or might become so. Examinations were given for six occupational groups and the 107 successful candidates were placed on the roster. During the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, 32 male and 44 female candidates from the national competitive examinations and the young professionals programme rosters were placed with various entities.

Disciplinary matters

Report of Secretary-General. In August [A/70/253], pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/287 [YUN 2005, p. 1474], the Secretary-General submitted his annual report covering the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 on action taken in cases of established misconduct and/or criminal behaviour, as well as disciplinary action and, where appropriate, legal action taken in accordance with the established procedures and regulations. The Secretary-General gave a brief overview of the administrative machinery in disciplinary matters, a summary of cases in which disciplinary measures were imposed, data on cases received and completed during the reporting period, and cases of possible criminal behaviour.

The cases for which the Secretary-General had imposed disciplinary measures pertained to abuse of authority, harassment and discrimination; theft and misappropriation; misrepresentation and false certification; misuse of UN property or assets; misuse of ICT resources; unauthorized outside activities and conflict of interest; assault and abusive conduct; inappropriate or disruptive behaviour; and failure to honour private obligations.

During the reporting period, 148 cases were completed, a significant increase over the number of cases completed during the previous two periods. Disciplinary measures imposed during the reporting period totalled 64, which were considerably higher than during the previous three periods. The increase during the reporting period was most likely due to the increasing responsiveness of investigating entities to the requests from the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) for further input.

The Secretary-General noted that the percentage of measures subject to appeals during the reporting period was 11 per cent.

The Secretary-General also provided information about the status and outcome of 39 cases before the Dispute and Appeals Tribunal from 1 July 2009 to date. Of the total of cases, 30 resulted in an overall win by the respondent or were cases withdrawn by staff members, 6 cases were settled, and 3 resulted in a loss by the respondent.

For possible disciplinary action, 143 cases were referred to OHRM during the reporting period, 23 (or 16 per cent) of which related to staff based at UN Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters, and 120 (or 84 per cent) related to field staff.

Of the disciplinary action cases received during the reporting period, 5 related to abuse of authority/harassment/discrimination; 14 to verbal and physical assault; 33 to misrepresentation and false certification; 2 to inappropriate or disruptive behaviour; 1 to misuse of ICT resources and computer-related misconduct; 5 to misuse of UN property or assets; 3 to failure to honour private legal obligations; 1 to financial disclosure; 1 to retaliation; 6 to sexual exploitation and abuse; 32 to theft and misappropriation; 6 to unauthorized outside activities and conflict of interest; 2 to violation of local laws; 2 to procurement irregularities; 1 to gross negligence; and 29 to others.

In response to resolution 59/287, the Secretary-General reported that eight cases involving credible allegations of criminal conduct by UN officials or experts on mission were referred to Member States.

Ethics Office

Report of Secretary-General. In August [A/70/307], in accordance with Assembly resolution 60/254 [YUN 2006, p. 1633], the Secretary-General submitted his tenth annual report providing an overview and assessment of the activities of the Ethics Office and the implementation of ethics policies from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015. The report also included information on the activities of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations, as requested by Assembly resolution 63/250 [YUN 2008, p. 1616].
Mandated to promote the highest standards of integrity and to foster an organizational culture of respect, transparency and accountability, the Ethics Office provided advisory support on ethics and other services to the global staff population of the Secretariat. Pursuant to that responsibility, the Office continued its efforts to engage with as many staff as possible across the Organization. In addition to conducting outreach missions to multiple duty stations, the Office, among other things, launched a new and mandatory online training course on ethics awareness, designed and initiated the 2014 leadership dialogue programme across the Secretariat, and revised and distributed ethics guidance and resource materials. The Secretary-General also detailed developments in the administration by the Ethics Office of the Organization’s financial disclosure programme and protection against retaliation policy.

Requests received by the Office during the reporting period concerned general ethics advice, the financial disclosure programme, protection against retaliation, training and outreach, and standard-setting and policy support. Ethics advice, including that relating to the financial disclosure programme, continued with 60 per cent to account for the majority of requests.

The 2015 financial disclosure programme filing cycle was successfully launched on 1 March 2015. As at 31 July, a total of 5,488 staff members of the Secretariat, peacekeeping missions and UN entities were enrolled in the programme. Although filers from the Secretariat and peacekeeping operations continued to constitute the majority of the total filer population, the number of filers from other UN entities that participated in the financial disclosure programme on a cost-sharing basis had increased considerably from 339 in 2006 to 2,253 in 2015.

The Ethics Office received complaints of retaliation and conducted preliminary reviews to determine whether a complainant had engaged in a protected activity and, if so, whether the protected activity was a contributing factor in causing the alleged retaliation. If the Office determined that a prima facie case of retaliation had been established, the matter was referred to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (oios) (see p. 000) for investigation. The Ethics Office made a final retaliation determination subsequent to its review of the investigation report and supporting evidence.

During the reporting period, the Ethics Office received 40 inquiries concerning protection against retaliation policy, of which 4 were determined to fall outside the mandate of the Office and 21 involved, among other things, requests for policy advice and information. Staff members raising workplace concerns not covered by the policy were advised of other available resources and referred to the appropriate offices, including the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (see p. 000), the Management Evaluation Unit (see p. 000), the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (see p. 000) and ohrm. The 21 advice cases did not constitute allegations of retaliation pursuant to the protection against retaliation policy.

Concerning the inquiries where staff alleged retaliation, the Ethics Office initiated 15 preliminary reviews. Of those, one staff member abandoned the protection against retaliation request, one case was resolved informally to the satisfaction of the complainant, and seven of the reviews did not raise prima facie cases of retaliation. The majority of those cases concerned workplace disputes between the claimants and their colleagues or supervisor, wherein it was determined that the complainant had not engaged in an activity protected by the policy. Six cases remained under preliminary review.

During the reporting period, the Ethics Office further determined one prima facie case of retaliation for a protection request review initiated in 2013/14. With the advice provided by the Office and the consent of the complainant, however, the matter was resolved satisfactorily.

The Ethics Office, in collaboration with the Department of Management, the Office of Legal Affairs and oios, prepared a proposal on a revised protection against retaliation policy, which was presented at the April 2015 meeting of the Staff-Management Committee (Bonn, Germany). An ad hoc working group was subsequently established by the Staff-Management Committee to consider further the revised policy proposal. Composed of staff and management representatives, the working group held its first meeting in June 2015; it would present the recommendations regarding the revised policy to the Committee upon conclusion of its deliberations.

Engagement in staff outreach and awareness-raising was essential to identifying and addressing the ethics-related concerns across the United Nations and to strengthening a consistent and shared ethical culture. Pursuant to that goal, the Ethics Office conducted various outreach missions engaging with more than 1,000 individuals, holding townhall meetings, providing confidential ethics consultations with individual staff members, and conducted tailored ethics briefings and presentations for specific field offices.

As per Assembly resolution 65/247 [YUN 2010, p. 1480], the Ethics Office conducted mandatory ethics induction briefings for senior leaders. The Director of the Office personally conducted 13 confidential ethics induction briefings with newly appointed asgs and usgs, including Special Representatives and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. The briefings addressed personal ethical responsibility, setting the “tone from the top”, retaliation prevention, and transparency and accountability practices.
In cooperation with OHRM, the Office launched a new online ethics training course which was available on Inspira in English and French and was mandatory for all staff members. In addition, it was available to consultants and temporary appointments and served as a refresher for existing staff; as at 31 July, the course had been completed by 11,000 staff members. The course was also utilized as a model ethics programme by other UN entities updating or developing their own online ethics training courses.

During the reporting period, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Ethics Office launched the 2014 leadership dialogue on treating one another with respect and tolerance, which provided annual opportunity to staff and managers at Headquarters and in field locations to engage in a one hour discussion on ethics and integrity issues. The Office developed the 2015 leadership dialogue, entitled “Fulfilling our mission: taking individual responsibility”.

The Office assisted various UN entities in developing policies and standards regarding staff conduct and integrity issues. Notably, it provided policy advice in the areas of financial disclosure, conflict of interest management and protection against retaliation. The Office provided advice to field offices, peacekeeping missions and regional commissions regarding guidance to field staff. Support activities included the provision of policy comments, proposed revisions to staff guidance notes and advice on vetting for conflicts of interest. The Office further collaborated with other Secretariat departments in examining issues relating to personal and organizational conflicts of interest and provided policy advice on terms and conditions of service for certain types of personnel.

During the reporting period, the Ethics Panel, which was mandated to create a unified set of ethical standards and policies for the Secretariat and separately administered organs and programmes and consulted on important and complex ethics matters having system-wide implications, focused on establishing coherence and consistency in applying ethics standards and reviewed lessons learned. The Panel identified and deliberated on emerging ethical challenges posing individual, institutional and process risks and consulted on matters concerning reputational risk management, organizational and personal conflicts of interest, outside activities, the use of social media, the review of financial disclosure statements, intra-agency relationships, the parameters of confidentiality and internal justice system challenges.

The Ethics Office and members of the Ethics Panel continued to participate in the activities of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations, established in 2010 to support the Secretary-General’s efforts to promote system-wide collaboration on ethics issues.

The seventh meeting of the Network (Washington, D.C., 7–10 July) was hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Secretary-General observed the efforts of the Ethics Office to engage with staff via enhanced outreach initiatives remained essential for preventing, mitigating and managing ethical and reputational risk within the Organization. The Office's interaction with staff worldwide consistently demonstrated a strong staff demand for counselling, consultation and guidance on ethics and integrity issues.

The Secretary-General further added that the Ethics Office remained a leading advocate for the values and principles enshrined in the Charter, the Secretary-General said. By engaging directly with staff and other stakeholders on those values and promoting adherence to the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity, the Office played a distinctive and indispensable role within the Organization.

Amendments to Staff Regulations and Rules

Report of Secretary-General. In July [A/70/135], the Secretary-General presented amendments to the staff regulations and rules that he proposed to implement as at 1 January 2016.

The amendments pertained to the Rule 4.15 concerning senior review bodies (instead of the Senior Review Group) and central review bodies for staff selection and managed mobility; Rule 5.3 on special leave; and Rules 9.9 concerning commutation of accrued annual leave.

Staff safety and security

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 69/133 [YUN 2014, p. 1693], the Secretary-General, in September [A/70/383], submitted a comprehensive report on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of UN personnel, covering the period from January 2014 to June 2015.

The Secretary-General gave an overview of the global security environment, associated security threats and challenges facing UN personnel, and the response of the Organization to those threats and challenges. It also contained an analysis of emerging security trends, their key drivers and their implications for UN personnel, and highlighted the role of the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) in strengthening safety and security and, in turn, enabling the United Nations to deliver its programmes across the globe.

The Secretary-General noted that UN personnel continued to work in environments with significant security challenges marked by armed conflict, post-
conflict instability, the proliferation of violent extremism and terrorism, rising crime, civil disorder and widespread human rights violations, most of which were fuelled by underlying political, economic and social crimes. The actors who represented the primary threat were violent extremists, armed groups, organized criminal networks and opportunistic individuals manifesting little or no respect for the mandate or values of the United Nations. Such actors did not view the Organization as a neutral or impartial entity and, in some cases, viewed its presence as an impediment to their objectives.

The rapid rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant was of great concern, in particular given the already substantial threat by other extremist movements, such as Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. In 2014, out of 15 UN personnel who lost their lives as a result of violence, 6 were killed in terrorist acts attributed to such groups. The persistent anti-United Nations propaganda that they conveyed, including through the Internet and various forms of social media, suggested that the threat of targeted attacks against the Organization would continue in the coming years. Such groups, and their growing number of affiliates, threatened UN personnel and programmes in an increasing range of geographic areas. Meanwhile, in Iraq, Mali, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, the United Nations focussed unprecedented security challenges as armed conflict had become intertwined with terrorism and with violent extremists who exploited local, national and regional vulnerabilities, including underlying ethnic, religious, sectarian or socioeconomic tensions.

The evolving global security environment had profound impacts on the Organization, both in terms of risks to personnel and the continuing implementation of programmes. While the dangers in the operating environment had increased, as demonstrated by a rise in the number of attacks against UN premises in the first six months of 2015 relative to 2014, the impact on personnel had been steadily declining, with less loss of life annually since 2011, most likely due to improved security management practices, including the increased use of armoured vehicles, safety and security training, enhanced physical security measures, security threat analysis and the application of programme criticality as a tool to determine acceptable risk. Those practices had strengthened the safety and security of personnel around the globe, thereby enabling the United Nations to stay and deliver its programmes, despite a zero-growth budget and with no increase in dss posts.

Fifteen UN personnel lost their lives and 65 were injured in 2014 as a result of acts of violence. An additional 8 personnel were killed and 42 injured during the first six months of 2015. The total of 23 personnel killed represented a decrease over the previous 18-month reporting period, during which 28 personnel were killed.

Six personnel were killed in 2014 as a result of terrorism and an additional five in the first six months of 2015, the first recorded period in which deaths from terrorism exceeded those resulting from other causes. It was too early, however, to determine whether that situation would develop into a trend. On 17 January 2014, four personnel died in an attack at a restaurant in Kabul, Afghanistan, and on 4 July 2014, two were killed in Gaalkayo, Somalia. On 13 February 2015, a UN personnel was among the victims of a complex attack on a Shia mosque in Peshawar, Pakistan. On 20 April 2015, four personnel were killed and five injured in the bombing of a UN vehicle in Garoowe, Somalia.

Nine armed attacks were launched in 2014 on UN premises and 45 attacks on vehicles, and in the first six months of 2015, 16 armed attacks were launched on UN premises, 15 of which occurred in Yemen alone. That significant increase in attacks compared with the decreasing numbers of UN personnel killed demonstrated the value of investing in physical security measures. Strong perimeter defences and guards enabled the Organization to repel attacks at Mogadishu International Airport. In a separate incident, one UN personnel member survived a car bombing against his convoy in Mogadishu because of the protection afforded by a newly deployed armoured vehicle.

Crime accounted for 8 (53 per cent) of the 15 deaths of UN personnel attributed to acts of violence in 2014. There was concern about the increased number of UN personnel who were victims of aggravated and sexual assaults, which had risen between 2014 and 2015 almost three fold, from 39 to 112, with 73 personnel victimized in the first six months of 2015. A surge in armed conflict and civil unrest, combined with deteriorating economic conditions, had been identified as a contributing factor. A new residential security measures policy was approved by the Inter-Agency Security Management Network to strengthen the safety and security of UN personnel in and around their residences.

Female personnel continued to be proportionally more affected by crime and sexual assault than their male colleagues, but less affected by incidents overall. While female personnel represented approximately 40 per cent of all UN personnel in the field, they accounted for 46 per cent of crime victims and 100 per cent of sexual assault victims and constituted 13 per cent of deaths attributed to both violent acts and safety-related incidents.

In 2014, six UN personnel were abducted, five of whom were locally recruited. All were subsequently released. Seven personnel were abducted during the first six months of 2015, six of whom had been released, while one remained in captivity in Iraq. The successful
release of hostages was attributed to the professional hostage incident management capacity established within DSS and to the support of Member States.

The number of incidents of intimidation and harassment, which occurred mostly in areas in which parties to the conflict operated without regard to the rule of law, increased from 108 in 2013 to 295 in 2014. During the first half of 2015, 204 incidents were reported in these two categories.

The number of UN personnel detained or arrested had consistently decreased since 2010: Of 128 civilian personnel arrested in 2014, 110 were released, while 15 remained in detention and 3 were convicted of crimes in national courts. While a minority of arrests involved legitimate criminal charges, a majority could be linked to misperceptions or misunderstandings of the UN mandate, failure to uphold the privileges and immunities of the United Nations as recognized under international law or poor coordination between local authorities and the United Nations, among other challenges. Most arrests occurred in South Sudan, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The declaring of UN personnel as personae non gratae had, in some instances, amounted to a form of intimidation, including instances in which the declaration had come in response to the highlighting of human rights issues by the personnel. Member States were called upon to reaffirm their commitment to international law, the Secretary-General said, and to respect the privileges and immunities of the United Nations. He urged Member States to act against all unlawful detention or arrests of UN personnel or obstruction to their freedom of movement and to investigate all serious crimes and acts of violence against UN personnel within their respective jurisdictions and to seek the prosecution of all perpetrators in that regard.

Road traffic accidents remained a leading cause of death and injury. In 2014, all 15 safety-related deaths and 91 of 101 safety-related injuries were associated with road traffic accidents, with 30 per cent of those incidents involving UN vehicles. In addition, 29 non-UN personnel were killed and another 202 injured in road traffic accidents involving UN vehicles.

During the reporting period, the most important public health threat faced by UN personnel was the Ebola virus disease outbreak, which began in Guinea in December 2013 and later spread to neighbouring countries in West Africa. Although the Organization had to reorient its efforts to address the outbreak, few disruptions to programme delivery were reported owing to the implementation of alternate work modalities and other proactive security management measures, including the development of additional security personnel.

The challenging global security environment had had a substantial impact on UN operations, with programmes temporarily disrupted, projects realigned, activities transferred and alternate work modalities adopted in response. In some cases, unpredictable or large-scale hostilities necessitated a temporary reduction or relocation of UN personnel from the conflict areas. In all cases, the Organization was required to balance operational needs with security risks. While most evacuations had been of limited duration, the sustained high-risk environment in Libya resulted in the prolonged evacuation of international personnel from the country.

Inevitably, the Secretary-General noted, efforts to conduct safe and secure operations had a financial price. In Somalia alone, one UN agency recently spent approximately $1 million to improve the physical security of its compounds and enhance the security of its road movements.

Above all, disruptions to UN operations had had a direct impact on local populations. For example, in the South Sudan, some humanitarian offices were looted and destroyed, causing donor funding to decrease and, in turn, programmes to be suspended. Ultimately, the crisis in South Sudan had eroded development gains and had a severe impact on early recovery initiatives. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Nations had had to take a cautious and flexible approach to providing humanitarian assistance to civilians in need, and in Yemen, UN programmes had been resuming their work progressively in Sana’a since June 2015 owing to the critical humanitarian situation in the country.

Turning to the security of locally recruited UN personnel, the Secretary-General reported that they made up 65 per cent of all UN personnel affected by safety and security incidents in 2014. While being involved in more incidents by absolute numbers, they were proportionally less affected than their international counterparts in incidents resulting in violent deaths (53 per cent); in two specific areas, however, a greater percentage had been affected, namely, safety accidents (87 per cent) and arrest and detention (90 per cent). Locally recruited personnel made up the bulk of drivers and thus were more vulnerable to road traffic accidents, and they were most vulnerable to the abuse of authority by State officials.

The Secretary-General also analysed security incidents affecting humanitarian and other UN personnel. From January 2014 to June 2015, 92 personnel of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in close cooperation with the United Nations had lost their lives as a result of acts of violence, 84 were injured and 167 were abducted. Although likely to be incomplete, the data showed that the security environment had a disproportionate impact on NGO personnel as compared to UN personnel as relocation or evacuation of UN personnel had resulted in the delivery of critical programmes and activities by local NGOs, often at great personal risk.
The loss of life and injuries to staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (see p. 000) as a result of acts of violence were significantly worse in 2014 than in the previous year, increasing by 80 per cent. UNRWA area staff were not covered under the security management system and, therefore, those incidents were not included in the overall statistics of the report. The incidents, however, were symptomatic of the environment in which the United Nations operated.

UN peacekeepers, likewise, were not included under the security management system, but they faced threats similar to those encountered by UN civilian personnel, especially where they were co-located, such as the Central African Republic (see p. 000) and Mali (see p. 000). Between November 2013 and October 2014, the number of direct attacks against peacekeepers had more than doubled, from 7 to 16 attacks, relative to the previous 12-month period. In the first two weeks of October 2014 alone, 14 peacekeeping personnel were killed in hostile incidents.

Collaboration between the United Nations and host Governments formed part of the Organization’s strategic response, as did steps internally to bring perpetrators of serious crimes and acts of violence against UN personnel to justice. Dss had been working to develop a centralized database to register all serious crimes and acts of violence that resulted in the death or serious injury to UN personnel. The data would be used to follow up with relevant host Governments so that perpetrators could be brought to justice, and to maintain contact with injured survivors or the families of deceased victims. In parallel, the United Nations had worked tirelessly to secure the commitment of Member States to protect human rights and respect the privileges and immunities of UN personnel. In negotiating headquarters and mission agreements, the Organization made every effort to include applicable provision of relevant international conventions, including the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel [YUN 1994, p. 1289] and its Optional Protocol adopted in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1420].

Integrating security management with programme delivery, the Organization had broadened its programme criticality framework, in combination with the security risk assessment, in order to determine an acceptable level of risk to personnel operating in high-risk and very high-risk environments. The framework was a key element of the ‘stay and deliver’ strategy. Since its introduction, it had been implemented in 18 countries: Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, the State of Palestine, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

In line with its “stay and deliver” approach, the United Nations had recognized the need to clarify its duty of care towards personnel operating in high-risk and very high-risk environments. In April 2014, the High-level Committee on Management had established a working group chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, for a comprehensive review of key duty-of-care issues. Comprehensive studies had been undertaken in five distinct high-risk environments (Afghanistan, Haiti, Mali-Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic and countries affected by Ebola).

Through the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, the Organization was considering how best to address the security needs of the personnel most vulnerable to gender-based violence, including through the development of training courses for female personnel, the reporting and recording of gender-based incidents and the development of specific guidelines for security personnel. A review of existing UN security policies was also required, with a view to including gender-sensitive considerations.

The Network was developing also new safety and security policies. It had undertaken efforts to develop system-wide policies, guidelines and procedures in order to strengthen guidance on safety and security issues. Three policies had been promulgated: an updated version of the “Saving Lives Together” framework, new policies for air travel and the safety and security incident recording system. Two other policies, concerning residential security measures (intended to replace the minimum operating residential security standards), and the management of stress and critical incident stress, were recently endorsed.

According to the Secretary-General, the development of a significantly improved security risk management process was nearly complete, along with relevant training and an e-tool module. Its roll-out had been set for December 2015 and it was expected that by December 2016 security professionals across all duty stations would be trained in the process. The Network intended to approve new policies in 2016 relating to field crisis management, gender inclusion in security management, road safety, unarmed private security services and residential security risks for locally recruited personnel.

During the reporting period, in order to strengthen partnerships with NGOs or operational partners under the Saving Lives Together framework, dss coordinated operational security assistance to NGOs in Algeria, the Central African Republic, the Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The security management system also provided relocation and evacuation assistance to NGOs in Yemen. Seventeen security managers of NGOs enrolled in security certification programmes designed for UN security professionals. That cooperation was
further reinforced following the inclusion of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (dpko) and the Department of Field Support (dfs), along with the United Nations Development Programme (undp), in the oversight committee of the newly approved Saving Lives Together framework.

Dss initiated a comprehensive strategic review of its own goals and objectives, organization, structure, functions, tasks and outputs. The review, the first of its kind since its establishment in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1558], identified areas for immediate enhancement, such as threat and risk analysis, physical security, training and development, and surge capacity for the field. Dss also recognized the need to implement rapidly the long-standing integration of security resources.

In 2015, dss, in order to provide a more comprehensive analytical service to stakeholders, especially in the field, reallocated internal resources to the Threat and Risk Assessment Service. It also worked to improve the capacity of security professionals by enhancing its analyst training, and it begun to work with other components of the Organization to develop awareness programmes in areas with a high risk of terrorism.

The Department established a physical security unit to enhance the security of UN premises. As a priority, a method and a tool for the assessment of physical security were developed to complement existing security management system policies. The unit had also launched a broad community of practice interface, organized workshops and conducted assessments of premises.

In response to the increasing demand for the United Nations to prevent and mitigate security risks, dss increased the use of armoured vehicles and the provision of armed security services, including close protection services (e.g., in Yemen). The Department also strengthened its security surge capacity, including for emergency response, with 94 surge deployments to 14 countries in 2014 and 48 surge deployments to 11 countries in the first six months of 2015.

Dss continued to focus efforts and resources on delivering training programmes for all UN personnel. In 2014, the Department delivered more than 100 classroom-based courses to approximately 1,700 individuals, while around 95,000 enrolled in online courses. More than 8,000 individuals enrolled in the Safe and Secure Approaches to Field Environments courses in field locations.

The Department was also on schedule to deliver a robust package of security learning solutions by the end of 2015, with a particular focus on developing and implementing the Women’s Security Awareness Training.

During the reporting period, the Department’s Critical Incident Stress Management Unit continued to strengthen its capacity and enhance its preparedness to respond to critical incidents around the globe, using a three-pronged strategy aimed at building staff resilience through training, building the capacity of the UN country offices and developing a security management system policy for the management of stress and critical incident stress. Globally, dss provided psychosocial services to 10,923 personnel and eligible family members. The services included counselling, training and technical advice to managers in response to 53 major critical incidents around the world.

The first air travel policy was recently endorsed and would be implemented by the end of 2015, with the Department’s Aviation Risk Management Office serving as the single source of information and guidance on the use of global air transport. Since 2011, dss had provided information and guidance on aviation safety in response to some 6,200 requests from field duty stations worldwide.

The Secretary-General observed that the global security environment remained complex, dynamic and challenging, as old threats remained while new challenges had emerged. That dynamic security environment constituted the new norm under which the United Nations had to operate. In that context, strengthening the safety and security of UN personnel was paramount. The ability to stay and deliver in dangerous, high-risk environments required the Organization to continuously re-evaluate and enhance its security management practices and measures and to take innovative approaches in responding to the changing security environment.

The Organization needed to assess continuously whether the security management system was reflective of the security environment and remained fit for purpose. It also had to be assured that dss had the adequate staff and resources. As a priority, the Department required effective physical protection capabilities, enhanced information analysis capacity, broadly accessible training and a robust framework of security policies. Fulfilling those requirements demanded a continuous and consistent effort to implement existing safety and security policies, procedures, practices and standards throughout the system, with the support of Member States. The Organization was determined to undertake the continuous enhancement of its security management system in order to allow for the consistent and holistic delivery of safety and security services.

The Department would need operational and deployment flexibility to ensure that the security workforce reflected the changing dynamics of the security environment in terms of both skills and the ability to deploy the right personnel, with the correct equipment, where they were most needed.

In addition, the Secretary-General said, the attention of senior managers was required to ensure that security remained a mainstream consideration in all planning and implementation activities of the
Organization. Security had to be seen as an integral component of all programmes and provided with appropriate funding.

The Secretary-General noted, while the UN flag should ensure protection, UN personnel and premises were too often the target of deliberate attacks. The United Nations condemned in the strongest terms all forms of crime and violence against its personnel and urged that perpetrators be held accountable. In that regard, the collaboration between the United Nations and host Governments remained fundamental for the security of UN personnel, assets and premises and should be maintained in an open and constructive manner.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 10 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/104 [draft: A/70/L.25 & Add.1] (Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel) without vote [agenda item 73].

**Investigation into the death of Dag Hammarskjöld**

In a letter dated 2 July [A/70/132], the Secretary-General transmitted to the President of the General Assembly the report of the Independent Panel of Experts which he had established on 16 March 2015, pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/246 [YUN 2014, p. 1698], to examine and assess the probative value of new information relating to the deaths of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and those accompanying him.

The Panel was headed by Mohamed Chande Othman (United Republic of Tanzania), the other two members being Kerryn Macaulay (Australia) and Henrik Larsen (Denmark). In accordance with its mandate, the Panel reviewed and summarized the related information made available to it and assessed its probative value. The Panel reviewed the report and materials submitted by the Hammarskjöld Commission, as well as other information received from Member States and other sources. It travelled to Zambia to interview eyewitnesses and to Belgium, Sweden and the United Kingdom to visit various governmental and non-governmental archives. It proactively sought information from all Member States and submitted specific information requests to certain Member States.

It was the Panel’s ultimate conclusion that the final revelation of the whole truth would still require the United Nations to further critically address the remaining information gaps, including the existence of classified material and information held by Member States and their agencies that might shed further light on the fatal event and its probable cause or causes.

The Panel made several recommendations on the preservation of archives in a holistic manner, the continuation of the Secretary-General’s efforts to obtain classified records or documents from Member States concerned, and the disposition of new information that was received after the completion of the Panel’s mandate.

The report of the Panel constituted an indispensable step towards fulfilling the responsibility to establish the facts and truth about the events of 17 and 18 September 1961 [YUN 1961, pp. 63, 161], the Secretary-General said. He also expressed appreciation to the efforts of Member States to cooperate with the Panel, but noted, however, that in some cases, Member States had not provided a substantive response, had not responded at all or had maintained the classified status of the documents in question despite the passage of time.

The new information appeared to uphold the propriety, findings and conclusions of the original 1961 post-mortem examination of the passengers of SE-BDY, the Secretary-General said, which would appear to confirm that 15 passengers on board died of multiple or presumed multiple injuries sustained in the crash and that the sixteenth passenger died of similar causes, albeit five days later. The lack of probative value of new information relating to the cause or causes of death effectively puts to rest the claims that Dag Hammarskjöld was assassinated after surviving the crash.

Similarly, the Panel’s assessment of the new information relating to sabotage or hijacking as possible causes of the crash also appeared to put these two hypotheses to rest, absent any additional new information that might emerge. The Panel also found that claims made by mercenaries, or their interlocutors, and other agents that they shot or otherwise forced down SE-BDY in an aerial attack lacked credibility. Finally, while the Panel did not receive any new information that was specifically related to pilot error, the Secretary-General noted the Panel’s statement that this did not prejudice “the probative value of the existing information concerning that hypothesis of the cause of the crash”.

The Panel assigned moderate probative value to the following new information relevant to the hypothesis of an aerial attack or information as possible cause or causes of the crash: nine new eyewitnesses accounted for an aerial attack or information as possible cause or causes of the crash also appeared to put these two hypotheses to rest, absent any additional new information that might emerge. The Panel also found that claims made by mercenaries, or their interlocutors, and other agents that they shot or otherwise forced down SE-BDY in an aerial attack lacked credibility. Finally, while the Panel did not receive any new information that was specifically related to pilot error, the Secretary-General noted the Panel’s statement that this did not prejudice “the probative value of the existing information concerning that hypothesis of the cause of the crash”.

The Panel assigned moderate probative value to the following new information relevant to the hypothesis of an aerial attack or information as possible cause or causes of the crash: nine new eyewitnesses accounted that they observed more than one aircraft in the air at the same time as SE-BDY made its approach to Ndola, and that any additional aircraft were jets, or that SE-BDY was on fire before it impacted the ground or that it was fired upon or otherwise actively engaged by other aircraft present; the claims by two persons regarding hearing alleged intercepts or reading transcripts of intercepts of radio transmissions relating to a possible aerial or ground attack on SE-BDY; additional
information that had emerged on the air capability of the provincial government in Katanga in 1961 and its use of foreign military and paramilitary personnel; the possibility that communications from the cx-52 cryptographic machine used by Dag Hammarskjöld was intercepted; the possible role of crew fatigue as a contributing factor to the crash; additional information that called into question the official account of the time of discovery of the crash site and the behaviour of various officials and local authorities.

The Panel ultimately found significant new information as having sufficient probative value to pursue further aerial attack or other interference as a hypothesis of the possible cause of the crash. In particular, the Panel specifically concluded that the new eyewitness testimony, the claims of alleged intercepts and the new information concerning the air capability of the Katanga forces might also “provide an appreciable lead in pursuing the truth of possible cause or causes of the air crash and tragic deaths”. It was the Secretary-General’s view that a further inquiry or investigation would be necessary to finally establish the facts and reach a conclusive finding. He urged that Member States once again disclose, declassify or otherwise allow privileged access to information they might have. To that end, he had requested the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the United Nations Legal Counsel, to follow up with Member States concerned on the unfulfilled requests for specific information.

In line with the Panel’s recommendation to maintain contact with the various national and private archives, the Secretary-General had asked the Legal Counsel to explore the feasibility of the establishment of a central archival holding or other holistic arrangement that would enable access by electronic or other appropriate means to those records or archives by the United Nations and any other authorized parties with a view to ensuring their continued and enhanced preservation and access.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General considered it imperative to heed the words of the Head of the Panel in his transmittal letter of 11 June that the final revelation of the whole truth about the conditions and circumstances resulting in the death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of members of the party accompanying him would still require the United Nations, as a matter of continuity and priority, to further critically address remaining information gaps, including the existence of classified material and information held by Member States and their agencies that might shed further light on the fatal event and its probable cause or causes.

The Secretary-General recommended that the General Assembly remain seized of the matter as this might be the last chance to find the truth. He called on the Assembly to reiterate its message to Member States to ensure that any relevant records that remained classified were declassified or otherwise made available for review either by the UN Secretariat or by any eminent person or persons whom the Assembly might wish to entrust with this mandate.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 19 November [meeting 58], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/11 [draft A/70/L.9 & Add.1] (Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him) without vote [agenda item 129].

On 23 December (decision 70/554), the Assembly decided that the agenda item on the investigation and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him would remain for consideration during its seventieth (2015) session.

**Other staff matters**

**Mobility**

In July [A/70/254], pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/265 [YUN 2014, p. 1686], the Secretary-General submitted his second annual report on mobility, providing an update on the progress made towards implementation of the mobility and career development framework as at July 2015. The framework would apply to all internationally recruited staff of the Secretariat in the Field Service and Professional and higher categories up to and including the Director-2 level. It would include fixed-term, continuing and permanent appointments, except those on non-rotational positions, which required an advanced level of expertise, knowledge and qualifications in a technical field. It would be launched in January 2016, according to the Secretary-General, and preparations for its implementation were continuing.

In accordance with Assembly resolution 67/255 [YUN 2013, p. 1498], mobility was defined as a change in position, which could include one or more of the following: a change in role, function, department or duty station, or a move to or from an agency, fund or programme.

As at 30 June 2014, there were 14,197 Professional, Director and Field Service staff in the “mobility population”, while non-rotational positions were 109. Of the mobility population, 8,938 were male and 5,259 female. Staff at D or E duty stations (categorized by the International Civil Service Commission as the most difficult) comprised 2,641 men and 870 women. Of those, 1,475 men (or 56 per cent) and 503 women (or 58 per cent) had spent five years or more at the same duty station. The trend to move within the same duty station category continued, the Secretary-
General observed, and the number of staff who had served in hardship locations for over five years confirmed the need to improve opportunities for sharing the burden of serving in difficult duty stations, which was one of the main objectives of the mobility and career development framework.

The Secretary-General also provided updated data on the direct and indirect costs of moves, as well as on the number of positions open to external candidates and the number of such candidates appointed. In 2013, recurrent payments for the duty station moves of 1,254 staff members totalled $11,330,226, of which $2.1 million was paid to staff members who made a duty station move between departments, offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions (i.e., non-field entities), while $9.2 million was paid to staff members who moved to or from field missions.

The overall number of external appointments during the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2014 was 3,768, ranging from 637 to 857 annually. The proportion of external appointments compared with the proportion of all job opportunities ranged from 30 to 40 per cent. The highest number of external appointments was in the Professional category (3,046), followed by 541 external appointments in the Field Service category and 181 at the Director level.

The Secretary-General provided updated information on the staffing process under the mobility and career development framework that, in essence, was a new staff selection system which would be introduced in a phased manner, by job network, beginning with POLNET (Political, Peace and Humanitarian network) in January 2016. Staffing activities for networks that had been launched would be managed through semi-annual staffing exercises consisting of two parts: filling of vacancies: existing and anticipated vacant positions would be advertised and open to applications from internal and external candidates; managed mobility: an internal process for lateral staff movement, in which serving staff members would express interest in encumbered positions. Staff participating in the process would be those who had either reached their maximum position occupancy limit or reached their minimum position occupancy limit and chose to opt in.

In accordance with the Assembly’s request in resolution 68/265 that the Secretary-General ensure that managed mobility would not have a negative effect on mandate implementation under the peace and security, development and human rights pillars, the framework provided that vacancies arising from surge, start-up or human emergency situations might be filled using any of the existing modalities, including through the posting of temporary job openings or position-specific job openings and the selection of candidates from the semi-annual staffing exercises or by recruiting from rosters of pre-cleared candidates for entities authorized to do so, offering one-year fixed-term contracts as required. After that period, vacancies would become a part of the semi-annual staffing exercises. The foregoing would be evaluated in 2016 and 2017 to assess effectiveness in meeting surge, start-up and humanitarian emergency recruitment requirements while also fulfilling the objectives of the framework. Moreover, to preserve the ability of missions to deliver on their mandates, heads of mission would retain the authority to reassign staff laterally within the mission area during situations of surge, start-up or humanitarian emergency.

The framework would be supported by Inspira; its existing recruitment module was being reconfigured to accommodate the new roles and workflows for the management of job openings for vacant positions, and an entirely new module was being developed to manage the process of moving staff members laterally under managed mobility. A more streamlined approach for the evaluation of applicants’ eligibility and suitability would also be included.

During the reporting period a new staffing timeline had been developed; it was anticipated that it would take about 180 calendar days from the initiation of a job opening to the date of selection and including the 60-day advertising period, to fill vacant positions under the new framework. This represented a substantial improvement over the 2013-average of 273 calendar days (213 days plus the 60-day advertisement period). One of the steps causing delays in the recruitment process was the evaluation and recommendation of candidates, the Secretary-General observed. With the number of applicants on the rise, hiring managers were spending significant time manually reviewing all eligible applicants, conducting interviews and, where applicable, administering and marking written tests. Inconsistencies in the basis for job openings, including generic job profiles and job descriptions, as well as inconsistent screening questions, were cited as reasons for the delays in the processing of job openings. The process for filling vacancies under the framework was intended to resolve those issues by: conferring responsibility for evaluating and recommending applicants to dedicated network staffing teams and job network boards, respectively; increasing the proportion of job openings created using generic and/or standardized job descriptions; and facilitating the evaluation of suitability and eligibility by replacing the current screening questions used at the application stage with more detailed screening questionnaires. In addition, the process of filling vacancies under the framework would include a new, centralized and standardized assessment process.

These innovations and refinements were expected to reduce the time taken to evaluate and recommend candidates. The economies of scale and efficiencies created by advertising vacancies in batches, rather
than individually, and the centrally managed recruitment process should also allow for reductions in the time taken to complete other steps in the staffing timeline. To fully reap the benefits of the streamlined recruitment process under the framework and to make further progress towards achieving the 120-day target for recruitment set by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General proposed that the advertising time for vacancies posted as part of the semi-annual staffing exercises be reduced from 60 to 30 days. That would mean that it would take around 150 days, including the 30-day advertising time, to fill vacancies under the framework. The dates of upcoming semi-annual staffing exercises would be communicated to potential applicants as part of outreach efforts and clearly indicated on the UN career portal. The advertising time for vacancies in job networks not yet launched under the framework would remain at 60 days.

The new process of filling vacancies would continue to ensure that internal and external candidates were given equal consideration, the Secretary-General said, and equal treatment would be assured throughout the various stages of the recruitment process. As selection recommendations would be made by boards rather than by individual hiring managers, the needs of the Organization as a whole, and not just those of the department or office in question, would now also be taken into consideration. A global central review board and a senior review board would be responsible for confirming the integrity of the process.

The Secretary-General provided more detailed information on various aspects of managed mobility, including the application process and the criteria for matching staff members in the compendium to available positions, as well as a description of the process for the submission and review of special constraints requests. He also briefly outlined the workforce planning approach under the framework and the Organization’s response to the General Assembly’s decision in resolution 68/265 to limit the number of semianual staffing exercises be reduced from 60 to 30 days. That would mean that it would take around 150 days, including the 30-day advertising time, to fill vacancies under the framework. The dates of upcoming semi-annual staffing exercises would be communicated to potential applicants as part of outreach efforts and clearly indicated on the UN career portal. The advertising time for vacancies in job networks not yet launched under the framework would remain at 60 days.

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Throughout the reporting period, the global steering committee, the working-level technical advisory group and a dedicated working group of the Staff Management Committee on mobility had met regularly to provide oversight and/or feedback on all aspects of the framework and its implications. The mechanisms brought together representatives of Headquarters, field missions, regional commissions and offices away from Headquarters, thereby ensuring that the diverse needs of the global Secretariat were taken into account.

**Multilingualism**

**Committee on Information.** At its April/May session [A/70/21], the Committee on Information (coi) discussed the issue of multilingualism. During the general debate, coi representatives focused on multilingualism in the work of the Department of Public Information (dpi), including the use of the six official languages across social and new media platforms. The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information emphasized the Department’s commitment to multilingualism, saying that it was factored into all planning and decision-making to ensure that the Department reached as broad an audience as possible.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 11 September [meeting 103], the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/324 [draft A/69/L.86 & Add.1] (Multilingualism) without vote [agenda item 122].

**Travel-related matters**

**ACABQ report.** In a February report [A/69/787], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (acabq) considered the December 2014 report of the Secretary-General [YUN 2014, p. 1700] on standards of accommodation for air travel. During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 20 February 2015.

ACABQ also had before it, for information, the report of the Board of Auditors on UN peacekeeping operations for the 12-months period ended 30 June 2014 (see p. 000), which contained information on the audit of official travel for peacekeeping operations conducted by the Board in response to a request of the Advisory Committee.
The Committee noted that the requests in Assembly resolutions 67/254 A [YUN 2013, p. 1439] regarding the exceptions to the standards of accommodation for air travel and the presentation of proposals for enhancing controls in this area had not been fulfilled. It recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to limit the number of exceptions and to strengthen internal controls in that regard, and to report on progress achieved in his next report.

ACABQ noted, among other things, that the criteria for determining prominent traveller status should be clarified and that definitions should be tightened and consistently applied in order to allow for more streamlined, systematic and efficient process for responding to requests for exceptions to the standards of accommodation for air travel. The Committee recommended that the Assembly consider establishing a clear definition and a common set of criteria for determining the prominent traveller status and that it request the Secretary-General to submit proposals in this regard.

The Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to broaden the scope and enhance the content of his report to include comprehensive information on air travel activity across the entire Secretariat, including offices away from Headquarters and peacekeeping operations, as well as air travel-related costs under all sources of funding. In preparing his report, the Secretary-General should take into account the provisions and requests contained in Assembly resolutions 65/268 [YUN 2011, p. 1378] and 67/254 A, the observations and recommendations emanating from the audits of oversight bodies and all other relevant factors.

ACABQ also recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to entrust OIOS to conduct a performance audit of all travel activities across the Secretariat, including offices away from Headquarters and peacekeeping operations, on the proper application of air travel rules and economical utilization of travel resources under all sources of funding.

It encouraged the Secretary-General to continue monitoring industry best practices and the experiences of national Governments with regard to the potential application of frequent flyer miles for official travel.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

Report of Secretary-General. In February [A/69/779], pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/306 [YUN 2003, p. 1237], the Secretary-General provided data on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the UN system for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 and information on prevention, enforcement and remedial measures being taken to strengthen the Organization’s response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Secretary-General reported that the number of new allegations of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse received from the Secretariat departments and offices and UN funds and programmes totalled 79 in 2014 compared with 96 in 2013. Although the number of new allegations had decreased, much remained to be done to embrace the Organization’s response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

As at 31 December 2014, 28 allegations were made against UN staff members and related personnel other than those deployed in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported 16 allegations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) 4 and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) 5. The World Food Programme (WFP) received an anonymous allegation of sex with a minor by a staff member, which was being investigated.

In 2014, 51 allegations were reported in nine peacekeeping missions and one special mission. Of these allegations, 14 involved staff members of United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), 24 involved members of military contingents or UN military observers, and 13 involved UN police officers, members of formed police units and government-provided correctional personnel. Of these allegations, 38 (75 per cent) were received from three peacekeeping missions: the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), with 13 allegations each (51 per cent of the total); and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), with 12 allegations (24 per cent). The remaining 13 allegations (25 per cent) were received from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), with 5 allegations, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), with 3 allegations. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) all reported one allegation each.

During the reporting period, 18 (35 per cent) of the total number of allegations involved the most egregious forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, with 13 allegations of sexual activities with minors (25 per cent) and 5 allegations of non-consensual sex with persons aged 18 or older (10 per cent). Those types of allegations originated in six peacekeeping
missions: MONUSCO, with 9 of 13 allegations; UNMIL, with 3 of 5 allegations; UNMISS, with 3 of 13 allegations; MINUSMA, with 2 of 3 allegations; MINUSTAH, with 1 of 13 allegations, and UNOCI, with 1 allegation.

Of the 51 allegations received in 2014, 35 were recorded as potentially involving 38 adults, another 9 involved at least the same number of minors, and one more allegation reportedly involved two adults and one minor. Information concerning 6 allegations were insufficient to confirm the number of potential adult or minor victims.

Paternity claims were associated with 12 allegations, 7 of which were of sexual exploitation and originated in MINUSTAH and 5 were of sexual abuse and originated in MONUSCO.

With regard to investigations into the allegations received in 2014, 19 allegations involving at least 25 military personnel were referred to troop-contributing countries for investigation. In 12 of those instances, the Member States involved elected to investigate the matter on their own or in coordination with the United Nations, while in 7 instances the absence of a reply or a reply that the Member State had declined to investigate the matter meant that investigations were undertaken by the United Nations; 25 of the 51 allegations received in 2014 were referred to the United Nations for investigation, with 11 allegations involving some 15 civilian personnel, 11 allegations involving at least 15 police personnel, either UN police officers deployed individually or members of formed police units; 2 allegations involving the same number of government-provided correctional personnel and 2 allegations involving as many UN military observers; 2 allegations were still being reviewed at the end of the reporting period, pending further verification of information; information concerning 5 allegations was received by UNOS but deemed insufficient to allow for further investigations; as at 31 January 2015, investigations into 18 allegations received in 2014 were completed; the results of investigations into 26 allegations remained pending.

In 2014, troop- and police-contributing countries were informed that 16 military personnel and 5 police personnel would be repatriated on disciplinary grounds and barred from field missions in the future for their connection to 18 substantiated allegations. DRS also received 11 responses from troop- or police-contributing countries on action taken through their national accountability mechanisms regarding substantiated allegations.

For allegations received in 2014, responses indicated that disciplinary actions of an administrative nature were taken against two military personnel concerning two separate allegations of sexual exploitation, whereas two more military personnel were imprisoned for two substantiated allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

For allegations received in 2013, disciplinary actions of an administrative nature were taken against one military personnel, while another was dismissed. One police personnel received disciplinary action of an administrative nature for a substantiated allegation of sexual exploitation.

For allegations received between 2010 and 2012, three military personnel were imprisoned and later dismissed concerning one substantiated allegation of sexual abuse in 2012, whereas one police personnel was dismissed following a substantiated allegation of sexual exploitation in 2010. Proceedings against two military personnel in connection with two substantiated allegations of sexual exploitation had to be abandoned on procedural grounds.

The Secretary-General expressed his commitment to ensuring that all reported allegations were investigated fully and properly, provided that sufficient information was made available to start an investigation. When allegations were substantiated through investigations, he would continue to take measures within his authority and to request that Member States ensure that those responsible were held accountable through disciplinary actions or criminal accountability measures when so warranted.

For peacekeeping and special political missions, the Secretary-General observed, the total number of allegations received (51) was the lowest recorded since special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse were first put into place and represented a decrease compared with 2013. A significant decrease was observed in the number of allegations involving military personnel (24 allegations in 2014 compared with 37 in 2013), yet did not quite reach the lowest number, recorded in 2012 (19). The number of allegations against civilians (14) was the lowest recorded for that category of personnel. The number of allegations involving policy or assimilated personnel (13) was higher than that reported for that category since 2009.

The percentage of allegations involving sexual activities with minors, whether consensual or not, or non-consensual activities with an adult decreased to 35 per cent in 2014. Nonetheless, allegations of that kind continued to represent 50 per cent of all substantiated allegations from 2010 to 2013.

Concerning the number of allegations recorded for UNMISS, it appeared that the increase (from 6 in 2013 to 12 in 2014) resulted in part from UN personnel living in closer proximity with the South Sudanese population that took refuge in or around UNMISS premises following an outbreak of violence in December 2013. Furthermore, it was believed that outreach campaigns in 2013 and 2014, which included widely disseminating information on the standards of conduct expected of UN personnel, including definition of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as reporting...
mechanisms, led to an increase in reporting. Additional measures were taken to address the situation, such as clearer scrutiny of the number of participants in mandatory training, regular refresher briefings and continued awareness raising.

In 2014, 7 of the 13 allegations originating in MINUSTAH could be attributed to complaints made in order to seek a resolution with regard to paternity claims and obtain child support. All allegations except one concerned sexual relation that took place some years before, including two instances dating to 2009. When reviewed, those complaints also pointed to possible instances of sexual exploitation stemming from consensual sexual relations, and matters were accordingly referred to investigation.

The other peacekeeping mission for which paternity claims were recorded was MONUSCO, where all such claims were in connection with allegations of sexual abuse, with four allegations involving sexual relations with a minor and one concerning a non-consensual sexual relation with an adult. Nonetheless, the significant decrease in the overall number of allegations recorded for MONUSCO, from 23 in 2013 to five in 2014, was to be underlined. UNMIL also saw a decrease in reported allegations, from seven in 2013 to five in 2014.

Between 2010 and 2013, information was deemed sufficient to warrant the referral of 243 allegations for investigation. Of 229 allegations, 87 (38 per cent) were found to have been substantiated; of those, 43 were established as sexual abuse and 44 were determined to be of sexual exploitation. The fact that a larger proportion of allegations (62 per cent) had been found to be unsubstantiated was a positive development, the Secretary-General said, but there might be reasons for this, such as insufficient evidence and unavailability of witnesses. The 87 substantiated allegations involved 34 individuals who were minors when the alleged sexual abuse took place and 67 adults, all of whom had been recognized as victims. In addition, there were 26 paternity claims associated with those substantiated allegations.

During the reporting period, DRS took steps to address pending paternity claims by systematically sharing DNA collection protocol with concerned Member States. Yet hurdles remained as some of the alleged fathers refused to be tested and judicial proceedings needed to be conducted to obtain legal recognition of the identity of the father and a settlement for support to be provided to the children involved.

Member States continued to provide a high level of response concerning requests for the appointment of national investigation officers or referrals for actions on substantiated allegations, with an overall response rate of 85 per cent in 2014, compared with 91 per cent in 2013, 57 per cent in 2012, 43 per cent in 2011 and 39 per cent in 2010. The response rate to the specific communications regarding paternity matters was 20 per cent.

Information on the results of 33 pending investigations was provided for allegations recorded from 2010 to 2013. Unfortunately, information concerning disciplinary actions requested, mainly from Member States, remained pending in connection with a number of substantiated allegations. Continued efforts by Member States towards the timely completion of investigations and the transmission of comprehensive information to the Secretariat on actions taken remained critical to the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy.

The Secretary-General put forward a number of proposals for strengthening measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse which were based on wide-ranging recommendations of an interdepartmental and inter-agency working group whose report was considered in January 2015 at a high-level meeting of UN senior leaders chaired by the Secretary-General. The proposals were aimed at forging a strengthened zero-tolerance policy to which the Secretary-General remained fully committed. He concluded that, sexual exploitation and abuse in particular were intolerable forms of misconduct that could also represent criminal conduct and a violation of fundamental human rights. Sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel harmed the very people who looked to the Organization for assistance and adversely affected the reputation of the Organization and the noble work done by its personnel under difficult conditions.

The Secretary-General had identified areas where efforts could be made to strengthen further the response of the Organization in the prevention, enforcement and remediation of sexual exploitation and abuse. The proposals presented in his report reflected an integrated approach and demonstrated a resolve to create a United Nations that was worthy of the trust the world placed in it.

In the area of prevention, emphasis was placed on raising awareness and improving training. An e-learning programme on sexual exploitation and abuse would be made mandatory in peacekeeping missions first, then in the Secretariat and throughout the UN system. In addition, robust steps would be taken to ensure that the Organization deployed personnel who met the highest standards of integrity; therefore, it was critical to continue strengthening efforts in vetting personnel.

DRS continued to take steps to ensure that progress in addressing reported allegations was monitored and measured more closely. Additional information on actions taken to address all allegations received would be provided to the public and periodically updated. Nonetheless, additional efforts continued to be required to reduce the time needed to complete
investigations and ensure that allegations were addressed comprehensively.

The Secretary-General relied on Member States to respond to and complete investigations promptly, and to provide sufficient information on the results of those investigations and other actions taken when allegations were substantiated. He requested that Member States committed to a six-month timeline to conclude investigations and indicated that the same benchmark should be adopted by UN investigative entities.

Leaders and commanders and Member States had to do their part to pursue cases of sexual exploitation and abuse to the full extent of the applicable legal framework, the Secretary-General emphasized. It was expected that Member States would prosecute credible allegations of criminal offences brought to their attention by the Secretariat; every individual alleged to have committed sexual exploitation or abuse must be made to answer to those allegations. The Secretary-General said he had presented wide-ranging recommendations to strengthen accountability to cover leadership command and individual responsibility, as well as financial accountability.

**Administration of justice**

**Note of Secretary-General.** On 30 July [A/70/189], the Secretary-General reported to the General Assembly on an amendment to Article 8 (Appeals), paragraph 6, of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal. The amendment had been adopted by the Tribunal on 16 February, in accordance with article 32, paragraph 1, of its rules of procedure. The Assembly was requested to approve the proposed amendment. Until then, the rule, as amended, would apply provisionally.

**Report of Secretary-General.** In a 31 July report [A/70/187], the Secretary-General reviewed the functioning of the UN system of administration of justice for the calendar year 2014.

The system had commenced operation in 2009 [YUN 2009, p. 1474], pursuant to resolutions 61/261 [YUN 2007, p. 1525], 62/228 [ibid., p. 1528], and 63/253 [YUN 2008, p. 1637], by which the Assembly had decided that the system would be independent, transparent, professionalized, adequately resourced and decentralized, and would operate in a manner consistent with the relevant rules of international law and the rule of law and due process to ensure respect for the rights and obligations of staff members and the accountability of managers and staff members alike.

The first step in the formal system was management evaluation, the Secretary-General said. Except in cases involving the imposition of a disciplinary or non-disciplinary measure following a disciplinary process, or decisions taken pursuant to advice obtained from technical bodies, a staff member who wished to contest an administrative decision had to request a management evaluation of that decision. That step was intended to give management an early opportunity to review a contested decision, to determine whether mistakes had been made or irregularities had occurred and to rectify those mistakes or irregularities before a case proceeded to litigation. Where an administrative decision was upheld at the management evaluation stage or a request for management evaluation was deemed not receivable or moot, the staff member had the statutory right to file an application with the United Nations Dispute Tribunal. Either the staff member or the Secretary-General might appeal against a judgement of the Dispute Tribunal to the United Nations Appeals Tribunal on any of the grounds enumerated in the statute of the Appeals Tribunal. Decisions of the Appeals Tribunal were final and binding on the parties.

The Secretary-General noted a discernible link in 2014 between decisions that affected large numbers of staff members and recourse to the formal internal justice system. Those decisions related to a rostering exercise with approximately 35,000 written assessments for Field Service staff, which resulted in over 600 requests for managerial evaluation and one application to the Dispute Tribunal, and a periodic salary survey that led to a temporary remuneration freeze for some staff, resulting in more than 100 applications to the Dispute Tribunal.

There was a numerical increase in recourse to the Management Evaluation Unit, the Dispute Tribunal and the Appeals Tribunal. There was also an increase in the number of staff members seeking legal assistance from the Office of Staff Legal Assistance.

As at 30 April 2015, some 75 per cent of the management evaluation requests received in 2014 had not been pursued beyond the management evaluation stage, and 135 cases had been settled at that stage in the Secretariat and in the separately administered funds and programmes. At the Dispute Tribunal stage, 31 cases had been settled between the parties following case management by the Tribunal. A further 18 cases had been withdrawn by applicants following case management and 6 more cases had been successfully mediated after case management. Another 14 cases had been settled between the parties without case management, one of which had been resolved by formal mediation. One case had been settled between the parties at the Appeals Tribunal.

The Office of Staff Legal Assistance acted on behalf of staff members in the settlement of 110 cases in the formal and informal system in 2014; of those, around 50 were settled at the management evaluation stage.

The Management Evaluation Unit received a total of 237 management evaluation requests, from 1 January to 30 April 2015.
Of the 1,541 requests received in 2014, the Unit had closed 1,402 by the end of the year. Of the requests closed, 125 (9 per cent) were resolved through efforts by the Unit itself, by the decision makers themselves or with the involvement of the Office of Staff Legal Assistance or the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services. In 55 per cent of closed cases, the contested decision was deemed not receivable.

In 2014, the United Nations Dispute Tribunal received 411 new cases (44 per cent of which were received from staff of agencies, funds and programmes; 34 per cent from Secretariat staff, and 22 per cent from field operations staff), an increase of 42 per cent over 2013, and disposed of 320 cases. As at 31 December 2014, 317 cases were pending. Of the new cases, 248 (60 per cent) were filed by males and 163 (40 per cent) by females. The categories of applicants who filed cases in 2014 were as follows: Director (20); Professional (123); General Service (169); Field Service (21); Security (6); Trades and Crafts (9); National Staff (45); and Others (18). The cases received during the reporting period fell into six main categories: benefits and entitlements (154); appointment-related matters (non-selection, non-promotion and other) (96); separation from service (non-renewal and other separation matters) (54); disciplinary matters (14); classification (2); and other (91).

The Office of Staff Legal Assistance provided representation in 104 of the 411 new cases received in 2014. In 53 cases, staff members were represented by private counsel; in 9 cases, staff were represented by volunteers who were either current or former staff member; and in 245 cases, staff members represented themselves.

In 2014, 57 cases were decided in favour of the applicant either in full or in part. In 22 cases, only financial compensation was ordered. In 26 cases, both financial compensation and specific performance were ordered. Specific performance was ordered only in 6 cases and in 3 cases no compensation was ordered. Suspension of action was requested in 57 cases and granted in 12 cases; 14 requests were rejected on receivability and 25 on the merits, 5 were withdrawn and one was transferred.

During the reporting period, the judges held one plenary meeting (Geneva, 28 April–5 May 2014). Judge Ebrahim-Carstens was elected President of the Tribunal for one year, from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. As in previous years, the judges continued to convene round-table meetings with stakeholders and legal practitioners.

The Dispute Tribunal was composed of eight judges, three of them full-time, two of them half-time and three of them ad litem. In resolution 69/203 [YUN 2014, p. 1703], the General Assembly had decided to extend the three of the ad litem judges for one year, from 1 January to 31 December 2015. In view of the increased case load before the Tribunal, the Secretary-General recommended the extension of the three ad litem judges positions and the staffing complement that supported them, for one year, from 1 January to 31 December 2016. It was hoped that the interim independent assessment of the system of administration of justice would help to inform further consideration of the resource requirements of the Tribunal.

The seven-member United Nations Appeals Tribunal held three sessions in 2014: 24 March–2 April; 16–27 June; 6–17 October. At those sessions, it heard and passed judgements on appeals filed against judgements rendered by the Dispute Tribunal; on appeals against decisions of the Standing Committee acting on behalf of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB) alleging non-observance of the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF); and on appeals against judgements and decisions of entities that concluded special agreements with the Secretary-General.

During the reporting period, the Appeals Tribunal received 137 new cases and disposed of 146 cases. As at 31 December 2014, it had 101 cases pending. The ratio of cases filed by staff members compared to those filed on behalf of the Secretary-General changed from 2013 to 2014: In 2013, half of the cases were filed by staff members and half on behalf of the Secretary-General, whereas in 2014, 65 per cent of the cases were filed by staff members and 35 per cent on behalf of the Secretary-General.

The Appeals Tribunal also received 84 interlocutory motions in 2014. These included motions to extend time limits, to adduce new evidence, to file additional pleadings, to strike, for interim relief, for confidentiality, for oral hearings, for suspension of decisions and for withdrawal of some claims.

The Office of Staff Legal Assistance continued to provide legal advice and representation to UN staff worldwide, at all levels, in a wide range of employment matters, from non-appointment to termination, claims of discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority, pension benefits, disciplinary and misconduct cases, and other matters and entitlements under the Staff Rules. The Office also provided advice and representation to former UN employees and their beneficiaries regarding rights that arose from employment, including claims for pension and post-separation entitlements.

In 2014, the Office received 1,180 new cases and closed or resolved 1,171 cases and settled 110 cases. There were 213 cases carried over into 2014 from previous years. On 31 December 2014, there were 222 cases pending. The relatively higher number of cases in 2014 was due to a number of “case clusters”, for example, staff members from the same UN entity similarly affected by the same issue or groups of staff members seeking summary legal advice on the same
issue or individual cases resulting in numerous applications.

In cases before the Tribunals, the Office held consultations and provided legal advice to staff members, drafted submissions on their behalf, provided legal representation at oral hearings, held discussions with opposing counsel and, to the extent possible negotiated settlements. It similarly provided advice and assistance in submissions and processes before other formal bodies and represented staff in formal mediation.

The Office of Administration of Justice was an independent office responsible for the overall coordination of the formal system of administration of justice. Through the Office of the Executive Director, the Office of Administration of Justice provided administrative and technical support to the Internal Justice Council, including with regard to its meetings and teleconferences and the preparation of its annual report to the General Assembly and the identification of suitable candidates for the Tribunals.

The Office of Administration of Justice also continued to enhance online search capabilities, to enhance the court case management system platform for data recording and reporting, and to update its website to disseminate information on the UN formal system of justice. There were 115,741 visitors to the website in 2014 of whom 32 per cent were new visitors.

The Office chaired the informal working group composed of representatives of staff, the Secretariat and the funds and programmes that met in 2014 to identify a pool of suitable candidates for consideration by the Secretary-General for appointment to the panel to be entrusted with the conduct of the interim administration of justice through outreach missions and at meetings and symposiums.

The Office also disseminated information regarding the system of administration of justice through outreach missions and at meetings and symposiums.

The Administrative Law Section, which comprised the Appeals Unit and the Disciplinary Unit, represented the Secretary-General in the majority of cases brought by Secretariat staff before the Dispute Tribunal. The Section was also responsible for handling the implementation of the final judgement in the case.

The Section, located in the Human Resources Policy Service of the Office of OHRM, worked closely with other OHRM offices, as legal challenges before the Dispute Tribunal often focused on the interpretation and application of the Staff Rules, the Secretary-General’s bulletins and other administrative issuances. The Section also advised managers in the Secretariat on the internal justice system and investigative and disciplinary processes.

In 2014, the Section handled 430 applications before the Dispute Tribunal brought by Secretariat staff members against the Secretary-General. Of the matters handled, 168 were new applications received, compared to 176 in 2013. The applications handled in 2014 primarily concerned challenges relating to appointment, separation from service, benefits and entitlements, imposition of disciplinary measures, and classification matters.

In addition to handling applications before the Dispute Tribunal, the Section liaised with the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) when the Tribunal issued a judgement. OLA determined whether to appeal the judgement to the Appeals Tribunal. Subsequent to final judgements, the Section obtained the information necessary and conveyed the judgements to the relevant officials, including the Controller, for execution.

The Disciplinary Unit provided recommendations to senior management regarding the disposition of matters referred to OHRM for possible disciplinary action. In 2014, they handled 223 disciplinary matters.

OLA, as the central legal service of the Organization, provided legal advice to the Secretary-General, Secretariat departments and offices, funds and programmes, and other UN system organs, in a number of areas, including the administration of justice system.

The function of the Division included reviewing each and every administrative issuance relating to human resources management policy for consistency and accuracy prior to its promulgation; providing legal advice, assistance and support concerning the interpretation of the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly resolutions and decisions, the Staff Regulations and Rules, the mandates and activities in which UN organs were engaged and other administrative issuances of the Organization; and providing legal advice on matters before an administrative decision was taken, including by legally clearing recommendations for the dismissal of staff members.

The Division reviewed and analysed each and every judgement of the Tribunals, thereby developing a comprehensive view of the jurisprudence in the administration of justice system. The Division drew on this analysis when providing legal advice during the early stages of a claim by a staff member and used the analysis to provide case-specific advice to the entities representing the Secretary-General at the first level of the judicial process and to brief them generally on legal developments, as well as when determining whether appealing a given judgement of the Dispute Tribunal was in the interest of the Organization. The Division reviewed all 248 judgements rendered by the Tribunals in 2014.

The Division was also responsible for the representation of the Secretary-General before the Appeals Tribunal, which included the filing of and responding to appeals, filing motions and responses to motions, as
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well as oral advocacy at hearings before the Tribunal. Once judgements were released, the Division further provided advice on their implementation. In 2014, the Appeals Tribunal rendered 82 judgements in cases in which the Secretary-General was a party.

Pursuant to the Assembly’s direction, the Secretary-General appointed a panel of independent experts to conduct an interim independent assessment of the UN system of administration of justice. The final report of the five-member panel and his comments would be transmitted to the Assembly at the main part of its seventy-first (2016) session.

In response to the Assembly’s request, the Secretary-General outlined the practice of proactive case management by the Dispute Tribunal, which was a key factor in the successful settlement of disputes within the formal system or the withdrawal of cases by the applicants. Case management helped to identify and narrow the issues in dispute, the Secretary-General said, as well as to identify jurisdictional and receivability issues that lent themselves to fast-tracking or preliminary determination, including through summary judgements. Case management also helped identify the evidence proposed in support of the claims made and handle any other procedural or substantive issues for a fair and expeditious case disposal. Effective case management significantly reduced the need for lengthy hearing or hearings at all. In 2014, 31 cases were settled by the parties as a result of the Dispute Tribunal encouraging parties during case management to engage in meaningful good faith consultations with a view to informal settlement. A further 18 cases were withdrawn by applicants and 6 more were successfully mediated following case management.

In Annexes to his report, the Secretary-General set out a proposal for the harmonization of the privileges and immunities of the Tribunal judges, as well as a refined proposal with respect to the mechanism for addressing complaints regarding alleged misconduct or incapacity of the Tribunal judges. Also, under way was the preparation of a single code of conduct for all legal representatives, which would be ready for presentation to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

The Secretary-General further outlined a number of concrete steps at the management evaluation stage in order to realize accountability of all individuals where violations of the Organization’s rules and procedures had led to financial loss. He added that the Organization continued to monitor the outcomes of both the management evaluation and litigation stages in order to refine the measures taken towards personal accountability.

The Secretary-General requested the General Assembly, among other things, to approve the extension of the three ad litem judge positions, including the extension of the three sitting ad litem judges, and the staffing complement to support them, for one year, from 1 January to 31 December 2016; to approve the proposal regarding the harmonization of privileges and immunities of the Tribunal judges; to approve the refined proposal for a mechanism to address complaints against judges; and to take note of the information with respect to the accountability of all individuals where violations of the Organization’s rules and procedures had led to financial loss and the action taken with respect thereto.

Report of Internal Justice Council. In a report issued in August [A/70/188], the Internal Justice Council reviewed issues relating to effective access to an independent, professional and accountable system of justice, and summarized the steps the Council had taken in making recommendations to the General Assembly for the seven vacancies that would arise on the Appeals Tribunal and the Dispute Tribunal effective 1 July 2016.

Annexed to the Council’s report was a letter from the judges of the Appeals Tribunal (Annex II), regarding resources for the Tribunal and its Registry, as well as the status of the judges. A memorandum from the judges of the Dispute Tribunal (Annex III) focused on systemic issues, including institutional instability, matters affecting the independence of the system of administration of justice, the transparency of the system, adequate resourcing, adequate representation of applicants before the Tribunal, status of the judges and draft code of professional conduct for external legal representatives. With regard to the latter, the judges expressed the view that a proper consultation on the code was essential. They had not been consulted and had only been furnished with a draft copy, the authors of which were unknown, in late June. Therefore, they were opposed to the approval of the code until they had been provided with the opportunity to comment on it in order to ensure that they were indeed in a position to enforce the code.

ACABQ report. The Advisory Committee, in October [A/70/420], commented and made recommendations on the Secretary-General’s report on administration of justice, as well as on the report of the Internal Justice Council.

Letter of General Assembly President. On 3 November [A/C.5/70/9], the President of the General Assembly transmitted to the Chair of the Fifth Committee a letter from the Chair of the Sixth (Legal) Committee on the administration of justice at the United Nations.

Report of Interim Panel. By a 11 December note [A/71/62], the Secretary-General transmitted the report of the Interim Independent Assessment Panel on the system of administration of justice at the United Nations. The Panel was appointed in March 2015 and completed its assessment in October.
The Panel noted that the UN justice system functioned in a special and challenging environment; it was designed to contribute to better accountability of the Organization and its staff by resolving internal conflicts and dealing with misconduct. Very often, however, the victims of conflict and misconduct were not staff members and those victims turned to the United Nations for help and for remedies. Holding UN personnel accountable for their conduct and taking care of victims, whether UN staff or not, were key responsibilities of the Organization and its management. Not doing so entailed impunity, which was bad for the Organization, for its mission, for staff morale and for justice.

Only about half of the UN workforce had access to the justice system. Contract staff and consultants, among others, did not have access. Many conflicts occurred within the workforce between staff and “non-staff”, which had to be resolved through a single mechanism. The arbitration clause that the “non-staff” had in their contracts was prohibitive, in particular in the field, and costly for both parties if invoked; effective recourse had to be provided to all who were in an employment or contractual relationship with the United Nations.

The new justice system was demanding for the Organization and in particular for its management. Decisions were increasingly being challenged and lessons had to be learned from the outcome of the proceedings. This could result in improved management practices, in observance of rules and policies and in early resolution of disputes or, even better, dispute prevention. People and conflict management was an inherent part of modern management and managers had to be encouraged to respond positively to mediation attempts.

A great number of cases going through the justice system concerned career issues, as well as interpretation of rules and procedures. Better written rules, clearer procedures, consistent practices and professionally conducted investigations could avoid most of them. Another matter that regularly led to appeals concerned investigations.

The justice system had become more transparent, the Panel found, but more outreach was needed to increase knowledge of the system by all staff and to make the system universally accountable. More transparency was needed on the part of the Tribunals, with more consistency in the proceedings before the Dispute Tribunal and more and better reasoning by the Appeals Tribunal in its judgements. The Panel noted that the search engine of the Tribunals’ jurisprudence was being improved and emphasized that the publication of guides with lessons learned from jurisprudence had to be resumed.

The system was professionalized at almost all levels, the Panel noted. It found, however, that the qualifications required of potential judges were too limited and suggested that knowledge of human rights and international law, together with practical experience in administrative and criminal justice, be added. Furthermore, judges had to be more acquainted with the Organization’s structure, rules and procedures before they took up their duties. A single code of conduct needed to be introduced for all counsel acting before the Tribunals.

The system was somewhat more decentralized than before, the Panel observed. Ombudspersons and Office of Staff Legal Assistance legal officers could be found in the regions and the Dispute Tribunal at three locations. Still too many functions were centralized at Headquarters, such as the Management Evaluation Unit and the Office of Legal Affairs in the area of disciplinary matters. This had to be remedied as justice needed to be closer to the people whom it served, both through the physical presence of its components and through better access to focal points, guides and resources, among others.

Where the rule of law and due process were concerned, the Panel recommended that the Dispute Tribunal, in order to enhance consistency, lay down provisions for procedure, either in the rules of procedure or in practice directions. Staff had to be protected from retaliation for appearing as witnesses or for lodging an appeal.

The Panel concluded the justice system was playing its part in securing a respectful workplace, which was the overall goal that had to be achieved so that the Organization could fulfill its mandate. A number of measures had to be taken to achieve that. Only a few, however, concerned the justice system directly.

Office of Ombudsman and Mediation Services

Report of Secretary-General. In July [A/70/151], the Secretary-General provided an update on the activities of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services. The report contained information on the activities carried out during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014. It focused on Secretariat-specific activities, including dispute resolution services offered to staff, outreach activities and initiatives to promote greater conflict competence among staff and managers and observations on systemic issues. Detailed information on the specific activities undertaken for the funds and programmes and UNHCR was provided in separate reports that could be found on the intranet pages and/or websites of the respective entities.

The Office was headquartered in New York and had seven regional offices and a mediation service. The regional offices were located in Bangkok, Entebbe (Uganda), Geneva, Goma (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna.
ombudsman for the funds and programmes and for UNHCR provided services to their global constituencies from New York and Geneva, respectively.

The Office opened 2,236 cases in 2014, an increase of 7 per cent over the previous year. Of those cases, 1,671 originated in the Secretariat, 431 in the funds and programmes, and 134 in UNHCR.

Progress continued in promoting mediation as an effective and informal way of resolving workplace disputes while enhancing harmony and collaboration. The case volume in 2014 (64) was slightly below that of the previous year (73). Of the cases recorded, 57 emanated from the Secretariat and 7 from the funds and programmes and UNHCR. Of the 64 cases received, 46 were completed, including 2 group processes. Of those completed cases, 33 resulted in a settlement. Six cases opened during the year were continuing as at July 2015. In 2014, 12 mediation cases (19 per cent) were referred by the Dispute Tribunal, 37 (58 per cent) were self-referrals and 15 (23 per cent) were referred by other sources, including the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, the Management Evaluation Unit and case officers within the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services.

The increased rate of self-referrals signalled a heightened awareness of the benefits of mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism, the Secretary-General said conducted in 2009 often included resolution of long-standing litigation.

In accordance with Assembly resolution 64/233 [YUN 2009, p. 1474], the Office identified broad-based systemic issues as root causes of conflict and ongoing efforts and opportunities to deal with them. Those issues included abusive behaviour and incivility at the workplace; the need for the Organization to improve its investigative capacity; staff serving in dangerous regions; and the lack of effective communication with staff.

While much progress had been made, continued efforts were needed to promote a culture where informal resolution and mediation were resorted to more naturally. From both the staff and management sides, knowledge and experience of mediation as a conflict resolution tool remained limited. The Office was advocating that informal resolution processes, including mediation, were incorporated into relevant administrative instructions, guidelines and rules so that they could become part of the Organization’s management fabric. The Office would continue to promote the value of early action and prevention, together with measures to help foster conflict competence and harmonious working environments.

ACABQ report. In an October report [A/70/420], the Advisory Committee expressed support for the continued involvement of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services in the progressive development of human resources policies and practices.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 14 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee [A/70/593], adopted resolution 70/112 (Administration of justice at the United Nations) without vote [agenda item 143].

**UN Joint Staff Pension Fund**

As at 31 December 2015, the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) recorded 126,892 active participants, compared to 122,759 at the end of 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 1705]. The number of member organizations remained unchanged at 23.

The Fund recorded 71,474 periodic benefits at year’s end, a slight decrease from the previous year of 72,367 benefits [ibid.]. The distribution was as follows: 26,275 retirement benefits; 15,525 early retirement benefits; 7,536 deferred retirement benefits; 10,843 widow benefits; 901 widower benefits; 1,409 disability benefits; 8,947 child benefits; and 38 secondary dependent benefits.

The payroll for benefits was $2.2 billion. Benefits were paid in 15 different currencies. During the year, the net assets available for benefits decreased by $617 million as the expenditure for benefits of $2.4 billion exceeded contributions by approximately $105 million. The value of the Fund’s assets decreased by about 1.2 per cent, from $53.1 billion on 31 December 2014 to $52.4 billion on 31 December 2015.

The Fund’s assets were valued at more than $54 billion and as at 31 December 2015, had an actuarial surplus of 0.16 per cent of pensionable remuneration. This represented a marked improvement from the deficit of 0.72 per cent at the end of 2013. More importantly, it highlighted the reversal of the negative trend observed in the last decade and meant that UNJSPF was one of the few solidly-funded, defined-benefit pension plans in the world.

As at 31 December 2015, UNJSPF had direct investments in 41 countries, 7 international/regional institutions and 24 currencies.

UNJSPF had an Emergency Fund, financed by the assets of the Fund and any voluntary contributions up to an amount not exceeding $200,000 each biennium. It was utilized to provide financial assistance to beneficiaries who were currently receiving benefits from the Fund and was intended to provide relief in cases of proven hardship owing to illness, infirmity or similar cases.

In 2015, the Fund completed its third asset-liability management (ALM) study which provided additional confirmation of the Fund’s sound actuarial valuation position and favourable funded status. The results of the ALM study also served as a key input for developing the Fund’s new Strategic Asset Allocation. UNJSPF also approved an update to the Fund’s Risk Management...
Policy. The UNJSPB Audit Committee continued to provide assistance in fulfilling the Board’s oversight responsibility dealing with such areas as internal and external audit, financial management and financial statements, risk management and internal control framework.

In August 2015, the Fund launched the new, customized Integrated Pension Administration System (IPAS).

Administrative expenses

**Report of UNJSPB.** In August [A/70/325], UNJSPB presented a report on the administrative expenses of the Pension Fund containing the Fund’s revised budget for the biennium 2014–2015, which indicated a reduction in appropriation amounting to $1,115,700. This reduction comprised amounts under expenditures for investment costs ($3,815,100) and audit costs ($68,800), offset in part by increased administrative costs of $2,768,200. The revised appropriations for the biennium would then amount to $176,550,800, divided into administrative costs ($93,768,500), investment costs ($79,898,50), audit costs ($2,475,000) and Board expenses ($408,800). Of that amount, $154,954,100 would be apportioned to the Fund and $21,596,700 would be chargeable to the United Nations under the cost-sharing arrangement. The revised estimate for extrabudgetary costs in 2014–2015 was $148,100.

The report also contained budget estimates for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017, which amounted to $178,211,300 (before recosting), to cover administrative costs ($90,361,400), investment costs ($83,856,400), audit costs ($2,893,500). Pension Board expenses ($944,200) and extrabudgetary costs ($155,800). The report provided for a total of 257 continuing established posts, 21 new established posts, 1 extrabudgetary post and the reclassification of 6 posts.

The Board recommended that the General Assembly approve the revised appropriations for the 2014–2015 biennium, and for the 2016–2017 biennium an estimate amounting to $180,714,200, comprising administrative costs ($91,666,500), investment costs ($85,180,200), audit costs ($2,902,600) and Pension Board expenses ($964,900). Of that amount, $158,464,400 would be apportioned to the Fund and $22,249,800 to the United Nations under the cost-sharing arrangements. In addition, the Board also recommended approval of $164,700 for extrabudgetary costs, funded by a number of member organizations, as well as an amount not exceeding $225,000 to supplement contributions to the Emergency Fund.

The Board’s report included a summary of follow-up action taken to implement requests and recommendations of ACABQ. Annexed to the report were: a summary of discussions in the Board on the revised estimates for 2014–2015 and the budget estimates for 2016–2017; the approved organization chart for UNJSPF for 2014–2015; the proposed organization chart for the Fund for 2016–2017; the number of UNJSPF participants by member organization as at 31 December 2014; the financial statements of the Fund for the year ended 31 December 2014; and the report of the Board of Auditors on UNJSPF for the year ended 31 December 2014 (audit opinion).

**Report of Secretary-General.** In a September report [A/C.5/70/2] on the administrative and financial implications arising from the UNJSPB report, the Secretary-General noted that the total amount to be reimbursed by the United Nations for the central secretariat of the Fund was estimated at $23,869,500, based on one third of specific elements of the administrative budget of UNJSPF, and that the estimated requirements of $13,220,300 ($13,835,300 at 2016–2017 rates) related to the share of the regular budget in the expenses of the central secretariat, excluding reimbursements anticipated from UN funds and programmes.

The Secretary-General noted that the overall resources amounting to $22,249,800 (at 2016–2017 rates) represented the UN share in the administrative and audit costs relating to UNJSPF. In accordance with established procedures, that overall amount would be shared among the regular budget of the United Nations and the funds and programmes. The distribution would require that an estimated 58 per cent of that amount be attributable to the regular budget, with the balance to be reimbursed by the funds and programmes. On the basis, however, of the latest data on the number of UNJSPF participants, the percentage share of the regular budget would need to be revised to 64.4 per cent. In applying the revised distribution rate to the proposed overall requirements, an amount of $14,328,900 (at 2016–2017 rates) represented the UN share in the administrative and audit costs relating to UNJSPF. In accordance with established procedures, that overall amount would be shared among the regular budget of the United Nations and the funds and programmes. The distribution would require that an estimated 58 per cent of that amount be attributable to the regular budget, with the balance to be reimbursed by the funds and programmes. On the basis, however, of the latest data on the number of UNJSPF participants, the percentage share of the regular budget would need to be revised to 64.4 per cent. In applying the revised distribution rate to the proposed overall requirements, an amount of $14,328,900 (at 2016–2017 rates) would represent the revised regular budget share, as compared with the provision of $13,385,300 already included in the proposed programme budget. Accordingly, an additional amount of $493,600 would be required.

**ACABQ report.** The Advisory Committee, in a November report [A/70/7/Add.6], declared that it was not in a position to recommend approval by the General Assembly of the additional appropriation of $493,600 proposed by the Secretary-General. The Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would provide the additional information in that regard to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the administrative expenses of UNJSPF for the biennium 2016–2017.

On 23 December, the Assembly, in resolution 70/248 A (sect. VI) (see p. 000), endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of ACABQ, subject to the provisions in the resolution. It accepted the report of the Board of Auditors and approved its recommenda-
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It decided to establish 14 additional posts and approved revised estimates of $176,550,800 for 2014–2015 for the administration of the Fund; expenses, chargeable directly to the Fund, totalling $157,213,000 for 2016–2017, with $21,865,300 as the UN share of the cost of the administrative expenses of the Fund for 2016–2017; and the increase of $246,000 in the UN share of the cost of administrative expenses of the central secretariat of the Fund for 2016–2017, representing a charge against the contingency fund. Lastly, the Assembly authorized the Pension Board to supplement the voluntary contributions to the Emergency Fund for 2016–2017 by an amount not to exceed $225,000.

The Assembly requested the Pension Board to ensure that all recommendations were implemented in full and in a timely manner. The Assembly noted with concern the delays in the receipt of payments by some new beneficiaries and retirees and stressed the need for appropriate action. Stressing the need to avoid any action that would compromise the fiduciary responsibilities and long-term sustainability of the Pension Fund and emphasizing the importance of the Fund meeting its target annual real rate of return of 3.5 per cent over the long term, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make all efforts to improve the Fund’s investment performance and to continue diversifying its investments between developed, developing and emerging markets.