

**Statement by Mr. Rudy Sanchez, Officer-in-Charge, Department of Field Support
to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations
20 February 2015**

Introduction

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to address the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. For half a century, this forum has provided a platform for partnership between and among member states as well as between the membership and the Secretariat. The resulting bridge of communication and catalyst for consensus-building has given rise to myriad achievements in the sphere of international peace and security. On behalf of the Department of Field Support, I convey my thanks to you, the membership of this august body, and your predecessors, for the progress made possible through this Committee's impactful deliberations.

Mr. Chair, at the outset, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Madame Uche Joy Ogwu of Nigeria on her re-election as the Chair of the Special Committee and to congratulate you on your re-election as the Chair of this committee's Working Group. We are very pleased that Madame Ogwu and you will continue to lead this important forum.

Context in which we are delivering field services

Mr. Chair,

The context in which peacekeepers carry out their work has never been more insecure and precarious. In September, for example, four peacekeepers from Chad were killed in Mali by an IED as several others were critically wounded. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab, after many failed attempts, succeeded on Christmas Day in making its way into the Mogadishu International Airport, killing three troops and a civilian contractor. A defining theme of UN peace operations today is more volatile situations, greater instability and more risk to our Blue Helmets.

Despite these challenges, the United Nations operates an extensive global network in its efforts to bring about peace and stability. UN peacekeepers cover an immense area stretching over 7.5 million square km. The terrain can be remote, with supply-lines stretching 2,000 km or more, and the infrastructure often extremely weak or non-existent.

The top priority at DFS is to support our colleagues in the field with quality and speed. Their security, their welfare, must not be compromised in any way whatsoever. Another priority is efficiency – we have a responsibility to carefully manage the resources that you, the membership, have entrusted to the Organization. And in this regard, we are making good progress. Indeed, while the cost of peacekeeping today exceeds \$8.5 billion, the per capita cost of peacekeeping is 17 per cent less than it was in 2008-2009 when adjusted for inflation.

Gender, regional representation and personnel conduct

Mr. Chair,

The Department of Field Support attaches the highest priority to a more balanced gender representation among senior leaders in peacekeeping. We continue to seek more uniformed and civilian women using tools such as the Senior Women Talent Pipeline. In the past year, a total of 64 senior women participated in this unique initiative, which supports women in their efforts to be selected for senior positions in UN peacekeeping. Four were selected, with many others today better equipped to compete. A second round of outreach was launched last November.

It is also important that we ensure the appropriate representation of staff from troop and police contributing countries in both departments at Headquarters and in field posts including at senior levels taking into account their contributions, as set out in General Assembly Resolution 67/287.

Mr. Chair,

With regard to personnel conduct, there is a continued need to focus on advancing the enhanced programme of action introduced by the Secretary General in his report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, issued in February 2013 as well as the Policy on Human Rights Screening of United Nations Personnel.

DFS remains fully committed to preventing and addressing misconduct by personnel deployed in field operations. In this regard, the Secretary-General convened the senior leadership of the Organization last month to discuss his proposals stemming from assessments done by a team of experts in those missions with the highest incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse. The work of the team was carefully studied by a DPKO-DFS led Working Group in 2014 and their recommendations on prevention, enforcement and remedial action were endorsed by the senior leadership and will be reflected in the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

I am pleased to report that, in 2014, we received the lowest recorded number of allegations on sexual exploitation and abuse since special measures were first put in place. There were 51 allegations received in 2014, compared to 66 in 2013. This confirms the general downward trend in numbers of allegations reported each year since 2005. However, one incident of sexual exploitation and abuse is one too many. We will continue our efforts to prevent these incidents from occurring.

Progress made and achievements to date--GFSS

Mr. Chair,

I would now like to turn to the Global Field Support Strategy - GFSS. As the Special Committee knows, for the past 4.5 years, the GFSS has served as the umbrella strategy for managing change in United Nations field support. In 2010, when DFS was just three years old, the GFSS was launched; it laid out an agenda to transform structures and tools that enable and support peacekeeping operations with a view to maximizing the speed, quality and efficiency of mission support.

In the ensuing years, much has been achieved. The Global Service Centre structures in Brindisi and Valencia now deliver value-added services to missions in ICT and logistics. The Regional Service Centre in Entebbe provides support to nine client missions. Improved

financing and contracting tools are used to speed-up mission start-ups. Recruitment is faster – although in this and all the areas I have mentioned, there is still much that can be improved.

Under the human resource pillar of GFSS, DPKO and DFS have conducted nine civilian staffing reviews; UNOCI, UNIFIL and UNAMID, MINURSO, UNAMI, MONUSCO, MINUSTAH, UNISFA and RSCE. In 2015, staffing reviews are planned for UNDOF, UNOAU, UNMIK, UNSOA, MONUSCO, MINUSMA and potentially UNMIL. The civilian staffing reviews have provided a mechanism to align missions to their mandates and mission life cycle, resulting in overall efficiencies for the organization. We will soon begin the implementation of a supply chain management strategy to improve the operational effectiveness of our supply chain operations for the future.

GFSS will conclude, as a strategy per se, on 30 June, but the need for reform continues. As was the case over the previous half decade, only through continuous refinement of the United Nations field support machinery can we ensure that we will be able to respond to the challenges of the future. Moving beyond 1 July, the Global Field Support Strategy will be mainstreamed into the work of the Department of Field Support. The GFSS ethos, and its focus on innovation, will be stronger than ever as DFS confronts the challenges ahead.

Way forward

Mr. Chair,

The coming year promises to be a landmark for United Nations peacekeeping. Not only have we reached an all-time high in terms of deployment and budgets - we are also embarking on a process of review and reflection with potentially significant impact on the nature of our work: the Secretary-General's High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations is expected to produce useful recommendations on the future of our shared endeavour. The challenge will then fall to the Membership to consider the Panel's recommendations and to set a medium and long-term direction for the United Nations in the field of peace and security.

Aside from the work of the panel, developments on the ground will necessitate a continuous drive towards systemic improvements in how we do business. We anticipate the need to focus, in this regard, on six priority areas. First, we need to enhance our capacity to act quickly in remote and dangerous environments. Improvements in the technology we deploy will enable us to advance situational awareness, safety and security of peacekeepers, and manage missions cost-effectively and with less impact on the environment. The findings and recommendations of the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping warrant careful review in this regard.

Second, we must maximize the collaboration between military and support planners. Joint planning with the Office of Military Affairs is of paramount importance, in order to ensure that new units become rapidly operational, and enable more proactive, flexible and mobile operations.

As seen in missions such as MINUSCA and MINUSMA, challenges in deploying enablers during the start-up phase of missions can impede mandate implementation as a whole. The enabling capabilities premium proposed by the Senior Advisory Group on reimbursement to troop-contributing countries and related issues (SAG), and approved by the General Assembly last April, provides an opportunity to mitigate this problem. DFS is also developing a concept of triangular partnership on rapid deployment between: troop

contributing countries; Member States with the resources to contribute engineering capacity and training; and, the United Nations.

Third, the demand for more rapid, flexible and mobile operations points to the importance of making full use of delegated authority. Directors of Mission Support have been delegated the authority to approve contracts with UNOPS of up to \$1 million (and \$3 million for the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support) in order to initiate engineering works more rapidly than has been the case thus far.

Fourth, we need to continue to improve the quality and consistency of service delivery to our clients. For example, the measurement regime put in place at the RSCE has been essential in making adjustments and focusing efforts to improve performance and customer satisfaction. This has been a top priority for us and progress is being made.

Fifth, we must ensure that corporate reforms are conducive to fast-paced work in the field. These reforms would include improved supply chain management, expanding shared services and rolling out UMOJA Extension 1 (UE1). UE1 is expected to be implemented for international civilian staff in all peacekeeping operations by November of this year while functionality related to uniformed and national personnel administration is expected to be rolled out in April 2016.

Finally, we must continue to exercise responsible stewardship of limited resources. This will require us to find creative solutions that simultaneously reduce costs and enhance productivity.

Concluding Remarks

Mr. Chair,

Peacekeeping requires a shared vision backed by strong cooperation between Member States and the Secretariat. It is only with concerted effort and thoughtful reflection on the way forward that we can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of those who depend on our assistance.

I would like to conclude by paying homage to our uniformed and civilian personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of international peace and security.

I would also like to thank the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations for its invaluable guidance to the Department of Field Support. As you are aware, Ms. Ameerah Haq retired from the Organization at the end of January. We look forward to an equally constructive relationship between you and the incoming Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Mr. Atul Khare.

Thank you.