

Civilian capacities: statement to Fifth Committee, 7 December 2012
10:00, Conference Room 3, NLB

I thank the Committee for giving me this opportunity to introduce the Secretary-General's report on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict. I also thank the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for their report, which drew attention to several issues I shall address today. The Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet has asked me to express her regret that other obligations have prevented her attending in person to address this Committee.

Let me first recall the origin and the scope of the Civilian Capacities initiative. The Secretary-General, in his 2009 report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, called for a review of how to "broaden and deepen the pool of civilian experts to support the immediate capacity development needs of countries emerging from conflict." He appointed a Senior Advisory Group on Civilian Capacity, led by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, to carry out that review.

The Senior Advisory Group underlined that civilian capacities are a crucial part of peacebuilding and a critical complement to the political and military components of peacekeeping missions, because "without this capacity, resilient institutions will not take root and the risk of renewed violence will remain". The Group identified five critical capacity gap areas: safety and security, justice, inclusive political processes, core government functionality and economic revitalisation.

The present report responds to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 66/255, which took note of the Secretary General's 2011 Report on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict and encouraged the United Nations "to broaden and deepen the pool of civilian expertise for peacebuilding.... including from countries with relevant experience in post-conflict peacebuilding or democratic transition."

The present and previous reports have outlined why this issue has such practical importance for countries facing post-conflict and post-crisis transition today. Member States have emphasised in the General Assembly, Peacebuilding Commission, Economic and Social Council and Security Council the central importance of national ownership and national capacity-building for sustainable peace. A comprehensive body of research supports this point, showing that the strength, inclusion and accountability of national institutions is the single greatest predictor of whether post-crisis transitions are successful in avoiding recurring conflict and achieving inclusive development.

Building the national institutional capacity to provide inclusive political participation, security, justice and economic and social opportunities is often an immediate and urgent challenge for countries seeking to consolidate peace on the ground, from Liberia, South Sudan, Cote D'Ivoire and Timor Leste, to more recent transitions such as Libya, Myanmar, Somalia or Yemen. The Secretary General's report outlines that there is no one-size-fits-all model of institutional design, and institutional models cannot be imposed from outside – but that post-crisis situations frequently do need well-timed and sustained assistance to complete these difficult transition processes. Countries are rightly insisting that this assistance be aligned with their national

priorities, and include exchanges with other countries who have similar experience, often from the Global South.

This is a challenge where the UN is well placed to play a strong role. The UN has a range of instruments – political and peacekeeping missions, humanitarian, human rights and development assistance – to support nationally-owned institution-building. Its long-standing global experience positions it well to facilitate exchanges of experience between Member States. Yet the UN has not always realised its full potential in this regard: the system does not always act as “one UN”, and does not always assemble the right skills and coherent financial support to meet national institution-building requirements in a timely and effective way.

In this regard the UN is not alone – the same analysis is often applied to much other multilateral and bilateral assistance. And while important, the UN is not the only actor on the ground. Regional institutions, the IFIs and bilateral donors also play an important role. The African Union and the League of Arab States, for example, are launching their own work in this area, and have proposed to work in close partnership with the UN.

Vision

The vision and governance arrangements of the Civilian Capacities initiative – to which the ACABQ drew attention in its recent report - reflect this central challenge for the UN system and the international community at large.

The overall vision of the initiative is to equip the UN to respond better to national institution-building requirements in the aftermath of conflict or crisis. Its scope covers:

- the five key gap areas identified by the Senior Advisory Group and presented in the first Report of the Secretary-General: safety and security, justice, inclusive political processes, core government functionality and economic revitalisation.
- the actions of UN Secretariat departments, agencies, funds and programmes within these areas in post-conflict and post-crisis situations;
- partnerships for expertise from post-conflict, post-crisis and democratic transitions, as defined in General Assembly resolution 66/255.

The benchmarks towards which the initiative is working include transparent guidance on responsibilities and accountabilities for UN global focal points in each of the five gap areas; a working platform for partnerships with Member States to provide expertise and assistance within these areas; and improved tools for the UN system to access this expertise. Because building national institutions is a generational endeavour, the initiative has not set benchmarks measuring institutional outcomes in all post-conflict or post-crisis countries. In order, however, to make sure that actions at Headquarters are linked to country-level results, it has set a target of 4-5 country level examples this year of support to national ownership and innovative partnerships.

These benchmarks have an element of piloting efforts before scaling them up. Hence the measures for financial and managerial agility first take account of ways to strengthen responsiveness to national institution-building requests within the existing regulatory framework before considering any more significant changes to policy or

procedures; the approach to CAPMATCH is to work with Member States to pilot-test participation and results from the system before making proposals for its eventual application, location and resourcing.

Governance arrangements

The governance arrangements reflect the cross-cutting nature of civilian capacities. Support to post-crisis institution-building is in many cases part of both Security Council mandates and mandates of agencies, funds and programmes. This is one reason why the UN has devoted such efforts to strengthening integrated missions and “one UN” approaches. The Civcap Steering Committee is designed to reflect this cross-cutting nature.

Second, because civcap is a cross-cutting initiative, the work of the Steering Committee and the Secretary-General’s report cover a number of individual reforms to be proposed for consideration by the General Assembly, such as the Field Service and Procurement reviews. These are described here because they impact on the effectiveness of civilian capacity support, but they remain under the leadership of their respective departments. This approach aims to increase organisational coherence and avoid duplication.

Let me now turn to the specific Civcap workstreams covered in the Secretary-General’s report.

National Ownership

National ownership is at the heart of the civilian capacities initiative, which is addressing questions of guidance at Headquarters, as well as practical work at a country level. The first part of this is work with UN missions and country teams to support strong national prioritisation processes in contexts such as Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, Libya and Timor Leste. This has raised important issues about the phasing of UN planning to support national processes of decision-making. These in turn are being reflected in amendments to the Integrated Mission Planning Process. Country level engagement has also highlighted a number of ways in which the UN system can be more adaptive to local contexts, draw on South-South exchanges and coordinate capacity-building initiatives more strongly across the UN system; these lessons are being drawn together into principles and guidelines by an inter-agency working group led by UNDP. Last, the Field Service Review will examine the feasibility of nationalising Field Service posts: associated training and mentoring would be expected to contribute to national capacity-building in the longer term.

Partnerships for expertise

As directed by resolution 66/255, we are working to develop broader and deeper networks of capacity providers. One practical tool is the online platform, CAPMATCH, where participants can post requests or available capacities. Outreach to Member States in the Global South has been a particular priority of the pilot phase of CAPMATCH launched in September, and over half of the government

organisations registered are from the Global South. The platform is a way not only to deepen the identification of needed capacities and expertise, but also to broaden and diversify the thinking on lessons of successful institution-building for conflict prevention and recovery, by supporting Member States in documenting their relevant experiences.

CAPMATCH is not a recruitment site or a roster of experts, nor does it affect established UN staffing procedures. Rather, it is an informational tool to increase outreach to Member States and other organizations about capacities that are available and required. CAPMATCH contains vetting mechanisms to ensure that government entities participating are bona fide, and to exercise the same due diligence over non-governmental participation as does the ECOSOC affiliation process. The system also includes provision for feedback from receiving governmental authorities, respecting the principle of national ownership and the idea that those requesting assistance are best able to judge its effectiveness. While CAPMATCH registration is by organisation rather than individual, we will welcome views from Member States on ways in which participating entities may strengthen quality assurance of capacities provided.

The design of the CAPMATCH platform aims to support national ownership, by enabling direct input of priorities from national governments as well as through UN missions or country teams. The coverage of capacities in national planning and aid coordination in CAPMATCH is also specifically designed to support national ownership, by providing governments, at their request, with additional capacities to coordinate aid and ensure that it is aligned with national priorities.

In relation to efforts to strengthen accountability within the UN system for provision of support, the Secretary General's report describes the designation of DPKO and UNDP as joint Global Focal Point for the police, justice and corrections areas in the rule of law in post-conflict and other crisis situations. The Civcap initiative will also be reviewing other areas of capacity deficit with the relevant parts of the UN system and external partners over the coming year.

Financial and managerial agility

As noted in the Secretary-General's report, responding effectively to nationally-defined needs requires the UN to be agile and adaptable. We think there is room within the current regulatory framework to improve nimbleness, while ensuring the necessary transparency and accountability for decisions made in the field.

Resource management in field operations needs to be able to adapt to changing requirements, including evolving national requirements, as policies and priorities take shape in post-conflict settings. The initial mission design and budget are prepared in fluid circumstances when knowledge of local requirements and capacities is limited.

One aspect of the approach is to ensure through briefing and training that senior mission leaders are fully aware of the authority and procedures for resource management in the field, including redeployment.

In terms of redeploying resources, the Senior Advisory Group had recommended that heads of mission be authorized to shift 20 per cent of the provision for civilian personnel to other kinds of capacity. We decided not to accept that recommendation. Instead, the Secretary-General's present report emphasizes that missions can and should make changes in the type and composition of civilian capacity, when required, by applying the procedures that already exist for making changes.

The second main theme relates to accessing and deploying appropriate expertise. Staff deployment through the staff selection system is clearly, and will remain, the main means of equipping missions with civilian expertise. Measures to broaden the pool of relevant expertise and deploy it more effectively include:

- an emergency staff deployment facility which would consist of a pool of pre-cleared and pre-trained experts. A proposal for the establishment of this facility will be presented to the General Assembly at a later date, prepared under the leadership of OHRM.
- the online platform CAPMATCH, described earlier;
- accessing the experience of Member States through the instrument of government provided personnel with the legal status of expert on mission. This tool is already used in areas that fall within the particular competence of government, such as police, military advisers, corrections personnel and judicial advisers. The request of the General Assembly in resolution 66/264 for greater clarity in resource proposals and the criteria for deploying government provided personnel with the legal status of expert on mission will be addressed in the forthcoming peacekeeping overview report. The main factor in applying GPP more widely would be to meet needs for specialized functions that are found primarily within government departments and agencies, or for expertise that is unique to a region, or is required for a niche function, or is not readily available in the United Nations or is not required in the Secretariat on an ongoing basis.
- The wider use of GPP when needed reflects a focus on securing contextually relevant expertise, which in many cases is found in the Global South. Experience to date supports that view: of the approximately 405 GPP civilian experts on mission (beyond the police) now deployed, over 80 per cent are from the South.
- The Secretariat is preparing guidelines to ensure a clear and consistent approach to applying the criteria for use of this modality, selection process and terms and conditions of service. Also in support of greater clarity, it is intended to reflect resource requirements for this personnel in future budgets in the civilian personnel expenditure grouping, so as to present a more comprehensive picture of envisaged personnel requirements.
- Improving our tools to identify consulting needs and to solicit expertise on a global basis through the development by OHRM of a platform for consultancy;
- Drawing on the expertise identified by or available through entities that have developed rosters aimed at post-conflict civilian capacity needs. Our work on this is at an early stage. We will report to the General Assembly on progress made and

on opportunities for more systematic arrangements with such entities as part of the strategy for meeting the civilian capacity needs of missions.

One other recommendation by the Senior Advisory Group addressed in the Secretary-General's report concerns comparative advantage. The basic idea is that the actor best equipped to carry out a mandated task should receive the resources to do it. Our attention at this stage is focused on using an improved Integrated Mission Planning Process to identify early in the planning stage which actors are best equipped to carry out tasks.

The Civilian Capacities initiative aims to develop a close partnership between Member States and the UN Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes not only in the approval and implementation of measures but in the thinking on support to national institution-building in the aftermath of conflict and crisis. Useful lessons are already emerging from the regional consultations already held in Africa, Asia and among Arab states, from country level engagement and from our discussions with regional organisations such as the African Union and the League of Arab States. But it will require an approach of collaborative thinking between Member States and the Organisation to proceed with due awareness of the need for close governance and sensitivity but also with a sense of the urgency needed to improve the UN's responsiveness in those country situations which need it most.