

Drafting of General Assembly Resolutions

Joint Swiss-UNITAR Briefing on United Nations Budgetary Matters

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2 September 2020

Drafting resolutions: Contents

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What is a resolution

- ❑ Resolutions are the collective expression of sentiment, intent, views and opinions of Member States, which are agreed in the context of an intergovernmental process.
- ❑ Resolutions may contain mandates to the Secretariat/other entities.
- ❑ Resolutions are issued by the General Assembly, the ECOSOC, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council.
 - ❑ Resolutions may also be issued by competent regional, sectoral or functional bodies.
- ❑ Resolutions and Decisions have the same legal status:
 - ❑ **Resolutions:** used for policy, mandates and budgets
 - ❑ **Decisions:** used for procedural matters.

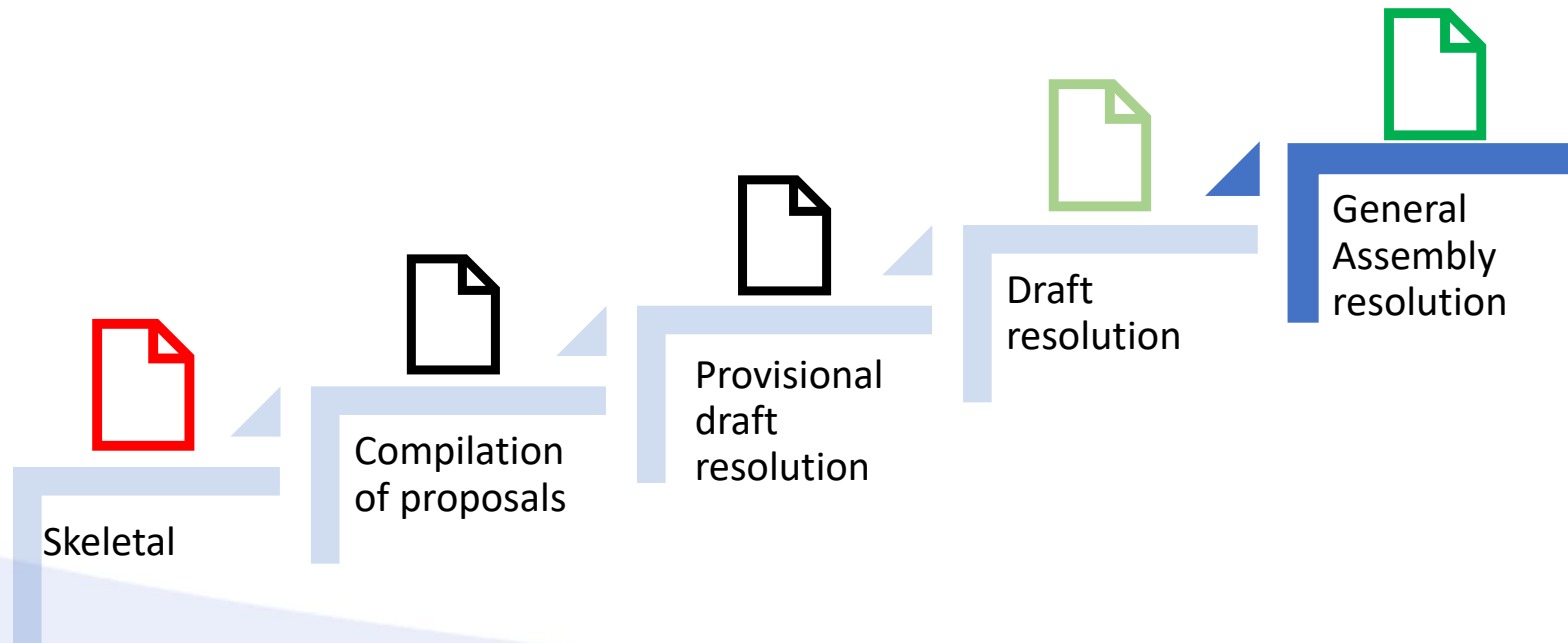
Legislative framework

- ❑ **The Charter of the United Nations**
- ❑ **General Assembly RoP 96-133:** guide the functioning of the Main Committees:
 - ❑ RoP 125: Decisions shall be made by vote; in practice, the Fifth Committee aims to reach decisions by consensus => many layers of consultations.
- ❑ **General Assembly RoP 153:** No resolution with anticipated expenditures shall be voted on until the Fifth Committee examines the budgetary effect.
- ❑ **PPBME** (*ST/SGB/2018/3*) and the **FRR** (*ST/SGB/2013/4*) guide the planning, programming, review and approval process of assessed budgets.

Role of the Fifth Committee

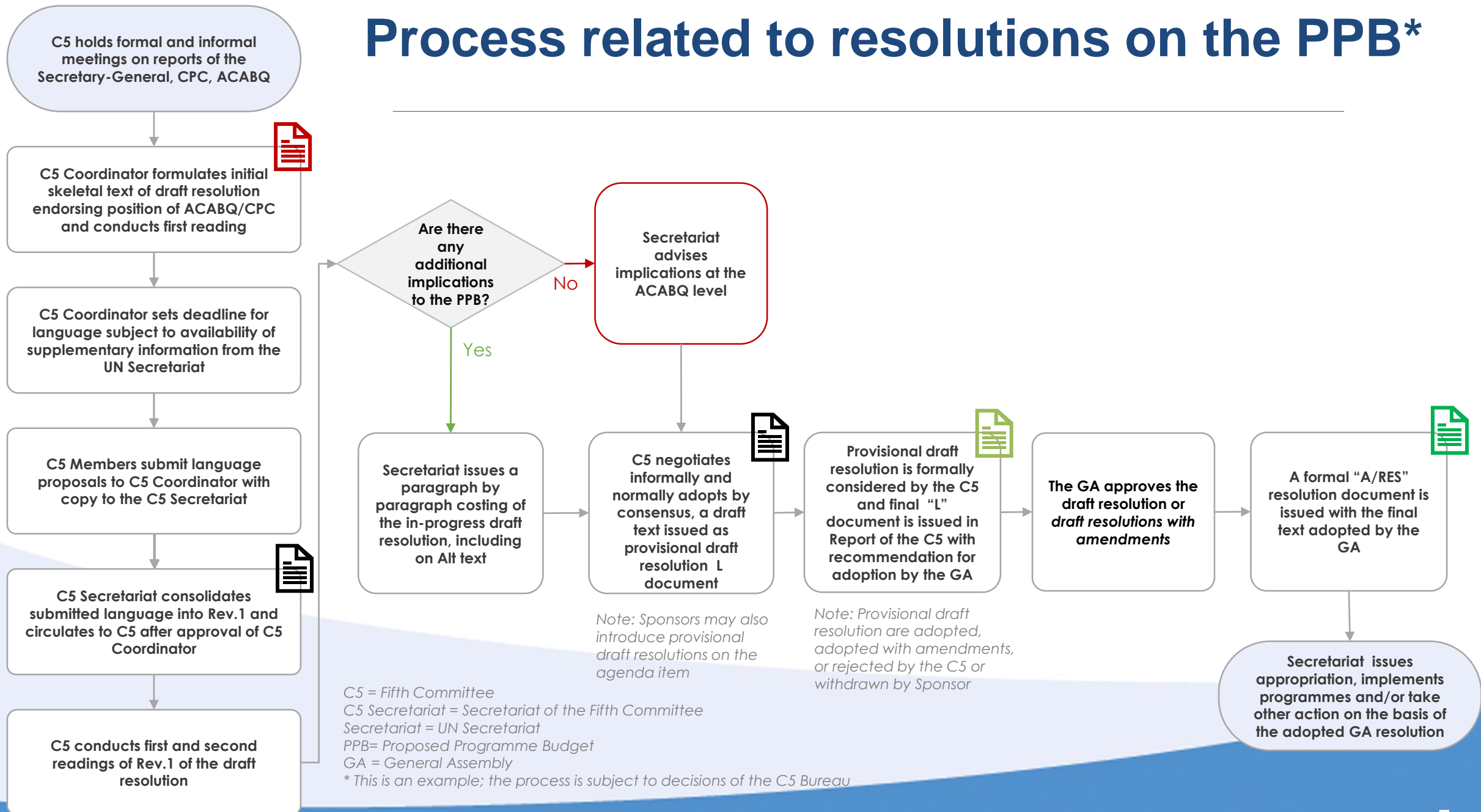
- ❑ **Drafts resolutions** relating to administrative and budgetary matters after considering:
 - ❑ The relevant report(s), including reports of the Secretary-General, OIOS, BoA, JIU
 - ❑ The conclusions and recommendations of the ACABQ
 - ❑ The conclusions and recommendations of the CPC
 - ❑ Statements from Member States
 - ❑ Statements/supplementary information from the Secretariat.
- ❑ **Recommends adoption** of draft resolutions to the General Assembly.
- ❑ **Considers the budgetary implications** resulting from mandates emanating from the other 5 Main Committees of the General Assembly.

Evolution of a resolution document



-  Fifth Committee process
-  General Assembly process

Process related to resolutions on the PPB*



Structure of a resolution

- ❑ **Name of the adopting organ**

- ❑ **Preambular paragraphs**

- ❑ Present the background or motive for the resolution; introduce the operative text
- ❑ Normally begin with an italicized verb ending in -ing (e.g. *Recalling...*)
- ❑ Usually factual, are not numbered, end with a comma.

- ❑ **Operative paragraphs**

- ❑ Express opinions, decisions or request action
- ❑ Usually begin with italicized verb in the present tense (e.g. *Decides...*)
- ❑ Are action oriented, numbered, end with a semicolon.

- ❑ **Annexes**

- ❑ Resolutions may have annexes with additional information.

Preambular text

EXAMPLES

<i>Affirming</i>	<i>Having considered</i>
<i>Bearing in mind</i>	<i>Keeping in mind</i>
<i>Confident</i>	<i>Noting with concern</i>
<i>Convinced</i>	<i>Observing</i>
<i>Deeply concerned</i>	<i>Reaffirming</i>
<i>Emphasizing</i>	<i>Recalling</i>
<i>Expressing appreciation</i>	<i>Recognizing</i>
<i>Fully alarmed</i>	<i>Taking into account</i>
<i>Guided by</i>	<i>Taking note</i>
<i>Having examined</i>	<i>Welcoming</i>

Operative text

EXAMPLES*

<i>Affirms</i>	<i>Reaffirms</i>
<i>Approves</i>	<i>Recalls</i>
<i>Authorizes</i>	<i>Regrets</i>
<i>Calls upon</i>	<i>Requests</i>
<i>Decides</i>	<i>Resolves</i>
<i>Emphasizes</i>	<i>Strongly condemns</i>
<i>Endorses</i>	<i>Supports</i>
<i>Encourages</i>	<i>Takes note</i>
<i>Further requests</i>	<i>Trusts</i>
<i>Notes</i>	<i>Welcomes</i>

*Examples in red are examined for possible budgetary implications

Tips for drafting resolutions

- ❑ The use of previously approved resolution text, as applicable, may facilitate consideration of proposals.
- ❑ Expressing each new idea in a separate paragraph may support quicker consideration.
- ❑ Text with budgetary implications; e.g. “*Requests* the Secretary-General to ...”; “*Decides* not to approve the request for abolition of posts..” may have to be costed.
- ❑ Consistent use of operative text supports interpretation of proposals e.g. “*Takes note* of paragraph XX of report ..” usually conveys disagreement.
- ❑ Clarity is important but non-specific text has a place in resolutions.
- ❑ The Secretariat will ensure adherence to the many editorial rules.

Case Study

**Questions relating to the Proposed
programme budget**

GA resolution 74/262

Resolution 74/262



Seventy-fourth session
Agenda item 135
Proposed programme budget for 2020

**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 27 December 2019**

[on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/74/614)]

74/262. Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for 2020

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions [41/213](#) of 19 December 1986, [42/211](#) of 21 December 1987, [45/248](#) B, section VI, of 21 December 1990, [55/231](#) of 23 December 2000, [56/253](#) of 24 December 2001, [58/269](#) and [58/270](#) of 23 December 2003, [59/276](#), section XI, of 23 December 2004, [60/283](#) of 7 July 2006, [61/263](#) of

- ❑ Resolution 74/262 on Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for 2020 sets out:
 - ❑ The collective expression of sentiment, intent, views and opinions of Member States as regards the proposal made by the Secretary-General for the level of post and non-post resources that will be funded by the regular budget for the year 2020.
 - ❑ The staffing table authorized for 2020 for the entities funded by regular budget.

Skeletal Text: Preambular

The General Assembly,

- **Reaffirming its resolutions** 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/211 of 21 December 1987, 45/248 B, section VI, of 21 December 1990, 55/231 of 23 December 2000, 56/253 of 24 December 2001, 58/269 and 58/270 of 23 December 2003, 59/276, section XI, of 23 December 2004, 60/283 of 7 July 2006, 61/263 of 4 April 2007, 62/236 of 22 December 2007, 63/262 of 24 December 2008, 64/243 of 24 December 2009, 65/259 of 24 December 2010, 66/246 of 24 December 2011, 68/246 of 27 December 2013, 70/247 of 23 December 2015, 71/272 A of 23 December 2016, 72/261 and 72/266 A of 24 December 2017, 72/266 B of 5 July 2018 and 73/281 of 22 December 2018,
- **Having considered the proposed programme budget for 2020**, the eleventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of projects financed from the Development Account, the report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on internal oversight: proposed programme budget for 2020 and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,

Skeletal Text: Operative

1. *Reaffirms* that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and reaffirms the role of the Fifth Committee in carrying out a thorough analysis and approving human and financial resources and policies, with a view to ensuring full, effective and efficient implementation of all mandated programmes and activities and the implementation of policies in this regard;
2. *Also reaffirms* rule 153 of its rules of procedure;
3. *Further reaffirms* the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;
4. *Reaffirms* the established budgetary procedures and methodologies, based on its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211;
5. *Also reaffirms* the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations;
6. **Endorses** the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,

Compilation of proposals

102. *Decides* to reduce resources for air travel by 10 per cent for each budget section whose 2018 average compliance rate for official and staff travel is below 60 per cent; further decides that the reduction should be 15 per cent if the average compliance rate is below 30 per cent and 20 per cent if the average compliance rate is below 20 per cent;

UN **United Nations**
European Union

102.alt.1 *Decides* to reduce the proposed resources for travel by 30 percent under Section ~~xx, xx, xx~~ 11, 15, 16 and 18;

UN **United Nations**
Japan
Amended by proponent, 12 December

102.alt.1.bis *Decides* to reduce the proposed resources for travel by 20 percent under Section ~~xx, xx, xx~~ 1, 3, 10, 19 and 34;

UN **United Nations**
Japan
Amended by proponent, 12 December

102.alt.1.ter *Decides* to reduce the proposed resources for travel by 10 percent under Section ~~xx, xx, xx~~ 4, 5, 14, 21, 29C and 29G;

UN **United Nations**
Japan
Amended by proponent, 12 December

102.alt.2 *Decides* to reduce official travel by 10 per cent for all sections with a travel compliance rate of 50 per cent or less;

UN **United Nations**
United States

Language with financial implications

- ❑ Submitted language with financial implications is costed by the Programme Planning and Budget Division (PPBD)

Posts

240. *Decides* not to approve the reclassification of the post of Chief of Service, Economic Affairs from D-1 to D-2;

240.alt.1 *Decides not to approve upward reclassifications* in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

240.alt.2 *Takes note* of paragraph V.69 of the report of the Advisory Committee and *decides to reclassify one post* of Chief of Service, Economic Affairs (D-1), to the D-2 level in subprogram 11, and further *decides against the abolishment* of two P-2 level posts in subprograms 3 and 8;

UN United Nations
Japan

UN United Nations
United States

UN United Nations
Mexico

Non- posts

92. *Recalls* paragraph 70 of its resolution 65/247 and continues to note the continued use of consultants in the core activities of the Organization and in this regard decides to reduce the proposed resources for consultants *by 10 per cent*, in addition to the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee;

93. *Decides* to reduce resources for non-staff compensation *by 5 per cent*;

94. *Recalls* paragraph 104 of the report of the Advisory Committee and decides to reduce the overall expenditures on consultants and experts *by 15 per cent*;

94.alt *Decides* to reduce resources for consultants and experts *by 20 per cent*;

UN United Nations
European Union

UN United Nations
United States

UN United Nations
Russian Federation

UN United Nations
United States

Provisional Draft

United Nations

A/C.5/74/L.20



General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
27 December 2019

Original: English

Seventy-fourth session
Fifth Committee
Agenda item 135
Proposed programme budget for 2020

Draft resolution submitted by the Chair of the Committee following
informal consultations

Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for 2020

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions [41/213](#) of 19 December 1986, [42/211](#) of 21 December 1987, [45/248](#) B, section VI, of 21 December 1990, [55/231](#) of 23 December 2000, [56/253](#) of 24 December 2001, [58/269](#) and [58/270](#) of 23 December 2003, [59/276](#), section XI, of 23 December 2004, [60/283](#) of 7 July 2006, [61/263](#) of 4 April 2007, [62/236](#) of 22 December 2007, [63/262](#) of 24 December 2008, [64/243](#) of 24 December 2009, [65/259](#) of 24 December 2010, [66/246](#) of 24 December 2011, [68/246](#) of 27 December 2013, [70/247](#) of 23 December 2015, [71/272](#) A of 23 December 2016, [72/261](#) and [72/266](#) A of 24 December 2017, [72/266](#) B of 5 July 2018 and [73/281](#) of 22 December 2018,

Reaffirming also the respective mandates of the Committee for Programme and

Amendment to Provisional Draft

- ❑ Amendments to the provisional draft are captured in the report of the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly: [A/74/614](#)

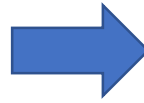
12. At its 21st meeting, on 27 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled “Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for 2020” ([A/C.5/74/L.20](#)), submitted by the Chair on the basis of informal consultations coordinated by the representative of Iraq.

13. At the same meeting, the representative of Finland (on behalf of the European Union), orally proposed an amendment to the draft resolution, by which two new operative paragraphs would be inserted into the draft resolution, relating to

18. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.5/74/L.20](#), as orally amended (see para. 60, draft resolution I).

Recommendation to adopt

Recommendation of
the C5 to the GA



III. Recommendations of the Fifth Committee

60. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for 2020

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/211 of 21 December 1987, 45/248 B, section VI, of 21 December 1990, 55/231 of 23 December 2000, 56/253 of 24 December 2001, 58/269 and 58/270 of 23 December 2003, 59/276, section XI, of 23 December 2004, 60/283 of 7 July 2006, 61/263 of 4 April 2007, 62/236 of 22 December 2007, 63/262 of 24 December 2008, 64/243 of 24 December 2009, 65/259 of 24 December 2010, 66/246 of 24 December 2011, 68/246 of 27 December 2013, 70/247 of 23 December 2015, 71/272 A of 23 December 2016, 72/261 and 72/266 A of 24 December 2017, 72/266 B of 5 July 2018 and 73/281 of 22 December 2018,

Reaffirming also the respective mandates of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in the consideration of the proposed programme budget,

Reaffirming further the role of the General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee, in carrying out a thorough analysis and approval of posts and financial resources, as well as of human resources policies,

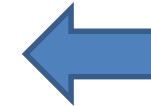
Recognizing the detrimental effect of the withholding of assessed contributions on the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations and its ability to implement mandates and programmes,

Recognizing also that late payments of assessed contributions, bearing in mind the special situation of certain Member States, have adversely affected the financial situation of the United Nations and resulted in a liquidity crisis that has affected the delivery of mandates,

Recalling its resolution 72/266 A and the decision of the General Assembly to approve the proposed change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis,

Having considered the proposed programme budget for 2020,¹ the eleventh progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of projects financed from the Development Account,² the report of the Independent Audit Advisory

¹ A/74/6 (Introduction), A/74/6 (Sect. 1), A/74/6 (Sect. 2), A/74/6 (Sect. 3), A/74/6 (Sect. 4), A/74/6 (Sect. 5), A/74/6 (Sect. 5) Corr.1, A/74/6 (Sect. 6), A/74/6 (Sect. 7), A/74/6 (Sect. 8), A/74/6 (Sect. 8) Corr.1, A/74/6 (Sect. 9), A/74/6 (Sect. 10), A/74/6 (Sect. 11), A/74/6 (Sect. 12), A/74/6 (Sect. 13), A/74/6 (Sect. 14), A/74/6 (Sect. 15), A/74/6 (Sect. 16), A/74/6 (Sect. 17), A/74/6 (Sect. 18), A/74/6 (Sect. 19), A/74/6 (Sect. 20), A/74/6 (Sect. 21), A/74/6 (Sect. 22), A/74/6 (Sect. 23), A/74/6 (Sect. 24), A/74/6 (Sect. 25), A/74/6 (Sect. 26), A/74/6 (Sect. 27), A/74/6 (Sect. 28), A/74/6 (Sect. 29), A/74/6 (Sect. 29A), A/74/6 (Sect. 29B), A/74/6 (Sect. 29C), A/74/6 (Sect. 29E), A/74/6 (Sect. 29F), A/74/6 (Sect. 29G), A/74/6 (Sect. 29H), A/74/6 (Sect. 30), A/74/6 (Sect. 31), A/74/6 (Sect. 32), A/74/6 (Sect. 33), A/74/6 (Sect. 34), A/74/6 (Sect. 35), A/74/6 (Sect. 36), A/74/6 (Income sect. 1), A/74/6 (Income sect. 2) and A/74/6 (Income sect. 3).
² A/74/85.



A/74/614 Report of
the C5 to the GA

General Assembly Resolution

United Nations

A/RES/74/262



General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 January 2020

Seventy-fourth session
Agenda item 135
Proposed programme budget for 2020

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 December 2019

[on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/74/614)]

74/262. Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for 2020

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/211 of 21 December 1987, 45/248 B, section VI, of 21 December 1990, 55/231 of 23 December 2000, 56/253 of 24 December 2001, 58/269 and 58/270 of 23 December 2003, 59/276, section XI, of 23 December 2004, 60/283 of 7 July 2006, 61/263 of 4 April 2007, 62/236 of 22 December 2007, 63/262 of 24 December 2008, 64/243 of 24 December 2009, 65/259 of 24 December 2010, 66/246 of 24 December 2011, 68/246 of 27 December 2013, 70/247 of 23 December 2015, 71/272 A of 23 December 2016, 72/261 and 72/266 A of 24 December 2017, 72/266 B of 5 July 2018 and 73/281 of 22 December 2018,

Reaffirming also the respective mandates of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in the consideration of the proposed programme budget,

Reaffirming further the role of the General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee, in carrying out a thorough analysis and approval of posts and financial resources, as well as of human resources policies,

Recognizing the detrimental effect of the withholding of assessed contributions on the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations and its ability to implement mandates and programmes,

Recognizing also that late payments of assessed contributions, bearing in mind the special situation of certain Member States, have adversely affected the financial situation of the United Nations and resulted in a liquidity crisis that has affected the delivery of mandates,

Recalling its resolution 72/266 A and the decision of the General Assembly to approve the proposed change from a biennial to an annual budget period on a trial basis,



Interpreting resolution language ⁽¹⁾

8. **Endorses** the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,⁴ **subject to** the provisions of the present resolution;

- ❑ Interpretation: the conclusions and recommendations of the ACABQ that are not mentioned in the resolution are endorsed by the General Assembly; the exceptions are contained in the resolution.

⁴Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fourth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/74/7).

Interpreting resolution language (2)

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to *continue to* strengthen internal controls in programme planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting;
 15. *Emphasizes* the importance of comprehensive budgetary performance in the management of the programme budget, and *requests* the Secretary-General to clearly link the budget inputs to tangible results;
 16. *Stresses* that results-based budgeting and results-based management are mutually supportive management tools and that improved implementation of results-based budgeting enhances both management and accountability in the Secretariat, and *encourages* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in this regard;
- ❑ Interpretation: These requests are to be implemented as much as possible withing existing resources and structures.

Interpreting resolution language (3)

17. *Decides* that a vacancy rate of 9.1 per cent for Professional staff and 7.4 per cent for General Service staff shall be used as a basis for the calculation of the budget for 2020;
18. *Also decides* that the staffing table for 2020 shall be as set out in the annex to the present resolution;

❑ Interpretation: These are firm decisions that must be implemented; note that the General Assembly approves both on staffing table and resources; which may be in conflict due to the approved vacancy rate.

Interpreting resolution language (4)

32. *Also stresses* that extrabudgetary resources shall be used in consistency with the policies, aims and activities of the Organization, and requests the Secretary-General to provide information on the financial and human resource implications of the use of extrabudgetary resources in the Organization in his next proposed programme budget;

- ❑ Interpretation: The request has ambiguous language that may lead to subjective interpretations by the Secretariat that may differ from the intent of Member States; the Secretariat is expected to carry out some related actions within existing resources and structures.
- ❑ Non-prescriptive language is sometimes helpful to express a request without budgetary implications and/or to arrive at consensus text.

Interpreting resolution language (5)

74. **Takes note** of paragraph IX.12 of the Advisory Committee, and decides to establish three general temporary assistance positions of Investigator (1 P-4 and 2 P-3) in the Vienna Investigations Office;

- ❑ Interpretation: The recommendation of the ACABQ to establish two general temporary assistance positions is not supported and the General-Assembly decides to establish the three general temporary assistance positions proposed by the Secretary-General.
- ❑ In resolutions on the reports of the Fifth Committee “*Takes note*” indicates lack of support; in other resolutions, “*Takes note*” is neutral.

Interpreting resolution language (6)

76. **Recalls** paragraph XII.22 of the report of the Advisory Committee, and decides to approve resources for the malicious acts insurance policy for 2020 in the amount 3,996,107 dollars;

- Interpretation: The ACABQ's analysis for recommending a reduced amount for the malicious acts insurance policy for 2020 was considered, and the approved amount is reduced from \$4,806,000 to \$3,996,107 as recommended by the ACABQ.

Interpreting resolution language (7)

72. **Recalls** paragraph VIII.98 of the report of the Advisory Committee, and decides not to approve the reclassification of one post of Procurement Officer (P-3) as a P-4 post and one post of Travel Officer (P-2) as a P-3 post;

- ❑ Interpretation: The ACABQ's analysis and recommendation to approve the reclassification proposed by the Secretary-General was considered, but not supported.
 - ❑ Note that in this case the word "*Recalls*" is used where the ACABQ's recommendation is not supported; such variation in the use of Operative text sometimes impacts interpretation and poses challenges for the costing work of the Secretariat.

Issues to consider for 2021

- ❑ There are three new recommendations of the ACABQ that may multiply the areas for which consensus would be needed for the resolutions on the PPB for 2021:
- ❑ The ACABQ has recommended:
 - ❑ Application of recosting only once at the time of approval by the General Assembly
 - ❑ Inclusion of additional details on extrabudgetary resources
 - ❑ Application of entity-specific vacancy rates.

Impact of Covid-19

- ❑ The timeline and procedures for consideration and adoption of resolutions may have to be amended to allow for silent procedure both at the level of the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly.
- ❑ PPBD will continue to give the same level of support, albeit virtually, and in person if requested.

References/Resources

- ❑ Fifth Committee FAQs: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/fifth/faq.shtml>
- ❑ Drafting and editing GA resolutions:
http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/edit-guidelines/types_documents/res_dec_draft_edit.htm
- ❑ Draft resolution [A/C.5/74/L.20](#)
- ❑ Report of the Fifth Committee [A/74/614](#)
- ❑ GA resolution [74/262](#)
- ❑ [GA Rules of procedures](#)
- ❑ UN Financial Rules and Regulations [ST/SGB/2013/4](#)
- ❑ Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation: St/SGB/2018/3 ([PPBME](#))