

## UN peacekeeping must remain flexible and adapt to meet rising demand – top official

26 February 2007 – United Nations peacekeeping operations must continue to evolve in a period of sustained high demand, with the number of blue helmets deployed around the world the highest in its history at nearly 100,000 and still rising and an annual budget that has more than doubled over five years to \$5.7 billion, the top UN peacekeeping official said today.

“This capacity for innovation has been a lifeline for UN peacekeeping,” Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno told a General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, detailing a slew of new arrangements, from UN military and police adviser support for an African Union force in Sudan’s war-ridden Darfur region to loaning staff from other missions as in Timor-Leste, Lebanon and Nepal.

“It is on that adaptability that we must now build. We must turn our capacity for evolution into a vehicle for creating a stronger, more professional and more effective UN peacekeeping, even in a period of huge operational demands.

“No matter how capable the individuals and how innovative our response in particular contexts over the past few years of surge, the demands facing us today require a more systematic, structural response,” he said.

He underlined the new structural reforms proposed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to split the current Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) into a Department of Peace Operations and a Department of Field Support, both headed by an Under-Secretary-General, the managerial level of the current DPKO chief. The two new departments are to be specialized and tightly-integrated.

“The development of peacekeeping doctrine will be consolidated in the Department of Peace Operation’s policy and best practices section where one of its core activities will be the development of guidance to support the functioning of integrated operations,” Mr. Guéhenno declared.

“A dedicated field support department will enable us to prioritize recruitment and outreach so as to ensure that personnel appointments, in particular those of senior leadership, reflects the gender balance and geographical diversity to which we are committed. And a consolidated field personnel capacity will assist us in swiftly taking forward the implementation of the proposal to establish a civilian cadre of peacekeepers, should Member States support this vital new initiative.”

There are vital operational needs that demand urgent attention and resources, he added. “On one point we are all agreed: if we are to manage our current tasks, and potentially take on new ones in 2007, we urgently require the reinforcement of planning, management and operational capacities across the span of UN peacekeeping.”

Beyond the need to strengthen military capacities, he stressed the importance of reinforcing the Police Division at UN Headquarters and, in parallel, the further expansion of the Standing Police Capacity, and he proposed establishing an integrated office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, headed by an Assistant-Secretary-General, to support the sustainable reform of security in countries after conflict has ended.

“I would urge all of us to keep uppermost in our minds our ultimate goal and objective,” Mr. Guéhenno said. “That goal is, in essence, a simple one. UN peacekeeping exists to enable men, women and children around the world to emerge from the scourge of war so as to pursue lives of dignity and basic humanity. It is to these individuals that our greatest obligation lies.”