



**Under-Secretary-General for Field Support
Mr. Atul Khare**

**Chiefs of Defence Conference – Agenda Item 6: Challenges and Opportunities for Mission Support in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
27 March 2015 – ECOSOC Chamber**

Excellencies,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Chiefs of Defence,
Distinguished Guests,
Nobel Peace Laureate, former President of Timor-Leste and Chair of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, H.E. Mr. José Ramos-Horta and distinguished members of the Panel,
My dear colleague, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, Military Adviser of the United Nations, General Maqsood Ahmed, Director for the Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training, David Haeri,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here today at this significant moment in the history of international peace and security cooperation.

As Mr. Ladsous said, United Nations peacekeeping plays a critical role in fragile states emerging from crisis. My remarks will focus on how the Department of Field Support, in practical terms, endeavours to make this immense global partnership work effectively on the ground. I will also focus on the implications of the strategic trends raised by the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and conclude by describing my priorities to ensure that DFS keeps pace with changing mandates and expectations.

The DFS Field Support Model

Since its creation in 2007, the Department of Field Support has supported both UN peacekeeping operations that include civilian, military and police components, as well as special political missions. The DFS field support model enables the comprehensive approach of peacekeeping missions described by Mr. Ladsous. A whole-of-mission structure provides

the backbone of the logistics, administrative and mission support for all military contingents and individual personnel at mission Headquarters and in the field.

Today, DFS supports 17 peacekeeping operations (including a non-UN peacekeeping operation, AMISOM) and 20 other field-based missions.

The DFS model is somewhat unique in that civilians provide logistics support to military as well as to the police and civilian components of the mission. This places command of strategic mission assets, such as helicopters or fixed wing aircrafts, at the highest levels of mission leadership, of which the Force Commander is an integral part, so that these assets may be used to deliver on the strategic priorities of the mission as a whole.

Our missions encompass the activities of over 177,000 military, police and civilian personnel operating in over 30 countries. DFS operates 220 aircraft, which is more than twice as many aircraft as the largest commercial fleet in the African continent. Our missions will deliver over 350 million litres of fuel this year and provide over 300,000 meals every day to the furthest reaches of our military installations in the field.

DFS has evolved to become a relatively flexible tool with global reach, and has been called upon to support extraordinary missions. This has included a partnership with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapon in Syria, where we deployed weapons inspectors into an active conflict zone with only a few days' notice. It also includes the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, where we deployed a civilian mission across a region in the midst of a serious pandemic. These are just a few examples of how DFS can provide logistical support and personnel in diverse environments.

Trends and implications

As the Secretary-General and Mr. Ladsous have underlined, recent trends in the mandates and operating environments for peacekeeping missions are placing new and challenging demands on our support structures.

The most important of these are the challenges associated with discharging complex mandates in increasingly dangerous environments, characterized in many cases by asymmetric and targeted threats. In these environments, peacekeepers face complex evolving threats of political violence, mingled with transnational organized crime, regional conflict, urban violence and ethnic strife. This violence increasingly takes place at the periphery of societies where the state is unable or unwilling to govern and discharge its primary responsibility to protect civilians. Our deployments in northern Mali provide striking examples of these challenges. Over the past months, we have lost far too many brave peacekeepers to IED and rocket attacks around Kidal and in other locations. Our transport and combat aircraft crews put themselves at immense risk to support these operations in a harsh environment for aviation, and the tragic death of two helicopter pilots just last week near Gao is a stark reminder of these conditions.

This new reality has a number of significant implications for the needs of our military components, both in terms of effective mandate implementation and in terms of safety, security and duty of care for our personnel.

First, in order to bring the degree of stability necessary to create an environment that is conducive to political dialogue, peacekeeping missions need to generate a momentum of operations that puts us ahead of the decision cycles of armed groups. In eastern DRC, for example, we need to take actions to prevent atrocities by the armed groups, rather than respond ex-post facto to fierce and predatory attacks by them on vulnerable civilians. This requires enhanced information gathering and analysis assets, but also the enabling capacities to make the force flexible and mobile. As many of these are whole-of-mission assets controlled by the field support component, this responsibility rests as much on our shoulders as on troop and police contributing countries and with your active engagement, we shall deliver.

Second, these environments demand enhanced provisions for the safety and security of our personnel. Peacekeepers require more mobile and dynamic force protection measures to perform their mandated tasks effectively and safely. Currently, many of our units are housed in hard walled accommodations, making changes in location and posture both cumbersome and costly. New technologies in the areas of situational awareness, military accommodations and transport offer considerable opportunities in this regard, and we are looking to increasingly diverse and creative modalities of integrating such assets into our missions.

Third, providing consistent and high-quality in-mission medical support and rapid medical and casualty evacuation services has always been a priority, but also a challenge for peacekeeping operations that has yet to be fully met. DFS currently supports 310 hospitals and clinics across our missions, but we recognize that a standardized and reliable chain of medical support is a precondition for many Member States' participation in peacekeeping and, consequently, we are taking steps to meet this expectation.

Finally, at the global level, the UN needs greater strategic force projection capabilities. As soon as military contributions are generated, we need to move them into theatre and bring them to initial and then full operational capacity as quickly as possible. This means greater strategic airlift capacity, which is an area where Member States could assist us greatly. It means expeditionary staging capacity and the early generation and deployment of enabling capacities, especially aircraft, engineering, and force protection units. It also means units with more inherent support and self-sustainment capacity.

We recognize that the trends in peacekeeping today point to a risk of a growing delta between the strategic and operational requirements of our missions, and our capacity to support these undertakings. For that reason, I would like to describe to you, in some detail, what steps DFS has taken and is taking to transform the field support model so it remains fit for purpose for the world of the near future.

Recent efforts to improve field support

Over the past five years, DFS has implemented an umbrella strategy for managing change in UN field support known as the Global Field Support Strategy. GFSS has pursued five main objectives: 1) Expedited and improved service delivery to the field; 2) Improved support to peacekeeping and peace-making mandate delivery; 3) Strengthened resource stewardship, efficiencies and economies of scale; 4) Strengthened accountability; and, 5) Improved safety, security and quality of life.

As this initiative nears the end of its implementation period, we have succeeded in reducing our in-mission footprints while improving service delivery to the field. We are using shared and remote service delivery models to speed the rapid deployment of our missions. A Global Service Centre structure in Italy and Spain now delivers value-added services to missions in ICT and logistics. A Regional Service Centre in Uganda provides support to nine missions and has become a regional aviation hub that maximizes the value of our aircraft. Improved financing and contracting tools are used to speed-up mission start-ups.

It is critical that the key partners of peacekeeping, namely the Security Council that mandates missions, the Member States that provide human and financial resources, and the Secretariat that operationalizes missions, work closely together in the real spirit of shared responsibility and mutual accountability. On our part, the establishment in 2013 of the Office of Peacekeeping Strategic Partnerships as a shared advisory service to DPKO and DFS has provided crucial advice on issues that affect troop performance, such as needs for military unit standards, reforms to our contingent-owner equipment reimbursement systems, and how we can better enable inter-operability. The Office, which is led by former UN Force Commander Lt. Gen. Luiz Cruz, works in close collaboration with Troop and Police Contributing Countries and DPKO/DFS leadership to implement recommendations to improve, among other things, the support services that we provide to enable better performance.

Reforms to the reimbursement frameworks for personnel and equipment will also improve both the effectiveness of our support as well as the broader peacekeeping partnership.

Like the Member States we serve, we in the Secretariat must continue to make peacekeeping operations more efficient. Improving our support to the field necessarily means making better use of human and financial resources through economies of scale, specialization, and a clearer division of labour among the key actors in mission support. Through the reforms I have described, and others, we have achieved a 17 per cent reduction in the cost of support, per uniformed personnel, over the past five-year period, after adjusting for inflation.

However, at the same time, DFS has consistently made clear that the safety and security of our personnel must in no way be compromised and, consequently, deployments to dangerous environments will bring new security costs.

Future priorities

In taking up my role as Under-Secretary-General, I have strived to renew the priorities that will take us forward in the continuous task of improving support to the field. I see three principles that will inform our work in the coming months and years. These are: rapidity at all levels of operations; effectiveness and efficiency; and accountability for delivering results within the applicable structures and processes of the organization.

To put these principles into practice, DFS is adopting five priority areas of work.

First, enable operations in more remote, dangerous environments. We will prioritize safety, security and welfare of personnel, and expand shared services outside of mission areas.

Second, strengthen collaboration with troops and police. DFS plays a central role in the process through our administration of management of contingent owned equipment. We will work to improve joint planning and deployment synchronization with the DPKO Office of Military Affairs, to ensure that we have the right capability to enable faster deployment and more proactive, flexible operations.

Third, improve the quality of service delivery: deliver more consistent and higher quality services for clients, and measure performance rigorously.

Fourth, work more closely with Member States to prevent incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as other violations of conduct and discipline. And when such incidents happen, ensure concerted action to hold perpetrators accountable. We have a shared responsibility in this regard to safeguard the reputation of United Nations peacekeeping.

Finally, with limited resources, we will make every possible effort to absorb cost increases, find creative solutions, reduce overheads and fixed costs, and find productivity gains.

There can be no doubt that the international community has high expectations for peacekeepers and expects DPKO and DFS, in turn, to ensure that they are provided with the support they need to undertake their tasks. As we move forward together in this partnership, the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support are looking forward to enhancing cooperation and sharing of lessons learned among the militaries of our Member States. We want to make the best use of your unique qualities and strengths to collaborate with existing troop and police contributors, and expand our base to enhance participation of new contributing countries.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to come before you today to lay out our vision for the future of field support to peacekeeping operations. This vision would not be complete without clear recognition of the ultimate sacrifice that many of your troops have made in their capacity as blue helmets. We can never lose sight of the fact that all that we

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do, certainly here at UN headquarters, is aimed at their success, their security, and their welfare as they work in challenging circumstances to make the world a better place.

I believe this meeting provides an unprecedented opportunity for dialogue on how to fulfil this aspiration. I look forward to working with you towards improved mutual understanding, innovative solutions and, ultimately a stronger partnership for peacekeeping.

Thank you.