



**Statement of Ameerah Haq  
UN Under-Secretary-General for Field Support**

**Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference  
9 September  
Auckland**

Major General Gawn, General Odierno, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here in Auckland with you at the Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference. I would like to express my appreciation to New Zealand and the United States for organizing this important event. I am particularly honored to deliver the keynote address at today's opening ceremony, which gives me an opportunity to extend, on behalf of the Secretary-General, sincere gratitude for your Governments' contributions to UN peacekeeping.

I would also like to commend you on your choice of topic for this year's Conference. Your discussions on unity of effort in support of peacekeeping, the challenges faced by land forces deployed to peacekeeping operations, and duty of care all hit at the heart of ongoing discourse on enhancing multilateral engagement in the promotion of peace and security.

In my remarks to you today, I will describe some of the trends that have defined UN peacekeeping in recent years; I will conclude with a few specific areas where I anticipate change in how we do business. In articulating my views to you, I will draw on my experience as Under-Secretary-General for Field Support as well as the time I have spent in peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan, Sudan and, most recently, as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Timor-Leste.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Peacekeeping is among the most visible, challenging and important of the many roles played by the United Nations. The UN Charter asserts that the principle purpose of the UN is "to maintain peace and security, and to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace." The Charter's preamble begins with the lofty aspiration, "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war..."

The first UN peacekeeping mission was established in 1948 with a mandate to observe the implementation of armistice agreements between Israel and four of its neighbors.

Today, “blue helmets” are involved in the stabilization of post-conflict situations, the protection of civilians, support to national elections, and the conduct of targeted offensive operations against armed groups, among other tasks.

In Mali, the UN confronts extremist groups who blend in easily with the local communities of the North. In Haiti, peacekeepers support the country’s resurgence from protracted political and communal violence and successive natural disasters. In DRC, perhaps the most robust mandate in UN history allows UN forces to “neutralize” armed groups. In Somalia, the UN provides logistics and sustainment support to troops of the African Union, a new model in our relationship with regional organizations.

It was not always like this. The early years of UN peacekeeping were characterized by a predominance of observer troops who supervised the implementation of peace agreements; their mere presence was a powerful deterrent to breaches of the peace. Today, the threat we face is less visible, more insidious, and closer, at least in geographic proximity, to civilian communities. UN peacekeeping mandates today are increasingly focused on containing armed groups that bear no loyalty to any official military or sovereign political power. Groups like the Yau Yau group, an armed militia of the Murle tribe in South Sudan are more representative of the military units that cause instability today. The M23, active in the Eastern DRC, is another “unconventional” force that is increasingly the rule rather than the exception.

### ***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

A few weeks ago, suicide bombers affiliated with the Al-Shabab group in Somalia entered the UN complex in Mogadishu, and self-detonated, killing various of our national and international personnel. In 2009, Taliban militants stormed an international guest house in Kabul, killing 12 people including 6 UN personnel. Last April, in South Sudan, an Indian contingent in Jonglei state was deliberately targeted – and five troops ended up losing their lives.

Incidents such as these highlight a modern-day reality faced by UN peacekeepers. It is not only that we are dealing increasingly with non-traditional forces. 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.

In 2003, Sergio Vieira de Mello, the then-SRSG in Iraq, and nearly two dozen members of his team, were killed when a truck bomb rolled into a relatively unprotected compound; on that day, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003, UN peacekeeping entered the modern era. Thereafter, armed militants could – and would - actively seek to harm UN troops and civilians, something that would have been taboo, unthinkable, and supremely counter to their political interests until then.

The implications for UN peacekeeping ever since have been profound. With the collapse of the Canal Hotel, so did the UN’s sense of security effectively disintegrate overnight. The UN has been in a state of alert ever since – with troops – many of your troops - devoting more time and energy to protecting UN personnel and property. An age of innocence, of sorts, has passed, and with it, our ability to stand above the fray.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Across the fifteen peacekeeping operations currently managed by the UN, 116 nations contribute approximately 91,000 troops and police to this collective effort. The total cost of UN peacekeeping today is just under \$8 billion annually. The main cost component of this total – 37 percent at last count - is paid directly to Governments for their contribution of military and police. A further 8 percent is for rations and rotation movements for uniformed personnel.

While the overall budget of UN peacekeeping is at an all-time high, the actual per capita cost of established missions has actually decreased by 8% in real terms compared to 2008/9. New missions such as those in Mali ratchet up the overall budget, but established missions have for some time been engaged in a persistent and largely successful campaign to reduce costs.

Herein defines another key attribute of modern-day peacekeeping – the ever-present search for efficiency gains. Faster, better, safer peacekeeping, yes – but also, less costly and more efficient. How to increase cost-effectiveness without any adverse impact on mandate implementation is a difficult balancing act. The mantra of the day is to “do more with less”.

My department, the Department of Field Support, has sought in several ways to achieve “win-win” outcomes where greater impact and lower cost can be achieved in tandem. One approach is to introduce what we call shared services. Rather than each peacekeeping mission having its own back office to handle procurement, human resources, and financial matters, we can consolidate these functions in regional service centers, where a critical mass of skilled personnel provides services to multiple missions. We have located our information technology equipment and logistics support at these regional centers. Many of you are familiar with our regional service center in Entebbe, Uganda, and our main logistics base in Brindisi, Italy.

Building on the same concept of shared services, we are improving the efficiency of UN peacekeeping through inter-mission cooperation. Last year, in Syria, the UN did something that it had never done before. It set up a fully functioning mission - the UN Supervision Mission in Syria, or UNSMIS - within one month of the adoption of the Security Council resolution that mandated it. The start-up of UNSMIS was telling in several ways. First, the speed with which it was set-up was attainable only because of a high degree of inter-mission cooperation. UNIFIL, UNDOF, UNTSO and UNFICYP – all established missions in the neighborhood - worked together and resolved many of the challenges by digging deep within their limited reserves and deploying assets in support of the new operation. This included the provision of equipment and supplies, telecommunications, and the administration of personnel. Our base in Brindisi provided critical support that allowed our civilians – and your military observers – to hit the ground running.

More recently, in Mali, we have introduced several innovations to expedite the start up of the mission there. Most of our back-office functions for MINUSMA have been provided by staff in our mission in nearby Ivory Coast. The two missions – ONUCI, our mission in the Ivory Coast, and MINUSMA in Mali - are effectively “tied at the hips”. Our troops in Mali receive rations and fuel through pre-existing contracts for ONUCI personnel in Ivory Coast. Our procurement team in Abidjan has done the groundwork so our troops in Mali have the premises and the resources they need in places like Timbuktu. This has saved precious time. We have streamlined the process for the recruitment of civilian staff in Mali: the mission has an unusual degree of delegated authority to hire in the speediest manner possible.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

In my statement to you this morning, I have highlighted two broad trends in UN peacekeeping. I have talked about the diversity in UN peacekeeping activities and mandates. And I have described some of our efforts to enhance cost-effectiveness. What I would like to do in the remainder of my statement is to address several specific opportunities to grow peacekeeping further, so to speak. Just as a parent raises a child, with care and sometimes a little “tough love,” so too must we look with objectivity at where UN peacekeeping *needs* to do better, where it *can* do better, and how to create the incentives that guide our system to the desired end-state.

I would like to touch on four areas where we are grappling with new ways of doing business:

1. the use of technology to improve our conduct of operations and the safety of peacekeepers;
2. the environmental impact of our operations;
3. the criticality of aviation assets in support of our land operations; and,
4. new dilemmas around the use of force

Earlier in my statement, I spoke about the blurred lines between combatant and civilian in many of the countries where UN peacekeepers are deployed and where UN peacekeepers themselves are targets. In this regard, modern technology holds much promise in allowing UN peacekeepers to protect civilians as well as themselves. Unmanned Aerial Systems, for example, have the potential to improve surveillance and situational awareness, and enhance information gathering. Last June, seven peacekeepers from Niger were ambushed and killed in southwest Ivory Coast, a tragedy that we believe could have been mitigated or even avoided if we had better visibility from above. We have recently concluded the process of procuring an Unmanned Aerial System for use in UN peacekeeping. In the coming year, we will roll out the technology in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the invitation of the Government there.

Innovative technologies are also urgently needed to minimize the environmental impact of UN peacekeeping operations. For too long, we have not attached enough importance to minimizing our environmental footprint. Today, technologies are such that we can improve our environmental footprint while also reducing cost. For example, 15% of the energy requirement of our mission in south Lebanon is now produced by solar power.

The convergence of interests in peacekeeping on the one hand and environmental sustainability on the other will continue – mainly because of global warming. Many of the conflicts that our respective forces are involved in today find some of their origins in the age-old struggle for basic resources: land, water, minerals. This struggle will only intensify in the coming decades due to increased desertification, rising sea levels, and the easy availability of small arms. It behooves all of us to better understand, and prepare for, the rise of resource-based conflict in the years ahead.

With regard to military assets, experience makes clear that the availability of air assets can make or break a mission. In places like Mali and South Sudan, characterized by vast distances and limited infrastructure, a huge proportion of goods and services must be transported by air. In such scenarios, the combination of limited air assets and a shortage of engineering teams to build or maintain runways can seriously impede our efforts. In addition, aviation assets that can provide timely CASEVAC and MEDEVAC services, and support land operations through mobility, observation and close air support are in short supply. We have been told that next year, with the international community winding down in Afghanistan, more air assets will become available; to those of you in the audience with any say in the matter, let me take this opportunity to state unequivocally that UN peacekeeping would benefit immensely from even a small portion of these assets.

No discussion on new challenges in UN peacekeeping would be complete without some mention of the Force Intervention Brigade that we have deployed in the Eastern DRC. The Security Council has authorized the mission there to confront armed groups with a robust mandate and rules of engagement. A “Force Intervention Brigade” was established in response to repeated incursions into and around the town of Goma in Eastern DRC. Let there be no mistake: giving UN peacekeepers the ability to “neutralize” and disarm others is different from past practice. The explicit task of conducting “targeted offensive operations” is new. This new mandate represents an important point of inflection which brings with it conceptual, operational and indeed doctrinal questions that we are working through with our Member States and on the field. For example, the potential impact of collateral damage and the need for actively managed “hearts and minds” campaigns bring political as well as operational challenges for us to navigate with our partners. We need to carefully work with humanitarian actors to ensure humanitarian access is not denied as a result of the UN mission’s new role. Efforts to make progress on the political front must remain paramount through all of this – the Great Lakes Special Envoy Mary Robinson has an important role to play in catalyzing action in implementing the Framework Agreement that countries in the region have committed to.

These considerations bring me to another concern, namely how to ensure 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 your troops place the UN logo on their uniforms, they become part of a 60-year global campaign that is all about sacrifice for the greater good. When blue helmets, or troops supported by the UN, violate the fundamental human rights of others, when they sexually exploit minors or vulnerable women, when they break international humanitarian law or if they have a record of doing so in the past, they undermine the precious legitimacy that is so critical to the UN’s

effectiveness. 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 family and those supported by the UN. We will need to implement these policies with engagement from Governments and military leaders such as yourselves.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The UN political mission in Afghanistan, known as UNAMA, last month reported that the number of Afghan civilians killed or injured in the first half of 2013 rose by 23 per cent compared to the same period last year. In Syria, as you know, more than 100,000 people have been killed since the conflict erupted two years ago, with nearly two million more displaced. Roughly 2 million civilians were killed, and four million displaced, during the second Sudanese civil war from 1983-2005. In DRC, nearly 3.5 million have died because of the conflicts there, many due to disease and starvation.

These figures remind us once again of a critical trend that underpins all of the issues on the agenda of this Conference: today, more so than ever before, civilians are being intentionally targeted by established militaries and armed militias alike. This reality requires that we move aggressively in identifying solutions that place civilian protection at the heart of approaches to collective security.

As Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, I look forward to working with you as we steer the course of peacekeeping's evolution into the unknown, towards hoped-for outcomes, towards greater appreciation of the plight of today's, and tomorrow's, civilians. At the end of the day, it is for their safety and welfare that we are meeting. The challenges, the opportunities, the aspirations that I have conveyed to you today derive from the shared goal of making the world a place that is characterized by the rule of law and the absence of tyranny.

We believe the collective security arrangements of the UN – including UN peacekeeping – provide a sustainable, effective and efficient tool for managing conflict in the future. We welcome your engagement in UN peacekeeping and we encourage your greater involvement. Today, UN peacekeeping is the only operational entity that can bring together and collectively deploy the diverse national capabilities that are represented today. When this partnership is provided with the necessary resources to deliver in the field, when it is empowered by its Member States to be flexible and responsive, and when it is energized by the political will to respond quickly, UN peace operations have proven to be a powerful resource for conflict management.

I wish you the best in your discussions this week.

Thank you.