

**Statement by Under-Secretary-General Ameerah Haq to the
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
24 February 2014**

Madam Chair,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the Chair of this Special Committee.

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address the Special Committee as you begin your deliberations. My colleague Hervé Ladsous has provided an overview of the strategic and operational challenges with which our missions are currently grappling. I would like to update you on the work of the Department of Field Support, and in particular, our efforts to support our troops over the past year.

Let me begin by recognizing the peacekeepers who have paid the ultimate price in the pursuit of peace; in 2013, 107 peacekeepers lost their lives and already this year, as Hervé mentioned, 14 have fallen. It is in their memory that we intensify our campaign to improve the living and working conditions, the security and the welfare, of our troops and civilian colleagues in the field. It is with their sacrifice in mind that we are reminded of the practical significance of your deliberations.

Madam Chair,

I would like to turn to some of the contextual factors that have influenced the work of DFS, and mission support more generally, since I last addressed the Special Committee.

Clearly, the past year has been anything but business as usual. 2013 and the first months of 2014 have brought forth an uninterrupted sequence of new challenges and new operational demands. New missions have been set up in complex operating environments. Existing operations have themselves undergone profound, historic change.

A critical driver of our work over the past year has been the growing security risks faced by our colleagues in the field. The past year has provided ample evidence to suggest that our staff, our troops, our assets and premises, face a higher level of risk, due to their affiliation with the United Nations, than at any time in the history of UN peacekeeping. It is not only that we are dealing increasingly with non-traditional forces – in places such as Mali, South Sudan, and the DRC. It is that we – UN troops and UN civilians - are, more so than ever before, targets in the complex calculus of insurrection, insurgency, and terrorism.

The policy implication is that we must do more on the side of prevention and risk mitigation when seeking to protect our colleagues. Providing for the safety and security of deployed personnel in volatile environments is an absolute necessity. And it is a necessity that will almost certainly shift resources towards that end.

The need for enhanced security has had, and will continue to have, implications for mission planning. Compounds need to be reinforced. Staff must travel in convoy.

Vehicles must be fitted with the required communications equipment. Applying new technologies – such as the Unmanned Aerial Systems that Hervé has referred to - can help us to detect threats earlier, and thus, need to become a more standard feature of our modus operandi. Higher security risk is not a recent development; but the frequency and magnitude of incidents this past year suggest that we can be relatively certain that attacks against UN peacekeepers will continue.

Madam Chair,

Allow me to update you on some important developments that may be of interest to the Member States represented today.

Since my briefing to the Fourth Committee in October, many of you have taken part in the triennial meeting of the Contingent-owned Equipment (COE) Working Group, which took place at the end of January. At the opening of that event, I emphasized that the system for reimbursing troop contributing countries for their equipment and personnel must be equitable and predictable. I stressed that all of those involved, including those who provide the troops and those who pay the costs, must view the system as transparent and cost-effective. And I urged the membership that, for *any* of this to be achieved, *all* of us would have to be prepared to be responsive and pragmatic.

In the end, the COE WG produced some noteworthy achievements. The Working Group made a number of recommendations to enhance peacekeeping. This included recommending that the UN fund the rotation-related transport of aging COE – that is, major equipment that has either been deployed to a mission for seven years or longer, or, that has reached 50 % of its normal life. The report of the COE WG is being finalized and, alongside the report of the Secretary-General, will go to the budget Committees for the General Assembly's consideration.

I would also like to update you on implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/261 on rates of reimbursement to troop and police contributing countries. The General Assembly has endorsed the view that the rate of reimbursement should have an empirical basis and that a system should be put in place to regularly review and revise reimbursement rates. Accordingly, a survey is now being carried out, involving a representative sample of 10 troop and police contributing countries. I take this opportunity to thank the sample countries, which are participating in the survey voluntarily, for their support to the process. The results of the survey will be presented to the General Assembly in March for a decision on the way forward.

Madam Chair,

The conceptual backdrop for all of DFS' efforts in improving the timeliness, quality and cost-effectiveness of mission support is the Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS).

The overall budget of UN peacekeeping for 2013-2014 is nearing the \$8 billion mark - it is all the more important that we apply the GFSS, and its spirit of responsible stewardship of resources, in all that we do. When measured against the changing number of uniformed personnel and adjusted for inflation, the cost of peacekeeping to Member States is in fact 16 per cent less in 2013/2014, per capita, than the costs incurred in 2008/09.

The point I would like to emphasize is that the welfare of our troops, our police, and our civilian colleagues in the field, are paramount. In our efforts to bring about a more efficient use of resources, we must avoid any detrimental impact on the quality of our services, the ability of our personnel to carry out their work, or the capacity of our missions to protect them.

Solid progress was made on GFSS implementation in 2013. The finance and human resources pillars of the GFSS are showing encouraging returns on the investment of recent years; tools such as the standardized funding model, and rosters, for example, are being used to positive effect. We are also moving forward with the roll out of remotely-provided shared services. Modularization is shifting into a new, more dynamic phase that will allow service packages to better meet the needs of missions.

In 2014, GFSS implementation will take on a different complexion as we mainstream GFSS tools and processes into an integrated service delivery model for UN field support. End states have been defined for the individual GFSS pillars and we have set performance targets for June 2015 in each of these areas.

In the spirit of the GFSS, and in line with guidance from the General Assembly in resolution 66/264 of July 2012, we have made progress in conducting civilian staffing reviews. The goal is to ensure that staffing structures are aligned with mission mandate requirements. These exercises are intended to review, over the next two to three years, the civilian capacity requirement for civilian personnel in each mission. Each review concludes with a set of recommendations for necessary adjustments.

In 2013, DPKO and DFS completed three civilian staffing reviews - in UNOCI, UNIFIL and UNAMID. In 2014 we intend to conduct similar reviews in MINURSO, UNAMI, MONUSCO, MINUSTAH, UNISFA and UNMISS. We expect these reviews to become a standard management tool that is carried out regularly within each mission.

Madam Chair,

A top priority for DFS is to achieve continuous improvement in the services we provide to our troops. The introduction of new rations standards last year resulted in a paradigm shift in the quality of the rations and, accordingly, in the satisfaction of our contingents. We also regularly update our medical standards to ensure that our personnel are receiving the appropriate care and treatment. In this context, I would like to encourage our troop contributing countries to refer to the revised Medical Support Manual and to use it as a basis to conduct thorough pre-deployment medical screening examinations of your troops.

Referring back to the COE Working Group, I should add that the Working Group also agreed to recommend enhancements to the medical support capabilities provided by TCC/PCC, including provision of additional equipment for medical teams, as well as specialised medical support services for female peacekeepers. I believe this is a clear sign that the concerns voiced by TCCs and PCCs are indeed being heard and acted upon.

An additional priority for both DFS and DPKO is to address delays in the provision of critical enablers during mission start-up and reconfiguration. The experience in

setting up MINUSMA reminds us that the timely start-up of a mission depends on a careful and deliberate synchronization between the arrival of troops on the one hand, and the enablers that allow them to get the job done on the other. Experience makes unequivocally clear that critical assets such as engineering capability, air assets, medical facilities, and signal companies take more time to generate and deploy than “boots on the ground.” We need them both and we need to ensure that they arrive when needed.

With regard to helicopters, there is currently a global shortfall of 39 military helicopters. I am grateful to those countries that have stepped forward and contributed these essential enablers and, given the continued gap, ask others to follow suit. Our global requirement for helicopters continues to grow as UN peacekeeping deploys into complex environments with demanding mandates and limited road infrastructure.

Madam Chair,

Last year the Security Council adopted resolution 2122 to strengthen women’s participation in all aspects of conflict prevention and response, specifically calling on Member States to support women’s leadership development. We continue to seek more uniformed and civilian women to join those currently serving at all levels of the Organization. In the survey of personnel costs, currently being undertaken, we are interested in finding out more about the specific costs and investments involved in deploying women to UN peacekeeping. Following a one-year study and consultation, the Bridging the Civilian Gender Gap in Peace Operations project submitted recommendations to my Department in December. We are moving forward on a number of these recommendations, including those focused on retention and outreach.

The challenge of correcting the perennial gender imbalance leads me to another challenge: addressing the need for geographic diversity. We continue to strive to ensure the appropriate representation of staff from troop-contributing countries in both Departments – at Headquarters and in field posts, taking into account their contributions, as set out in General Assembly resolution 67/287. Currently, 17% of heads of mission and deputy heads come from the top 10 contributors of uniformed personnel – this is an improvement from last year, but we still have a long way to go.

With regard to conduct and discipline, DFS remains fully committed to preventing and addressing misconduct by personnel deployed in field operations, bearing in mind the zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. We are fully engaged in advancing the enhanced programme of action introduced by the Secretary-General in his report on Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, issued last February. The next report, to be issued later this month, will point to a slight increase in the number of allegations received in 2013 (66), as compared with 2012 (60). DFS is determined to take the necessary measures to address all allegations of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse. In this regard, DPKO and DFS cooperation with Member States is indispensable for ensuring that those who have committed sexual exploitation, abuse and other offences are held accountable. National criminal investigation and prosecution are important tools in this regard.

In the past three years, we have introduced policies that set clear and non-negotiable thresholds for personal conduct for those who work in the UN family and those

supported by the UN. The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy and the Policy on Human Rights Screening of United Nations Personnel are distinct yet complementary. Full implementation of both policies requires continued engagement and cooperation with Member States. I extend my sincere gratitude to those Member States who have cooperated with our efforts to ensure compliance with these policies.

Madam Chair,

To do well, peacekeeping transitions and mission draw-downs require as much foresight and planning as do mission start ups. The system-wide *Policy on UN Transitions*, largely based on the successful experience of UNMIT in Timor-Leste, provides guidance to field missions and the UN country team on the planning and management of transitions. The policy highlights among other things the need for national ownership, a clear communication strategy, and early and integrated planning.

Building on the Policy on UN Transitions, the Department of Field Support has also updated the Liquidation Manual which provides guidance on mission responsibilities and covers issues such as asset disposal and donations, environmental, human resources, financial and records management.

With regard to environmental concerns, DFS has initiated the development of an overarching Waste Management Policy, which will define waste management objectives, responsibilities in Field Missions and UN Headquarters, and general principles of waste management.

These initiatives well reflect the strategic role that headquarters can and should play in supporting the field.

Madam Chair,

Peacekeeping requires a shared vision backed by strong cooperation between Member States and the Secretariat. When it has the necessary resources to deliver in the field, when it is empowered by the membership to be flexible, and when it is focused on the achievement of results as the guidepost for its efforts, UN peacekeeping is a powerful resource for conflict management and peace consolidation. We look to the C34 to provide clear direction and to convey to our operations in the field, a strong signal of shared commitment and support.

Of course, at the end of the day, we are talking about individuals. Individuals who carry out their daily work on the front lines, in harm's way, to protect innocent civilians. People who risk their lives to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter. Men and women who may, ultimately, lose their lives in the service of the United Nations.

I am confident that your discussions will be undertaken with their best interests in mind. I look forward to working with you as we endeavor to support them as best we can.

Thank you.