

**Statement by Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous to the
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
20 February 2015**

Introduction

Good morning, Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be with you this morning together with Mr. Sanchez. Allow me to begin by thanking you for agreeing to come this morning and for your flexibility in arranging this meeting. I personally wanted to be here to share my remarks with you. It is indeed a pleasure to speak before you today as this year marks the 50th anniversary of this Committee's establishment. Mr. Chair, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Madame Joy Ogwu of Nigeria for her re-election as Chair of the Special Committee and to congratulate you as well for your re-election as Chair of this committee's Working Group. I also wish to commend the entire committee for a successful opening of the formal session which was presided over by the President of the General Assembly.

Distinguished delegates, I would like to thank you for the support that you have shown to our two departments and to the work of peacekeeping around the world. I also want to recognize the support you provide as Member States in **the form of troops, police, equipment, training and much more.** Let me reiterate the significance of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations as stated by the Deputy-Secretary-General Mr. Jan Eliasson in his remarks to you at the opening of the formal session. It is an important forum that is central to the partnerships which must be strong for peacekeeping to work, along with triangular cooperation and indeed regional cooperation.

You have received the **Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping A/69/642 and its addendum.** You will find that this report reflects the challenges we face as well as the accomplishments we have seen in the past year and it responds to many of this committee's requests. Despite the various challenges faced in our operations, the report demonstrates the continued value of peacekeeping operations. Studies indicate that when peacekeeping missions are deployed in post-conflict situations, countries are 50 per cent less likely to experience an outbreak of conflict again. (*Sources: Ibrahim Ahmed Elbadawi "Post conflict transitions: An overview" "World Bank Economic Review 2008"*)

Although peacekeeping operations have proven to be effective in many scenarios, there is still a need for us to constantly adapt, while at the same time strive for increased effectiveness and efficiency. Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, I believe we have a shared interest in seeing our operations succeed and therefore, **I would like to focus my remarks to you on performance.** Our peacekeepers can only reach maximum performance if we have a shared understanding of what successful performance looks like, how we measure and attain it.

Evolving context for peacekeeping

We are in the midst of an **evolving context for peacekeeping operations.** While the goals of peacekeeping to support a political process and maintain security as we assist a country's transition from conflict to lasting peace remain the same, the challenges we face and the activities we carry out continue to evolve. Changes in the operational environment have an

impact on how we perform and require us to find ways to ensure that our performance is up to par.

Due to this evolving context, the Secretary General, as you are fully aware, has initiated the **Peace Operations Review**. The High level Panel on Peace Operations has been actively looking at evolving dynamics of conflict and the changing nature of peace operations. The panel has held regional meetings and consultations but their work is yet far from complete. You are scheduled to hear from panel members next week when they will provide you with more details of their work thus far. We look forward to the conclusions and recommendations of this Panel to inform our understanding of the context in which we are operating and to provide possible options for a way forward.

I am pleased to announce that the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation, which former USG Ameerah Haq and I convened last year, submitted its findings and recommendations to the Departments in late December. The Panel's chair and I will brief you more thoroughly on the findings next week. I will say now, however, that the Panel exceeded our expectations in their consideration of the immediate and long-term gains we stand to achieve with a more technologically-enabled and innovative approach to peacekeeping. In addition, many of the Panel's ideas align with our shared vision for the future. We look forward to working with you as our partners, to lay the groundwork and generate the capabilities necessary for our success in the face of ever-evolving challenges.

These two reviews, as well as other reviews that are ongoing, are pivotal to the work that we conduct and their recommendations will feed into how we move forward to enhance our performance. The Peace Operations Review coincides with the Peacebuilding review as well as the SG's Global Review on Security Council resolution 1325, which will contribute to shaping the vision of DPKO/DFS women peace and security agenda in the next few years.

Trends

I would now like to turn specifically to the trends that characterize some of our new operating environments and speak to the issues as identified by the Secretary-General when he announced the Review of Peace Operations and that are compounding the challenges we face.

The Secretary-General noted that peacekeeping missions today are increasingly operating in **non-permissive environments**, where ongoing violence makes it more challenging for peacekeepers to do their job safely and effectively. We see this, for example, in Mali, where peacekeepers in the north face attacks and asymmetric threats from armed groups and criminal organizations and in Darfur, where peacekeepers continue to operate under the threat of deadly attacks, kidnapping and carjacking. Last year alone, 123 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Missions are also increasingly deployed to places where there is **no peace to keep and no peace agreement to support**. This means that many missions must first attempt to bring about the cessation of hostilities, while also providing protection to civilians, before they can focus on long-term, sustainable peace. This is the case in the Central African Republic and Mali, where it is difficult to identify the parties to the conflict and the line between combatant and civilians is blurred.

In many cases, the threats missions confront are increasingly **transnational** in nature, even though peacekeeping missions operate within national boundaries. Drug trafficking and organized crime, terrorism and activities in ungoverned territories and at sea pose new challenges for our missions and require a re-think of our operational and political approaches to conflict resolution as well as how we engage with spoilers

Finally, over the last several years Member States, host governments and local communities have placed high expectations on UN peacekeeping to support the **protection of civilians**, particularly women and children, which the Security Council has clearly mandated at the centre of our responsibilities. As missions are deployed earlier in the cycle of conflict, the need to protect civilians is likely to continue growing. I believe that the protection of civilians is a crucial task for United Nations peacekeeping operations as we assist governments in re-establishing security and emerging political processes.

Confronted with the scale of human suffering in many of the places we are deployed, the international community has a collective responsibility to respond, and peacekeepers are in many cases the tool used for this purpose. Protecting civilians demands capabilities and the willingness for uniformed peacekeepers to be proactive and decisive in high-risk environments. We must, however, constantly reinforce the notion that **the primary responsibility to protect civilian populations remains with the State**, and that without a political resolution to end the armed conflict, the objective of protecting civilians will never be achieved.

While these trends point to an evolution in the roles and activities of United Nations peacekeeping, the fundamental objective has not changed. Peacekeeping continues to be primarily a political tool aimed at supporting the implementation of peaceful settlements and enabling longer-term recovery and sustainable development. Where large-scale violence is ongoing, it plays an indispensable role to protect civilians and support political solutions. This underscores that peacekeeping is and will remain an early peacebuilding tool in our missions. Its activities aimed to foster inclusive political engagement, reform key security and justice institutions, to name a few, pave the way for viable peace so that our missions can eventually exit.

Challenges we face in performing on new mandates in new environments

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, as we strive to achieve these long-held goals of peacekeeping, we must ask how we can ensure that peacekeeping missions perform to a high standard in today's environments. In the context of peacekeeping, we can define performance as the efficiency and efficacy of peacekeeping missions in meeting the objectives provided in their mandates. We therefore need to ask: how do we execute the mandates we are given, in the environments we are deployed, to the satisfaction of our stakeholders?

From the trends I have described, I see **five key challenges** that impact the performance of our field missions.

First, our mandates today present a number of **political challenges** for peacekeeping operations in the field. When a mission is deployed in a conflict that lacks a clear political framework to guide the parties towards peace, the central political role of a mission can be challenged by all parties. How we carry out our political good offices, and how we balance working with non-state actors and national governments, has a direct effect on the way we are

perceived in-country and our ability to carry out our mandates. **Striking the proper balance between the two principles of consent and impartiality** has always been a complex and challenging question for heads of mission, as we see today in Sudan, South Sudan and Mali.

In many of the operating environments for peacekeeping today, we face a second challenge relating to state-building and the execution of mandates to support the **restoration and extension of state authority**. Promoting inclusive governance, institutional development and service delivery are all essential prerequisites to longer term peacebuilding and sustainable development. However, when Government capacity is extremely weak, as we see in the Central African Republic, eastern DRC and elsewhere, we face considerable challenges in supporting the extension of legitimate, effective state presence beyond the capital to the regions.

Third, is our ability to **deploy the necessary capabilities rapidly**, wherever we are needed. When a crisis erupts, a race against time begins where we endeavour to deploy peacekeepers to protect civilians and stabilize a country before the situation escalates further. This becomes more and more important as we are mandated to deploy into situations where conflicts are ongoing, in which each day we are not on the ground is another day of violence, destruction and suffering. Today, the process of generating and deploying uniformed contingents normally takes six months. We need to shorten this timeframe significantly. In particular, we need specialized capabilities that are critical in the start-up phase of an operation, including enabling capacities like engineering, air transportation and medical support, as well as better ways to establish camps and deploy units across a country. We also need to pay more attention to how to increase numbers of uniformed women to give us an operational edge.

Fourth, we need to ensure that our peacekeeping missions possess the **capabilities** necessary to effectively implement their mandates and that mission personnel have the appropriate skill set to work in a specific context. If we expect our civilian, police and uniformed peacekeepers to undertake challenging assignments in risky areas, we have a responsibility to ensure they are equipped and trained to execute these tasks as safely as possible. Missions require tools to enhance their mobility across large areas of operations, and respond robustly to threats when they arise. We currently face considerable shortfalls in delivering the capabilities required in the field, particularly for enabling units such as helicopters. We also face considerable challenges in ensuring consistency in capacity, equipment and training across the units deployed in peacekeeping, particularly when UN peacekeeping missions take over from existing operations, as was the case in Mali and the Central African Republic. Increasing standardization across the uniformed components of peacekeeping operations is critical if missions are to fully utilize the capabilities DPKO identifies as necessary for the execution of the mission's mandate. I would also like to highlight the increasing importance of language skills for our troops. This is essential in order for our peacekeepers to understand the social dynamics in countries where we are deployed and to easily gather and analyse information.

The fifth and final challenge is **command and control**. Let me start by thanking our police and troop contributing countries and expressing my deep appreciation for our peacekeeping troops whose commitment continues to be the backbone of our missions. When a country deploys a contingent of its military or police personnel to a peacekeeping mission, they are placed under the operational command of the Force Commander or Police Commissioner and are required to follow his/or her orders exclusively, without reference to any other chain of command. In practice, however, we have seen that some contingents will retain an

operational link to their capitals and will refer to their national leadership prior to obeying, or disobeying, an order from the Force Commander or Police Commissioner. In other cases, troop and police contributing countries have pledged units to peacekeeping, but with conditions or caveats, including location of deployment, types of actions units will not take, and parallel rules of engagement.

Such disruptions to the chain of command in peacekeeping missions seriously hamper the capacity of the mission to use the force to its full capacity. Failures by units to respect the chain of command and to adequately implement the ROE have, on some occasions, led to **critical failures** of missions to protect civilians and on others have placed mission **personnel in considerable danger. This is unacceptable.** When a Force Commander or Police Commissioner issues an order, he or she must be fully confident that the order will be followed unequivocally, within the framework of core mission military or police documents, including the military or police concept of operations and the rules of engagement. **Adherence to the authority, command and control framework for peacekeeping operations is not, I stress, optional, nor is adherence to the full spectrum of possible actions a unit may be required to undertake.**

Priorities to improve performance

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

While some challenges we face relate to the capacity of UN peacekeeping to perform as an organization, others relate to the performance of individual contingents and units which, in turn, affects the performance of the organization. Looking ahead, again I see six priorities to enhance the performance of peacekeepers at both levels.

To strengthen the performance of peacekeeping at the organizational level, we must first strengthen our **political and capacity building roles** together with key partners. Indeed, it is the search for political solutions and the support to the building of effective and legitimate security institutions as well as the extension of state authority that will provide enduring protection, enable long-term stability and sustainable development. Where there is a very weak government presence and/or no political framework in place, we must focus our early efforts on assisting the parties to establish a basic roadmap for peace.

We must insist on a measure of political inclusivity in decision making, even in the early days of a post-conflict situation to establish a degree of legitimacy in the interim political structure, and build confidence among a divided population. And when there are political openings, we must be prepared with the required plans and expertise to assist in strengthening the rule of law, human rights protection, DDR, SSR, democratic processes, support to gender equality frameworks and core government functions to begin to progressively consolidate peace. We do this in close cooperation with UN Country Teams, and other key international partners.

A second priority is to **expand the base of major contributors** to peacekeeping while deepening the engagement of current contributors. Only in this way can peacekeeping retain its universal character and draw effectively upon the full array of capabilities across Member States. We also continue to encourage a wider gender dynamic from our contributors to include a higher percentage of women in deployments.

The third priority is to enhance and modernize the **capabilities** of our peacekeepers. The ability to operate safely in an environment of new threats, including asymmetric attacks will require improved training, planning, information gathering, analysis and intelligence tools, as well as our own duty of care for all our peacekeeping personnel. To this end, we recently released the Force Headquarters Handbook and undertook major steps with the training of military leadership, deputy force commanders and sector commanders. At the Headquarters level, DPKO has been working with Member States to develop a police doctrine and military unit manuals that clearly articulate the levels of capacity, equipment and training each type of unit is expected to possess. Where troop and police contributors face challenges in meeting these standards, we need to provide support to enhance their capacities.

Fourth, we must enhance the **management of performance** at all levels in our missions. We need to more systematically and transparently measure and monitor the performance of our personnel. For this reason, the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership, which is now fully operational, plays a critical role in identifying gaps that have an impact on the delivery of mandates by our missions. It undertakes reviews of the safety and security of uniformed personnel, the provision of welfare, the adequacy of support services and it assists in identifying lessons learned. Last year, reviews were conducted in UNAMID, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNMISS. I am pleased to announce that we are also in the process of finalizing an Operational Readiness Assurance Framework that will assist Force Commanders in measuring the state of readiness of all units under their command. **In situations where contingents fail to adhere to the chain of command of peacekeeping operations, we must be more vocal in identifying the costs of these incidents for the mission's effectiveness.**

Earlier this week, I travelled to Amsterdam for the first of the four regional conferences organised as a follow-up to the Peacekeeping Summit last September, co-chaired by the UN, the US, Bangladesh, Japan, Pakistan, Rwanda. These conferences, the rest of which will take place in Uruguay, Indonesia and Ethiopia, and the second Peacekeeping Summit expected to take place during the next general debate of the General Assembly, aim at generating increased Member State contributions of uniformed capabilities.

As a basis for engaging with Member States in these discussions, we, DPKO and DFS, have prepared a paper that describes in detail our capability requirements, which will be circulated to you today. As you will recall, we prepared and circulated to you a similar document last year, and today's paper will also be under review and revised, as our needs evolve.

The paper today presents our needs in three, all equally important, clusters: To start, it points to our needs in relation to current gaps in peacekeeping missions, including air assets, special forces units, signals companies, combat engineering and staff officers. The most urgent and significant gaps are in our two newest missions, MINUSMA and MINUSCA. The paper then makes reference to rapid deployment capabilities, namely commitments from TCCs to make certain capabilities (including enablers) available within a short period of time. We currently have a mechanism in place to register these kinds of commitments called UNSAS level 4 (the rapid deployment level). This registry is however currently empty. Finally, the paper also mentions a broad range of capabilities that are required for current and future missions as part of the regular deployment and rotation of personnel and contingents – and in particular capabilities that can make our operations more effective in responding to the changing threat environment in which we operate. We have looked at these kinds of capabilities in detail over the last few months, with the help of our

internal Uniformed Capabilities Steering Group. I hope that your capitals will use this paper as a tool for refining and expanding commitments to UN operations and for planning a longer-term approach to supporting UN peacekeeping.

Given the often inhospitable environments in which we work, the quality of **mission support** is a critical underpinning factor for the achievement of all of our priority tasks and to which Mr. Sanchez will speak. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations needs the flexibility to respond quickly when we are tasked by the Security Council and missions require the authority – with full accountability –to adjust mission postures and plans to unfolding events. **We need to update and reform our model of field support to match the scale, complexity and urgency of our demands on the ground.** Field support is an important topic being examined by the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and I look forward to its recommendations in this area.

Sixth, and to enhance the performance of peacekeeping at the operational level, we must look closely at the performance of T/PCCs with a focus on units. Let me reassure you that in raising this topic today, I see it as a joint endeavour, with shared responsibilities between DPKO/DFS and the T/PCCs. To start, and for each of us to play its part, we need to develop a common understanding of what performance consists of. The leadership of a unit, its conduct and discipline, the unit's flexibility to adapt as well as a good understanding of the operational environment are all elements that are part of the overall performance of a unit. We must jointly work on these performance indicators.

DPKO's Office of Military Affairs is in the process of developing a document on improving military performance in the field which aims to streamline the evaluation of units thereby help improve unit effectiveness in our mission. The current evaluation and accountability system as applied to TCCs in mission is equipment-driven and not performance driven. Training is a shared endeavour. The UN must provide good material while national and regional centres must deliver training. The Training Architecture Review which we are soon to complete will address ways to strengthen our collective impact. It is necessary that MoUs are strengthened to provide grounds for stricter standards of evaluation, and it is also important that we work to better understand the reasons behind poor performance and establish incentives to encourage better performance as well as penalties for non-performance.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, in addition, as an organization, we must learn from our mistakes and build on our achievements. Lessons drawn from our peacekeeping experiences must inform future operations. This, in turn, will provide better direction and streamline work processes. Organizational learning will increase the chance that successful approaches are replicated. As Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, I am committed to promoting a learning and knowledge sharing culture in our Organization. I am also convinced that we need to share more systematically and proactively our knowledge and standards with our critical partners and stakeholders. The new peacekeeping resources hub, a web-portal where Member States and training institutions access DPKO-DFS guidance and training is an example of this partnership.

Key Operational Developments

Since you have already received a detailed briefing on operational developments from ASG Mulet, I will now briefly highlight only a few key operational developments over the last

year, which I believe, illustrate our achievements as well as the increasingly complex challenges we face.

In the Central African Republic, DPKO and DFS worked closely with the African Union with the goal of transferring authority from the AU to the UN during the MINUSCA's start-up phase. MINUSCA is now a fully-fledged multidimensional peacekeeping operation, expected to reach its troop ceiling in April this year.

In Mali, our activities in MINUSMA have focused on implementing the Ouagadougou Agreement and supporting efforts to create a long lasting peace deal. The mission is also very much focused on activities related to the re-establishment of state authority, and has for example, supported the re-opening of more than 50 percent of courts and prisons in Northern Mali. Unfortunately as you are all aware, the mission has become a clear target of asymmetric attacks intended to handicap our operations. This notwithstanding, our peacekeepers continue to work arduously to strengthen the mission's posture and protection against these threats.

MONUSCO received a strengthened political and military mandate in 2013, including a reinforced good offices mandate to support the implementation of the DRC government's commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, and this led our operations in the DRC to shift to a greater focus on the eastern part of the country. Our approach in MONUSCO has yielded notable results and this was witnessed particularly with the success we saw last year with the M23. The mission has been actively supporting the efforts of the government to conclusively disarm the FDLR. A strategic review of MONUSCO as well as the United Nations presence in the DRC was completed last year and recommendations were provided to the Security Council.

During the summer of 2014, the situation in the Golan Heights rapidly deteriorated and this caused UNDOF to be temporarily relocated from Camp Faouar to the Alpha side. These developments have had a significant impact on UNDOF's capacity to observe, monitor, report and investigate incidents and violations. For the moment, UNDOF is using innovative measures including advanced technology in order to conduct its work in monitoring the Area of Separation despite its withdrawal.

The advent of the Ebola outbreak has led UNMIL to support the Government of Liberia and its partners in managing the unprecedented outbreak. The outbreak has been an additional and significant challenge to the mission. It led to the creation of UNMEER, which has been working collaboratively with UNMIL to address the crisis. All the while, UNMIL has had to place a hold on its drawdown of its military police components until it is no longer embroiled in a global health crisis.

For the majority of 2014, Haitian political developments were at an impasse. The lack of an agreement on the various aspects related to the holding of legislative and municipal elections led to a parliamentary vacuum and now Haiti is governed solely by the executive. That being said, the mission has had a number of achievements including its role in strengthening the Haitian National Police. MINUSTAH has also been fully engaged in its own consolidation and reduction of uniformed personnel.

Concluding Remarks

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates, peacekeeping's success hinges upon our collective will. To this end, the guidance provided by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations is of utmost importance. In addition to your guidance, it is imperative that we enhance triangular cooperation as well as cooperation with regional organizations. Concerted efforts from all parties and guidance from this committee will feed into our ability to maintain and increase performance of peacekeeping operations. The people we serve deserve our greatest efforts. I would like to conclude my remarks by paying tribute to the men and women who have paid the ultimate price in their efforts to bring peace and stability.

Thank you.