

Introductory Remarks to the Fifth Committee
Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support
Agenda Item 149. Administrative & budgetary aspects of financing United Nations peacekeeping operations: Overview report

9 May 2015

(check against delivery)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to introduce the Report of the Secretary-General on the Overview of the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/71/809), together with the Controller, Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas. I would like to take this opportunity to also thank the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for presenting the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in its related report.

Before I begin, I would like to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving the cause of international peace and security.

Madam Chair,

The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/296, requested the Secretary-General to submit an annual overview report on the financing of peacekeeping missions, reporting, inter alia, on trends in the size, composition and funding of the peacekeeping missions, relevant developments in peacekeeping operations, and efforts to improve the management and functioning of peacekeeping operations.

Since then, the deliberations of the General Assembly on the overview report of the Secretary-General have offered a valuable opportunity to discuss critical issues that affect the functioning of peacekeeping and to further strengthen the partnership between Member States and the Secretariat.

The current overview report submitted for your consideration contains more detailed information on what we have achieved so far, and what our plans are for the coming year. We noted with satisfaction that the General Assembly welcomed our efforts to produce a more streamlined overview report last year focused on new developments, policy changes and management challenges facing peacekeeping operations. Building on this positive encouragement, we strove to make further

improvements in the presentation, format and quality of information contained in the report before you.

For its part, the Department of Field Support has continued to strive for improvements to help peacekeeping operations succeed with rapid, effective, efficient and responsible support. To achieve this objective, we have maintained our focus on the five priorities outlined in the overview report of last year: improving supply chain management; strengthening environmental management; fostering technology and innovation; strengthening administration and management; and combatting misconduct.

Madam Chair,

The report before you sets forth the key improvements we have made in field support over the past year. I would like to highlight a few of these.

The first is the introduction of a common set of core performance indicators for support issues across all peacekeeping operations. The objective of this undertaking is to harmonize the performance frameworks for field support, in accordance with the provisions of resolutions 61/276 and 55/231 on the use of results-based budgeting for peacekeeping missions.

These indicators will enhance accountability and transparency, as well as provide Member States, Headquarters and missions with a common understanding of expectations, achievements and shortcomings. They are a concrete expression of our commitment to continuously measure, review and improve the performance of field support services. I wish to point out that this initiative also strengthens the alignment between the strategic framework approved by the General Assembly for the peacekeeping programme of the regular budget and the peacekeeping budgets.

The second key area I would like to underscore is the implementation of the supply chain management initiative. As you know this project seeks to get the right products, to the right places, at the right times, and at the right costs for all peacekeeping missions. Since the last overview report, we have concluded a first version of the blue print for an end-to-end supply chain management and advanced in acquisition planning, centralized warehousing, the analysis of international delivery terms in systems contracts, and the implementation of the East Africa corridor.

To reflect the need for an integrated ‘end-to-end’ supply chain approach, the Support Account budget proposals for the 2017/18 period include the restructuring of the Department of Field Support’s Logistics Support Division. In 2017/2018 we will also continue to focus on the implementation of Umoja UE2, and the decommissioning of Galileo as well as other systems. We count on your continued support for these initiatives, which will have a positive impact on the delivery of goods and services to peacekeeping missions.

The third key area of our work I would like to highlight is strengthening environmental management. In this coming year, we will continue to implement the newly-developed environment strategy, which is focused on energy, water and wastewater, solid waste, wider impact, and environmental management systems. Our goal is to ensure that field missions achieve maximum efficiency in their use of natural resources, operate at minimum risk to people, societies and ecosystems, contribute to a positive impact on the latter wherever possible, and minimize strategic, operational and reputational risks.

Concrete progress has already been achieved. In 2016, the majority of peacekeeping operations implemented projects aimed at reducing their environmental footprint, such as the acquisition of 439 wastewater treatment plants. .

In order to further enhance the provision of strategic direction on environmental management across DFS and the peacekeeping operations, in the Support Account budget for 2017/18 we propose to establish an Environmental Section in my own front office, through the reassignment of posts from within existing DFS resources. The support of the General Assembly for these initiatives will be of fundamental importance in order to enhance the Secretariat’s ability to enhance environmental management for its field operations.

I would also like take this opportunity to refer to important developments in our partnership with the African Union (AU). This year we have implemented two agreements which further strengthen our collaboration. The first enabled AU personnel to participate in a training programme designed to foster mission support leadership and technical skills. The second established a pilot staff exchange programme. We have also conducted a joint review of mechanisms to finance and support AU peace operations.

These initiatives have been greatly beneficial to both the United Nations and the African Union. We look forward to continue working with the African Union, as

well as other regional and sub-regional organizations to leverage knowledge, resources and expertise for engineering, medical support, technology, environmental protection, force protection, and conduct and discipline.

Madam Chair,

I am pleased that the Board of Auditors has expressed a clean opinion on the accounts of the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the 2015/16 financial period.

We also appreciate the Board's conclusion that the systems and processes for preparation of financial statements has been strengthened and that the financial position of peacekeeping operations remained financially stable, with sufficient cash resources to sustain core operations.

As in previous years, however, the Board identified some recurring issues with room for improvement, including financial reporting, asset and property management, air operations, human resources management, procurement, and environmental and waste management. Concerted efforts are being taken to address these challenges in all missions.

Madam Chair,

Over the past year we have worked to improve our operations according to the guidance the General Assembly provided, through its last resolution on cross-cutting issues, on how best to manage the resources entrusted to us by its membership. We value the engagement and support of the membership and look forward to your deliberations to continue to guide our work.

Together with my colleagues, I remain at your disposal to respond to questions on the document before you.

Thank you.