Check against delivery

Remarks of Anthony Banbury, Assistant-Secretary-General
Acting Head, Department of Field Support

Introduction of GFSS

Opening session of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly
Second resumed sixty-sixth session

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Thank you for this opportunity to offer remarks as the Fifth Committee begins its deliberations. I have the honour to represent the Department of Field Support this morning and to introduce the Secretary-General's second progress report on the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS). I hope that you will see the impact of GFSS implementation as you go through your review of the Support Account, mission budgets, and the UNLB/Global Service Centre budget, as well as the Secretary-General's Overview report. We are mindful – and the deliberations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions have confirmed - that the issues before you during this resumed session are both complex, interconnected, and very important.

Mr. Chairman, it is also my privilege to recall the Secretary-General's announcement on April 26 regarding the appointment of Ms. Ameerah Haq to the position of Under-Secretary-General for Field Support. Ms Haq is currently bringing to a successful completion her duties as the Secretary-General's Special Representative to Timor-Leste. She will take up her new duties here at UNHQ on 11 June 2012, and we are looking forward to her arrival and the wealth of experience she will bring to her position.

As presented by the Controller, the proposed funding for 2012/13 of $7.4 billion across all peacekeeping operations, the Support Account, and the UN Global Service Centre represents a reduction of $433 million, or almost 6 per cent, from 2011/12.

These budget estimates for 2012/13 reflect genuine efforts by the Secretariat to improve the cost-effectiveness and affordability of UN peacekeeping operations while avoiding a negative impact on operational performance and mandate delivery of the individual missions. The resulting cost reductions are beyond what could be considered business as usual. Instead, they represent the cultural change underway in the Department of Field Support, as embodied in the Global Field Support Strategy. The efficiencies and savings incorporated in the budget estimates represent well-informed decisions taken after thorough analysis and consideration in DPKO and DFS, as well as the Missions. In every case, the individual operational and political circumstances in each respective

peacekeeping operations were specifically taken into account in finalizing budgetary requirements. In this context, reduced costs in 2012/13 represent efforts in three primary distinct areas:

- Sustainable efficiencies in consumption and other operating costs such as fuel, aircraft, spare parts, travel, and rotation of military contingents.
- Reduced and deferred acquisitions and construction of major equipment and facilities where possible as a budgetary imperative, and a greater reliance on redistribution of existing assets across the peacekeeping community.
- Right-sizing of resourcing requirements for missions which have been reduced in size or are likely to enter into a transitional phase in the foreseeable future.

At the same time, we have not hesitated to request new or additional resources where the operating context requires. The significant expansion in support required of UNSOA, as well as the ongoing deployment of UNMISS and UNISFA, are major cases in point. These measures remain a challenge for the Organization, but they are a challenge I am confident we can meet while maintaining our absolute commitment to and priority of mission capability and mandate delivery.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Almost two years into the five-year implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy, I am pleased to be able to highlight a number of positive developments. Before discussing these highlights in further detail, I would like to stress that the primary tenet of the strategy remains improved service delivery to our missions and to the military, police and civilian components that carry out the tremendously difficult work of peacekeeping in the field every day. Based on current political and operational trends and anticipated developments in United Nations peacekeeping, one certainty is clear: the work of supporting our field Missions will continue to be characterized by considerable challenges. Challenges ranging from complex – often volatile – operational environments, to increased demand for specialized capabilities, and the simultaneous need for greater organizational flexibility, represent the reality in which we currently operate. The Global Field Support Strategy is guiding the Secretariat – in partnership with Member States – to meet these challenges in a dynamic way with common sense, sound judgement and managerial responsibility. This entails meeting the diverse array of operational needs for large multi-dimensional missions such as MONUSCO, hybrid operations such as UNAMID, provision of complete logistical support to African Union troops in Somalia, the recently deployed and evolving supervision mission in Syria, and support to the full range of Special Political Missions around the world.

I cite these examples as they are a reflection of the wide variety of operations supported by the Department of Field Support. These operations are in a continuous state of flux, and demand flexible and responsive support solutions - solutions that deliver results in an evolving and ever challenging peacekeeping climate. In the last year alone, we have seen the establishment of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei and the liquidation of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. These three missions are just a part of the incredibly complex and logistically

challenging work that the Department of Field Support carries out concurrently and on a daily basis.

At the same time we are starting new missions in one part of the globe, we are transitioning in another, phasing-down in still another, all the while supporting sustained, dynamic operations across the peacekeeper's globe. In Syria, we make it our absolute priority to ensure the full range DFS support capabilities were on the ground when the observers arrived. In Liberia, UNMIL will begin with the progressive handover of security responsibilities to national authorities. In Timor-Leste, UNMIT will downsize with the successful conduct of elections, leading to a transition to national authorities and other partners.

This dynamic, ever changing peacekeeping climate presents tremendous challenges and demands. It also requires a range of tools and flexible response options if the UN is going to meet the expectations placed on peacekeeping by the full range of our stakeholders. We need a dedicated and focused effort and a new way of thinking and working. With UN troops trying to prevent the outbreak of fighting in South Sudan, UN police taking on enhanced security responsibilities in Haiti, and Human Rights officers helping to pursue accountability in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, it cannot be business as usual for the UN. This is why we are so committed to the integrated global service delivery model of the Global Field Support Strategy. Our peacekeeping missions need better services, the people they are serving deserve it, our Member States expect it, and we are committed to providing it. The GFSS is the delivery mechanism for those improved services. It provides the framework in which we rise to these challenges in a fundamentally different way than in the past; one in which responsive, mission-oriented service delivery is the objective; where peacekeeping troops and police are our clients, where staff safety and security are paramount, and structural efficiencies are introduced to every aspect of our work.

As evidence of our difficult and dangerous operating environment, in 2011, 113 peacekeepers perished through targeted attacks, violence, banditry, natural disasters, plane crashes, safety accidents and illness. We all know that peacekeeping deploys in volatile circumstances, increasingly harsh terrain and often dangerous environments. The United Nations has quite unfairly become a target of extremism. As a result, we have been obliged to introduce stronger security systems and safety measures. We are deeply grateful that Member States have been willing to make investments to improve the security and safety of our personnel. But, I would be remiss in my duties if I did not share with you today my deep concern –an increased concern based on what we have seen in Sudan, Darfur, South Sudan, Afghanistan and – most recently – the Democratic Republic of Congo for the safety and well being of our field staff. We ask our people, all too often, to put themselves in harm's way. We owe it to them to provide the highest feasible level of security we can.

Mr. Chairman,

As DPKO and DFS sustain a process of continuous reform, we strive not only to address, but also to anticipate, international peace and security challenges with flexibility and professionalism. Over this past year, DFS has continued its work at headquarters and in the field on the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy, moving towards managing field support as a global enterprise with a professional, structured and systematic approach that can adapt easily to a variety of operating environments.

The primary objective of the GFSS is improving service delivery to the field. The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the GFSS describes the key achievements in this regard. These successes form the basis upon which the Department of Field Support will continue to implement the service delivery model endorsed by the General Assembly. This model calls for a Headquarters focused on strategy, policy development and management oversight in close coordination with Member States and other Secretariat Departments to ensure that transformations for service improvement focus on Member States' priorities and are fully coordinated within the Secretariat. Let me reassure you that none of these policy functions are included in those proposed for transfer away from Headquarters.

I have paid careful attention to the opinions expressed by the Advisory Committee with regard to the GFSS and, more broadly, the work of the Department of Field Support. I must say I find myself agreeing with the majority of their views, including – indeed especially – their admonitions to do more, and even their implied criticisms. Much of what the ACABQ is recommending in terms of performance measurement, structural improvements, KPIs and benchmarking is exactly the kind of strategic and policy work we believe DFS headquarters needs to be more focused on. But, as long as we are simultaneously responsible for operational support to 29 field missions – including urgent priorities like the new deployment to Syria – it is difficult to focus the managerial and human resources required to design and implement the kinds of changes required. The people in DFS who are responsible for working to ensure we successfully implement IPSAS, to develop and roll-out Umoja, to support UNMISS in an ambitious reconstruction programme in South Sudan before the rains set in, to work with the AU to enable the deployment of AMISOM outside of Mogadishu, are the ones who are now working tirelessly to ensure no Military Observer cannot do his/her job in Syria due to a lack of enabling support. And it is these same people who we are asking to design new systems, manage structural reforms, benchmark and measure their performance. And we are asking them to do this when the DFS share of the support account has gone from 26% in 2007/2008 to a proposed 20% - 1/5 of support account resources – in 2012/2013.

Furthermore, as the department pursues this ambitious initiative, it does so while consuming a progressively smaller share of the organization's resources. As an indication of the contributions made in the implementation of the GFSS, the overall costs for peacekeeping proposed for 2012/13 is equivalent to $74,700 per capita of uniformed personnel expected to be deployed during the year. When adjusted for inflation, costs incurred in 2008/09 of $85,300 per capita of uniformed personnel, before the introduction

of the GFSS, were 14 per cent higher than the estimate for 2012/13. Thus, despite the absence of quantifiable performance indicators, the evidence exists to demonstrate that in both its implementation and its impact, the global field support strategy is enabling the United Nations to do better with less. Thus, despite the absence of quantifiable performance indicators, the evidence exists to demonstrate that in both its implementation and its impact, the global field support strategy is enabling the United Nations to do better with less.

To enable the DFS Headquarters transition to a strategic focus, the Global Service Centre is assuming operational service delivery activities, in particular as they relate to global asset management, integrated support services to the field and design and delivery of the modularization programme. This model is conceived as a unified concept in two locations. It consolidates the Organization's capacity to more reliably support multi-dimensional field missions and their changing needs with agility, speed and professionalism. In the past year, the deployment of modular service packages to Somalia has allowed rapid troop deployment in remote and dangerous areas. Utilisation of liquidated UN Owned Equipment from UNMIS and MINURCAT allowed DFS to maximise use of resources at regional level for deployment of UNMISS and UNISFA. Another example of how the GSC has allowed us to improve the way we do business is demonstrated by our support to the new mission in Libya. Acting as the "Support Headquarters" for the new Mission, the GSC is providing a broad array of services to UNSMIL from Brindisi, through both on-the-ground Mission Support Teams and remote services, allowing the mission to focus more of its attention and efforts on implementation of its mandate.

Similarly, the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe supports regional peacekeeping and political missions by hosting back-office, financial, and human resources functions from its seven participating missions, allowing processes to be better harmonized and qualitatively improved through standardization and reengineering. In turn, this allows us to apply performance measurement frameworks to consistently monitor and report on these improvements. These initiatives are being conducted in close alignment with planning for IPSAS and Umoja roll-out, which will greatly enable the data-collection needed to track and report on expected improvements and efficiency gains. Building on the positive experience of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, the Secretary-General's second Progress Report on the GFSS implementation presents the case for the creation of two additional service centres, in West Africa and the Middle East. We intend to return to the General Assembly with options and proposals for the establishment of the new RSCs, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 65/289.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to emphasize that we are less than two years into what is a long-term comprehensive change initiative. In this period, in addition to putting essential foundations in place, we have prioritized delivering tangible results to our Missions. I acknowledge that we have not always followed standard project management methodology that is often used outside the Secretariat context. We are aware of our

shortcomings in this regard as highlighted in audits of the Board of Auditors and OIOS, as well as the current ACABQ report. This is due in part to the lack of reporting tools and systems to capture required data – an issue that will be significantly improved by the planned roll-out of IPSAS and Umoja. Nonetheless, we have in fact provided significant achievements over the past two years as described in the Secretary-General's report on GFSS. Indeed it is my view that the business case and cost benefit analysis, development of KPIs, and reporting and performance measurement systems for the GFSS and related projects, while far from perfect, are some of the most advanced and rigorous that I have seen for Secretariat-initiated and designed projects.

Our commitment though is to constantly improve, to listen to your advice and to do better. We are developing a comprehensive GFSS implementation plan with clear goals, timelines, key activities, milestones and project deliverables, which will set out the envisaged end-state of the strategy under each pillar; detailed cost-benefit analyses; a performance measurement framework with targets and benchmarks, a risk management framework and a review of the governance arrangements. These vital elements will be further developed as we continue to implement the GFSS. We realize that we have many challenges ahead of us before we can fully realize the benefits of the GFSS. But the investments and effort we have made the last two years have laid the foundations upon which we can build a new mission and service oriented delivery model that will provide progressively increasing benefits to our stakeholders. We are fully committed to this effort and we know that with the guidance and support of Member States, together we will succeed.

Throughout the Committee's review of Mission, Support Account, and Global Service Centre/UNLB budgets, I trust that you will see evidence that we have maintained focus on the long-term strategic goal of moving toward a global enterprise that delivers high-quality, integrated and cost-effective mission support. In this connection, we have already taken note of the observation by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that the current arrangement results in piecemeal reporting that makes it difficult to assess progress in the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy, and, therefore, we will pursue alternative arrangements for reporting on future progress.

I also want to assure you that we are committed not only to be present and support the Committee throughout its formal and informal deliberations, but also to offer informal briefings to the Committee whenever requested. In so doing, we hope that the responses given to the almost one thousand questions raised by the Advisory Committee throughout its deliberations serve as a useful basis on which the Fifth Committee may build. Please be assured that we are making, and will continue to make, every feasible effort to produce the information required by the Committee in a timely and accurate manner in order to meet the needs of the Committee during your deliberations and negotiations.

In closing, I believe the information the Committee has before it demonstrates clearly and unambiguously that, although much remains to be done to meet the expectations of the Committee in several areas, through the implementation of the Global Field Support

Strategy we have been able to do better with less across the board, and have taken concrete steps to make further improvements over the coming period. We look forward during the coming sessions to the Committee's continued guidance and encouragement for this continuing endeavour.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.