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Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Status of the civilian rapid deployment roster

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General report on the status of the civilian rapid deployment roster, including measures to improve its utility, taking into account recent experience with its use (resolution 58/298, para. 9).

This report outlines the status of the pilot civilian rapid deployment roster, analyses its achievements and shortcomings and makes recommendations to improve its utility.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 58/298 of 18 June 2004, in which the Secretary-General was requested to report to it at its fifty-ninth session on the status of the civilian rapid deployment roster in the context of the support account for peacekeeping operations. The aim of the report is to evaluate the status of the civilian rapid deployment roster and make recommendations to improve its utility.

2. For the purposes of the report, the term “rapid deployment roster” is used to denote the mechanism whereby United Nations staff members are selected and included in a roster. They may then be deployed at short notice and for a limited period of time to perform critical functions during the start-up, surge or liquidation phases of peacekeeping missions.

II. Background

3. In response to one of the key recommendations of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations on the enhancement of the capacity of the United Nations to rapidly mount or expand field operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809, para. 91), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations initiated the establishment of a rapid deployment roster of civilian personnel in 2003. This initiative was an integral part of a revised staffing and recruitment strategy for field missions put in place in early 2002 whereby, to the extent possible, all vacant mission posts were to be advertised (see A/58/764).

4. The availability of a rapid deployment mechanism became critical, in particular to meet the immediate requirements of new or expanding missions, given the time needed to process vacancy announcements and select candidates. Furthermore, the existing arrangements of sending required personnel on temporary duty from other missions or from Headquarters were found to be ad hoc in nature and inefficient for both the releasing and the receiving missions.

5. The decision was thus taken to establish, on a pilot basis, for a period of one year a dedicated rapid deployment roster of United Nations staff members. All existing field operations were informed of this initiative on 14 February 2003 by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

6. The pilot rapid deployment roster was to be composed of experienced staff members in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations who were to be deployed for a maximum period of three months to undertake critical tasks in the start-up of a mission, mission enhancement or mission liquidation. The establishment of such a roster would allow a reasonable amount of time to initiate the regular recruitment process, pending the approval of posts and funding. The pilot rapid deployment roster was to function in a staggered manner with three integrated teams. Each team would be prepared to deploy on 14 days’ notice for a period of four months and on 60 days’ notice for the remaining eight months of the year.

III. Implementation mechanisms of the civilian rapid deployment roster

7. The preparations for the establishment of the pilot rapid deployment roster comprised three phases: (a) initial clearance of candidates (7 March-14 April 2003); (b) technical and medical clearance (14 April-22 May 2003); and (c) establishment of three rapid deployment teams (22 May-4 June 2003). The official launch of the rapid deployment roster was announced on 4 June 2003.

8. Out of approximately 6,500 staff members contacted in the field and at Headquarters, 637 applications were returned by staff members and approved by their immediate supervisors. During the second phase, the rapid deployment roster management team of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations worked in collaboration with several other departments and offices to obtain the technical and medical clearance of those applicants. The selection criteria included previous peacekeeping experience and language skills. Gender balance and geographical distribution were also taken into account. During the third phase, the rapid deployment teams were established and the selected staff members were informed. The composition of the rapid deployment roster by releasing mission and functions performed are reflected in annexes I and II respectively.

9. In July 2003, a rapid deployment roster training programme was conducted at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy. Twenty-seven rostered staff members attended. The training covered such issues as leadership and management, planning, team-building, working with operational partners and field skills. Another training session, designed specifically for public information experts, was held in Brindisi in May 2004.

IV. Achievements

10. The rapid deployment roster was put to immediate use, with staff being deployed to the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (5 staff) and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq (5 staff) in June and early July of 2003. Since then, the rapid deployment roster has been utilized most intensively in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (32 staff). In 2004, staff members were deployed to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (6 staff) and to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (6 staff). One staff member was deployed to the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission for the liquidation of the mission. As at July 2004, 57 staff members had been deployed from the rapid deployment roster to six missions.

11. One of the key achievements with respect to the roster, its widespread use in UNMIL, is due to a large extent to the fact that the senior management of the Mission was extensively briefed on the rapid deployment roster concept. As a result, the Mission drew heavily on the roster, leading to its first large-scale test.

12. The responses received from the field as well as from Headquarters staff are worth noting. Of all the staff members who responded positively to the request by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, more than 600 were approved by their immediate supervisors. The use of electronic tools greatly contributed to the wide dissemination of roster applications to staff in the field and to the subsequent

management of the roster by linking the system to the Personnel Management and Support Service databases.

13. The 2003 rapid deployment roster exercise was managed through the short-term recruitment against temporarily vacant posts for a limited period of time of two junior Professional staff members and one administrative assistant to process the screening and clearance of applications as well as to inform the candidates selected. For the rapid deployment roster to be effectively maintained and utilized, additional resources should be dedicated to that function.

V. Evaluation of the pilot rapid deployment roster

14. It had been agreed that the pilot 2003 rapid deployment roster would be the subject of an internal evaluation of, among other things, the resource implications and the use of the roster. The Personnel Management and Support Service conducted the evaluation in late 2003. This evaluation was supplemented by a thorough review of the mechanism in the context of the lessons learned study on the start-up phase of UNMIL conducted by the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit during the first quarter of 2004. The main observations and recommendations on the present procedures of the rapid deployment roster mechanism are summarized below.

Communications, process and commitment

15. Interactions with the various field missions revealed that a number of issues remained unclear. Those issues relate to the actual purpose and implementation of the rapid deployment roster, its administration and funding or the permissible length of deployment. As a consequence, a number of releasing missions had been reluctant to release staff members who had been cleared and selected, while some receiving missions had questioned the qualifications of the staff member selected by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for the roster. It was recommended that greater emphasis be placed on ensuring that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including the field missions, buy in to the rapid deployment roster mechanism. In this view, a comprehensive administrative policy should be developed and communicated to all missions clarifying and explaining all administrative arrangements pertaining to the rapid deployment roster mechanism. It was also recommended that all significant communication between the parties involved (the releasing mission, the receiving mission and the staff member) regarding the roster process be done utilizing the rapid deployment roster management capacity to be established (see para. 23 below).

Composition of the roster

16. A substantial number of critical posts were left either vacant or without a sufficient number of candidates to fully staff the three teams. Some functions were more in demand than others, indicating the need for a review of the critical functions identified. It was recommended that, for positions that are difficult to fill, consideration be given to allowing staff outside the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including staff of the Department of Management, to apply for the rapid deployment roster. Moreover, consideration within clearly established guidelines could be given to evaluating, in coordination with the United Nations Volunteers

office in Bonn, Germany, the possibility of opening up the roster to United Nations Volunteers currently working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Finally, the Department would need to review the list of functions and match the applications to the service requirements.

Applications

17. The first exercise was voluntary and the initiative rested with the staff member. While the response has been positive, that approach had a number of shortcomings; namely, some functions did not attract the interest of staff members or supervisors were not willing to release their best staff members for even a limited period of time. It was recommended that a nomination system be introduced, with nominations originating either at Headquarters or in the field missions based on the requests of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York. This would ensure improved commitment and involvement of the releasing missions as well as introduce a vetting procedure at both ends of the process.

Selection and clearance process

18. Some dichotomies were observed between the qualifications of applicants who were technically cleared and accepted as part of the rapid deployment roster and the technical skills required to start up a mission. As indicated above, some missions questioned the relevance of the qualifications of some candidates. It was recommended that for each position, terms of reference (job description or generic job profile) be made available at the time of nomination or application. The selection process at Headquarters should also be streamlined through the establishment of a standing selection committee and a network of focal points within the various entities involved in the technical clearance process.

Deployment

19. Some rostered staff members were not released by their parent mission, even though the mission had approved their application. Thus, critical posts were left vacant or had an insufficient number of candidates (see annex III). It was recommended that greater emphasis be placed on securing in advance the release of rostered staff members. The various parties involved (roster candidate, releasing mission, technical unit and receiving mission) should be informed of the implications of their decisions regarding the application process. Rostered staff members should be released when requested, be accepted by the receiving mission and accept the rapid deployment assignment. The application process should be supported by an undertaking signed by both the staff member and the releasing mission.

Medical clearance

20. The medical clearance process took longer than anticipated and in some cases delayed the final composition of the rapid deployment roster teams. This highlights the fact that there is no mechanism to monitor whether or not medical clearances of field staff are up to date. It was recommended that the medical clearance process begin as soon as the first roster candidates are technically cleared. A mechanism is being established within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ensure that medical examinations are up to date for field staff.

Length of deployment

21. The deployment period for rostered staff was set at a maximum of 90 days on the assumption that this would allow sufficient time to recruit longer-term replacement staff. UNMIL submitted nine requests for extension of staff deployed from the roster (out of a total of 32 staff) for periods ranging from two weeks to two months. In other cases the receiving mission and the staff member concerned expressed an interest in remaining in the receiving mission. This development hampered the smooth functioning of the roster process, as it had not been foreseen that the staff member would not return to his or her parent mission. Releasing missions became reluctant to release their staff under those circumstances. It was recommended that the maximum length of the deployment period be extended to 120 days. As the rapid deployment roster is not intended as a transfer mechanism, if a rostered staff member wished to apply for a position in the receiving mission, he or she would first have to return to the releasing mission for a minimum period of three months to enable the latter to identify and select a replacement.

Training programme

22. In 2003 and 2004, as indicated in paragraph 9, two training programmes were organized. This fell short of the initial goal of training all three teams. It was recommended that the training programme be reviewed in terms of content and that it be offered at regular intervals throughout the year so that it would be provided to most individuals included on the roster.

Management and resources

23. In terms of management and resources, both evaluations pointed to the need to allocate dedicated resources to the rapid deployment roster project. It was recommended that the Personnel Management and Support Service be given full responsibility for the management and maintenance of the roster and develop a rapid deployment roster management capacity. Additional staff are required to effectively manage the roster. In addition, financial resources need to be identified to cover the costs associated with the training of rostered staff members.

VI. The way forward

24. The value of a civilian rapid deployment roster mechanism was clearly demonstrated during the 2003 pilot exercise, despite the constraints identified, in that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was able to employ this facility to initially staff new and expanding missions during the surge period.

25. The purpose of the rapid deployment roster will be extended to fully encompass the needs of missions during the start-up, surge and liquidation phases. The team structure will be replaced by a single integrated roster whose members will be individually deployed as and when needed. As such, a revised list of critical functions has been drawn up. A specific number of staff will be selected for each of those functions, thus ensuring that a sufficient number of staff are selected for the roster in case of simultaneous and competing requirements. It is anticipated that the new rapid deployment roster will comprise approximately 365 civilian staff members performing critical functions (see annex IV).

26. Comprehensive revised procedures will be communicated to all field missions and conscientious efforts will be made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to fully explain the mechanism and its implementation modalities. In particular, it will be clearly stated that the rapid deployment roster facility is not a transfer or promotion mechanism, nor will it substitute for the regular recruitment process. For staff members, placement on the roster may lead to a challenging and rewarding assignment, which should be appropriately recognized through the performance system.

27. In order to ensure a larger pool of candidates, in particular for senior positions and functions that have been difficult to fill, the application process will be extended beyond the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to include the other areas of the Secretariat and, under conditions to be negotiated, United Nations Volunteers serving in peacekeeping operations. It is recommended that the civilian rapid deployment facility be closely linked to other rapid deployment initiatives developed by the Department, such as the memorandum of understanding to set up civilian standby capacities, which was circulated to all Member States.

28. Other major changes will be introduced in the selection and clearance process. The revised process will allow the Department or the missions to nominate staff members for inclusion on the roster. Individual staff members may also continue to nominate themselves, but their release will have to be cleared by their supervisor and the mission. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the overall needs of field missions are met, the final decision on which member of the roster will be sent to a specific mission will be taken by the Department at Headquarters. Due consultations with the releasing and receiving missions will take place, as appropriate and feasible at the time of deployment.

29. Staff selected and placed on the rapid deployment roster will remain on the roster for a period of one year. However, the application process will be open throughout the year to ensure that the roster remains populated and up to date.

30. The electronic application system will be upgraded to meet the new requirements and interface with the databases used by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (including Galaxy). Generic job profiles for each critical position will be made available and each applicant will be requested to submit a personal history profile. Each application will be certified by the immediate supervisor of the applicant. Nominations of candidates by managers will be made in consultation with staff members and their direct supervisors.

31. The maximum deployment period will be extended to 120 days. With the concurrence of both the receiving and releasing missions, roster staff may apply for a position in the receiving mission but will have to return to his or her parent mission for a minimum period of three months.

32. A critical element of the new rapid deployment roster mechanism will be a strengthened and improved training programme. Selected members of the roster will be required to participate in a training programme that will take place over a period of seven to nine days. This training will be offered at regular intervals throughout the year. It will be designed to train integrative skills and be aimed at enhancing ability to function in a team environment under challenging conditions and often without direct supervision.

33. An evaluation mechanism will be built into the new procedures. The management of receiving missions will ensure that exit questionnaires are completed by each staff member deployed through the roster and his or her supervisor upon completion of the assignment. Supervisors' responses will determine the future participation of the staff member in the rapid deployment roster programme. Both the supervisor's and staff member's evaluations will be used to evaluate the rapid deployment roster mechanism on an ongoing basis.

34. As indicated in paragraph 23 above, a rapid deployment roster management capacity will be established within the Personnel Management and Support Service. Management functions will include coordinating the rapid deployment roster selection and clearance process; continuously monitoring the roster; identifying gaps and issuing general and specific application request announcements as necessary to ensure that the roster remains populated and up to date; and identifying opportunities, such as visits to missions, to meet with staff and supervisors to promote and discuss the programme. Focal points will be appointed in each technical entity in the Secretariat to provide technical advice and help to locate candidates. The rapid deployment roster will be renewed annually. One additional General Service post to support rapid deployment roster management is being requested in the 2005/06 support account budget.

VII. Conclusion

35. The rapid deployment roster mechanism represents an important initiative to strengthen the ability of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to rapidly mount field operations and provide temporary additional support to a field mission undergoing expansion or other changes in the concept of operations, including downsizing. Missions and participating staff members both gain from participation in the rapid deployment roster programme. The benefit to the receiving mission is the ready availability of experienced, qualified, field-tested peacekeepers who can hit the ground running. The benefit to the releasing mission includes the re-absorption of staff who return from the experience having gained new and/or stronger skills and richer peacekeeping experience. The benefits to the staff member include exposure to new challenges that have the potential to enhance personal and professional experience, expertise and skills.

36. The rapid deployment roster is but one of the means being examined by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to address its fundamental need to meet urgent operational requirements through the development of a cadre of highly qualified professional peacekeepers who are available to deploy on short notice. The Department will report on efforts to build such a cadre and the conditions of service underpinning the ability to recruit, retain, develop and rapidly deploy these individuals in its comprehensive report on the conditions of field service, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/266 of 23 December 2004.

VIII. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

37. **The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report.**

Annex I

Composition of the rapid deployment roster by releasing mission and team

<i>Releasing entity</i>	<i>Team 1</i>	<i>Team 2</i>	<i>Team 3</i>	<i>Total</i>
Headquarters	19	16	11	46
United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic	1	0	0	1
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	6	4	2	12
United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	5	8	5	18
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan	8	4	7	19
United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone	10	9	7	26
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	1	3	0	4
United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	0	1	0	1
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon	5	10	3	18
United Nations Mission in Angola	1	0	0	1
United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea	6	2	4	12
United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo	30	25	23	78
United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor	12	13	9	34
United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	6	0	2	8
United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia	3	2	0	5
Total	115	97	72	283

Annex II

Composition of the rapid deployment roster by function

<i>Function</i>	<i>Team 1</i>	<i>Team 2</i>	<i>Team 3</i>	<i>Total</i>
Office of Head of Mission	6	5	6	17
Planning team	3	3	3	9
Political affairs	3	3	3	9
Public information	4	4	3	11
Civil affairs	3	3	3	9
Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration	0	0	0	0
Development and rehabilitation	4	4	3	11
Human rights	1	0	0	1
Rule of law	1	0	0	1
Office of the Director of Administration	11	10	8	29
Office of the Chief, Integrated Support Services/Communication and Information Technology Service	4	4	3	11
Joint Logistics Operation Centre	4	1	1	6
Movement Control Section	2	3	1	6
Commodity units	2	2	1	5
Contingent-owned equipment	2	2	0	4
Air operations	2	1	0	3
Engineering	9	6	2	17
Communication and Information Technology Service	15	11	10	36
Supply and warehouse	6	4	0	10
Transport	10	9	7	26
Medical	1	1	1	3
Office of the Chief, Administrative Services	2	2	1	5
General services	6	7	4	17
Personnel	6	5	6	17
Procurement	2	2	2	6
Finance	4	5	5	14
Total	113	97	73	283

Annex III

Critical posts vacant or without sufficient candidates

Senior-level posts

Chief of Staff

Senior DDR Officer

Director of Administration/Chief Administrative Officer

Chief Security Officer

Chief of Integrated Support Services/Technical Services

Chief Joint Logistics Operation Centre

Chief, Movement Control Section

Chief, Communication and Information Technology Service

Chief Supply

Civilian Personnel Officer

Senior Human Rights

Chief of Administrative Services

Chief of General Services

Chief Procurement Officer

Mid-level and support posts

Legal Officer

DDR Officer

Spokesperson

Human Rights Officer

Air Safety Officer

Logistics Officer/Contract Management

Communications Officer

Information Technology Officer

Broadcast Technician

Medical Officer

Nurse

Personnel Officer

Finance/Budget Officer

Annex IV

List of critical positions (civilian staff)

<i>Critical positions</i>	<i>Small mission</i>		<i>Medium-sized mission</i>		<i>Large mission</i>	
	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number</i>
Office of the Head of Mission						
Special Representative of the Secretary-General	Assistant Secretary-General	1	Under-Secretary-General	1	Under-Secretary-General	1
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General	D-2	1	Assistant Secretary-General	1	Assistant Secretary-General	1
Special Assistant	P-4	1	P-5, P-4	1, 1	P-5, P-4	1, 1
Senior Secretary	General Service	2	General Service	2	General Service	2
Chief of Staff	—	—	D-1	1	D-2	1
Legal Adviser/Officer	P-4	1	P-5	1	P-5-D-1	1
Administrative Assistant	General Service	1	General Service	2	General Service	2

<i>Critical positions</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number</i>
Political affairs		
Senior Political Affairs Officer	P-5 to D-2	5
Political Affairs Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Public information		
Chief Information Officer/Spokesperson	P-4 to D-1	5
Public Information Officer	P-3	5
Radio/Video Producer	P-3	5
Broadcast Technician Officer (if applicable)	P-3	5
Civil affairs		
Senior Civil Affairs Officer	P-5 to D-1	5
Civil Affairs Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration		
Senior Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Officer	P-5 to D-1	5
Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Development and rehabilitation		
Senior Development and Rehabilitation Officer	P-5 to D-1	5
Quick Impact Project Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Gender affairs		
Gender Adviser/Affairs Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
HIV/AIDS		
HIV/AIDS Adviser/Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
Human rights		
Senior Human Rights Officer	P-5 to D-1	5
Human Rights Officer	P-3 to P-4	5

<i>Critical positions</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number</i>
Rule of law and corrections		
Senior Judicial Affairs Officer	P-5 to D-1	5
Judicial Affairs Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Corrections Adviser	P-3 to P-4	5
Security		
Chief Security Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
Security Officer	P-2 to P-3	5
	Field Service	5
Close Protection Officer	Field Service	5
Subtotal, substantive		115
Administration		
Chief Administrative Officer	P-5 to D-2	5
Legal Officer	P-4	5
Administrative Officer	P-3 to P-5	5
Administrative Assistant	General Service	5
Aviation Safety Unit		
Aviation Safety Officer	P-2 to P-4	5
Budget Unit		
Chief of Budget/Budget Officer	P-3 to P-5	5
Budget Assistant	General Service	5
Finance Section		
Chief Finance Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
Finance Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Finance Assistant/Cashier	General Service	5
Civilian Personnel Section		
Chief Civilian Personnel Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
Human Resources Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Human Resources Assistant	General Service	5
Procurement Section		
Chief Procurement Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
Procurement Officer	P-2 to P-3	5
General Services Section		
Chief General Services Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
General Services Assistant	Field Service	5
Property Control and Inventory Officer	P-3	5
Property Control and Inventory Assistant	Field Service	5
Receiving and Inspection Officer	P-2	5
Receiving and Inspection Assistant	Field Service	5
Medical Unit		
Medical Officer	P-4 to P-5	5

<i>Critical positions</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number</i>
Training Unit		
Training Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Surface Transport Section		
Chief Transport Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
Transport Assistant (workshop)	Field Service	5
Transport Assistant (warehouse)	Field Service	5
Transport Assistant (dispatch)	Field Service	5
Air operations		
Chief Aviation Officer	P-4	5
Aviation Officer	P-3	5
Movement control		
Chief Movement Control	P-4	5
Movement Control Assistant	P-3	5
Supply		
Chief Supply Officer	P-4 to P-5	5
Supply Officer (warehouse)	P-3	5
Supply Officer (rations)	P-3	5
Supply Officer (fuel contracts)	P-3	5
Supply Officer (contingent-owned equipment)	P-3	5
Engineering		
Chief Engineer	P-4 to P-5	5
Stores Assistant	Field Service	5
Facilities Management Assistant	Field Service	5
Electrician	Field Service	5
Generator Technician	Field Service	5
Logistics		
Chief, Integrated Support Services	P-5 to D-1	5
Logistics Officer	P-3 to P-4	5
Communication and Information Technology Service		
Chief, Communication and Information Technology Service	P-4 to P-5	5
Chief, Information Technology	P-3 to P-4	5
Satellite Technician	Field Service	5
Telephone Technician	Field Service	5
Radio/Microwave Technician	Field Service	5
Information Technology Technician/Systems Support	Field Service	5
Wide-Area Network Technician	Field Service	5
Subtotal, administrative support		250
Total civilians		365