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Comprehensive Report on the Department of Safety and Security

Use of Private Security

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Statement by

Mr. Gregory B. Starr, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Safety and Security

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this distinguished Committee on the Comprehensive Report on the Department of Safety and Security (A/67/526) and the Use of Private Security (A/67/539), as well as on the Report of the Advisory Committee (A/67/624).

Turning first to our comprehensive report. The report, presented at the request of the General Assembly, outlines our strategic vision, mission and objectives to support the Organization's efforts in achieving a modern and effective security management system to enable UN system programmes and operations while protecting United Nations personnel, their eligible family members, premises and assets. In setting out our main programmes and objectives, we aim to provide clarity about the work of the Department of Safety and Security, as both a uniformed security service and a provider of non-uniformed security services for the United Nations system worldwide.

Since 2007, the Department has made significant strides in policy, operational and oversight support for the United Nations Security Management System, taking full account of the evolving global security environment. We have maintained a strategic focus on implementing effective risk mitigation through a UN system-wide coordinated security risk assessment mechanism, developed high-quality, best-practice security policies and enhanced compliance with established policies and procedures.

We have adapted our work to meet the challenges posed by Member States that call for the United Nations system to operate in more and more places around the world while enabling programmes even in the most difficult and challenging of environments. Today, a greater number of countries present major security challenges than was the case five years ago. This calls for a more robust and dynamic security and risk management architecture to be in place. At the same time, as the primary

responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel, their eligible family members, assets and premises rests with host governments, we have engaged more actively with Member States on all aspects of security management, including ensuring collaboration in sharing security related tools used by the security management system, promoting bilateral and multi-lateral engagement and mainstreaming collaboration with host governments on security matters in all our policies.

We are cognizant of the current financial climate, which dictates that we must ensure the maximum use of our resources to the best of our ability. In this regard, the Department continuously reviews its security deployments and seeks ways in which we can make better use of our resources, including applying the most cost-effective means in recruiting, selecting, training and deploying our security personnel.

In enabling the programmes and activities of the UN system and accepting greater risks for doing so, we are also cognizant that with the acceptance of greater risk comes the possibility that there may be tragic occurrences. We therefore continue to work to institute better information tools, better analysis of what the threats are and better utilization of our resources to lessen that risk.

We appreciate the support and the sentiments expressed to us in the ACABQ's report A/67/624 and look forward to continued support from the General Assembly and Member States in our efforts to support the UN system globally.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

Turning to our report on the Use of Private Security, it is to be noted that the UN has long used private security companies, mostly unarmed, national companies, for functions such as the protection of property and access control.

In light of well publicized events involving international private security companies in the past decade, we reviewed our existing guidance and found it needed additional review and safeguards. In this respect, the Secretary General provided the necessary direction in order for DSS to lead a multi-agency effort, in tandem with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), to look at how and when we use private security companies. A working group was established that produced a policy, guidelines, and a model contract to guide the use of armed private security companies. In formulating the policy and related documents, we worked closely with the agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system, the staff federations, departments in the UN Secretariat, as well as human rights entities to ensure that the final product reflected the best global practices. Every step of the process, from the development of the policy and related guidelines to their subsequent approval by the Chief Executives' Board entailed regular and close collaboration both within the secretariat and extensively throughout the organizations of the UN system to ensure the widest possible consultation. The resulting policy and documents represent the amalgamation of the highest standards to be followed to ensure the requisite due diligence in the use of private security companies.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for this opportunity to present these reports. I look forward to engaging with you to answer any questions or concerns you may have.