

Statement

Under-Secretary-General for Field Support

Susana Malcorra

Fourth Committee 22 October 2010

Agenda Item:

**Comprehensive review of the whole question of
peacekeeping operations in all their aspects**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

I too am honoured to come before the Fourth Committee today as it begins its consideration of this agenda item. This is the third time I have come before this Committee, and I do so in my capacity as Head of the Department of Field Support (DFS), which was created by the General Assembly four years ago.

INTRODUCTION

Since I last spoke to you, the Organization has unfortunately experienced several tragedies which serve as an ongoing reminder of the dangers and risks of peacekeeping. In October last year, an

attack on a United Nations guesthouse in Kabul, Afghanistan claimed the lives of five UN personnel. In January of this year, an earthquake in Haiti claimed the lives of over 200,000 Haitians and 101 United Nations civilians, military and police. Others have lost their lives in different Missions. In honour of their memories, I would join Alain in paying tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace.

Mr. Chairman,

During its short existence, DFS has made some progress towards the goal of managing field support as a global enterprise with a professional, structured and systematic approach that can adapt easily to a variety of operating environments. Our vision for this Department is for it to evolve from an administrative backstopping office into a strategic resource management organization focused on policy development and management oversight.

Internally, DFS has also been working closely with the Departments of Peacekeeping and Political Affairs. DFS has established a working relationship with DPA to ensure their missions receive the same quality of support. DFS has also been working closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) in initiatives such as the civilian capacities review.

We are also working with Department of Management streamlining and improving many key processes that impact the lives of our troops, police and staff in the field.

OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Mr. Chairman,

DFS operates in an extremely dynamic global environment and its support covers the full spectrum of United Nations Field Missions.

In **Sudan**, in addition to providing continued support to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the Department has contributed to increased logistical and technical support in anticipation of the referendum to be held on January 9th, 2011. For that task we are deploying more than 500 additional staff. We are establishing a presence at state and county level to mirror what the Referendum Commission will do. We are building bases in the deep field to accommodate electoral staff and police in support of the referendum. **Darfur** still remains a high priority to us but I'm glad to report that deployment has exceeded 85%.

The Department has been providing assistance in the **Ivory Coast** in anticipation of the first presidential elections to be held in that country since the outbreak of civil war in 2002. Our logistics has been the backbone of these elections, from distributing ballots to constructing polling centres. This same logistics have played a role in

Afghanistan. We are also starting to prepare for elections in the **DRC** which means supporting 32000 polling stations through out the country.

The tragic earthquake in **Haiti** represented not only a terrible loss for all of us. It also meant an urgent challenge for DFS: opening a 24-hour call center and, with the full support and cooperation of the Department of Management, identifying and repatriating the remains and providing assistance to the families of the ones who perished, evacuating 235 injured personnel, opening a back office in Santo Domingo to provide administrative support to the mission's recovery and reconstitution operations, and providing support to the government with warehouses and tents. All of this while bringing the so badly needed extra military and police units. Now we are providing support to the upcoming elections.

DFS has also assisted in the transition of two special political missions into integrated peace-building entities in the **Central African Republic** and **Guinea Bissau**. In **Burundi**, the special political mission that DFS supports is being downsized following the successful legislative elections of earlier this year.

Additionally, by the end of this calendar year, our operations in **Chad** will be closed down. For DFS, closing down a Mission is only the beginning of the critical liquidation work. For example, we have to repatriate the troops, undo the 2000 kilometers that separate Douala from Eastern Chad with all the COE and left over assets.

DFS continues to partner with the African Union in support of its operation in **Somalia**.

Our Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) has established a lifeline between Mogadishu and Mombassa. We have a continuous shuttle of vessels bringing critical medical supplies, rations, prefabricated buildings, field kitchens, ablution units and other elements to bring the AU troops to a standard of support equivalent to the United Nations. Operating in a highly challenging security environment, the Department is meeting the support requirements. We have had a team rotating in and out of Mogadishu to ensure appropriate delivery and oversight of these services.

THE GLOBAL FIELD SUPPORT STRATEGY

Mr. Chairman,

I want to thank you all for the endorsement of the Global Field Support Strategy. The Secretary-General's GFSS Proposal represents a response to the challenges faced by the Organization to improve the delivery of support components including logistical, administrative and information and communication technology to field missions. As you recall, I highlighted the objectives of the Global Field Support Strategy to the General Assembly during this past year. The Strategy is designed to expedite and improve support for peacekeeping, including critical early peacebuilding, and to expedite and improve support for peacemaking, electoral assistance, mediation support and conflict prevention, strengthening resource stewardship and accountability while achieving greater efficiencies

and economies of scale and improving the safety and living conditions of staff.

The Department of Field Support has also entered a phase of consolidation. We remain mindful that this coincides with the ongoing period of financial restraint. The global scarcity of resources highlighted last year only has become more acute. The GFSS should help us ensure that appropriations are used wisely while improving the quality of the support our Missions require. Efficiency should never be obtained at the risk of losing effectiveness. These principles lie at the heart of the Global Field Support Strategy.

The Department has been actively engaged with the Member States concerning this Strategy. We are grateful for the extensive participation of Member States in these discussions and the opportunity for consultations, as it allows the Department to keep Member States informed and obtain inputs to ongoing implementation.

Deployment Modules

We are proceeding on schedule with the development of *Phase One* of the **modularization** project. Effective modularization will support greater predictability of support readiness, costs, risks, quality, skills, deliverables and meeting of programme objectives. A first informal workshop was conducted with your C-34 representatives on 8 and 9 July of this past year. By all accounts, the workshop was a success

and the workshop findings have been incorporated into our project plans and guidelines. A second informal workshop with your representatives will be conducted on 12 November. The focus of this engagement will be on the operational and technical aspects of establishing camps in the field, including the deployment of enabling capacities with the physical materiel. We recommend that representation from Member States include subject matter experts on the operational and technical aspects of camp design and deployment. We intend to conduct a third C-34 workshop in UNLB in the spring of 2011. We also intend to have a separate workshop in UNLB in the spring of 2011 with experts from the field.

Regional Service Centre

Since the approval of the Global Field Support Strategy as of 1 July 2010, the Regional Service Centre was established to consolidate routine back office administrative and support functions (in the areas of personnel administration, finance, ICT and regional training) from geographically grouped field missions, into a centre whose goal is to deliver services to those missions efficiently and effectively. This consolidation is currently in progress and being linked to the political and operational priorities of the peacekeeping missions in the region. The transfer of back-office administrative functions from the missions to the Regional Service Centres will enable the realization of economies of scale as a result of consolidating selected functions into a shared facility.

In the meantime we are also working to strengthen our Brindisi Base broadening its range of services. As a side note, we have started the installation of equipment in Valencia to establish the back-up centre, as the new construction is approaching its end.

Financial Framework

Work on the Standard Resourcing Model continues to progress in conjunction with efforts undertaken on modularization. This Resourcing Model will introduce a simplified financial procedure to allow an increase in working capital. It is expected to be completed and submitted for legislative review as part of the second resumed session of the 65th session.

Human Resources Framework

Mr. Chairman,

In terms of human resources management, the Department has focused on immediacy of response through a deliberate approach for securing external capacities and building internal capacities.

As we have informed the you, our approach is fully aligned with the Secretary-General's human resources management reform initiatives and informed by the unique characteristics of service in field operations which are often in remote locations under increasingly

insecure conditions. It is therefore imperative that conditions of service provide an incentive for prospective civilian peacekeepers join our most arduous, challenging field missions. The General Assembly has begun its review of the Secretary-General's proposals which acknowledge and address the gaps in the compensation framework by providing incentives for seeking assignments to non-family missions where staff members, in particular a single mothers, cannot take their families. I urge your careful consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals in this regard, which we will feel will redress this challenge effectively.

I also am pleased to inform that we have made improvements in the rate at which we have processed claims for death and disability incurred by the Member-States who have contributed troops and police to the UN's field operations. There remain several cases which we are working on diligently to resolve. They teach us that there remains much that can and must be done, working together with the troop and police contributors, to ensure that such claims are resolved promptly and to the satisfaction on all parties.

October 2010 marks 10 years since the Security Council adopted its resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. While great strides have been made, we still have a significant amount of work to meet the goals of this resolution. I regret that gender balance among civilian personnel still remains out of reach. The Department will therefore make further efforts to increase representation of female staff including introduction of flexible working arrangements and improvements in the quality of the accommodations in field missions.

The state of conduct and discipline of peacekeeping personnel remains an area of concern and I have, during the past year, continued to maintain a close dialogue with representatives of Troop and Police Contributing Countries to ensure that allegations of misconduct are addressed in time and in accordance with the provisions outlined in the revised draft Model Memorandum of Understanding approved a little over three years ago. While allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse appear to have decreased this year by comparison with last year, it is disheartening to observe that allegations relating to the most serious types of offenses such as rape or sexual relationships with minors remain high as compared to the total number of allegations received. In order to enhance transparency in our reporting to member states and the media, the Department has launched since the end of November last year a new conduct and discipline website which provides, on a quarterly basis, critical data on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Starting last week, an interactive tool has been introduced to view these statistics in a dynamic fashion

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ACCOUNTABILITY

As a Department, we remain accountable to you, the Member-States, for the quality of our results and their cost-effectiveness. The introduction of Senior Manager Compacts for all Heads of Mission during this past year and the further delegation of human resources management authority to head of missions manifests this collective acknowledgement and demonstrates our continuing commitment to align accountability with responsibility and authority. We recognize that much remains to be done in this area and we therefore are working with the Department of Management to ensure that the authority that is delegated to managers in the field missions in all areas of resource management is commensurate with their responsibilities and accountability.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as I have said to you in the past, balancing our short term demands with a more strategic approach is a difficult exercise.

The Global Field Support Strategy represents a fundamental transformation of how the Department delivers its services. In

addition to reviewing our work processes, changing organizational culture and methods of work require time and concerted effort. Mindsets have to change; new ways of working together – particularly in an integrated way – need to become more entrenched and strengthened. The Department must give equal importance to ensuring effective oversight and responsible stewardship during the full life span of a mission. It also demands close collaboration between the General Assembly and the different elements of the UN Secretariat in the field and at Headquarters. We must do so in a manner that retains the close links with TCC's and PCC's and enhances our communications.

The tragic events of the past twelve months in which we lost valued colleagues due to malicious acts and natural disasters also highlights the need for us to improve our systemic capacity to identify and mitigate risks even as we strive to improve the efficiency of our operations.

The current phase of consolidation therefore presents an important opportunity to transform our service delivery model to meet today's challenges in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and safety.

Along with the entire Department, I remain committed to delivering the best support that we can to our field operations and the peoples we collectively serve. We can only achieve this goal by getting the right staff on board, securing sufficient financing and providing the

necessary equipment and logistics services to the field in the most efficient way possible.

Thank you.