

Introductory Remarks to the Fifth Committee

Mr. Anthony Banbury, Assistant-Secretary-General for Field Support

**Agenda Item 147: Administrative & budgetary aspects of financing United Nations
peacekeeping operations**

**Fourth Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Global Field Support
Strategy**

13 May 2014

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Delegates,

It is a pleasure for me to be with you today, to introduce, on behalf of Under-Secretary-General Ameerah Haq, the fourth annual progress report on the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS) (A/68/637). In line with the practice adopted last year, we have submitted for your consideration the Overview Report (A/68/731), which includes Annex I on the GFSS benefits and performance frameworks; and Annex 2 on the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe.

Fully aware of the number of items on the agenda today, and the various reports before you, I will focus my comments primarily on the GFSS, but I will also offer a few remarks on the other cross-cutting reports before you today.

Mr. Chairman,

The decisions of the Security Council over the past year highlight the importance and enormity of United Nations peacekeeping. Noting that deliberations are still pending with regard to South Sudan, the Council has considered requirements to deploy 37,000 additional troops and police during this period. We have seen significant new missions mandated for Mali and the Central African Republic. MONUSCO's operations in the DRC have been enhanced with the addition of a Force Intervention Brigade. The AU mission in Somalia that is supported by the United Nations is now the largest peace operation in Africa. And, of

course, the crisis in South Sudan requires significant new security capabilities if we are to halt the violence that has threatened the population there.

While the troops and police associated with these measures, as well as our complex civilian programmes, are critical to the well-being of thousands of affected people, the decisions to expand the role and responsibilities of United Nations peacekeepers over the past year present an enormous challenge.

There is no denying that they add to the financial burden of our field missions, but there can also be no doubt that United Nations peacekeeping, due in no small part to the unique partnership that exists between Member States, provides the most affordable solution available to the international community in responding to conflict.

Mr. Chairman,

The Global Field Support Strategy has helped prepare the United Nations for the challenges I have described, and those of the future. This year's Fourth Progress Report provides the refined End-State Vision for the GFSS and an update on implementation progress in financial year 2012/13.

In 2010, the Secretariat introduced the GFSS objectives that would guide DFS and mission support components in the field. With slightly more than 12 months remaining in the Strategy's implementation timeline, those strategic objectives remain highly relevant today, namely:

- Expediting and improving service delivery and mandate delivery;
- Strengthening resource stewardship and accountability, including through efficiencies and economies of scale;
- Improving staff safety, security and quality of life; and,
- Utilizing local and regional capacity and reducing environmental impact.

We are now able to demonstrate tangible improvements in the field against these objectives. With the support of the General Assembly, DFS has developed structures, tools and systems

that support faster deployment, deliver safer and more secure conditions for our peacekeepers, and ensure a more responsible field footprint.

We have reflected upon the points made by the Advisory Committee in its last report on cross-cutting issues and the feedback from delegations to this Committee. We have worked closely with the Board of Auditors to make concrete progress on their recommendations on the GFSS. An End-State Vision has now been established for each pillar, building on the initial end-states presented last year. We have also put in place a revised performance framework for each of the GFSS pillars. It cascades from end state vision to expected achievements and to KPIs, with targets set for June 2015.

In more tangible terms, we are actively rolling out GFSS innovations. For example:

- Under the finance pillar, the standard funding model and increased interim funding allowances have been applied for MINUSMA in Mali, based on lessons from South Sudan;
- Modular infrastructure packages have been shipped for use in Mali and modular designs will help deliver in the austere environment of the Central African Republic. Mission Support Teams continue to deliver excellent service to field missions.
- Under the human resources framework, rosters will continue to drive down recruitment timelines. Workforce planning is underway with three civilian staffing reviews – in UNIFIL, UNAMID and UNOCI - and the Field Service Review in 2013, with another six civilian staffing reviews in 2014;
- At the same time, the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe (RSCE) has launched its integrated service lines along with enhanced client support tools. These efforts seek to address early performance challenges in the RSCE, and will set the benchmark for future shared services provision.

Mr. Chairman,

We must recognize that changes around us offer new opportunities to refine and deliver the End-State Vision. In the Third GFSS Progress Report last year, we indicated that we were reconsidering our approach to regional service centres. In the latest report, we note that we will now refrain from pursuing our earlier proposal of establishing two additional regional service centres. Instead, we will develop a revised proposal to the General Assembly that will present a pragmatic shared services configuration for providing non-location dependent shared services to the field missions not currently supported through Entebbe.

We are also making a conscious course change to ensure that our approach to shared services and the Umoja approach to service delivery are aligned. As systemic changes take place in the Secretariat's delivery model, DFS will adapt to embrace them. In the meantime, we are eager to realize the significant potential that the shared services approach promises for our missions.

For this sixty-eighth session, one of our requests to the General Assembly is for the approval of a pilot to consolidate the education grant function at Entebbe as a shared service for all missions. This consolidation would provide an opportunity to further test the scope for expanding the client missions of the Service Centre in Entebbe; indeed, this is an opportunity to test financing models for the Centre that still fully respect the General Assembly's requirement for scalability. Consolidation would help standardize the function in advance of the roll-out of education grant processing through Umoja later this year. The transfer of this function would entail the abolition of two posts in Brindisi. The workload would be absorbed by the RSC at no additional cost.

Mr. Chairman,

In mid-2015, the Global Field Support Strategy comes to an end. We will not seek an extension - there will be no GFSS II. Rather, we will use the remaining 12 months of GFSS implementation to work with our client departments and missions to articulate a post-GFSS strategic approach that will continue to guide the work of the Department of Field Support and sustain our commitment to continuous improvement.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the Fourth Annual Progress Report, you have before you the Overview Report which the Controller, Ms. Gina Casar, has presented to the Committee. Our respective Departments have done our best to support the Advisory Committee during its hearings on the Overview report (document A/68/731), and we now look forward to engaging with the Fifth Committee on the many important issues that the report covers.

The Overview Report, perhaps more so than any other document before this Committee, captures the speed and depth of the ongoing evolution of United Nations peacekeeping activities in all its complexity. This complexity calls for careful deliberation on perennial priorities including air operations, fuel and rations, conduct and discipline, and information technology and communications. Air operations, in and of itself, constitutes a significant annual investment - at present, exceeding \$1 billion, with fuel and airfield services included - for which we can spare no effort in our pursuit of efficiency and transparency.

In addition, several new and emerging developments call for discussion in this forum insofar as they have implications for the financing of peacekeeping operations. For example, the crisis in South Sudan has highlighted the need for a focused discussion on Inter-Mission Cooperation. New technology, and the potential of its expanded use in United Nations peacekeeping, will also continue to receive significant attention, including this week when the Security Council meets to review the experience in the use of UAS by MONUSCO. New operating systems, including Umoja, and new standards for doing business, including IPSAS, are clearly having an impact on the workflows that lie at the heart of UN peacekeeping operations. The fundamental question of how best to ensure the scalability of UN peacekeeping operations underpins many of these concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

On one final matter, I would like to commend the report of the Contingent-Owned Equipment Working Group introduced by its chair, the Permanent Representative for Ireland, Ambassador Donoghue.

The COE Working Group seeks to improve the system for reimbursing countries for personnel and equipment contributed to peacekeeping missions. The recommendation by the Working Group for the UN to support the shipment of replacement COE to longstanding peacekeeping operations recognizes the realities of the harsh conditions faced by many of our contingents. The Working Group has also acted to enhance medical support for our operations, and, for the first time, military and police contingents will be expected to meet the same standards for environmental practices and waste management that guide our peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

We have engaged with the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the Overview, the Fourth Annual GFSS Progress Report, and reforms of our TCC reimbursement frameworks, as well as budget proposals for our missions, the Global Service Centre and the Support Account. We have made every effort to respond to the requests for clarification, in spite of the onslaught of operational demands that have coincided with the recent exchanges with the ACABQ. We now look forward to offering our fullest support to the Fifth Committee in reaching a successful conclusion in its deliberations.

In conclusion, we remain determined to support our field missions in the delivery of their mandates in the most effective way possible. Our mission is to do all we can to support our colleagues – the military, the police, and the civilian staff – who continue to risk their lives in our shared endeavor. It is their welfare that must necessarily provide the compass for our work. In concluding, therefore, I wish to pay tribute to our colleagues in the field, whose lives will be directly affected by your deliberations; the reports introduced today have been prepared with their best interests in mind, so that they might, in turn, be equipped and enabled to serve those most in need.

Thank you.