

**Statement by Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous to the
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
24 February 2014**

Good morning, ladies and gentleman, distinguished delegates. It is a pleasure to be with you this morning together with Under-Secretary-General Haq. We are also joined by our senior management team including the new leadership of our Office of Military Affairs, Lt. General Ahmed.

I thank you for the support that many of those gathered in this room have shown to both of our departments and, indeed, to the work of UN peacekeeping operations around the world. This Committee has received a report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/68/652). I would like to highlight some key points as the Committee opens its 2014 session.

Looking at the current strategic context facing UN peacekeeping, I see five factors that, taken as a whole, impact how peacekeeping operations can effectively carry out their mandated tasks.

First, there is continued **high demand** for UN peacekeeping. In addition to the establishment of a new mission in Mali, 2013 also saw the evolution of peacekeeping's roles and activities and the potential for additional new missions in 2014. The relevance of this instrument to today's challenges remains clear.

Second, UN peacekeeping faces a **heightened level of new threats**. Missions may need to operate where there is little peace to keep, where they are confronted with or even targeted by improvised explosive devices and other unconventional threats, and where parties to the conflict are shifting to non-State actors that may have close ties to transnational organized crime.

Third, we see continuing **high resource constraints**. The Member States and the Organization collectively face financial and capability constraints – be they military, police, or civilian - that significantly challenge and condition the implementation of our mandated tasks. Together with DFS, DPKO remains engaged in ensuring that resources are directed where they can achieve the greatest impact.

Fourth, the complexity of contemporary threats requires **close and heightened partnerships** with international stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional organizations, in order to collectively address contemporary crises. This also requires, very often, creating a viable regional security infrastructure with adequate stand-by arrangements.

Fifth, UN peacekeeping requires **high political engagement and support**. On the ground, the pursuit of peace itself is a deeply political and non-linear undertaking reliant upon the often-evolving consent of host nations and key parties. Internationally, the political will and support of the Security Council and police- and troop-contributing countries is of critical importance.

Taken together, growing demand and high expectations, coupled with constrained resources, must lead to an equally high international responsiveness and commitment.

Flexibility and innovation at Headquarters and within our missions is no longer an option, but an acute necessity. Developing an understanding among TCCs and PCCs of the need to sometimes adapt our Rules of Engagement and required equipment to adequately meet current threats is key. The breadth of missions we are currently required to conduct and support is more diverse than ever, involving distinct partners, diverse operating environments, and widely varying mandates, each demanding a distinct mix of skills and capabilities. As such, a close and coordinated relationship between the “sacred triangle” represented by the Secretariat, the Security Council and TCCs/PCCs should be further enhanced.

We see many of these challenges as we look across our missions today. This Committee will receive a formal briefing on operational developments later this week. And so rather than provide you with a comprehensive description of the situation in the field, I will touch briefly on a few key operational realities which, I believe, illustrate the increasingly complex challenges we must be prepared to face in the year ahead.

In South Sudan, we have seen a devastating outbreak of violence. Many UNMISS personnel, including uniformed personnel from 67 Member States, have put their lives at risk to protect civilians, monitor human rights, and facilitate humanitarian assistance which have been our focus since the onset of the crisis. At the roots of this crisis, we see the fundamentally political nature of building sustainable peace. The crisis has also underscored the importance of protecting civilians when political processes break down. UNMISS is to be commended for all it is doing to protect civilians, with 70,000 seeking refuge with the UN camps. Even as the scale of the crisis has outstripped the mission’s capacities, it has prioritised protection and done all it can do, saving thousands. Also evident in South Sudan, are the serious obstacles we face, even when there is broad support, to rapidly reinforce our missions, highlighting the urgent need for stand-by arrangements and enhanced mobility.

In Mali, the mission continues its efforts to promote the launch of an inclusive dialogue that will lead to a sustainable settlement of the conflict. Meanwhile, despite intensive efforts, obstacles to the timely start-up of this mission persist. By the end of March, MINUSMA should reach nearly 80% of its authorized troop strength and have recruited about 1/3 of civilian personnel. We are now focused on the establishment of fully operational offices in the north which will be critical to achieving the mission’s mandate to support the stabilization of key population centres and the re-establishment of state authority, including security and justice. Challenges we will have to overcome include the threat of asymmetric attacks against civilians and peacekeepers, delays in the provision of critical enablers, and complications that have arisen from the re-hatting process.

In DRC, MONUSCO has worked with the Government to continue to implement its mandate, including now to undertake targeted offensive operations to neutralize and disarm armed groups. Several factors have contributed to early progress, including the existence of a regional Peace and Security Framework and related negotiations, very good political coordination among the AU, EU, US and UN, as well as the explicit mandate and enhanced capabilities provided by SCR 2098. Full operational capability of the UAS system is expected in April 2014. Here we once again see that the security strategy works when there is a viable political framework. To sustain these gains into the future, the Government of the DRC must, with timely

international support, ensure the full reintegration of armed groups and their dependents and the establishment of security, other state services and the rule of law and to reaffirm its authority in eastern DRC.

In Darfur, the UN and AU continue to operate across vast spaces and difficult terrain to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian assistance. We see the largest number of attacks against peacekeeping personnel in this mission. Ensuring they are properly supported and equipped is a high priority to which I and Ameerah are personally committed.

I have highlighted those missions that I believe best exemplify some of the demands that UN peacekeeping is increasingly likely to face in the future. On the horizon, we may face additional demands in the Middle East, the Central African Republic, in Somalia and elsewhere.

Innovating and strengthening the capabilities of peacekeeping operations is essential to ensure safety and security, to adequately protect civilians, and to modernize mission postures in line with the evolving nature of conflict. It requires efforts across several fronts, including the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment, ongoing efforts to implement General Assembly resolution 67/261 on the recommendations of the Senior Advisory Group, and the continued guidance of this Committee toward a capability-driven approach.

Military stand-by arrangements are important both for mission start up and rapid reinforcement. I have already engaged with the EU (Battle Groups), the AU (ASF, AIRC) and the CSTO. I also plan to contact the “Cruz del Sur” as well as the formed groups in the Pacific (“Melanasian Spearhead Group” - MSG) and the Polynesian Leaders Groups (PLG) and we will look at this issue ever more closely. Expanded **inter-mission cooperation arrangements** will also be essential. IMC was critical in the establishment of MINUSMA to fill the gap before the deployment of the first deployment of fresh troops. It was also useful during the first weeks of the crisis in South Sudan. I am also encouraging all my counterparts to consider collective contributions by one or more Member States. This is not always easy, in particular when our processes - and those of our contributing countries - are not designed for flexibility. Mission start-up also depends on rapid deployment, and I have directed that we also review UN processes – including those that relate to our administration and budgeting -- to improve deployment times.

Access to **modern technology** can also enhance mission capabilities. The deployment of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) in the DRC is contributing to situational awareness for the entire mission. We will continue to work closely with Member States in the roll out and use of UAS to ensure peacekeeping is an information-based endeavour. Beyond purely military aspects, making better use of existing and affordable technologies for peacekeeping as a whole is one of our priority areas in the year to come, within GA approved procurement and other frameworks.

We recently distributed to the Special Committee an analysis of critical capability shortfalls that affect our ability to work at full capacity and are committed to working with Member States to fill gaps, in particular regarding **critical enablers**. Ameerah will speak to this issue in more detail.

In line with the General Assembly decision, I am glad to announce the establishment of the **Office of Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership** with the initial functions of assisting in identifying gaps that impact on mandate delivery and making recommendations on systemic issues relating to peacekeeping operations. The Office will also be making recommendations to ensure the safety, the security, the welfare and the provision of adequate support services to field uniformed personnel, and to incorporate lessons learned into peacekeeping operations. While doing so, the Office will work closely with troop- and police-contributing countries as well as senior leadership of field mission and Headquarters. The Office has just completed its first review in UNAMID and shall present its findings and the recommendations shortly.

To ensure interoperability and cohesion, we must work to articulate a common approach to **standards**, including through the 11 military manuals under preparation with Member States, and ensure peacekeepers are adequately **trained and equipped** to undertake all required tasks. We will be reviewing the Core Pre-deployment Training Modules in 2014. And, with the support of this Committee, we hope to work toward a renewed training architecture better linking national and regional training centres with field operations and the UN Secretariat. We are also pleased that the current personnel cost survey being undertaken recognises pre-deployment training as a common and additional essential cost for TCCs/PCCs. The data collected will also help us to understand the systems of contributing countries and how we can support them better.

Modern **policing in UN peacekeeping** also demands broadened capabilities. The DPKO/DFS Policy on United Nations Police in Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions has been approved, following extensive consultations with Member States. It will create an essential common reference framework for the close to 13,000 deployed police officers. In deploying to 12 peacekeeping operations and 7 political missions, UN police officers require proper pre-deployment training; appropriate, up-to-date equipment; and an improved capacity to deploy rapidly. The Police Division, under Commissioner Feller, is implementing an early notification system to Member States of skills sets required in the field, to assist with national recruitment processes, as well as a new information system devoted to recruitment of police officers. We are also exploring the possibility of developing a roster for leadership positions in the field. And we continue our effort to increase female representation among UN Police (Global effort) and cooperating with the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* to attract Francophone Police Officers.

As Member States are aware, nine of our peacekeeping operations covering 95% of our total field personnel currently have mandates to **protect civilians**, often in extremely challenging conditions and in the face of high expectations. DPKO is also working to draw from mission experiences to streamline and improve early warning and rapid reaction processes. Dedicated POC, Women Protection and Child Protection advisers in missions have had a positive impact in the coherence and efficiency of the activities. It is also important for the international community to send a strong message that the protection of civilians is the primary responsibility of the host nation. Our missions continue to update and revise their PoC strategies to ensure a coordinated mission-wide approach which also takes into account resources, mandates and host-state responsibilities.

In general, **civilians in multidimensional peacekeeping operations** play a critical role in ensuring a strong nexus of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Many civil affairs and human rights officers play vital advisory and monitoring roles in remote regions and in doing so complement the activities of UN and other partners on the ground. Maintaining an integrated approach helps ensure a clear division of labor and the alignment of collective UN efforts. The Security Council has begun to request the handover of certain tasks and, as such, the drawdown of peacekeeping missions. That means a transition for the entire UN presence that should be based on the principle of national ownership.

Rule of law support must keep pace with the growing tasks of peacekeeping operations. The rapidly-deployable Justice and Corrections Standing Capacity (JCSC) was able to deploy to Mali and Somalia within days of being requested but, due to funding shortfalls, mission demands have far outstripped available capacity. Within missions, justice and corrections personnel, in order to adequately support national counterparts, need to be able to couple technical expertise with programmatic resources. Since it was established in 2012, the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections has enabled closer collaboration between DPKO, UNDP and other key partners. Looking forward, there is a need to shift from joint assessments and planning to concrete programme-building and implementation.

Since 2007 when the United Nations efforts on **security sector reform** began under the guidance of your Committee, the number of peace operations supporting national SSR efforts has expanded - from three to thirteen. In addition to the much needed, training and equipping of security institutions, the UN is increasingly being asked by Member States to help them enhance the quality of security sector governance and security provision so that they are responsive to the security concerns of their populations. Experience has shown that this approach can contribute to a durable peace. SSR is addressing critical challenges in achieving a durable peace. Concretely, it means strengthening oversight and financial management of security institutions in Liberia; assisting the development of national security plans for Somalia and Côte d'Ivoire; helping coordinate international support of national SSR priorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to assisting the reform of the defence forces in Mali.

Missions, in their support to **disarmament, demobilization and reintegration** (DDR), are grappling with new realities, such as the presence of multiple, fractious armed actors, tenuous command and control structures, the convergence of local self-defence militias, mercenaries, and global jihadist and terrorist organisations. From efforts to 'disengage combatants' in Somalia to support for community violence reduction approaches in Mali and Haiti, DDR effort must be tailored to the context and accompanied by parallel resources and programming for reintegration. Linked to these evolving realities, our **Mine Action Service** can help to address IED threats, as well as weapons maintenance and ammunition disposal through its ability to rapidly deploy technical experts and specialised equipment.

Peacekeeping remains a vital tool for international peace and security and a flagship of the United Nations. It is a collective effort and demands, at all times, that the highest standards of conduct are upheld by all UN personnel. It rests upon strong cooperation between the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Secretariat; between the Member States contributing personnel and financial support.

The C34 brings together the full range of Member States in support of peacekeeping. Your voice and guidance in policy matters is an important signal of the political commitment and support of the UN for our peacekeepers who, day in and day out, work together to achieve peace. Since I took office, I have been trying to enhance the cooperation between the Secretariat (DPKO), the Security Council, and our TCCs/PCCs. I trust that the links are growing stronger, and I will continue and try to strengthen them further. To illustrate this, I have proposed to five Permanent Representatives of the main TCCs for UNDOF to join me during an upcoming trip to the Golan Heights.

UN peacekeeping brings a unique, universal legitimacy unmatched by any other international peace and security instrument. Despite the ongoing challenges that peacekeepers face, studies tell us that when peacekeeping missions are deployed in post-conflict situations, countries are 50% less likely to experience an outbreak of conflict again. Representing only 0.4 per cent of world military expenditure, but also the second largest deployed military force in the world, UN peacekeeping is ‘good value’. And even as the tasks of peacekeeping operations have become more complex and diverse, there have been sustained efforts to further improve the cost-effectiveness of resources provided by the Membership to support peacekeeping.

I know that many of the countries represented here today are contributing actively to the work of United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. We mourn the loss of no less than 14 men and women who have died so far this year while serving in Darfur, Mali, South Sudan and, most recently, our special political mission in Afghanistan. We will continue to strive to carry forward their efforts to improve the lives of people in the countries where our missions are mandated. Bringing hope to those who have suffered for decades is the real and lasting work of UN peacekeeping.