Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

I am pleased to introduce the report on the Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for peace operations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2013 (A/68/337 Part II).

To begin with, I am pleased to report that the initiative to make internal audit reports available to the public, following the approval of the General Assembly continues to be positive in terms of transparency, with no unintended or negative consequences so far. There has been growing interest in the reports, evident in the trend of webpage visits and reports downloaded. To date, no Member States or members of senior management has availed themselves of the possibility to request advance copies prior to publishing.

The report before you provides an overview of the work of the three Divisions: Internal Audit, Investigations, and Inspection and Evaluation. OIOS issued over 200 oversight reports and about 500 recommendations on peacekeeping matters in 2013.

During the reporting period, the Internal Audit Division made greater use of thematic audits to identify systemic strengths and weakness across peace
operations. In 2013, thematic audits were completed on the preparedness for the implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards; management of contingent-owned equipment; administration and management of rations contracts; receiving and inspection activities; account receivable and payable; fuel management; and procurement. This approach has helped highlight the need for policy reviews and procedural changes as well as facilitated knowledge sharing.

In 2013, the Investigations Division has been undergoing restructuring in line with the approval by the General Assembly in the context of the 2013-2014 budget. This process is undoubtedly challenging, though OIOS is making steady progress. Notwithstanding the challenges arising from the organizational changes, the Investigations Division has continued to dedicate its efforts to carry out the duty of investigation. In particular, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) involving uniformed personnel has remained one of the significant areas of concern. In light of enforcing the zero tolerance policy, OIOS will continue to do its part to ensure that SEA allegations are properly investigated or followed up. We will also continue to rely on Member States to do their part to pursue appropriate follow-up actions in accordance with the related Memorandum of Understanding for troop-contributing countries.

During the reporting period, the Inspection and Evaluation Division began a comprehensive risk-based work planning analysis. This exercise identified 53 discrete peacekeeping topics, including cross-cutting themes, for evaluation. The Division’s activity included completion of a meta-evaluation of peacekeeping evaluations, which led to the establishment of an institutional framework for
cooperation between OIOS and DPKO in order to strengthen the quality and utility of peacekeeping evaluations.

On staffing matters, efforts to address vacancy rates throughout OIOS continued, through enhancement of recruitment strategies and increased use of rosters for staff selection. The OIOS vacancy rate for peacekeeping at the end of 2013 was 18 per cent, the same as at end-2012 and much lower than 25 per cent at end-2011. I expect that vacancy rates will improve following completion of the restructuring of the Investigation Division given that rosters will be better populated with qualified candidates, and reclassification of all ID positions will be completed.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all OIOS staff for their dedication to the work of OIOS, and for their commitment to the ideals of the United Nations.

I would also like to express appreciation to all Member States for your interest in and support for our work.

I thank you and welcome your questions on any subject matter.
Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

I am pleased to introduce the report of the OIOS evaluation of the implementation and results of protection of civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/68/787). Protecting civilians is one of the most critical tasks entrusted to a peacekeeping mission, and one of the most visible areas of Organization activity. When the Organization is seen to fail in this task, its reputation suffers.

Ten peacekeeping operations currently hold a mandate to protect civilians. The evaluation covered eight of those missions. It excluded MINUSCA, the mission established just last month in the Central African Republic, and MINUSMA, the mission in Mali which was still new when the evaluation began in mid-2013.

This evaluation follows a review presented to you last year of the way protection of civilians mandates are reported by United Nations peacekeeping operations. This time, the evaluation has delved deeply into the ways in which the Organization’s peacekeeping missions implement this mandate, looking at what works well and what works less well in terms of results.

Its point of departure was a comprehensive review commissioned by DPKO and OCHA in 2009, which reported that the chain of events to support protection of
civilians was broken. OIOS drew for this report on information not only from DPKO/DFS and its stakeholders, but also from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The report has been shared with both those entities.

In the five years since that review, much has improved. Structures and guidance have been developed, partnerships have been clarified and preventive and mitigating activities appear to be achieving results, at least in locations within reach of peacekeeping bases.

However, despite improvements, peacekeeping operations frequently lack the capacity and willingness to effectively intervene in active conflicts to protect civilians under attack. They rarely use the force available to them and instead resort to more passive measures, such as sheltering civilians who flee to their bases. As a result, the civilian toll in many such conflicts has been terrible, even when peacekeeping forces have been in close proximity.

Multiple reasons contribute to this state of affairs:

- Views on the use of force differ among troop-contributing countries and among Security Council members themselves;
- A de facto dual line of command appears to operate within missions, whereby troop-contributing countries and mission leadership may issue differing instructions to contingents;
- The obligation of missions to act when host Governments are unable or unwilling to discharge their responsibility to protect civilians is not well understood;
Peacekeeping missions believe they have insufficient resources to respond to force with force; and

Contingent members themselves are concerned about possible penalties if their use of force is judged inappropriate.

Mr. Chairman,

As a result of these factors, a distance has emerged between policy and practice in relation to protection of civilians. That distance compromises the ability of the United Nations to discharge the protection of civilians mandates. The distance can and should be narrowed.

As a first step in doing so, the evaluation recommended enhancing the operational control of the United Nations over military contingents in peacekeeping missions: failures by contingents to follow orders or instructions issued by a peacekeeping mission in relation to a protection of civilians mandate should be communicated to United Nations Headquarters for review with the troop-contributing country concerned.

The evaluation also made two other recommendations:

- To improve the clarity of peacekeepers’ tasks at the tactical level, so that decisions could be made more quickly on the ground; and
- To improve the working-level relationships affecting cooperation and coordination between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian entities.

DPKO and DFS have accepted all three recommendations. However, they expressed reservations about whether the first recommendation would in fact improve the
performance of peacekeeping operations in delivering on their mandates, stating that challenges to command and control are rare, and pointing to existing processes that address such circumstances.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to add one more observation.

While some of the solutions to the problems identified in this evaluation lie with the Secretariat and other United Nations entities, others lie with Member States themselves. I mentioned earlier that the evaluation noted differences in opinion among Security Council members and reluctance among troop-contributing countries on the use of force to protect civilians. The reality is that the United Nations cannot fully protect civilians while the troop contributing countries do not instruct their contingents to do all they can, including using force as a last resort when civilians are under attack before them. I am fully aware this is not easy, but such instructions remain, de facto, within the control of Member States and not the Secretariat. I recognize that use of force is a highly contentious issue as the United Nations is devoted to furthering peace; nevertheless further debate on the use of force to protect civilians appears to be warranted. Such debate could contribute to building consensus on this issue.

Furthermore, all the Permanent Members of the Security Council interviewed for the evaluation were strongly supportive of such debate, and indeed look forward to its results. Consequently, we hope this report will come to the notice of Members of the Security Council in case the report’s analysis can be useful to them.
I stand ready with my Director of the Inspection and Evaluation Division, Deborah Rugg, and her team to support you in your discussions on this important evaluation.

Thank you.