



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

799 United Nations Plaza, New York NY 10017-3505

**Statement by Ambassador Joseph M. Torsella
on the adoption of the Senior Advisory Group report**

Before the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee of the UN General
Assembly
6 May 2013

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

The United States welcomes adoption of the recommendations of the Senior Advisory Group on Troop Reimbursement Rates and Other Related Issues. This is the capstone of a First Resumed session marked by exceptional cooperation and constructive negotiation by all Member States. We look forward to carrying this spirit over into the Second Resumed session.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by saying "thank you" to Madame Louise Frechette who so ably chaired the Senior Advisory Group, or SAG, as it has come to be known. I also thank all members of the SAG and the Secretariat staff who supported the SAG discussions. They undertook a daunting task and produced a significant report that will benefit all of peacekeeping and especially the brave men and women who serve in these difficult missions.

We should recall that the SAG was requested by this Committee to resolve an issue that has been contentious and disruptive for several years. The Troop Contributing Countries have correctly noted that the reimbursement rates have not been adjusted in a decade. The major Financial Contributing Countries justifiably argued that without an empirical basis for understanding costs an increase in reimbursement rates would be arbitrary and indefensible to our taxpayers. A key SAG recommendation that we adopted today is a new streamlined survey process to resolve this seemingly unsolvable conundrum.

Let me be clear. The SAG recommendations are not perfect. Every delegation in this room can find something in these recommendations that they do not like. The recommendations are a compromise agreed to by all SAG members after months of difficult discussion, analysis and negotiations. The resolution we have adopted is a further compromise, but when taken as a package, the SAG recommendations that we adopted provide a balanced set of tools to help us reach our common goal of continuously improving peacekeeping.

For example, in addition to providing the framework for an enduring method of determining reimbursement rates, the SAG recognized that many UN peacekeepers acquit themselves superbly despite exceptional levels of risks and operate without caveats or restrictions. The resolution we have passed today authorizes the Secretary-General to recognize the effectiveness these exceptional men and women have in peacekeeping by paying them a premium.

We have often spoken in this Committee of the increasing complexity and difficulty of peacekeeping operations. The SAG recognized this changing environment and the need to improve readiness to meet these evolving challenges. The resolution we adopted includes a number of peacekeeping enhancements and incentives for improving mission readiness to achieve difficult mandates. The resolution authorizes the Secretary-General to pay a premium to TCCs who provide critical enablers that are in short supply. We have also established a new standard rotation period to provide greater continuity on the ground and conserve scarce resources, and we have provided incentives to TCCs to ensure that their troops are fully equipped with the tools they need to meet the challenges of their mandates.

Today's resolution has laid the foundation to revitalize the global peacekeeping partnership to meet the challenges of peacekeeping today and in the future. However, Mr. Chairman, we should not be lulled into believing that our work is done. On the contrary, adoption of the SAG report recommendations should be the first step in a continuing process. There are many challenges ahead, some of which we will begin to address later today in the Second Resumed session, and others that will emerge as new demands arise.

We Member States have a responsibility to the peoples of the host countries emerging from conflict, to the military, police, and civilian peacekeepers who serve in missions, and to our own citizens who support peacekeeping and view peacekeeping as the iconic mission of the United Nations. The resolution we have agreed today is an opportunity for us to commit to continue to working together in the constructive spirit of cooperation that produced this resolution to improve peacekeeping for all our stakeholders. We cannot afford to squander this opportunity.

Thank you Mr. Chairman