

37. United Nations peacekeeping operations

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held three meetings and adopted one presidential statement in connection with the item entitled “United Nations peacekeeping operations”. At the meetings, the representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support provided updates to the Council on the development of the “new horizon” initiative, which aimed to form a unique global partnership agenda for peacekeeping and establish a new field support strategy for peacekeeping missions. The Council also discussed the role of police- and troop-contributing countries, peacekeeping financing and support, partnerships with regional and other organizations and the political dimensions of peace operations, among other topics.

23 January 2009: challenges faced by peacekeeping operations

On 23 January 2009, in their briefings to the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti outlined the main challenges faced by peacekeeping operations and addressed the details of the support strategy. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations stated that it was clear that United Nations peacekeeping was overstretched, both operationally and politically. In regard to political support, he stressed that when operations were tested by circumstances, the unified voice of the Council and behind-the-scenes political pressure from key players in the Council and countries in the region were critical. Political support from the Council could assist in other ways too, for example in mobilizing troops and other resources through bilateral engagements with prospective troop and police contributors.⁶⁹² The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support noted that the Department of Field Support was the newest in the United Nations system, and its creation had also led to greater clarity of purpose concerning the role it was supposed to play. She expressed concern that the magnitude of the operational challenges often

⁶⁹² S/PV.6075, pp. 3-7.

overshadowed a more thorough assessment of how to find a more strategic approach to doing business and achieving the kinds of economies of scale one would expect from a global operation. She noted several proposals the Department was considering, including greater use of support hubs that could provide support services from more secure locations to missions in the region; greater delegation of managerial and administrative authority to managers in the field; a diversified approach to sourcing goods and services; and a smarter approach to technology by using different applications in the provision of aviation tasks, equipment usage, military support and rapid response.⁶⁹³ The Special Representative of the Secretary-General outlined the challenges facing peacekeeping, including the question of when missions should be deployed, what tasks they should undertake and how they could be more effective, drawing upon his specific experience in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).⁶⁹⁴

Council members and other speakers agreed that the report of the Panel on Peace Operations, chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi,⁶⁹⁵ remained relevant as a basis for any discussion of peacekeeping. They emphasized the challenges in the following areas: peacekeeping financing and support, United Nations partnerships with regional and other organizations, protection of civilians and political dimensions of peace operations.

29 June 2009: relationship between the Council and troop- and police-contributing countries

On 29 June 2009, the Council met to discuss its relationship with police- and troop-contributing countries. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support new horizon initiative to form a new partnership agenda for peacekeeping. The Council had already received an executive brief of a non-paper that would be released in July and would focus on four main points: (a) critical peacekeeping tasks and functions that required a renewed consensus; (b) measures to improve mission design, resourcing and deployment;

⁶⁹³ Ibid., pp. 7-10.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 10-13.

⁶⁹⁵ S/2000/809.

(c) proposals on assessing and building the capacities needed for future peacekeeping; and (d) a strategy to create a stronger, more flexible support system.⁶⁹⁶ The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support highlighted several proposals that the Department was working on, including using a more targeted approach, with elements of mission support provided globally, others regionally and the rest at the level of individual missions. She noted that it was becoming increasingly important to calibrate support to the different stages of the mission life cycle — start-up, stabilization, maturity, surge, drawdown and liquidation — with different priorities in terms of deployment in each of those stages.⁶⁹⁷

Recognizing the challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping operations, including financial shortfalls, shortages of military and other personnel, as well as general overstretch, speakers generally welcomed the debate as part of ongoing reform efforts to increase their effectiveness. Recalling the need to build on the report of the Panel on Peace Operations and other reform proposals, delegations welcomed the Secretariat's new horizon initiative, in particular the proposed establishment of a new agenda for partnership to strengthen the unity and cohesion of various actors, ensure greater credibility for the missions themselves and strengthen their capacity. Speakers agreed that the success of current and future peacekeeping operations depended on strengthening the triangular communication between the Council, the Secretariat and police- and troop-contributing countries. Some speakers also called for expanding those working relationships with regional partners, especially with the African Union, within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter. Many speakers agreed that for peacekeeping to become more rapid and flexible, institutional and operational reforms to command-and-control mechanisms, procurement and supply systems were required.

5 August 2009: presidential statements on peacekeeping and relations with troop- and police-contributing countries

On 5 August 2009, in his briefing to the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations noted the release of the non-paper entitled "A new partnership agenda: charting a new horizon for

United Nations peacekeeping" on 17 July. He made several commitments with respect to the planning, monitoring and reporting of United Nations peacekeeping missions, including providing the Council with thorough assessments of situations into which a new peacekeeping operation might be deployed, presenting proposals for the full range of support that might be considered to assist with mission deployment, consulting with the Council and contributing countries in advance of the deployment of technical assessment missions and debriefing on their findings. He also underlined the Secretariat's commitment to enhancing meaningful dialogue with police- and troop-contributing countries in the planning for new and ongoing missions and to ensuring that the Council received, through the reports of the Secretary-General, a clear assessment of the views of those countries in advance of the renewal of the mission mandate. He stated that the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support would also work to produce appropriate and high-quality benchmarks for missions, driven by a comprehensive understanding of conditions on the ground, and to research best practices in benchmarking.⁶⁹⁸

The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support also updated the Council on the progress in developing the new field support strategy, including the release on 3 August of a midpoint non-paper. The process would culminate in a report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, in spring 2010. She explained that the Department would seek guidance from Member States in the areas of the establishment of a new support framework for service delivery in field operations; the adoption of standardized mission support models to improve deployment timelines, achieve economies of scale and facilitate oversight; and the implementation of responsive resource management.⁶⁹⁹ The Force Commander of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) reported on the progress of the mission and the lessons learned for peacekeeping operations in general, including the importance of such strategic enablers as helicopters.⁷⁰⁰

Speakers reaffirmed the need to ensure that the mandates of peacekeeping operations were clear, credible and matched by appropriate resources. Speakers

⁶⁹⁶ S/PV.6153, pp. 3-6.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁹⁸ S/PV.6178, pp. 3-5.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

acknowledged that a peacekeeping operation was not an alternative to a political process but an accompaniment to it, underlining the necessity of a parallel peace process that included all parties. They also acknowledged the need for coherence between, and integration of, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development to achieve an effective response to post-conflict situations from the outset. Many speakers reaffirmed their support for expanded mandates for peacekeeping operations in order to cope with the realities on the ground. Speakers stressed the importance of ensuring close cooperation between the Council on the one hand and the Secretariat and police- and troop-contributing countries on the other regarding the collective oversight of peacekeeping operations. Speakers called for more consistent use of benchmarks to monitor and evaluate the progress made in implementing mandates of peacekeeping operations. Many speakers reiterated the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. The representative of the Russian Federation noted that the draft presidential statement did not sufficiently focus on the roles of the Special

Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Military Staff Committee.⁷⁰¹

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement,⁷⁰² by which it, inter alia, committed to strengthening the unique global partnership of United Nations peacekeeping. The Council stated that it had endeavoured to improve its dialogue with the Secretariat and with the police- and troop-contributing countries on the collective oversight of peacekeeping operations, and identified several areas where further reflection was required to improve the preparation, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and completion of peacekeeping operations. The Council also took note of the assessments and recommendations provided in the new horizon non-paper and the field support strategy contained therein, and intended to give them careful consideration.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., p. 17.

⁷⁰² S/PRST/2009/24. For more information, see part X, sect. I, with regard to peacekeeping operations.

Meetings: United Nations peacekeeping operations

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
6075th 23 January 2009			Rule 37 8 Member States ^a	All Council members and all invitees	
			Rule 39 Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Under- Secretary-General for Field Support, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of MINUSTAH, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations		
6153rd 29 June 2009			Rule 37 18 Member States ^b	All Council members and all invitees	
			Rule 39 Senior Political Affairs Adviser in the Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Under-Secretary- General for Peacekeeping Operations, Under-Secretary- General for Field Support		

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
6178th 5 August 2009			Rule 37 22 Member States ^c	All Council members and all invitees	S/PRST/2009/24
			Rule 39 Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Under- Secretary-General for Field Support, Force Commander of UNAMID		

^a Canada, Czech Republic, India, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan and Uruguay.

^b Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic (on behalf of the European Union), Egypt, Germany, Ghana, India, Italy, Jordan, Morocco (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Spain and Uruguay.

^c Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Morocco (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden (on behalf of the European Union), Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

38. Post-conflict peacebuilding

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held four meetings, and adopted two presidential statements in connection with the item entitled “Post-conflict peacebuilding”. In response to a letter sent to the President of the Security Council from the representative of the United Kingdom and a report by the Secretary-General, two thematic debates were held to explore the challenges faced by United Nations peacebuilding efforts in immediate post-conflict settings. At the other two meetings, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission presented to the Council the annual report on the Commission’s work. The Council discussed key challenges faced by the Commission and important issues related to United Nations peacebuilding initiatives in general.

20 May 2008 and 22 July 2009: discussion and presidential statements concerning peacebuilding in post-conflict situations

On 2 May 2008, by a letter addressed to the President of the Council,⁷⁰³ the United Kingdom transmitted a concept paper that called for a Council discussion on the subject of post-conflict stabilization to identify and address the critical gaps that hampered international efforts to help countries stabilize and

build sustainable peace as they emerge from conflict. Gaps were found in three areas: leadership on the ground; rapidly deployable and skilled civilian capacity; and flexible funding.

On 20 May 2008, in response to that request, the Council held a debate on the subject of ensuring effective peacebuilding efforts, especially in the immediate aftermath of conflict. In his statement to the Council, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of strengthening the collective response of the United Nations by taking coherent measures in cooperation with other actors, developing sufficient capacity by aligning the respective instruments in the United Nations system, building up civilian expertise and securing early and flexible funding.⁷⁰⁴

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone commented on the peacebuilding effort in his country and made several observations for further reflection, emphasizing the need to balance international intervention and national ownership, pay sufficient attention to local norms and sensitivities and let local actors take charge.⁷⁰⁵

The Senior Vice-President of the World Bank reflected on the expansion of its work in connection with fragile and conflict-affected countries from both

⁷⁰³ S/2008/291.

⁷⁰⁴ S/PV.5895, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 4-7.