

Under-Secretary-General for Field Support Atul Khare
Statement to the 4th Committee
30 October 2015

As delivered

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee, for the first time since I assumed the position of Under-Secretary-General of Field Support eight months ago.

As Hervé [Ladsous] has mentioned, this has been an extraordinary year for United Nations peacekeeping. A year of considerable challenges, but also of great opportunities.

The Department of Field Support (DFS) has been set up to help our operations succeed. It supports 36 peacekeeping, special political and other missions in 30 countries, encompassing 169,000 personnel, employing 15,200 support staff, and is accountable for the stewardship of \$9 billion in annual resources. This includes UNSOA [United Nations Support Office for AMISOM], which my Department leads and which provides support to the largest United Nations-mandated, African Union-led, peace operation to date.

In their day-to-day work, DFS staff handle some of the most complex, diverse and challenging administrative, logistical and operational problems faced by any organization, country, or military. Sixty percent of the people they serve are based in hard-to-reach areas. Forty-two percent are in areas categorized as highly insecure.

The most basic tasks, such as the delivery of fuel or the provision of water and sanitation, often pose enormous logistical challenges and, too often, enormous risk. I have witnessed these conditions first-hand in Somalia and Mali. They are part of the daily reality of many of our missions.

I pay tribute to the courage, dedication, and sacrifice of my colleagues in the field, including the international and national contractors, and to the commitment of those who support them here at headquarters.

These are the staff who used the Global Field Support Strategy to drive the reforms that made field support leaner, faster and more integrated. I appreciate the recognition received for these efforts from the Member States and the C34 [Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations].

But my staff and I recognize that even more efforts are required.

One of the key recommendations of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations is the establishment of more field-focused operations, reflecting the intense interest in field support expressed by Member States and other stakeholders. To that end, we are working with the Department of Management to identify more agile, flexible measures that would be better suited to the imperatives of our work in emergency situations or during mission start-up. We will also work with Member States to reform policies and procedures in order to make our units more

mobile and responsive on the ground, such as by updating standards of accommodation to reflect newly available technologies.

Making field support better

I believe there are five crucial stepping-stones to achieving effective, agile, responsible field support.

First, we need to work better together, both inside the UN and with our partners. Internally, we need to ensure coherence of mission planning and deployment across the uniformed, substantive and support components. DPKO [Department of Peacekeeping Operations] and DFS have already made significant strides in this regard: by conducting joint mission planning, issuing joint mission concepts and concepts of operations, and by holding joint meetings with TCCs [Troop Contributing Countries] and PCCs [Police Contributing Countries]. We have continued advancing a range of joint reform efforts, many of which were noted in the High-Level Panel's recommendations, by establishing client boards which include representation from DPKO, DPA [Department of Political Affairs] and field uniformed and civilian personnel.

With our partners, we need to cooperate more effectively in support of better peace operations. The recent Leaders' Summit on Peace Operations was a remarkable example of Member States and the Secretariat coming together to address operational challenges facing peacekeeping operations with common resolve. We need to see that same resolve in the sharing of responsibilities across all peacekeeping partners, in the enhancement of performance, and in updating the COE [Contingent Owned Equipment] manual to enable more effective, efficient and safe mandate implementation, including through innovations such as new provisions for medical and casualty evacuation and new technologies, including greater use of renewable energy.

Second, we need to focus on performance. In line with the High-Level Panel's recommendation, we are strengthening the accountability of our managers, refocusing management fora on performance and KPIs [Key Performance Indicators], and investing in analytical capacity to support better decisions. And we are sending a strong message to all our staff that we must be able to account for our performance to you, the Member States.

Third, we need to align authority, responsibility and resources to enable the effective delivery of results on the ground. We must collectively ensure that the UN's administrative structures are fit for purpose for 21st century threat environments, dynamic operating tempos, and complex mandates. The High-Level Panel called on us to design support structures that meet the needs of the field and to amend policies and procedures accordingly. Inside field support we have begun this work by realigning our structures both in field missions and at headquarters. Our field personnel and finance and budget divisions have completed their reorganization and the reorganization of logistics support has been launched with a phased approach.

Fourth, we need to build stronger partnerships, both within the UN system and outside. We are working hard to encourage triangular partnerships that help build the capacities of our troop and police contributing countries. Two recent examples of these efforts are the joint initiative with Japan to train and equip engineering units of African troop contributors, and our work on specialist support packages. We are also finding alternative ways to generate support capacities by engaging more creatively with Member States. In this regard we have entered into an acquisition and cross servicing agreement with the United States to allow our field missions to

access material and logistics services that the US provides to its military personnel and partners. And we have entered into a new rapid deployment support arrangement with the German state organization THW [German Federal Agency for Technical Relief].

Fifth, we must pursue immediate support priorities so that we can deliver much need improvements in our processes on the ground without delay. These include supply chain management, promoting conduct and discipline, reducing our environmental footprint, and implementing corporate reforms like Umoja and the Global Service Delivery Model.

Highlight priorities

Across all these areas of work, I would like to highlight some key crosscutting priorities that will inform our efforts.

First is technology. We need to leverage the full potential of technology to enhance the effectiveness of our missions and the safety of our peacekeepers. We can use technology to enhance situational awareness, strengthen security and improve force protection measures. DPKO and DFS are implementing a strategy to enhance technology and innovation across peacekeeping. This means using new tools, but also reviewing and adjusting our organizational structures and processes. I plan to revert to Member States on the internal reorganization of ICTD [Information Communication Technology Division] to better reflect these priorities.

Another key cross-cutting priority is our collective responsibility to implement our mandates responsibly, demonstrating zero-tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and other abuses. We must maintain unwavering focus on ensuring that UN personnel and non-UN security forces supported by the UN, meet the highest standards of integrity, conduct, and commitment to human rights. When troops affix the UN logo to their uniforms, they become part of a 60-year global campaign that is about sacrifice for the greater good. As Hervé [Ladsous] described, a great many peacekeepers made the ultimate sacrifice this year and I pay tribute to them. When blue helmets, or troops supported by the UN, violate the fundamental human rights of others, they defile the precious legitimacy that is critical to the UN's effectiveness and for which their comrades laid down their lives.

In the past two years, we have introduced policies that set clear and non-negotiable thresholds for personal conduct for those who work in the UN and those supported by the UN. We will need engagement from Governments, especially those of troop and police contributing countries, to implement and strengthen these policies and to fully discharge our responsibility towards victims and local communities. To that end, the Secretariat is making all efforts to implement the program of action outlined in the Secretary-General's most recent report on special measures for protection against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 69/307.

Finally, we must also reduce the environmental footprint of our field missions, both for better promotion and protection of the environment, but also to reduce the security risks to our personnel, military, police and civilians alike. We have made a number of important strides in recent months, including by promoting non-renewable sources of energy and using better waste management and sustainable solutions to reduce, recover, recycle, and reuse resources.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by reiterating that we must build a model for field support that is able to deliver the rapid, effective, efficient and responsible solutions that our stakeholders expect. And we must build an organisation that is able to do so, not once, but in a consistent, reliable and sustainable manner.

I seek your support in this venture.

Thank you.