

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Office of the President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly presents its compliments to all Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations and has the honour to attach a summary of the General Assembly's Thematic debate on "UN Peacekeeping: looking into the future" held on Tuesday, 22 June 2010.

The Office of the President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'JB' or similar, enclosed in a circular flourish.

New York, 9 September 2010

All Permanent Missions and
Permanent Observer Missions
to the United Nations
New York

Summary of the General Assembly thematic debate on “UN Peacekeeping: Looking into the Future”
Tuesday, 22 June 2010

Peacekeeping is today a major activity of the United Nations - a vital tool in the hands of the world body for the maintenance of international peace and security. The unique role and legitimacy of the United Nations brings added credibility and acceptance for its peacekeeping activities.

Success of peacekeeping in recent years, particularly in Africa, has also led to high expectations and a surge in demand. This poses significant challenges in terms of policy and decision-making, planning, force generation, deployment, managing peacekeeping missions, exit strategies and peace building. Available resources are often stretched beyond capacity, impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of missions. Beyond these challenges, UN peacekeeping operations have a role in supporting and sustaining the political processes which are crucial for establishing long-term peace. To ensure that peacekeeping operations continue to serve their intended role and bring relief to conflict-ridden states, it is important that UN peacekeeping rests on a solid political consensus around its objectives and the means to achieve them.

Many of these critical questions and challenges relate to several of the current peacekeeping operations and are also the focus of a growing political debate over the future of peacekeeping. Several initiatives from the Secretariat and Member States have sought to advance this discussion aimed at adapting and enhancing the peacekeeping capacities. Mostly rooted in the landmark "Brahimi Report", the ongoing reform efforts bring out the lessons learned from the implementation of its key recommendations and the need to continue to address the "unfinished business".

In this context, **the General Assembly** held on Tuesday, 22 June 2010 a thematic debate entitled **“UN Peacekeeping: looking into the Future”**.

The deliberations included high-level dignitaries and experts providing a wide-range of views on the various dimensions of peacekeeping operations and the current state of

reform. The debate included a special session on “Building Partnerships and Securing Capacities”, followed by panels on the “**Political Dimensions of UN Peacekeeping**” and “**Multi-dimensional Peacekeeping Operations: Towards sustainable peace peacebuilding and the nexus between security and development**”.

Many speakers noted the role of the General Assembly in ensuring an inclusive dialogue with all Member States on these important matters. Peacekeeping was viewed as the “flagship” activity of the UN, which was both successful and cost-effective. Many participants noted the need for reforms including through ensuring political support and the needed capacity in peacekeeping missions. The importance of national ownership and leadership in the peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding processes was also stressed. References were made to the increasing prevalence of internal conflicts and the resultant need for multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions that integrate peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding, as well as political, military and development aspects.

Opening session

In his opening remarks, H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly, noted that the General Assembly was holding this thematic debate to not only provide guidance on policy and strategic direction, but also to “galvanize the full engagement, participation and commitment of Member States behind this common objective”.

President Treki described the many achievements of the UN in managing conflicts, maintaining peace and stability and helping create conditions for durable peace and development, as well as the challenges resulting from increased expectations, the extraordinary surge in demand and the growing complexity of peacekeeping mandates. It was also important to consider the inter-linkages between peacekeeping operations and political processes, address the underlying root causes of conflict, provide resources commensurate with mandates, and ensure ownership of and support to national authorities. President Treki paid tribute to the tens of thousands of blue helmets who have served the cause of peace under the UN banner.

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General praised the role of peacekeeping missions in long-term peace and acknowledged the need to continue strengthening the peacekeeping machinery. Referring to the launch by the Secretariat of the New Horizon process last year, he said partnerships have been reinvigorated through dialogue between troop and police contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs), the Security Council and the Secretariat. Peacekeeping operations will continue to pose difficult issues, including on exit strategies and host-country consent, and the General Assembly has an important role in bringing Member States together in this “common enterprise”.

In his keynote address, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Former Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan (participating via videoconference from Paris) focused on the recommendations provided by his panel ten years ago and pointed to observations that remain relevant at present. He noted the Panel’s call for upgrading the UN’s regional expertise and its general capacities. He also recalled the Panel’s advice on the need for the Secretariat to resist pressures to tell the Security Council “what it wants to hear”, as well as on the need for rapid deployment of forces once decisions on troop and police levels were agreed. Referring to the importance of coordination in activities undertaken by the military, police, political, humanitarian and human rights and other development actors, Mr. Brahimi noted that the integrated approach recommended by the Panel has been rejected and continues to face resistance. While the Panel had called for quality rather than quantity of foreign staff, the civilian personnel system was said to be failing the missions, as well as the personnel themselves. On a positive note, Mr. Brahimi expressed his happiness at the strengthening of the “triangular cooperation: involving the Security Council, Secretariat and Member States (TCCs in particular), which has been the theme of the “New Horizon” agenda and the deliberations in the past year. He expected “plenty of surprises” in the next decade, and pointed to the key role of the General Assembly in this respect.

Special session: Building Partnerships and Securing Capabilities

Partnerships are crucial in securing the required capabilities for peacekeeping missions commensurate with their mandates. In this Special Session, Troop Contributing Countries were invited to share their experience and expertise on, *inter alia*, the best ways

to establish a meaningful partnership between those who authorize, those who implement and those who receive peacekeeping operations.

H.E. Mr. Luis Almagro, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uruguay stated that the Security Council has primary responsibility for international peace and security. Broad based support from Member States for mandates approved by the SC is of vital importance. The Minister stressed the significance of substantive discussions and consultations between the Security Council and TCCs/PCCs, the Secretariat and the C-34, as well as between TCCs and UN Headquarters. The Minister also stated that there was “no possible sustainability of complex missions without a correlation between mandates and resources”.

Major General (Rtd.) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, Cabinet Minister of Bangladesh noted the importance of building partnerships between UN Peacekeepers, civilians and other humanitarian actors. He also stressed the significance of consultation between TCCs and decision makers. The Minister called for adequate resources for missions in order to fulfill their mandates. Finally, the Minister stressed that peacekeepers were more than troops and they must have additional training to enable them to fulfill their particular responsibilities.

The Permanent Representative of Pakistan highlighted three main challenges confronting UN Peacekeeping: (1) meeting the high expectations created by past success, given the increased demand; (2) setting “clear, realistic and achievable mandates” and providing sufficient resources to achieve them; and (3) ensuring seamless transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, as well as clear exit strategies.

The Permanent Representative of India considered that much has changed in peacekeeping operations since their inception, noting that the original peacekeeping formula is now obsolete. The Permanent Representative also acknowledged that improvements have been made towards a new formula, but more needs to be done. The Permanent Representative voiced concern that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was currently a military-driven organization which needed to evolve to meet today’s challenges. He noted that 80% of peacekeeping occurred in areas that have experienced colonialism, and that peacebuilding operations must be sensitive to this experience.

The Permanent Representative of Nigeria stressed the importance of greater understanding of the causes of conflict in order to better address peacekeeping needs. The Permanent Representative suggested that peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding missions be mandated at the same time, and stressed that ultimately preventative diplomacy is most important.

Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, said much has changed since the Brahimi report. In 2000, for example, there were 20,000 troops deployed worldwide whereas now there are over 124,000. Mr. Le Roy recognized that it was due to the Brahimi report that the UN had been able to manage this unprecedented surge. However, he noted that not all of the Brahimi report's proposals were realized and challenges remained. To address these challenges, the Secretariat had launched the New Horizon process.

Mr. Anthony Banbury, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Field Support noted that there have been enormous changes in the past 10 years, but stressed that meeting expectations remained a challenge. In addition, he stressed the importance of the Global Field Support Strategy to enhance the UN's capacity to meet the challenges. Furthermore, he noted the vital importance of having the right staff doing the right jobs at the right time.

Panel one: Political dimensions of UN Peacekeeping

This panel focused on the political dimensions of peacekeeping, including questions of political will and support for peacekeeping operations and the inter-linkages and mutual impact of peacekeeping missions and political processes. Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, President of the International Peace Institute, moderated the panel.

H.E. Marti Ahtisaari, Former President of the Republic of Finland, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 2008 reflected on his experience in the Namibia peace process where a multidimensional peacekeeping mission clearly needed to be linked to the broader political mechanisms in the Security Council and beyond. Inter-state conflicts had become widespread and it was essential to continue intensive and continuous dialogue with all

parties. He advocated for greater local ownership, more authority for the Secretariat, and increased transparency of the Security Council. Regarding the transition from peacekeeping operations to peacebuilding, there was a need for qualitative change of staff and a focus on peace and development.

H.E. Ambassador Álvaro de Soto, Senior Fellow, Ralph Bunche Institute, Associate Fellow, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Former United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process emphasized that “it’s all political” in relation to peacekeeping operations. The UN was said to have a comparative advantage in organizing and deploying complex operations quickly. However, several crises in the aftermath of the cold war led to questions on the political will and resources available for the Organization to act effectively. There needs to be an agreed criteria or framework on how the international community addresses conflicts. The closest such instrument is the Outcome of 2005 World Summit. Furthermore, the UN has to be cautious not to lend itself to exclusionary policies and should identify “spoilers” who may be integral to any peace process.

H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Joint Special Representative for the African Union- United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) referred to a “democratic deficit” in the Security Council, which acts in a centric manner including through a “P5, P3 and even a P1”. He spoke of the need for missions to accept the reality of losses, as in UNAMID, and to ensure adequate capacity and resources, citing the example of unmet need for helicopters in UNAMID.

In the question and answer session that followed, six Member States took the floor to make comments *inter alia* on the need for enhancing national ownership in peacebuilding, including the participation of women, fine tuning of peacekeeping doctrine, and for two way flow of responsibility between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Panel two: Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations: Towards sustainable peace, peacebuilding and the nexus between security and development

The second panel focused on peacebuilding perspectives in the design of complex and multidimensional operations and how early peacebuilding tasks feed into and reinforce

medium and long-term peacebuilding and development. In particular, this panel emphasized the links between the security and economic aspects of sustainable peace, and addressed how UN peacekeeping operations can be rooted in dynamic and early partnership with all relevant actors in the field.

The panel was moderated by Dr. Jamal Benomar, Chef de Cabinet, Office of the President of the General Assembly. In his opening remarks, the Moderator noted that in the international post-conflict industry, UN and UN-actors were often organized in stovepipes, acting in parallel rather than in tandem. Peacebuilding in fact required a national coordination mechanism to develop and share knowledge. A key challenge for the UN was how to strengthen the legitimacy of state institutions, so they that were able to provide security and deliver primary services.

President John Agyekum Kufuor, Former President of Ghana, Former Chairperson of the African Union, Chairman of Interpeace noted that mandates for peacekeeping missions must be clear, robust and unambiguous, and that the best intelligence available should be harnessed. Regional organizations can help the UN to maintain peace, and hybrid missions were appropriate in some situations. President Kufuor also stressed that Member States should be aware of and prepared for the reality that peacekeeping required long-term commitment.

Dr. Ashraf Ghani, Chairman of the Institute of State Effectiveness, Former Minister of Finance, Afghanistan (participating via videoconference from Kabul) stated that UN Peacekeeping was different in reality than in theory and questioned whether the UN possessed the skills to effectively manage the reality of peacekeeping operations. UN Special Representatives to the Secretary-General need to have the appropriate skill-set, grasp the concept of “state craft”, and base their work on a very detailed process for managing state-building. He noted the need to focus on outcomes and stressed the importance of streamlining peacebuilding processes.

Mr. Justin Yifu Lin, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, Development Economics noted that given the interconnected nature of the global community, conflict in one State had serious repercussions for other States. He stressed that

attention must be paid to conflict prevention. Mr. Lin highlighted the importance of peacekeeping missions to successful economic recovery in a post conflict state. He further noted the challenges of expecting too much, too soon from post conflict states.

Ms Ellen Margrethe Løj, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia (UNMIL) stressed the importance and interconnected nature of peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding and development, noting that there can be no peace without development. She also highlighted financing issues and noted the ease of financing “attractive” projects versus the challenge of financing “unattractive” ones.

During the question and answer session, 11 Member States took the floor. Speakers noted the challenge of prioritizing development and security in post conflict situations and commented on the need to mandate peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions and to provide flexible funding for both activities. Other delegations also stated the need for adequate financing of missions; local ownership of UN mandates; and open communication between the host state, peacekeepers and other stakeholders. The need to pay attention to preventative diplomacy was also pointed out.

In response, the Moderator reflected on the need for greater understanding of issues on the ground, clear exit strategies and integrated peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities. President Kufuor reiterated his view that peacekeeping mandates should be peacebuilding mandates and that budgets must be realistic. For his part, Mr. Lin suggested that security and development should not be considered as mutually exclusive goals. Finally, Ms Løj reiterated that peacekeeping and peacebuilding should not be seen as sequential events, and emphasized the importance of balancing security and development goals.

Concluding session

Mr. Le Roy praised the opportunity to hear a wide variety of views during a “full debate” of the Assembly. He said that his Department was committed to keep financial costs at a minimum, and reminded the Assembly of the billions in savings that result from the prevention of conflicts. It was clear that peacekeepers were “early peace builders” and they did a lot more than “quick impact” projects. He also announced that the first annual progress report of the “New Horizon” study would be available in July in order to continue the dialogue on the important challenges discussed in the debate.

Concluding the debate, Vice President H.E Jarmo Viinanen, speaking on behalf of President Treki, said that the discussions had reaffirmed the need for strong leadership and strategic direction for UN Peacekeeping. He recalled the centrality of political processes in multi-dimensional operations, the importance of peacebuilding and the inter-linkages between security and development in ensuring sustainable peace.