

Introductory Remarks by Ms. Ameerah Haq
Under-Secretary-General for Field Support

Third Annual Progress on the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy

(A/67/633)

14 May 2013

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour to be here, with the Controller, Ms. Gina Casar, for the introduction of the report on the *Overview of the financing of UN peacekeeping operations*, document (A/67/723) and to introduce the Secretary-General's *third annual progress report on the implementation of the global field support strategy* (A/67/633).

Before introducing the GFSS report and sharing some views with the Committee, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace over the last year. We must honour and remember their sacrifice. And, we must continue to place the highest value on supporting military and police personnel who dedicate themselves to the cause of peace.

As part of our efforts to improve reporting, this year we have taken a two-step approach. We have provided dedicated reporting on the high-level strategic end-state vision and implementation progress for the Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS) in the third progress report. Separately, in Annexes I and II of the Overview report, we have responded to comments and requests by the Committee for detailed administrative and budgetary information related to GFSS implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Department of Field Support (DFS), and peacekeeping in general, today face major operational challenges in places like Mali, Syria, South Sudan, Eastern DRC, Somalia, and Afghanistan. To meet the diverse and complex requirements these realities place on field support, DFS must continue to adapt its tools and processes. The Global Field Support Strategy, Umoja, IPSAS, and the roll-out of Inspira to the field are fundamental change management initiatives that aim to narrow the gap between demands in the field and our capability to meet them. Each one of these changes, in and of itself, is dynamic, difficult and imminent. When you put them together, in a context of fewer resources, the picture is one of immense complexity, high risk, and tremendous pressure on the department, its staff, and our colleagues in the field. This is the fundamental challenge for DFS today: how to navigate the gauntlet of complexity that is unfolding before us as we speak.

DFS continues to support a wide array of peacekeeping and special political missions, with a total count of some 122,000 personnel in various stages of operation. Each of these missions presents its own set of challenges and opportunities for improved business processes. Events in Mali over the past year have led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 2100 (2013) which establishes what will be one of the large and complex UN peacekeeping operations. Support planning is also taking place in view of a new and highly ambitious mandate for MONUSCO.

[FINANCIAL OVERVIEW]

Mr. Chairman,

Aside from new requirements for Mali and MONUSCO, the proposed funding for 2013/14 is \$6.8 billion for all peacekeeping operations, a reduction of \$200 million, from 2012-2013. While much of that reduction is due to the closure of UNMIT, it does also include the cost savings realized in recent years through greater efficiencies and other cuts in resourcing requirements. You will recall that 2012/13 funding levels were 10 per cent lower compared to the previous budget year for 'continuing' peacekeeping operations. I should also emphasize that total requirements have been reduced for 2013/14 despite large increases in expenditure as deployment levels increase in UNMISS and UNISFA, as well as the normal increase in prices and staffing entitlements.

[FIELD PERSONNEL OVERVIEW]

I am pleased to report that we are seeing a significant return on the investment that Member States have made in human resources management reforms. Vacancy rates have been cut in half from the high water mark of 33.8 per cent in January 2008 to 12.3 per cent in January 2013. In the past year, the turnover rate dropped another 3 percent, to just over 8 per cent, and rosters are now the primary tool used by field missions to satisfy their requirements for civilian capacity.

We are also working to adjust the size and composition of our workforce so that our missions have the dedicated skills and experience required. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/264, DFS is undertaking a review of the civilian staffing of selected peacekeeping missions to ensure that personnel structures are in line with what is needed to implement mission mandates effectively. As part of this broader initiative, we are also conducting a review of the Field Service category, which comprises 60 per cent of international staff in peace missions.

We are also addressing the challenge of improving the recruitment and retention of women in peacekeeping – an important issue that has come up during exchanges with this Committee. Currently, women comprise just 28.8 per cent of the field missions' workforce. The percentage of women among national staff is lower still, at 17.1 per cent. We must do more to improve the representation of women in peacekeeping.

[GLOBAL FIELD SUPPORT STRATEGY]

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates,

The GFSS remains a cornerstone for the Secretariat's efforts to improve the quality, speed, and strategic relevance of mission support. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that the men and women who are deployed under the UN flag, in challenging and volatile environments, receive the support they need to carry out their mandates.

Having only recently passed the midpoint in the implementation of this five-year initiative, we still have a ways to go before we can assert that the goals of the GFSS have been fully achieved. In this context, we have taken very seriously your decisions as well as

recommendations made by Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and Board of Auditors (BOA) to strengthen the effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of the GFSS implementation process.

In addition to steps taken to improve the GFSS reporting process as requested by the General Assembly, we have sought to broaden understanding of the goals, and ultimate impact, of the GFSS. We have done this by defining how the four pillars of the strategy – human resources, finance, supply chain, and service centres – are being operationalized at each service delivery level; that is, at headquarters, at the Global Service Centre (GSC), at the Regional Service Centre (RSC), and in field missions. The vision we have laid out this year explains how the division of labour between these four levels of service delivery will facilitate economies of scale, specialization, and ultimately, the endeavour to “do more with less.” We hope you have found this revised approach to GFSS reporting to be clear and helpful, and we would welcome your feedback. I seize this opportunity to thank the ACABQ for its support to this approach.

In addition to articulating the GFSS end-state, as requested by BOA and ACABQ, we have also reinforced the governance framework in support of regular engagement with clients and partners in the field and throughout the Secretariat, including the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Political Affairs, and Management.

We have further devised an implementation plan to guide the activities of the DFS Divisions and the Service Centres in implementing GFSS changes across the four pillars of the strategy. As the BOA has recognized in its most recent report, we have also taken steps to strengthen the risk management framework for the GFSS. The implementation plan and risk management framework are both “living” documents that are regularly reviewed and updated by the Secretariat to respond to evolving requirements and decisions of the GFSS governing bodies.

Mr. Chairman,

Key performance indicators (KPIs) for some elements of the GFSS were identified in the previous progress report of the Secretary-General and have been reported on in this year’s annexes to the overview report. We now have in place KPIs for each of the GFSS pillars. These KPIs are linked to the strategic goals and objectives of each GFSS pillar; they have been established using a common methodology and measurement approach in close cooperation with our Secretariat implementing partners. In some cases, baseline data will take more time to collect and track to allow for comparative analysis. The measurement tools we have identified to monitor performance and capture impact of the GFSS will also require careful review and refinement in line with the progressive system-wide roll-out of Umoja and the introduction of IPSAS.

Another development is the ongoing preparation of a comprehensive, end-to-end supply chain strategy. It encompasses the global planning and management of all activities involved in the needs identification, sourcing, inventory management, movement, utilization and liquidation of goods and services required in support of field operations. Modularization remains an integral part of the supply chain strategy. These activities will better position my Department to plan and execute support services more effectively, responsively, and efficiently.

Mr. Chairman,

Alongside work being done at the strategic level, the GFSS has yielded practical benefits on the ground. One example is the application of the service centre concept and the improvements in the operational and transaction support provided to client missions by the Global Service Centre (GSC) in Brindisi and the Regional Service Centre (RSC) in Entebbe.

Since the Secretary-General's previous progress report, the GSC in Brindisi successfully supported the testing and roll-out of three pre-defined modular service packages to the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) in Mogadishu, consisting of two 850-person and one 1,000-person camps. I had the privilege of visiting the camps in late 2012, shortly before their completion in January, and it was gratifying to see the impressive work that has been accomplished in operationalizing the modular approach to start-up. We intend to apply similar practice to the new mission in Mali.

In the past year, the GSC also successfully deployed some 100 mission support team personnel in response to requests from 12 peacekeeping and special political missions for support on a range of logistics, administrative and ICT requirements.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates

Streamlining of transactional support and enhanced coordination of air assets for the eight client missions serviced by the RSC in Entebbe have continued this year. Thanks to the network created through the Transportation and Movement Integrated Control Centre (TMICC), the RSC coordinates regional efforts for airfield infrastructure, including ground support equipment, leading to safer operations. In line with GFSS principles, TMICC has initially focused on two high value activities, the optimization of air assets and troop rotations. As one concrete example of progress in the RSC's work, the TMICC has facilitated the reconfiguration and sharing of the air fleet of the client missions and delivered savings amounting to \$102 million from 2010 to last year.

Last year's General Assembly resolution 66/264 (paragraph 58) requested that the Secretariat provide plans for the establishment of two additional regional service centres in the Middle East and West Africa. As this year's progress report notes, we believe it prudent to fully operationalize the RSC concept in Entebbe and draw lessons learned from this experience before going forward with additional centres. This year, the Secretary-General has not put forward any new proposals for movement or streamlining of headquarters functions in support of GFSS implementation. However, in the coming months, a number of initiatives will result in opportunities for structural refinements reflected in the 2014-2015 budgets, including the civilian staffing reviews I mentioned, beginning with UNAMA and UNAMID.

Lessons are also being drawn this year from the application of the standardized funding model, as requested by the GA in resolution 66/243. We are carefully considering the important ACABQ observations and recommendations in that regard as we continue to refine and improve the model for future application.

[IPSAS AND UMOJA]

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Delegates of the Committee,

While there are many challenges ahead for my Department, I am also pleased to note some important developments. The BOA has expressed its satisfaction with the improved monitoring of the implementation of its recommendations and the guidance to the missions by the Administration. Particular improvements were also noted in the area of personnel, where most of the recommendations were implemented.

Regarding a key area of concern, that of IPSAS implementation, the Board has explicitly recognized that in 2011-2012, various programmes were underway to address the issues related to the management of assets, specifically in the context of the implementation of IPSAS. It has also been recognized that some areas, such as the management of property and the accuracy of inventory, are showing a trend of improvement. Particular note is made of the improvements in the physical verification of assets, and reconciliation of discrepancies, as a demonstration of the efforts made by the Department of Field Support to address the Board's concerns in the previous reports.

In this regard, and in line with the ACABQ recommendation in paragraph 11 of its report (A/67/780) to provide an update on IPSAS status, I wish to indicate that preparations for the implementation of IPSAS in field missions have progressed well. Mission Standard Operating Procedures have been updated for IPSAS compliance; some 900 staff members have been trained; data on assets has been collected, enriched and cleansed; and valuation of the assets is well on its way. At this point, DFS is working very closely with the field missions and Accounts Division to derive the first IPSAS compliant opening balances prepared as of 1 July 2013.

As for Umoja, preparations for roll out in field missions have centred on design, testing and validation of Umoja to-be processes, role mapping of mission finance functions, cleansing of data, as well as setting up the training programme. Applicability of the new system in different field mission settings is currently being looked at to ensure that the system can cater for stand-alone missions, missions with a back office and in the context of service centres.

DFS has recently established a project management office (by redeploying existing resources) to support the implementation of the two major change initiatives - IPSAS and Umoja - at the same time. The office will, in particular, ensure that mission IPSAS and Umoja implementation activities are tightly monitored and supported; including via site preparedness reporting, all Directors/Chiefs of Mission Support (DMS/CMS) progress appraisals, field monitoring team visits and reports, as well as regular VTCs with mission IPSAS teams and Umoja site coordinators.

[ACCOUNTABILITY]

As we move towards the adoption of IPSAS, DFS has taken a proactive stance to enhance accountability. As a first step in this process, we have introduced Letters of Representation (LoR) in all field operations. These Letters are designed to build a culture of greater accountability and provide assurance that the Organization's resources are being utilised in line with Departmental strategic goals and existing delegations of authority. All DMS/CMS have filed with me their 2012 Letters of Representation. To preserve the chain of command, these

Letters are filed through their SRSG/Head of Mission. We believe that the LoRs also underline the central role that DMS/CMS play in mission leadership and the responsibility and accountability of the SRSG/Head of Mission for the management of his/her mission.

We have also made progress to strengthen managerial, command and individual accountability for the conduct and discipline of our personnel. You are likely familiar by now with the Integrated Conduct and Discipline Framework and its ongoing implementation under the strategic pillars of integration of roles and responsibilities; capacity-building; outreach, including information dissemination and communication; and performance-based accountability. The reduction in the overall number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse is also a positive development, yet close to half of those allegations continue to involve the most egregious forms of sexual exploitation and abuse, including sexual activities with minors. Just one incident of sexual exploitation and abuse by our personnel can overshadow the exemplary behaviour of most peacekeepers and can destroy the confidence and support for the work we do on the ground, in particular as such incidents involve the very population we are mandated to protect.

[SAG]

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates,

Before I close, I wish to express that we are fully committed to implementing all the provisions of the resolution on the Senior Advisory Group on troop reimbursement which was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 May. In that regard, let me stress the importance of the survey process and the need for swift action so that the data required can be collected within what is now a very short time-frame. We will be updating the General Assembly on our progress and look forward to working closely with the relevant troop and police contributing countries.

The resolution also requests a report by the end of the Fifth Committee's second resumed session, to include comments from Member States. This will also require a major effort, with our colleagues in DPKO to ensure that the report can be ready as soon as possible.

We will also be working hard, at the request of TCCs and PCCs, to update memoranda of understanding before 31 October, so that they are fully in line with current requirements. This may put great pressure on our current capacity and, again, we will need support to ensure that this process can be concluded expeditiously.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, these were some thoughts about the two reports before you. My team and I are committed to supporting the Committee throughout its hearing on both issues. Needless to say, we will make every effort to produce, in a timely and accurate manner, additional information required by the Committee in support of its deliberations. I am confident that, working together, we can continue to strengthen and improve the support we provide to the men and women who rely on us day in and day out in the field.

Thank you.