



TOWARDS A RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

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seriously affected the Secretariat's capacity properly to oversee the work of the UN; therefore, the development of a rational system for the budgetting, financing and administration of peacekeeping operations is absolutely crucial."²⁴ A combination of better budgetary procedures, new financial regulations and modest institutional innovations is essential.

The UN has recently moved toward mission budgetting on an annual basis, as an alternative to the current practice of linking budgets to mandate periods, which are often shorter than one year and cut across the UN's calendar-year budgetary cycle. Although this change will dramatically lighten the administrative load on the Secretariat (the budget submissions for 1996 should be reduced from 82 to 27) and reduce the time required for consideration of mission budgets, it is insufficient as a basis for the future. Over the short to medium term, consideration should be given to the development of a unified budget for peace operations, which would improve the planning and forecasting processes and ensure the reliability of funding required for effective rapid-reaction. This reform would not eliminate the need for assessed contributions for individual peace operations. Nor would it permit the unauthorized movement of funds from one operation's budget to another. However, it would identify all operations and their resource requirements for longer periods, placing them on a more transparent financial footing, and enabling Member States to anticipate the funds required for future peacekeeping assessments.

3. The UN should move toward the creation of a unified budget for peace operations, which would place the financing of current operations on a more coherent, predictable and reliable basis.

The UN also needs reform in its institutional systems to permit more rapid reaction to emerging crises. The ACABQ currently meets approximately 150 days per year, and a substantial portion of its work involves consideration of peace operation submissions for a budget which is now four times that of the UN's regular budget. The ACABQ is clearly over-worked and cannot devote the time and attention to peace operations that are warranted. Moreover, the budgets of peacekeeping operations are inherently different and more complex than those of other UN organizations — which are primarily salaries and require an in-depth knowledge of the programs that are to be delivered by the organization. The large logistical component and the unique nature of military operations mean that expenditures for peace operations are much different than those of the regular budget. One way of helping the ACABQ is to create a peace operations sub-committee, where special expertise could be brought to bear on financial issues. This innovation would help the budgetary process while maintaining the critical principle of accountability.

4. Member States should establish a Peace Operations Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), made up of financial experts from Ministries of Defence.

A series of administrative questions within the Secretariat also needs to be addressed. In simplified form, current financial procedures to establish a peace operations budget involve the production of preliminary estimates, often entailing a Technical Survey Mission to provide background material to the Security Council's decision. In advance of a Council decision, the Secretary-General has limited