

Statement by
Mr Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations
General Assembly Thematic debate: "UN Peacekeeping - looking into the future"
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Mr President, distinguished members of the General Assembly,

I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for arranging this interactive debate on peacekeeping providing an opportunity to exchange views on the future of United Nations peacekeeping. It is an extremely valuable and timely debate marking the 10th anniversary of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations led by Mr Brahimi.

Since the panel published its landmark report ten years ago UN peacekeeping has undergone remarkable changes. In 2000 the level of deployment was 20,000. Today, UN peacekeeping deploys over 124,000 peacekeepers in 16 missions around the world, making it one of the most dynamic and challenging collective endeavours to promote international peace and security.

Without the so-called Brahimi report we would not have been able to sustain this unprecedented surge. Building on the report's recommendations and Member States' support the peacekeeping machinery was strengthened, both in the field and at headquarters. The Report was extremely farsighted and many of the issues which it identified remain with us today.

Fundamentally it reminded us that UN peacekeeping depended upon a partnership between the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretariat, Troop and Police contributors and the host governments.

It laid the foundation for policy consensus among peacekeeping stakeholders regarding the use and application of UN peacekeeping. It underlined that peacekeeping missions should deploy only when there is a peace to keep. It reaffirmed the three basic principles of UN peacekeeping – consent, impartiality, and the non-use of force except in self defense – while providing guidance on the implementation of these principles in complex post-conflict settings.

Conceptually the Brahimi report also recognized that peacekeeping missions have become multidimensional and engaged in assisting the parties on a range of fronts including rule of law and what has become known as early peacebuilding. Each of these fundamental conceptual points remains relevant today.

The General Assembly also took the Brahimi report as the basis for strengthening peacekeeping operationally in the areas of identifying and building human and material peacekeeping capacities and mission support allowing rapid deployment of new, complex operations. A stronger emphasis on training and leadership sought to ensure peacekeepers were prepared to support growing peacekeeping requirements.

The report also made recommendations to strengthen the staffing of DPKO and regarding field personnel. It fundamentally pointed out the need for a professionalization of peacekeeping staff. We continue to work with the Member States in this field and reforms are ongoing.

The Brahimi report articulated the importance of bringing together the various elements of a UN mission. More integrated structures at Headquarters and in the Field have subsequently been put in place and integrated planning systems have been designed. The Report was certainly critical of the Secretariat regarding achieving a “one-UN” effect. In response to that criticism we have built an operational culture and a system for learning lessons, best practices, developing guidance and training.

One should recall also, that not all of the proposals the report put forward to address capacity requirements for peacekeeping were in fact realized. The establishment of strategic deployment stocks and a peacekeeping logistics base provided a partial solution to growing needs, but the Report’s recommendation that the Security Council leave in draft resolutions authorizing sizeable troop levels until firm commitments of troops and other critical mission elements had been identified remains unfulfilled to this day. Then, as now, rapid deployment remains subject to resources which Member States have such as strategic lift and ultimately a sufficient pool of Troop Contributors willing and able to move fast. Similarly, the hope of a comprehensive, dependable strategic reserve envisioned by Brahimi has yet to become reality.

Measures proposed to strengthen the Secretariat’s decision-making capacity through an integrated information management and strategic analysis capacity were not approved, though integrated planning processes did emerge from the Report to provide for greater coherence and strategy development.

The implementation of many of the recommendations put forward in the Brahimi Report has been influenced greatly by an evolving strategic environment and new demands. Many of the proposals have been realized, though others remain unfulfilled or have been overtaken by changing requirements and challenges that could not have been foreseen at the time. Subsequent reform initiatives have helped address some of these new dimensions and dynamics and have served to reflect the continuously evolving nature of UN peacekeeping.

In 2007, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was restructured and augmented and the Department for Field Support was created. Based on these reforms, we were able to respond to the considerable increase in both the size and complexity of UN peacekeeping, including in terms of integrated missions and planning processes. The result has been an enhanced quality in our response to requirements and greater synergies within the UN family. We have developed a new and greater understanding of the range of assistance needed to keep and build peace.

After a decade of considerable surge, it appears that UN peacekeeping may now be headed toward a period of consolidation and perhaps even contraction. This does not mean that our task will be an easy one. The challenges we are facing today in many ways remain daunting. UN peacekeeping operations are deployed to environments that are inhospitable, remote and dangerous, sometimes with inadequate logistical support and resources. The diversity of our missions is likely to continue to grow, as are the expectations in terms of what UN peacekeeping should deliver. Missions' mandates are increasingly more complex and multidimensional. While we still have traditional missions supporting a ceasefire agreement between two or more parties, we also manage multi-dimensional missions, supporting a peace process and national authorities after civil conflict, on the other end of the spectrum. These missions cover vast territories, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, and have complex mandates ranging from supporting elections and state capacity, to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, strengthening the rule of law and improving the management of the security sector. Other missions provide security and protection in response to a conflict. Increasingly, UN peacekeepers are called upon to take a more robust approach to implement complex mission mandates, and to deter spoilers to a peace process, to the mandate, and to mission personnel. They are called upon to protect civilians, including from sexual violence in conflict. This carries significant policy and operational challenges.

Some of our missions are extending initial security and stability gains into longer-term peacebuilding. More and more frequently peacekeeping operations are expected to initiate early peacebuilding activities in the immediate aftermath of conflict and carefully designed transitions to ensure that sufficient resources and expertise are maintained to consolidate the peacebuilding efforts. Last but not least, we are cooperating with and supporting other peace and security actors, in Afghanistan and Kosovo, and in other places, including through capacity-building provided to the African Union.

Many of these challenges were identified already ten years ago by the Brahimi panel. Nevertheless, with the expansion of the number of missions and deployed personnel, as well as the increasingly complex mission mandates and environments, the challenges have become more acute. To address these challenges, my colleague, USG Susana Malcorra, and I launched the so-called New Horizon process last July. The aim was to strengthen the peacekeeping partnership, that the Brahimi report itself highlighted, creating a greater consensus around how to tackle new challenges.

We identified some central challenges that required urgent attention. We saw an eroding consensus among Member States on the role of UN peacekeeping. Many times the political process accompanying a peacekeeping mission was weak or non-existent. In recent years we have experienced an increasing conditionality of consent. And we have had difficulties to deliver transition and exit strategies in the absence of political or peacebuilding solutions to sustain the process when the peacekeepers leave.

The priority agenda for 2010-2011 under the New Horizon was presented by the Secretary-General in his report to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping in January this

year. It reflects the priorities that emerged from extensive exchanges with members of the peacekeeping partnership during 2009.

The priority agenda comprises four principal building blocks aimed at bolstering the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping peacekeeping and which are indeed a continuation of the Brahimi legacy: i) **Policy Development**: developing practical guidance on critical roles for modern United Nations peacekeeping; ii) **Capability Development**: developing and sustaining the required capabilities to support peacekeeping now and into the future; iii) **Field Support Strategy**: developing stronger United Nations field support arrangements; and iv) **Planning and Oversight**: ensuring more effective arrangements for planning, management and oversight.

We are pleased that Member States expressed general support for this agenda in the Fourth Committee in October last year as well as in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping in February-March this year, and most recently in the Fifth Committee.

As part of the New Horizon agenda we have improved **planning and oversight**, strengthening the cooperation and consultation between Security Council-Secretariat-troop and police contributing countries. We have achieved greater consensus around crucial **policy areas**, including on the protection of civilians in peacekeeping. We have initiated an intensified dialogue with Member States on themes central to the concept of a robust approach to peacekeeping, including deterrence, and addressing threats to missions through actions and posture. As part of the effort to improve coherent and predictable delivery in the field, we are in the process of identifying the critical early peacebuilding tasks that peacekeepers should undertake in the area of security and stabilization, with a specific focus on the areas of rule of law, SSR, DDR and mine action. We are also moving forward with developing a comprehensive **capability development** strategy aimed at filling critical capability gaps in a sustainable manner and ensuring that peacekeepers are better prepared, equipped and enabled to deliver against reasonable performance expectations. We have to move from quantity to quality and take advantage of what appears to be a time of consolidation to make real and lasting improvements to our capacity to fulfil the mandates we have been given. Underpinning all this, the Department for Field Support has developed a new **Global Field Support Strategy** that will provide a global delivery model better suited to meet today's peacekeeping challenges.

All of these initiatives have roots in the Brahimi report. The debate today is a valuable contribution to what is an ongoing dialogue on the future of United Nations peacekeeping. Indeed, the two topics chosen for the panel discussions are key to the success of modern peacekeeping. Sustained political support is essential throughout the lifetime of a mission. Peacekeeping can not be the substitute for a political process for resolution of conflict, but must instead be an accompaniment and part of a wider political strategy. For the peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus to be calibrated in the right way it is essential to have the end goal in mind from its inception. Good initial assessment and planning will pave the way for a successful exit strategy.

With peacekeeping having seemingly reached a peak and now a plateau, we have now an opportunity to take further steps towards finding solutions to these challenges, and to consolidate what we have already achieved in terms of strengthening UN peacekeeping building on the Brahimi report.

Let me end by paying tribute to the 115 current troop and police contributing countries that make peacekeeping a truly unique global partnership. Without your contributions peacekeeping would not be possible

I am looking forward to today's debate as an important contribution to further strengthening the truly global and collective endeavour that UN peacekeeping is.

Thank you.