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Agenda item 54

**Comprehensive review of the whole question of  
peacekeeping operations in all their aspects**

## **Implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations**

### **Report of the Secretary-General\***

#### *Summary*

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/277](#), highlights key developments in United Nations peacekeeping since the issuance of the previous report ([A/74/533](#)) and identifies issues for consideration by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

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\* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent available information.



## **I. Strategic context**

### **A. Perspectives for peacekeeping in a changing world**

1. Since 1948, United Nations peacekeeping has helped to end conflicts in dozens of countries. In 2020, more than 94,000 women and men from 121 Member States serving in 13 missions around the world contributed to laying the foundation for durable peace. Missions focused on supporting political processes, protecting civilians, advancing local and national reconciliation efforts and making progress on governance and the rule of law, including accountability, transitional justice, electoral reform and security sector reform.

2. In spite of its many accomplishments, United Nations peacekeeping faces a changing conflict environment, one marked by the regionalization of conflict, the proliferation of armed groups, erosion of the rule of law, exclusion and impunity. Peacekeeping missions are performing multiple interdependent tasks in non-permissive and high-risk environments, with diminishing resources. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has stretched the resilience of countries hosting peacekeeping missions and tested the ability of United Nations operations to support the response to the pandemic while also delivering on mandates. The world of tomorrow will be more populous, urbanized and likely to face more climate-related disruption coupled with unprecedented technological advancement. These factors will require the Organization to continue to adapt the role and capabilities of its peace operations.

3. While peacekeeping casualties have decreased, too many peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice for peace or bear lifelong disabling conditions as a result of their service. I pay tribute to them all.

### **B. Overview of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative**

4. The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, launched in March 2018, remains the core reform agenda for United Nations peacekeeping, with the eight thematic areas of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations as the organizing framework. The United Nations, at Headquarters and in the field, has remained committed to pursuing the implementation of commitments under the initiative, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the response of peacekeeping to the pandemic, with a focus on mutual responsibilities of peacekeeping partners in ensuring continuity in mandate implementation while supporting host Governments and communities and upholding safety standards, is an important example of the initiative in action.

5. Member States and peacekeeping partners have continued to demonstrate their support for the initiative. To date, a total of 154 Member States and four partner organizations have endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments. As of June 2020, 29 Member States and one partner organization had volunteered to informally champion one or more themes of the initiative. Champions have been maintaining momentum in a number of areas related to politics, women and peace and security, safety and security, and performance and accountability, among others.

6. The initiative is entering its second phase of implementation. Significant gains have been made, as illustrated in the present report, but collective efforts have to continue. In the present report, a number of priority areas are highlighted where the engagement of Member States remains vital over the coming period.

## II. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

7. Since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Department of Peace Operations has worked closely with field missions and other departments of the Secretariat, notably the Department of Operational Support and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, in pursuit of four interlinked objectives as set out by the Secretary-General in April 2020: (a) supporting national authorities; (b) protecting United Nations personnel; (c) mitigating the spread of the virus and assisting in the protection of vulnerable communities; and (d) ensuring operational continuity in the implementation of their mandates. From the outset of the crisis, peacekeeping operations, with technical guidance and support from Headquarters, have put in place and continuously reviewed and upgraded mitigation measures to minimize the impact of the pandemic on day-to-day operations and mandate implementation.

### A. Supporting national authorities in their response

8. The spread of COVID-19 can exacerbate socioeconomic tensions, undermine governance and local institutions, aggravate human rights violations and abuses, erode the rule of law, derail fragile political processes, worsen already volatile security situations and fuel intercommunal conflict. The risk is a destabilization of peacekeeping settings and an erosion of peace gains. The pandemic has given rise to hate speech, incitement to violence and harmful misinformation targeting both the local population and foreign nationals, including United Nations personnel in peacekeeping settings.

9. The main contribution of United Nations missions has been to continue supporting a stable political and security environment in host countries. Direct support to communities, institutions and partners was also provided, from supporting the provision of essential drugs and protective equipment to raising community awareness and supporting national coordination of the response. Missions promoted social distancing, including through a gender-sensitive approach. They also supported prevention and mitigation through, for example, a compendium of operational tools developed by the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peace Operations, including one on prison health and safety and one on police operations and planning, and through the provision of posters, pocket cards and contingency checklists in multiple languages for use in places of detention.

### B. Protecting peacekeeping personnel and their capacity to continue critical operations

10. As part of a system-wide effort to provide treatment and care to field personnel, the Secretariat has provided substantial guidance and support to missions. A field support coordination group for COVID-19, bringing together the Departments of Peace Operations, Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Operational Support, has been established at Headquarters to coordinate the monitoring of and support for missions. Medical treatment, testing facilities and medical evacuation options have been strengthened. Virtual walkthroughs have been conducted in the largest peacekeeping operations to identify and address gaps in public health and infection prevention and containment practices. These walkthroughs have led to improvements in procedures and practices, as well as guidance on how to prevent and detect outbreaks. A compendium of practical guidance has been developed and promulgated to assist United Nations health-care workers and managers as knowledge and understanding of the virus has evolved. All missions have been provided with a risk

mitigation plan for COVID-19, and outbreak response teams have been established in several operations. These mitigation measures have contributed, so far, to keeping the number of cases in peacekeeping operations relatively low.

### **C. Containing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19**

11. Helping to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 in peacekeeping settings is a moral, political and operational imperative. Ensuring, in particular, that peacekeepers are not a vector for contagion is of paramount importance. With uniformed personnel constituting the majority of deployments in peacekeeping operations, particular attention was paid early on to their movements in and out of host countries, in close coordination with local authorities as well as troop- and police-contributing countries and countries contributing government-provided personnel. Following a temporary suspension between April and July 2020, during which the movement of more than 58,000 troops was suspended, the deployments, rotations and repatriations of uniformed personnel, including military and police, as well as government-provided corrections personnel, have resumed under stringent conditions. These conditions include predeployment training on COVID-19 and a 14-day quarantine in their home country, adherence to missions' quarantine regulations upon deployment, physical distancing and the use of personal protective equipment. The implementation of these measures, as well as global and local restrictions on travel, has slowed down the pace of rotations since July 2020, and the Secretariat has been working with missions and contributing countries to identify and remove bottlenecks in order to maintain the well-being of personnel, mission capabilities and the safety of local communities and to plan the movement of more than 120,000 troops by the end of 2020.

12. To avoid measures taken by operations inadvertently leading to risk of secondary exposure from mismanagement of biomedical waste or wastewater, detailed guidance materials on personal protective equipment, biomedical waste handling, storage, treatment and disposal and managing waste and wastewater in relation to COVID-19 were disseminated.

### **D. Protecting vulnerable communities while delivering on mandate implementation**

13. COVID-19 has complicated missions' efforts to advance peace processes, as activities that depend on face-to-face high-level meetings, often critical to political processes, have been affected. In some cases, the pandemic has led to a recalibration of protection of civilians tasks, owing to a reduced footprint and sometimes a reduced capacity to perform patrols or monitoring activities. The pandemic has also impeded the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations and abuses.

14. Nevertheless, with the guidance and support of Headquarters, operations have put in place a range of measures that have ensured operational continuity and mandate implementation, with the pandemic spurring innovative solutions. Political dialogue, engagement and community outreach have been undertaken through virtual platforms, while public diplomacy initiatives and senior-level engagement were renewed to urge political unity and respect for human rights, facilitate access to justice and respond to inter-ethnic incidents. Overall, peacekeeping operations continued to prevent and respond to threats to civilians, which unfortunately have not decreased in the past six months. Efforts to strengthen the protective environment have also continued, including through security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, with various missions continuing to

conduct preparatory work and to provide assistance to national stakeholders in the development of policy frameworks.

15. Particular attention was given to ensuring that activities continue to support women and that evolving responses are gender sensitive, including by continuing to expand the number of women peacekeepers. As they respond to COVID-19, United Nations missions are also maintaining their commitment to survivors of domestic abuse. For example, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has scaled up its support to projects mitigating domestic violence and ensuring access to justice and free legal aid. In addition, supporting women-led organizations to engage in planning and decision-making processes and ensuring the participation of women in economic recovery plans and in building peace and security are also promoted in the fight against the pandemic.

16. The efforts of peacekeeping missions continue to be closely coordinated with those of United Nations country teams and partner organizations on the ground, including the African Union and the European Union, supported by exchanges of lessons learned with Headquarters. The Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law provided financial support to peacekeeping missions and country offices of the United Nations Development Programme in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and the Sudan to jointly support national COVID-19 efforts.

### **III. System-wide reforms and peacekeeping**

#### **A. Reform of the peace and security architecture**

17. The establishment of the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in 2019, with a single regional structure and a number of shared capacities, has contributed to more coherent and collaborative work in the peace and security pillar, illustrated by a move away from fragmented responses towards a coherent, “whole-of-pillar” approach. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the implementation of peace and security reform (A/75/202), the pillar is now better positioned to draw on a range of tools and resources that can be employed flexibly in mission settings. In peacekeeping contexts, the reforms also reinforced the Action for Peacekeeping agenda, to facilitate mandate delivery with tailored, politically-attuned peacekeeping operations and support for political processes, as in the case of the Central African Republic. The single regional structure facilitated strategic engagement with the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and bilateral partners that were indispensable to the ultimate signing of the peace agreement. The reform also strengthened the extent of support received by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) from the peacebuilding architecture. For example, the Peacebuilding Fund facilitated the quick disbursement of \$23.9 million to the United Nations country team and civil society partners following the signing of the peace agreement.

18. The peace and security reform is not only about the structural changes required for a “whole of pillar” approach, however, but is also about delivering a new organizational culture designed to strengthen the impact of the United Nations in the field. To this end, to accompany a benefits management system established to monitor progress against the reform objectives, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs together have taken a number of steps to promote culture change, including change management work to accompany

the reform process, as well as a series of concrete initiatives and activities aimed at building a dynamic, coordinated and agile culture within the pillar.

## **B. Development reform**

19. The United Nations development system complements the political good offices, specialized expertise and short-term programmatic activities of peacekeeping operations with more sustainable programming in support of national priorities and development plans. Multidimensional peacekeeping provides the opportunity to jointly support the implementation of key reforms and the strengthening of core State functions. In the Central African Republic, for example, MINUSCA and the United Nations country team are responding to the national plan for recovery and peacebuilding through their integrated United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. In South Sudan, the peacebuilding plan for the period 2018–2021 of the United Nations country team and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is anchored in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework that was developed by the country team and co-signed by the Government to build resilience and capacity in the country. As a result of the reform of the United Nations development system launched in 2019, resident coordinators are now better positioned to align United Nations country-level plans in support of nationally-led peacebuilding and development priorities, including in countries with structurally integrated peacekeeping missions.

## **C. Management reform**

20. Significant progress has been made with regard to nearly all of the issues highlighted in the initial report of the Secretary-General on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations (A/72/492), as reported in the most recent progress report of the Secretary-General (A/75/201). The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support have focused on consolidating reforms, including by simplifying policies, streamlining procedures, supporting empowered managers and strengthening operational support in the areas of information and communications technology, human resources management and supply chain management. Peacekeeping missions are represented on the Management Client Board, which has been functioning well; this forum, which was established as part of the reform, is a mechanism through which the various types of entities in the Secretariat can provide input and feedback to the two departments on the administrative policy framework and matters related to operational support.

# **IV. Political impact of peacekeeping**

## **A. Advancing political solutions and complementary political objectives at the national and local levels**

21. A key objective of peacekeeping operations is to facilitate and support political processes as a means of preventing violence and abuses against civilians and promoting the consolidation of peace, security and stability. Progress in 2020 varied depending on countries and, in many cases, was focused on local conflict resolution and mediation. COVID-19 compounded challenges to advancing political solutions.

22. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) supported the efforts of national and provincial authorities to resolve recurring

intercommunal violence through dialogue, particularly in Ituri and South Kivu Provinces. In South Sudan, UNMISS supported the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. Although the ceasefire has held at the national level, local intercommunal violence has been on the rise, prompting UNMISS to step up efforts towards local reconciliation and the protection of civilians.

23. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA and partners from the region supported the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of 2019 and preparations for the general elections in 2020 and 2021. In order to maintain confidence in the Agreement, MINUSCA also supported the investigation and prosecution of armed group members who had perpetrated serious crimes in contravention of the Agreement. In Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) supported a national dialogue in December 2019 and pursued efforts in support of the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali of 2015, while strengthening its presence and mediation efforts in central Mali, where intercommunal violence and activities by violent extremist groups have been on the rise. The Mission played a crucial role in supporting the deployment of reconstituted units to northern Mali, including Kidal, where their arrival in February 2020 was the first formal State security presence since 2012. Following the coup of August 2020, MINUSMA has been supporting mediation efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) towards a return to constitutional order and the continued implementation of the 2015 peace agreement.

24. In Darfur, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) provided substantive, technical and logistical assistance to the peace talks between the Sudanese transitional authorities and the armed groups in Juba from September 2019, which culminated in the signing of the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan on 3 October 2020. UNAMID also organized consultations with Darfuri constituencies, including internally displaced persons, and supported their participation in the Juba talks in order to ensure that their views and issues would be reflected.

25. In Kosovo,<sup>1</sup> UNMIK increasingly focused on strategic trust-building, supporting locally-owned processes and helping to enable progress in ongoing dialogues, with a focus on women and youth empowerment. In Cyprus, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continued to liaise and engage with relevant authorities on both sides to address tensions in and around the buffer zone, thereby avoiding their potential escalation. UNFICYP also shared with relevant parties a proposal for the establishment of a mechanism for direct military-level contacts; in May 2020, the two Cypriot leaders formally confirmed their interest in the proposal.

## **B. Fostering regional approaches to conflict prevention, management and resolution**

26. During the reporting period, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union undertook joint high-level field visits to the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Sudan, along with international partners. The Secretariat and the African Union Commission

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<sup>1</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

conducted regular high-level discussions and horizon-scanning meetings, organized virtually and held with increased frequency amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

27. Recognizing the regional dimension of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the threat posed by foreign armed groups, MONUSCO and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region continued to work together, including on advancing non-military solutions for the demobilization of combatants and supporting the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations carried out several high-profile joint missions with the African Union to support the implementation of the peace agreement and maintain the momentum towards elections in 2020 and 2021. It has also been working with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States and guarantor States from the region to ensure that the peace agreement stays on track. Building on their joint prevention work in the period leading to the 2018 presidential elections, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, the High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel and the representative of ECOWAS worked closely together to facilitate solutions to the political crisis in Mali that followed the 2020 legislative elections. MINUSMA also stepped up its support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which provides the framework for a regional response to common security challenges in the Sahel.

28. In fulfilling their mandates, peacekeeping operations contributed to the implementation of common frameworks for United Nations engagement in their respective regions, including the comprehensive regional prevention strategy for the Horn of Africa for UNMISS, UNAMID and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel for MINUSMA. MONUSCO contributed to the development by the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of a strategy for the subregion.

### **C. Strengthening analysis and planning**

29. Given the multidimensional challenges presented by conflicts, it is critical for the United Nations system, including peacekeeping operations and United Nations country teams, to work in concert to maximize the individual and collective impact on the ground. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment System, by collecting data on performance, is contributing to strengthening planning and analysis. An ongoing review of United Nations integration is considering strategic, operational and behavioural challenges to cross-pillar collaboration, as well as the impact of existing tools on the coherence of the system. The review will subsequently inform a review and revision of the Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning, the Integrated Assessment and Planning Handbook and other instruments that contribute to integrated and cross-pillar action to achieve and sustain peace.

30. In pursuit of the Secretary-General's commitment in the Declaration of Shared Commitments, the Department of Peace Operations has commissioned two publicly available independent studies on the practice of mandate prioritization and sequencing. The studies inform the ongoing development of a paper on parameters for prioritization and sequencing, and of recommendations for action by the Security Council.

## **D. The way forward**

31. Where mandated, peacekeeping missions have promoted political solutions and peace processes. While there has been some progress in the implementation of peace agreements at the national level in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan, as well as in Darfur, localized intercommunal violence remains a concern. Missions will continue to advocate for and support inclusive peace processes and agreements that address the root causes of conflicts at the local as well as the national level, including through community-level conflict prevention and management.

32. Concerns around political and economic marginalization and governance, whether at the national or the local level, increasingly seem to be at the centre of popular grievances and remain a driver of conflict. To consolidate peace and security, missions support host countries, at the national and local levels, to promote accountable, inclusive and transparent policies, institutions and processes and address corruption, where relevant.

33. Finally, given the continuously growing regionalization of conflict and conflict drivers, building partnerships in support of peace processes, both within respective regions and within the wider international community, will be essential for their success. Engagement with Member States, directly and through their regional organizations, will remain a critical element of a successful peacekeeping strategy.

## **V. Women and peace and security**

### **A. Ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace processes**

34. Peacekeeping missions continued to partner with women leaders and networks to ensure their full and meaningful participation in all stages of peace and political processes, as well as in protection, local conflict resolution mechanisms and actions to sustain peace. In Mali, for example, MINUSMA, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the European Union, supported a high-level forum with the signatories to the peace agreement in January 2020, leading to four women from signatory parties formally participating in the June meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee. During the meeting, the parties further committed to each include three women in their delegation at the next Committee session. In 2019, women's representation in formal implementation and monitoring mechanisms of the peace agreement in the Central African Republic increased to 23 per cent at the local level and 17 per cent at the national level, with the national committees on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform demonstrating higher participation of women. In South Sudan, UNMISS continued to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention, resulting in 29 per cent participation by women in local peace negotiations. In the Sudan, UNAMID supported the establishment of the Darfur women's platform to advocate for the inclusion of Darfuri women in the peace process and the political transition.

### **B. Integration of a gender perspective into analysis, planning, implementation and reporting**

35. Missions continued to integrate the women and peace and security agenda across functions. UNMISS, for example, provided strategic support and capacity-

building to increase the ability of national justice institutions to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence and supported the implementation of mobile courts in remote and underserved parts of South Sudan to process over 260 cases, resulting in 136 convictions. Across peacekeeping contexts, women formed an average of 36 per cent of beneficiaries of community violence reduction projects in 2019/20.

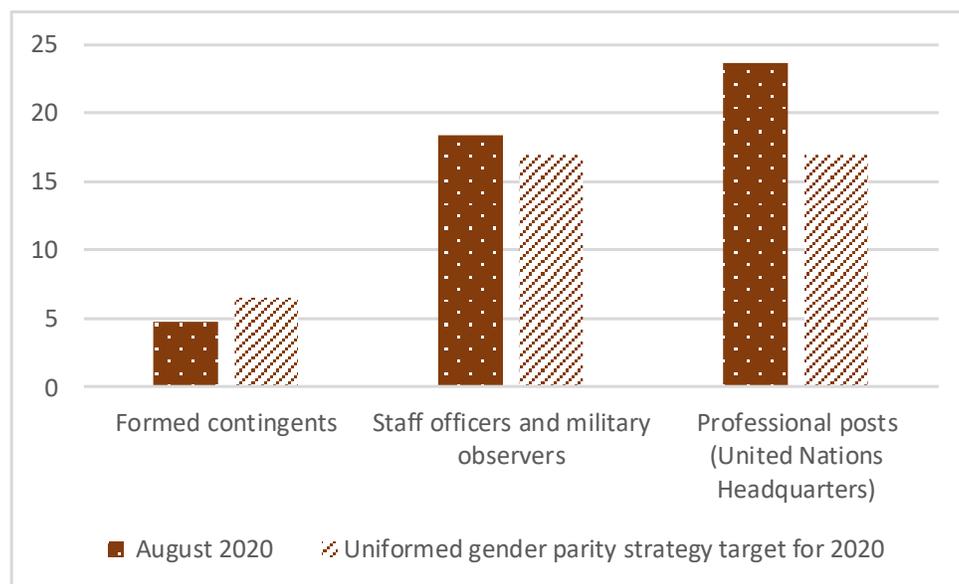
36. Through the adoption of data-driven evidence generation across the missions, there has been improved gendered conflict analysis and identification of threats and risks across the missions. This analysis has informed awareness of and early warning on violence that is targeted at or disproportionately affects women and girls, especially in conflict situations, as well as the gendered impacts of COVID-19, resulting in the reprioritization and reallocation of resources towards responses addressing sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, including trust-building initiatives. To this end, specialized United Nations police teams in UNMISS and MINUSCA, for example, ramped up related early warning, training and advisory services to national institutions.

### C. Gender parity

37. Efforts in coordination with troop- and police-contributing countries and countries providing justice and corrections personnel continue to make improvements in the number of uniformed women deployed. As of August 2020, most targets for 2020 set in the uniformed gender parity strategy 2018–2028 for the number of women deployed as military, police, and justice and corrections personnel had been met or surpassed (see figures I-III). An exception is the number of women in formed contingents, which traditionally have had very few women members, where slow improvement is shown. To make progress in this category and others, the United Nations relies on Member States, who are responsible for the force generation of personnel in contingents, to recruit and retain more women at the national level.

Figure I  
**Representation of women deployed as United Nations military personnel against uniformed gender parity strategy targets for 2020**

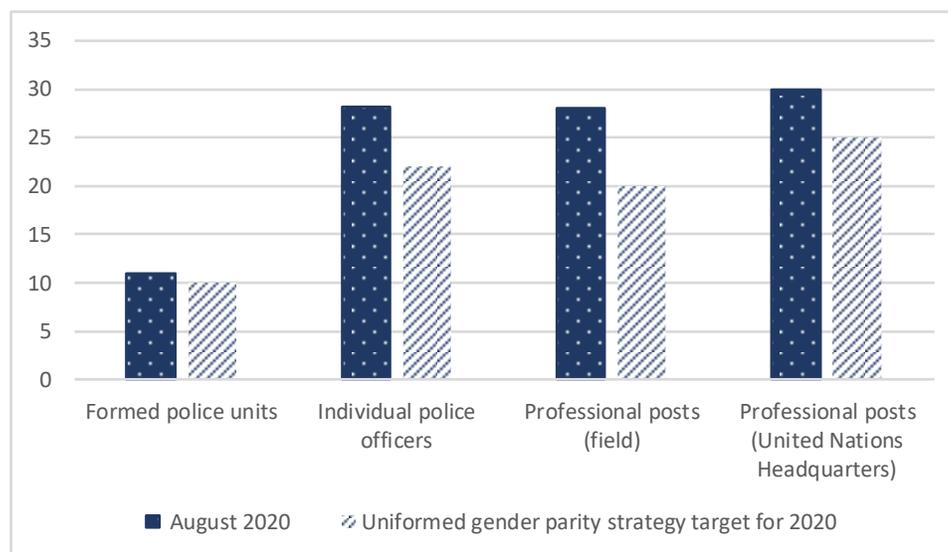
(Percentage)



38. For United Nations police, the greatest increase in the representation of women was in Professional posts in the field. In addition, at the mission leadership level, the gender balance among police personnel is close to parity, with women deployed or onboarding in 45 per cent of senior police leadership positions.

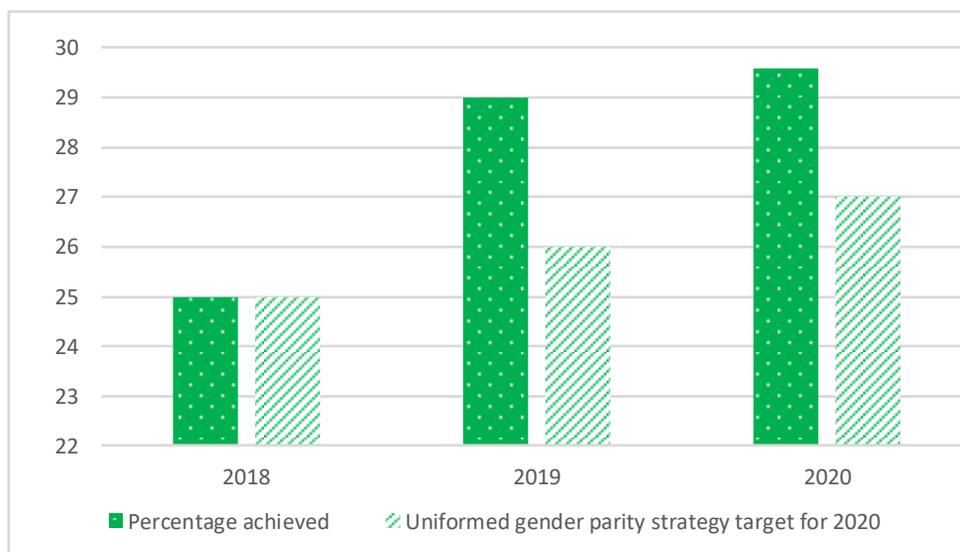
Figure II  
**Representation of women deployed as United Nations police against uniformed gender parity strategy targets for 2020**

(Percentage)



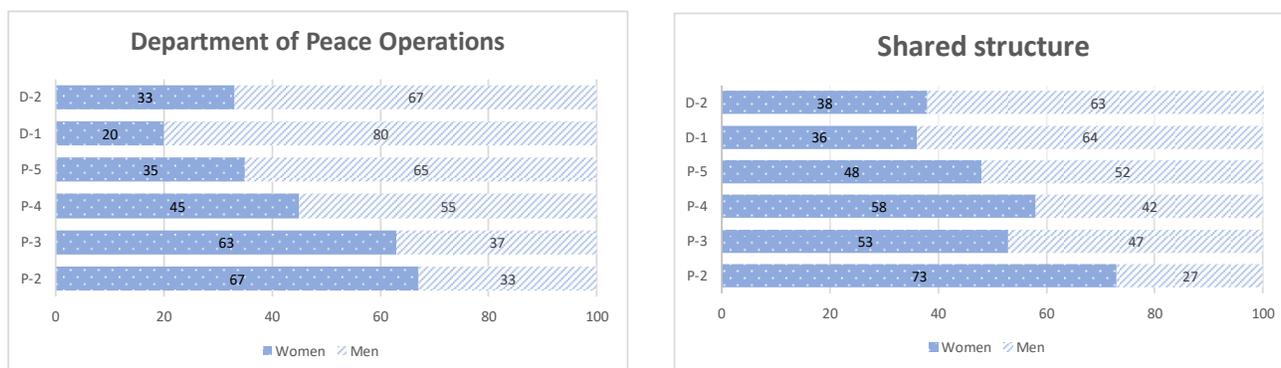
39. Efforts have also been made to increase nominations of women justice and corrections experts. As of August 2020, 29.6 per cent of deployed government-provided personnel were women (see figure III), exceeding targets set in the uniformed gender parity strategy despite a significant reduction in new deployments owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts have included calls for women-only nominations of justice and corrections officers, predeployment training sessions for women and a train-the-trainer exercise that helped to build a cadre of women trainers.

**Figure III**  
**Representation of women deployed as Government-provided justice and corrections personnel against uniformed gender parity strategy targets**  
 (Percentage)



40. Although gender parity in civilian staff has been reached in overall figures in the Department of Peace Operations and the shared structure at Headquarters, further progress is still necessary to achieve gender parity from the P-4 to D-2 levels in the Department and at the D-1 and D-2 levels in the shared structure. Gender parity was achieved at the P-5 level in the shared structure in 2020 (see figure IV). Significant challenges remain to reaching parity in the field. As of August 2020, women made up 22.3 per cent of civilian staff serving in peacekeeping operations. Targeted efforts are under way, including to make rosters more gender-balanced, with qualified female candidates, and to leverage upcoming retirements to improve gender parity.

**Figure IV**  
**Gender distribution in the Department of Peace Operations and the shared structure at Headquarters (civilian staff) as of August 2020**  
 (Percentage)



41. Outreach efforts to advance women’s representation and geographical balance in senior mission leadership positions have also been pursued. As of August 2020, eight women were serving as female heads and deputy heads of peacekeeping missions and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (equivalent to 35 per

cent). A second global call for nominations for generic head of mission and deputy head of mission positions was made, and efforts have also continued to ensure that newly appointed senior leaders receive in-briefing and are offered the opportunity to participate in the leadership partnering initiative, a mentoring programme designed to pair new appointees. In addition, the senior women talent pipeline initiative has supported the placement of 41 candidates from P-5 to Under-Secretary-General level since its establishment, 78 per cent of whom were to United Nations peace operations.

#### **D. The way forward**

42. Ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in political processes is vital to finding sustainable solutions to conflict; furthermore, the positive contribution made to the implementation of mission mandates by the increased representation of women in peacekeeping operations is clear. Looking forward, the United Nations will continue to pursue and maintain gender parity targets. It intends to strengthen and systemize data-driven analysis and measures to inform the integration of gender equality and women and peace and security outcomes into the strategic planning, resource allocation and decision-making processes of missions. It will work to enhance evidence-based communication, advocacy and knowledge management in all internal and external engagements to showcase the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and will accelerate the full and meaningful participation of women leaders and networks as equal partners in advancing political and peace processes at all levels of decision-making. Member States should support these efforts and advocate for the full inclusion of women in peace processes, governance and the rule of law and security sectors, as well as supporting efforts to increase the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels.

## **VI. Protection**

### **A. Overview**

43. Notwithstanding that the primary responsibility to protect civilians rests with host States, the effective implementation of mandates to promote and protect human rights, protect civilians, prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence and protect children in armed conflict remained a high priority for peacekeeping operations. Faced with complex protection challenges in peacekeeping settings, these complementary mandates were advanced under a mutually reinforcing three-tiered approach: protection through dialogue and engagement, provision of physical protection and establishment of a protective environment. Missions also continued to assume an important coordination role.

44. Over the reporting period, significant efforts were undertaken to finalize and promulgate formal guidance materials to strengthen peacekeeping capacities, enhance awareness, clarify roles and responsibilities, further develop integration and complementarity in the work of respective mission components, and ensure a standardized approach to the implementation of protection mandates. These materials include a revised protection of civilians policy, the first United Nations policy on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence, handbooks on the protection of civilians, conflict-related sexual violence and child protection and the first United Nations guidance material on casualty recording. A number of mission-specific protection-related strategies and guidance documents were also developed, and in-mission, context-specific, scenario-based trainings were conducted.

## **B. Protection through dialogue and engagement**

45. Peacekeeping operations have placed emphasis on dialogue and engagement at both the national and local levels to prevent, mitigate and address protection threats, including by utilizing remote modalities in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. MINUSCA advocated with peace agreement signatories to adhere to their commitments and engaged with armed groups to establish local weapon-free zones. UNAMID engagement led the Sudanese Armed Forces to prohibit the recruitment of children, and MINUSMA supported the creation of a security consultation network, bringing together local authorities, security actors and civil society. In several missions, community liaison assistants continued to play a critical role in engaging communities and supporting dialogue initiatives. Missions' strategic communications capacities continued to support protection mandates, responding to COVID-19 restrictions by adapting to new means, such as radio and social media.

46. Joint advocacy by missions with the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and for Children and Armed Conflict resulted in the Framework of Cooperation of the Sudan and the United Nations on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Conflict, the adoption by the Central African Republic of a child protection code and the adoption by South Sudan of an action plan to prevent violations against children. Engagement by UNMISS and the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict with the pro-Riek Machar Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition to call for compliance with their unilateral communiqué of 2014 resulted in the release of 78 women and 50 children, many of whom had been subjected to rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage. Advocacy continues for those still held and for accountability for those crimes to deter further violations.

## **C. Provision of physical protection**

47. Systematic monitoring and reporting on human rights violations, including the recording of civilian casualties, conflict-related sexual violence and violations against children, remain key activities for missions, feeding into risk analysis, threat assessments, early warning and physical protection strategies. There has been a focus on improving data collection and analysis to enhance evidence-based decision-making. UNMISS developed a data-driven tool for real-time identification of critical hotspots, and MINUSMA piloted a data analysis tool to assess the impact of force operations. UNISFA, in collaboration with civil society, identified gender-specific conflict triggers, while analysis by UNAMID identified remaining hotspots. Monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence established in five missions improved data availability and quality and led to an increase in targeted patrolling.

48. More effective implementation of protection mandates was also pursued through the adoption of mission-wide initiatives. MONUSCO established mobile teams for the protection of civilians to roll out a toolkit to field offices to improve threat assessments and the planning of capacity. UNAMID has enabled national authorities to address and process increasing incidents of intercommunal violence in a manner that abides by the rule of law, by promoting institutions that directly advance accountability and serve as a tool to build trust in the Government of the Sudan. MINUSMA is reorienting resources through the Mission's adaptation plan, with a mobile task force planned to better project force nationwide.

49. Peacekeeping operations supported physical protection in numerous other ways, including by assisting to protect human rights defenders, journalists, victims and

witnesses. Mine action components facilitated patrols and humanitarian assistance by clearing explosive ordnance and supported the destruction of confiscated weapons in protection of civilians sites in South Sudan.

#### **D. Establishment of a protective environment**

50. Peacekeeping operations continued to contribute to protective environments. Community violence reduction programmes, including to prevent the recruitment of at-risk youth by armed groups, were implemented in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and the Sudan. Support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes mitigated threats emanating from former combatants. The rule of law was supported through transitional justice processes, with MINUSCA advising on the development of draft legislation and various capacity-building and institutional reform efforts, including support for the criminal justice institutions and the Special Criminal Court to investigate serious crimes. MINUSCA also trained prison officers and armed groups on command responsibility for conflict-related sexual violence and supported implementation of the national security sector reform strategy. MONUSCO assisted host State police services in advancing institutional reform plans. MINUSMA focused on enhancing respect for human rights while countering terrorism, and assisted national authorities to deliver more gender-responsive security services. UNMISS strengthened the capacity of military judge advocates, who were subsequently deployed in trials related to serious human rights violations, and supported the establishment of a joint coordination office for child protection for parties to the peace agreement.

51. While impunity for serious crimes remains a significant challenge in all host countries, there were some notable achievements through support provided to the criminal justice chain. MINUSCA efforts saw the adjudication of 49 cases of serious crimes, while UNMISS-supported mobile courts near protection of civilians sites heard almost 300 cases. MONUSCO provided logistical and technical support to judicial authorities in their investigation of cases and strengthened efforts to apply gendered analysis and approaches to protection threats. Missions continue to bolster early warning and analysis, particularly at the local level, for improved situational awareness, with an increased focus on preventive action. Intensifying strategic communications on peacekeeping activities at large while addressing misinformation and disinformation targeting civilians (and peacekeepers) remains a priority. Adequately resourced specialized protection functions are needed to support these efforts, as the prosecution of grave violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including for crimes of sexual violence, contributed to the conviction of over 200 individuals. Missions have also supported efforts to strengthen civilian capacities to ensure safe, secure and humane detention facilities, including for high-risk prisoners, through, inter alia, human rights-based prison incident and security management strategies to address mass escapes and riots.

#### **E. The way forward**

52. The successful implementation of protection mandates is a joint responsibility. Advocacy for accountability with regard to national commitments has to be strengthened and translated into tangible actions. Missions can support this process by prioritizing the whole-of-mission mainstreaming of protection mandates in the capacity development of host country actors. A priority policy issue for the United Nations is how to ensure that protection threats are addressed during transitions. Finally, missions will be expected to continue to address the amplifying effect of COVID-19 on those most at risk.

## **VII. Safety and security**

### **A. Safety of peacekeepers**

53. COVID-19 has exacerbated the complexity of security risks, challenged the capability and resilience of national security services and created opportunities for non-State actors. Despite the impact of COVID-19, including movement restrictions imposed by national authorities, missions continue to deliver on mandated activities.

54. Despite the best efforts to implement strict prevention measures, 18 personnel serving in United Nations field missions had succumbed to COVID-19-related illnesses as at 26 October 2020. The number of confirmed cases among the more than 115,000 United Nations field personnel remains relatively low, however. Significant efforts continue to deliver on duty of care. Virtual crisis management exercises and remote support efforts are ongoing to assist missions to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

55. Health data show that peacekeepers suffer more injuries and harm from accidents and illness owing to workplace safety issues than they do from security events. To meet duty of care to peacekeepers, a comprehensive Secretariat-wide occupational safety and health framework is in place. One key achievement in this framework has been the development of an incident reporting system to collect data on how and where incidents and accidents occur.

### **B. Security trends and action plan to improve the security of peacekeepers**

56. Ensuring implementation of the action plan for improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers has contributed to a sustained decrease in the fatalities of uniformed peacekeepers resulting from malicious acts, from 58 in 2017 to 27 in 2018, 23 in 2019 and 9 as at 28 October 2020.

57. The fourth iteration of the action plan covered the focus areas of base defence and force protection, training and performance evaluation, mobility and flexibility, peacekeeping-intelligence, integrated trauma care and fully integrated planning and operations, which were further expanded, in line with the current operating environment, to actionable to-do recommendations.

58. A number of policy and guidance documents were revised, including the casualty evacuation policy, the policy on authority, command and control in United Nations peacekeeping operations, the policy on joint mission analysis centres, the standard operating procedures on formed police unit performance evaluations and the first combined guidance on military and police coordination mechanisms. Progress continues on standardizing the United Nations military decision-making process and the development of force protection guidelines to support integrated force protection planning for United Nations camps. Progress has also been achieved in United Nations military doctrine development to address ammunition management concerns and strengthen infantry, engineer and explosive ordnance disposal military unit standards, allowing for the development of standardized criteria for over 93 per cent of all military personnel deployed in peacekeeping missions. Additional guidance and handbooks are being developed to address cross-cutting requirements for planning and conducting operations, including on the integration of human rights, environmental management and civil-military coordination.

59. The Office of Military Affairs has institutionalized 90 of 130 identified actions and subactions to strengthen safety and security, while 40 are still in progress. A clear,

comprehensive and transparent procedure on caveats for military components is in the process of being finalized. At the same time, the performance task force of the Police Division for formed police units constantly monitors the workplans of the United Nations police components to implement safety and security measures, and, with support from the Police Division, United Nations police components have reviewed their planning and operational posture in response to COVID-19 and have increased their support to host State police, with the intention of strengthening their outreach to communities.

60. Force protection is being strengthened through technology, better coordination and scenario-specific rehearsals. Situational awareness and crisis response have been key areas of focus, with missions now undertaking coherent operations informed by peacekeeping-intelligence. Coordination with host authorities on the provision of security to United Nations personnel has also been enhanced.

61. Although the workshop planned for 2020 on the action plan with UNMISS, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, MINUSMA and UNAMID was postponed owing to COVID-19, engagement with the missions to continue implementation of the action plan continued through other means. Leadership at Headquarters and in the missions continue to prioritize implementation of workstreams to strengthen the security of United Nations peacekeepers. Implementation of the action plan is a work in progress and will remain a priority throughout the 2021/22 period.

### **C. Accountability for criminal acts against United Nations peacekeepers**

62. While investigating and prosecuting these crimes is fundamentally the responsibility of host States, the United Nations has continued to provide support in accordance with national and international criminal justice and human rights norms and standards. In the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, where 78 per cent of peacekeeper fatalities from malicious acts have been recorded since 1 January 2013, there has been an increase in the number of alleged perpetrators identified (from 170 in October 2019 to 194 in May 2020); an increase in the number of alleged perpetrators detained (from 119 in October 2019 to 136 in May 2020); and an increase in the number of cases with confirmed national investigations (from 83 in October 2019 to 97 in May 2020). In a notable development, six individuals were convicted in January and February 2020 for the killing of 11 MINUSCA peacekeepers in 2016 and 2017. The working group led by the Department of Peace Operations on accountability for serious crimes against peacekeepers has continued to provide assistance to address this matter, with a focus on developments in the three above-mentioned countries.

### **D. Situational awareness and peacekeeping-intelligence**

63. The capacity of peacekeeping missions for situational awareness continues to be strengthened through the community-oriented approach of the Police Division, the ongoing support of the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre and the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Secretariat, and the expansion of missions' use of the Unite Aware incidents database system ("Sage") and related data analytics work. With regard to peacekeeping-intelligence, progress has been made in the provision of critical operational guidance. Missions have recently been issued with the peacekeeping-intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance staff handbook and guidelines on the acquisition of information from human sources for peacekeeping-intelligence. Training material for United Nations military intelligence

officers is available online, with the potential to enhance Member State instruction on matters of military peacekeeping-intelligence. In this context, already-established mission peacekeeping-intelligence coordination mechanisms – in MINUSMA, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and UNMISS – continue to ensure that all efforts by in-mission peacekeeping-intelligence actors are coordinated effectively and efficiently.

## **E. The way forward**

64. While progress has been made in upholding the safety and security of peacekeepers, much remains to be done. Going forward, the Secretariat will maintain the impetus on the implementation of the action plan on improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers, including force protection and camp defence, reinforced medical standards, enhanced ammunition safety, improvised explosive device threat mitigation, training and care.

65. More work is also needed to strengthen the safety of peacekeepers, including by implementing the occupational safety and health framework. Operationally, the pursuance of mobile and agile operations with improved situational awareness, effective tactical peacekeeping-intelligence and proactive area domination continues to be required to enable missions to carry out their mandated activities, especially with regard to the protection of civilians, and to strengthen the defence of bases.

66. Emphasis will also be placed on undertaking information security assessments, as well as assessments on the management and handling of information. In addition, to support the strategic goals of strengthening interoperability and information security, focus will be placed on monitoring and providing support in achieving a high level of compliance with established standards and the architecture and policies of field missions as a means to manage and obviate risk to personnel, resources and mandate implementation.

## **VIII. Performance and accountability**

### **A. Ensuring the highest level of peacekeeping performance**

67. The performance of peacekeeping operations continues to be strengthened, including by enhancing the flexibility and responsiveness of missions. For example, following the endorsement of the MINUSMA adaptation plan by the Security Council in January 2020, the Secretariat encouraged troop- and police-contributing countries to deploy the capabilities needed for its success. During a force generation conference in May, troop- and police-contributing countries made pledges that would potentially fulfil the Mission's intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability requirements. The Secretariat is pursuing its outreach to fill critical helicopter gaps. The COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the political crisis, impacted on the adaptation plan, including by delaying infrastructure projects for camp extension. MINUSMA worked to mitigate these challenges and continue implementation of its adaptation plan.

#### **1. Integrated performance policy framework**

68. The integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework was finalized in September 2020. The framework is the culmination of several years' efforts to enhance the Secretariat's ability to measure and improve performance and accountability across all components of missions: civilian, police and military. The

framework brings the available performance evaluation tools together to improve coherence, identify gaps and help to track further progress where needed.

69. Throughout the development of the framework, consultations took place with missions, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the Security Council and troop- and police-contributing countries. The document includes measures for all categories of personnel, as well as senior managers, and has clear standards linked to mandate implementation. It has an objective methodology based on benchmarks, and it details accountability measures for underperformance, as well as incentives and recognition for outstanding performance.

70. The framework also reaffirms that the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates is contingent upon many critical factors, including well-defined, realistic and achievable mandates, political will, leadership, performance and accountability at all levels, adequate resources, policy, planning and operational guidelines, and training. It further emphasizes that peacekeeping performance is a collective effort that involves Member States, including host States, the Secretariat and missions, each with their own distinct responsibilities for performance.

71. Building on the commitment made by the Secretary-General during a high-level event on peacekeeping performance in December 2019, the framework will also help to strengthen linkages between initiatives and identify areas where additional efforts are required. Given the broad scope of the framework and its applicability to all peacekeepers, its implementation will require the combined efforts of and strong ownership across the Departments of Peace Operations, Operational Support and Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and Member States.

## **2. Comprehensive Performance Assessment System**

72. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment System has been launched in eight missions – MINUSCA, UNMISS, UNIFIL, UNFICYP, MONUSCO, MINUSMA, UNMIK and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara – and is being launched virtually in UNAMID. Missions have successfully started to collect quarterly data, which allows them to identify and assess trends over time. In UNFICYP, MINUSCA and UNIFIL, evidence-based recommendations have been put to the leadership to concretely strengthen operations in response to changes in context or assessments of where the mission is performing well and where it is not having the intended impact.

73. In the light of the ongoing pandemic, most missions have extended the System's results framework to capture the mission's role in supporting the efforts of national Governments to prevent the disease from spreading further.

74. Comprehensive Performance Assessment System results frameworks, as well as performance assessments, are increasingly being used to inform other mission planning tools, including the results-based budgeting framework. Missions are also beginning to use data from the System to strengthen reporting to Headquarters and Member States, which in turn will strengthen accountability.

## **B. Strengthening accountability for performance**

### **1. Performance assessment of civilian personnel and leadership**

75. In order to strengthen performance among mid- to senior-level mission support staff, the Departments of Peace Operations and Operational Support have been working on the development of the Enhanced Training for High-level Operational Support programme, which will replace the Senior Mission Administration and Resource Training programme and will use a blended approach of e-learning and one

face-to-face workshop. The programme, which will be rolled out in 2021, will focus on the new operational support framework of the Department of Operational Support, which is aimed at strengthening mandate delivery through empowerment, decentralization, integration and simplification of regulations and rules. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mission Advanced Staff Training programme and the senior mission leaders course have been postponed.

76. A new performance management approach is being piloted in the Secretariat. This approach increases the focus on promoting behavioural changes by: (a) enabling a more agile approach; (b) fostering a culture of ongoing dialogue and feedback; (c) enabling goal alignment and a shift from compliance to performance management; and (d) promoting collaboration and greater accountability for results across teams. Ongoing dialogue and feedback are designed to enhance the engagement of staff, ensure good performance and address performance issues, if any, in a proactive manner as they occur and therefore deal with underperformance issues immediately. An initial pilot was conducted across six departments and offices and three missions in 2019/20. Lessons learned will be identified from the pilot to inform enhancements to the performance management framework, including related policy changes, in order to foster a culture of continuous dialogue between managers and staff, promote collaboration and strengthen accountability for results. Enhancements would be targeted to begin roll-out for the 2021/22 performance cycle.

77. In 2018 and 2019, peacekeeping missions met the target of an average 120-day recruitment timeline established by the General Assembly, owing primarily to extensive use of the recruit-from-roster modality to fill international vacancies. The rostering process, which is managed by Headquarters for generic job openings, frontloads the full mandated assessment and clearance process of candidates. Having these ready pools of pre-assessed candidates, based on a robust workforce planning and forecasting methodology, continues to contribute significantly to reduced recruitment timelines in peacekeeping operations by ensuring that staffing needs in the dynamic field environment are met.

78. Since 2019, the Secretariat has also launched two specialized initiatives focused on streamlining and improving the recruitment and onboarding processes for civilian staff with a view to accelerating the effective use of innovative technologies. The improvements enable peacekeeping missions to more efficiently manage and fill vacant positions by providing a seamless and technologically-assisted process that benefits candidates, human resources practitioners and hiring managers alike. Full use of the new tools can reduce the lead times between job openings, recruitment and the start of duty of the selected candidate.

## **2. Integrated performance assessment of uniformed personnel**

79. Assessing and improving the performance of personnel from troop- and police-contributing countries remains a priority. Military units are assessed by force and sector commanders in a structured, systemic manner. The results of the assessment, including recommendations for improvement, are shared with the evaluated unit and result in a performance improvement plan. From 2021, the military performance evaluation framework will be expanded to include performance of military headquarters in field missions at the force, sector and brigade levels to ensure effective mandate implementation by the military component at all levels.

80. With respect to in-mission assessments, the Police Division's task force on formed police units continued to verify and analyse assessment findings and to engage with Member States on shortfalls, the replacement of non-serviceable items and other performance-related issues.

81. Integrated assessments both of formed military and police units also incorporate contingent-owned equipment performance measures reported against General Assembly-agreed reimbursement standards, as well as metrics for risk and temporary operating base premiums. With the objective of comprehensively assessing and addressing performance issues, performance trends, as well as performance issues with individual units, are examined at quarterly and monthly meetings at Headquarters.

## **C. Working with Member States to strengthen the performance of uniformed personnel**

### **1. Strategic force generation**

82. The Secretariat continued to work closely with Member States to maintain a range of units at different levels of readiness for deployment, with a total of 253 pledges registered in the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System as of September 2020. During the reporting period, 12 military and police units were verified as ready for rapid deployment. For the first time, two units were called up from the System's rapid deployment level and were successfully made available to be deployed to a mission within the required timeline of 60 days. Owing to COVID-19-related travel restrictions, a concept for remote assessment and advisory visits and for remote rapid deployment level verification visits was formulated.

83. The Secretariat organized a force generation conference in May 2020 to obtain support from Member States for the generation of specialized critical capabilities as part of the MINUSMA force adaptation plan, during which 10 critical pledges were made. The Secretariat has also worked closely with the Co-Chairs of the Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference process, in particular the Republic of Korea as the next host, to set objectives and begin planning for the preparatory conferences and the Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference to be held in April 2021.

### **2. Predeployment preparations**

84. The Secretariat continued to strengthen its framework for predeployment preparations to support troop- and police-contributing countries and its own efforts to ensure the timely and qualified deployment of military and police units. In addition to a revised standard operating procedure for assessment and advisory visits, a manual for the generation and deployment of military units to peacekeeping missions is in the final stages of approval.

85. For new deployments, as well as for rotations of units with previously identified performance shortfalls, the operational readiness of military units is validated during predeployment visits through a military skill validation tool that is based on standardized criteria. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person predeployment visits were suspended. To mitigate this situation, the Secretariat developed comprehensive interim procedures for the verification of military and police units prior to final acceptance for deployment or rotation. This process included the remote military skill validation, as well as predeployment training and conduct and discipline assessments. The remote military skill validation concept includes online training for national evaluators and strategic training partners (where possible), with third-party involvement to ensure objective assessments. Experience gained during this phase will be used to develop future standardized training for troop-contributing country evaluators.

86. Noting the importance of predeployment assessments and validations in deploying operationally capable and qualified individual police officers and units to enhance performance, new guidance was issued on specialized police teams and the

guidance on the predeployment assessment of individual police officers was revised. Upon the partial resumption of rotations on 1 July 2020, the Police Division undertook in-person predeployment visits to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan and Senegal, where a hybrid model of in-person and virtual training, assessments and evaluations has been piloted.

87. The Department of Peace Operations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued efforts to implement the human rights readiness framework by connecting and strengthening existing force generation processes to ensure that uniformed personnel are prepared to uphold and promote human rights. The revised standard operating procedure on assessment and advisory visits also integrated human rights parameters.

88. On the medical front, the Department of Operational Support has developed United Nations standards on buddy first aid and field medic assistance. Training courses have been conducted to train master trainers from troop- and police-contributing countries who can then train United Nations peacekeepers in their own countries.

89. The Mine Action Service continued to provide capacity-building and technical equipment to peacekeeping missions operating in environments with high explosive threats. In Mali, the Service provided predeployment and in-mission training and mentoring to nine infantry battalions, two combat convoy companies, five formed police units and two explosive ordnance disposal companies.

### **3. Capacity-building and training**

90. Military and police courses delivered in 2019 and 2020 benefited from the inclusion of trainers from Member States in Secretariat-led mobile training teams, increasing both training capacity and regional, gender and language diversity. Because of COVID-19-related suspensions of in-person training activities, many training programmes of the Department of Peace Operations had to be postponed in 2020.

91. The postponement of training activities allowed the Department of Peace Operations to refocus efforts on the development of new training materials. New predeployment training materials for military observers, military intelligence officers, explosive ordnance disposal military units and formed police unit command staff, and, for formed police units, predeployment training materials on the comprehensive protection of civilians, have been disseminated to troop- and police-contributing countries. In addition, the Department is developing a training module on a training-of-trainer methodology that will be rolled out to Member States and mission trainers beginning in 2021. Within the framework of the United Nations police training architecture programme, the training-of-trainer module, together with the revised specialized predeployment training materials for police, are being piloted.

92. The light coordination mechanism continued to engage with training and capacity-building providers and recipients to communicate gaps, identify opportunities and facilitate partnerships to improve the performance of troop- and police-contributing countries. Guidance was under development to assist troop- and police-contributing countries in capturing best practices and lessons learned from their deployment to peace operations. The mechanism has also coordinated the provision of COVID-19-related support, such as personal protective and medical equipment, and is currently facilitating discussions between Member States and the Secretariat on a standardized approach to training support, including mobile training teams.

93. The United Nations police training architecture programme, led by the Department of Peace Operations and with the participation of Member States and United Nations entities, as well as regional organizations, has advanced significantly. The programme aims to ensure that United Nations police are operationally

competent and effectively implement mandated tasks based on the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing, international human rights norms, gender considerations and environmental standards. The global roll-out of each programme will start in 2021 and will include “train and certify the instructors” courses in both English and French.

## **D. Providing effective support to peacekeeping operations**

### **1. Supporting peacekeeping missions**

94. In close coordination with the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support modified the letter of assist process for the generation of Member State-provided military aviation capabilities. The revised process includes a consistent, transparent and measurable methodology with the establishment of minimum requirements at the onset of a process, and well before engagement with potential providers. The assessment of the requirement and the determination to proceed through a letter of assist will be determined through a combined Department of Peace Operations/Department of Operational Support letter of assist advisory board. This review board will facilitate the decision-making process to ensure the identification and generation of the appropriate resources to meet the field operational requirements. The review process also includes the identification of any discrepancies in meeting established criteria, including any known caveats associated with the offer.

95. The Secretariat seeks the support of all troop- and police-contributing countries to eliminate any and all undeclared caveats. Limitations, restrictions and conditions imposed by a troop- or police-contributing country on its deployed formed capabilities impede the ability of the commanders on the ground to do what is required and adversely impact the effectiveness and efficiency of mandate implementation. The definition of caveats and a clear, comprehensive and transparent procedure on caveats for military components is being incorporated into the forthcoming United Nations military manual. A mechanism has been established to obtain undeclared caveats from the force headquarters of each mission on a quarterly basis so that the Secretariat can engage with the respective troop-contributing countries. No caveats were reported by troop-contributing countries for the first and second quarters of 2020, a positive result of efforts by the Department of Peace Operations and those countries to avoid caveats that have a detrimental impact on mandate implementation and performance.

### **2. Medical standards and capabilities**

96. The Department of Operational Support has introduced health-care quality and patient safety standards for all health-care facilities in missions above the level I plus level. Hospital commanders were trained on the implementation of the standards, and assessments of hospitals, including of COVID-19 response readiness, have been carried out virtually owing to COVID-19-related travel restrictions. A hospital assessment tool has been developed, through which compliance of these health facilities with United Nations medical standards and capabilities is monitored. Hospitals are required to undergo this evaluation in the fifth and tenth month of their rotation. United Nations standards have been developed to assess level IV referral hospitals to ensure that they provide the best care to all United Nations personnel. The Secretariat has instituted a credentialing process for all medical personnel and equipment deployed in field missions, the goal being to ensure that United Nations medical personnel practice within their competency framework.

### **3. Aviation**

97. The Department of Operational Support continued to develop and improve its delivery of critical logistics, operational and military enabling services through integrated planning at both the procurement and operational phases. This planning allows for a full and simultaneous consideration of both logistics and military requirements, in order to source and operate the most cost-efficient and operationally effective fleet. A key example is in the area of airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and unmanned aircraft systems services: using a newly developed methodology, all airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and/or unmanned aircraft systems operational requirements are captured in a statement of operational requirements, which allows for the determination of, among other elements, the most cost-effective and efficient solution and as to whether a new system or service would be sourced from military contributors or from the commercial market. These details, based on a multitude of factors, such as cost, time, capability, logistics requirements, deployment threat and necessary intelligence architecture, not only inform what will be required for the solicitation and force generation, but also provide decision-making guidance to United Nations leadership to determine whether the sourcing route taken will be military or commercial. The implementation of a category management concept is also ongoing, in order to implement such improved planning and sourcing methodologies into all technical business areas within the Department, including air operations, and a completed and approved strategy is expected by the second quarter of 2021.

### **4. Supporting innovative approaches to equipment serviceability and sustainability**

98. The Secretariat remains committed to helping troop- and police-contributing countries to bridge capability gaps in deployed formed units. In addition to the customary arrangements (for example, wet-lease or dry-lease options between the Organization and one or more troop- and police-contributing countries), capability gaps arising from the non-deployment or unavailability of contingent-owned equipment may be met through bilateral arrangements between Member States to provide equipment, training and maintenance services. Under such arrangements, Member States may separately provide formed personnel and contingent-owned equipment, or deploy together as a joint contingent. The level of reimbursement for these different arrangements is determined by the General Assembly.

99. To address the concerns of Member States on delays in the deployment of military and police units to peacekeeping missions, the Department of Operational Support has created a project team to identify critical chokepoints and recommend solutions. The establishment of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, along with the standard statements of unit requirements, has done much to help to reduce the time taken from the offer of deployment until the arrival of the units. The Department has developed an action matrix to shorten the time required for the procurement and cargo movement process, and in the next phase will be developing measures to shorten the time taken to select contingents that are ready to deploy. In this phase, the participation of troop- and police-contributing countries in the discussions will be requested to help with the creation of solutions.

### **5. Innovation through technology in peacekeeping**

100. Innovation and modern technologies are increasingly shaping the conflict landscape, and peacekeeping settings are no exception. To adapt and prepare operations for the evolving technology landscape, the Secretariat is developing a peacekeeping technology strategy that will advance the use of technology across

several themes of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative by setting out goals and highlighting areas for Secretariat and external support.

101. Building on the implementation of the Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise (SAGE) platform in 11 peacekeeping missions, the Unite Aware technology platform will further enhance situational awareness in peace operations. After a successful pilot in MINUSCA in 2019, it will be deployed in MINUSMA, UNFICYP and UNMISS throughout 2020.

102. Big data analysis and radio mining projects are being developed in MINUSMA to detect incidents of hate speech against the Mission and its mandate and to inform the Mission leadership on sentiment towards the United Nations. These insights augment mandate implementation by enabling countermeasures to hate speech and the associated incitement to violence, and thereby strengthening the safety and security of United Nations personnel, protecting vulnerable civilian populations and contributing to trust-building.

103. The Unite field remote infrastructure management system captures data on electricity, water and wastewater in real time to support field mission progress towards the environmental vision of the United Nations. Additional benefits include the predictive maintenance of equipment, increased uptime and reduced water, energy and fuel consumption.

104. To support clients in delivering on their mandate in spite of challenges imposed by COVID-19-related restrictions, the Global Service Centre has rolled out augmented reality to peacekeeping operations in a number of areas, including remote verification audits for property management to assist the Board of Auditors; remote environmental assessments; remote technical inspections of vehicles in the Sudan; asset inspections for procurement in the Global Service Centre; and unmanned aircraft systems training for geospatial information systems in the Global Service Centre.

105. Existing policy frameworks for information security in the established technology architecture will be adapted to mission realities and support will be provided in their implementation.

## **E. The way forward**

106. The past year has been one of consolidating the gains made in the peacekeeping performance agenda, as well as setting out the path forward through the development of the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework. This framework will be reviewed regularly by the Secretariat to ensure that peacekeeping performance and accountability are continually enhanced. The upcoming 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference and associated preparatory meetings will provide additional opportunities to engage with Member States on how to continue to work together to improve the collective performance of peacekeeping.

## **IX. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace**

### **A. Strengthening national capacity and ownership**

107. Coherence and collaboration between peacekeeping missions and development actors is critical to building national capacities for addressing conflict and fragility. Integration with United Nations country teams on the basis of comparative advantages continues to be the guiding principle in peacekeeping settings. Partnership between the United Nations and international financial institutions in peacekeeping settings is increasingly prioritized, as those institutions are developing new strategies to help

countries to prevent conflict and transition out of fragility. For example, the World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence enhances its focus on prevention, partnerships, community engagement and the security and justice sectors and is accompanied by new financial and analytical tools for crisis-affected countries.

108. The redoubling of efforts to strengthen national capacities and ownership to prevent conflict and consolidate inclusive peace is at the heart of peacekeeping efforts to strengthen impact. This is advanced through strategic and operational engagement on multiple levels and mandated areas, particularly those affecting governance, human rights, the rule of law and the security sector. Faced with persistent impunity for serious violations and conflict-related crimes, criminal accountability has been an increasingly critical area of support in addressing rule of law deficits in the aftermath of conflict. In Mali, MINUSMA intensified its support to enhance the presence of criminal justice authorities, including through the reopening of courts in the northern and central regions. The Mission, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, assisted the Specialized Judicial Unit to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime to scale up its investigation of 618 cases and improve its regional presence in northern Mali. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA supported the roll-out of the Government's national justice reform strategy and the ongoing "demilitarization" of the prison service policy, including through the recruitment, training and deployment of 300 new prison officers.

109. Missions continue to support efforts to reform and build the capacity of national police services, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where MONUSCO helped to further professionalize the Congolese National Police by training 28,979 officers, of whom 2,747 are women. It also provided technical support to finalize the national police's five-year reform action plan for the period 2020–2024.

110. Missions also support national authorities in establishing inclusive and representative security institutions through national processes and dialogue, including in South Sudan, where the United Nations supports the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and in Mali and the Central African Republic, where authorities receive support for comprehensive security sector reform processes that contribute to ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts. Support provided to national security forces in safe weapons and ammunition management by MINUSCA, UNMISS, MONUSCO and MINUSMA enhances the capacities of national actors to prevent explosive incidents and escalations in violence that may occur from the looting of weapons, ammunition and improvised explosive device precursors.

## **B. Transition planning and analysis**

111. The drawdown of UNAMID alongside the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, as well as the request of the Security Council for other peacekeeping missions to develop transition strategies in consultation with host Governments and United Nations and external partners, highlight the importance of integrated assessment and planning by the United Nations and of coherence with a range of partners. The need to ensure continued support for national capacities to sustain inclusive peace and protect vulnerable populations has led to innovative approaches to mandate delivery and the forward-looking use of resources. In Darfur, the establishment of State liaison functions enabled the provision of "whole of system" support to nationally-led peacebuilding, by addressing critical drivers of conflict, strengthening human rights and rule of law institutions and scaling up support for recovery and development to build resilience and mitigate protection risks. The Peacebuilding Fund scaled up its focus on supporting transitions, with the establishment of a dedicated transition window that

offers strengthened opportunities for coherence and sustainability of peacebuilding efforts; in 2019, 30 per cent of the Fund's portfolio was in transition settings.

112. The Secretary-General's planning directive on United Nations transitions, issued in 2019, provides a framework for stronger integration across missions and United Nations country teams in preparation for mission drawdowns and withdrawals. Cross-pillar support to transition processes is provided through the United Nations Transitions Project of the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations and the Development Coordination Office, the standing capacities of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions in Brindisi, Italy (in terms of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, justice and corrections, police and security sector reform), and the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law.

Figure V

### Work and results of State liaison functions

Through a whole-of-system approach, the State liaison functions are helping to consolidate peacekeeping and peacebuilding investments, enhance system-wide synergies and build capacities of United Nations country teams and national authorities to advance peacebuilding priorities

Enhancing the criminal justice chain to contribute to a sustainable protective environment in 27 priority areas

Strengthening rural courts to address land disputes and other conflict drivers in many hotspot localities, increasingly and more effectively meeting critical justice needs and resolving more than 2,000 cases per year



Transferring skills to more than 3,500 criminal justice professionals on community-oriented policing; access to justice, accountability and child/human rights; and the investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence

Training of more than 950 civil society members, 23 per cent of whom are women, to support criminal justice processes, including through trial monitoring and oversight

Increased confidence in rule of law institutions to contribute to a protective environment through greater awareness and community engagement, including community-oriented policing

### C. Strengthening coherence among United Nations system actors

113. The restructured peace and security pillar provides opportunities for closer alignment with a more agile and integrated development system. It also facilitates increased coherence among United Nations system actors at the country level. Arrangements such as the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law also continue to bolster a "One United Nations" approach to the provision of rule of law assistance. Joint rule of law programmes between peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams are in place in the Central African Republic and Mali, as well as in Darfur, leading to more cohesive and coherent rule of law engagement in mission settings, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution [2447 \(2018\)](#).

114. In his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace ([A/74/976-S/2020/773](#)) the Secretary-General stresses the critical relationship among peace and security, development, human rights and international cooperation. Intergovernmental coherence is essential to enhance the impact of the efforts of the United Nations, and

the Peacebuilding Commission has increasingly shown its value in facilitating a more comprehensive focus on nationally-led peacebuilding efforts in peacekeeping settings. The Commission has provided advice to the Security Council in accordance with presidential statements [S/PRST/2017/27](#) and [S/PRST/2018/20](#), including written advice on mandate renewals of MINUSCA. In the Central African Republic, the Commission's engagement has been complemented by quick disbursements from the Peacebuilding Fund, which have enhanced the capacities of the United Nations country team to support the peace agreement.

#### **D. Supporting inclusive and participatory approaches**

115. Peacekeeping operations support sustaining peace by promoting the participation and inclusion of different segments of the population to address conflict dynamics and foster sustainable solutions. Stronger partnerships with women's networks in missions have increased the space for the political participation of women. In Abyei, for example, UNISFA contributed to the direct advocacy of women leaders with local administrators and traditional Ngok Dinka and Misseriya leaders, ensuring their full and equal participation at different levels of decision-making. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO strengthened its partnerships with community-based women's networks to ensure that their priorities and concerns were fully incorporated into local-level early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms.

116. To prevent, mitigate and resolve intercommunal conflicts, peacekeepers have promoted inclusive community dialogue. MINUSMA, for example, supported intercommunal dialogue in the Ménaka region of Mali, including with women and youth, to prevent the escalation of reprisal killings. In Jonglei State in South Sudan, UNMISS supported reconciliation efforts between the Murle and the Lou Nuer following a spike in violence. In many peacekeeping settings, formal and traditional justice mechanisms are both key to mitigating and resolving intercommunal conflicts. In this regard, MINUSMA has supported efforts to reinforce relationships between formal and traditional justice mechanisms to address such conflicts. UNAMID has supported capacity-strengthening for 360 judges of rural courts to manage land disputes following the return of internally displaced persons and to prevent the breakout of violent intercommunal clashes.

#### **E. The way forward**

117. Overcoming fragility and preventing the outbreak or resumption of conflict requires coherent, coordinated and comprehensive approaches using political, social and developmental instruments. An increased focus on United Nations transitions in recent years has generated innovative practices to implement "whole of system" efforts in peacekeeping settings. Missions will continue to promote and support the engagement and participation of communities in local and national conflict resolution, reconciliation and violence reduction initiatives. Partnership with the World Bank Group in the context of the implementation of the new Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence offers potential for more aligned support for nationally-led prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained resources for peacebuilding activities of peacekeeping operations and other peacebuilding actors, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, remains essential.

## **X. Partnerships**

### **A. Partnerships with regional organizations**

#### **1. Strategic context of partnerships**

118. The Declaration of Shared Commitments undertakes to strengthen peacekeeping partnerships with relevant international, regional and subregional organizations and arrangements and Member States, including host countries as well as current and potential contributing countries, in recognition of the critical role that these actors play in conflict resolution and crisis management. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union remains vital to achieving mandates in several missions in Africa, including by facilitating and supporting political processes. The Secretariat has also worked with the African Union, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to share lessons learned regarding the protection of civilians and to promote shared approaches, particularly in the area of training.

#### **2. Partnership initiatives with regional and subregional organizations**

119. Partnerships with international and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, remain central to the engagement of the United Nations to facilitate and support political processes and other mandated tasks. In Darfur, for example, the African Union and the United Nations continued to work together to implement the mandate of UNAMID and are now cooperating to ensure the timely drawdown of the mission.

120. The Department of Peace Operations partnered with the African Union Commission and the European Union to carry out a joint peace analysis with an integrated gender perspective. This tripartite initiative, supported by the United Nations Office to the African Union and anchored in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, identifies entry points to inform strategies to advance the peace and political processes with a focus on the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in the implementation of the African Union-led peace accord.

121. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations assisted the African Union to ascertain the scope of requirements for the establishment of the African Union military observer mission in the Central African Republic as part of efforts to support the successful implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of February 2019.

122. In Mali, as a result of the coup d'état of 18 August 2020, ECOWAS and international partners, including MINUSMA, were required to engage in good offices to support national consultations that led to the swearing in of a civilian President, the adoption of a transition charter, the appointment of a transition Government and the lifting of sanctions imposed by ECOWAS on 6 October. Following the coup d'état, a high-level consultation led jointly by the African Union and the United Nations was held, which resulted in a commitment to mobilize technical and financial resources to strengthen women's full participation in the transition process in Mali.

123. The United Nations and the European Union also continue to cooperate, particularly in those settings where both United Nations and Common Security and Defence Policy missions are present. In addition, on 29 September 2020, the Department of Operational Support and the European External Action Service finalized a framework agreement to enhance operational cooperation in the field. In April 2020, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization approved a package of capacity-building support in the areas of military performance evaluation, medical care, the countering of improvised explosive devices, and signals and communications. A

group of experts from the Collective Security Treaty Organization held week-long consultations with the United Nations in December 2019 to better understand respective procedures and explore potential avenues for enhanced cooperation in the context of United Nations peacekeeping. In accordance with the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations (2016–2020), the United Nations has been cooperating across the areas of training on engineering and mine action, among others, including in the context of the triangular partnership project.

### **3. United Nations-African Union cooperation and capacity-building**

124. The Secretariat continued to work closely with the African Union Commission to strengthen the joint planning, deployment, management and transition of African Union peace operations through the implementation of the joint declaration on cooperation on African Union-led peace support operations of December 2018. The United Nations also continued to provide technical advice and support to ongoing African Union-mandated peace support operations. In this regard, the United Nations will sustain efforts to strengthen the capabilities and capacities of African Union-mandated operations and to support the operational readiness of the African Standby Force. This support arrangement builds on a proposal made by the Department of Operational Support that, in collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union, it serve as a strategic and operational enabler by acting as both partner and service provider to the African Union, including through the provision of opportunities to access United Nations services and equipment. The Department has deepened the relationship between the two organizations in operational support by enhancing synergies and interoperability, including through the knowledge and expertise exchange programme. In this regard, in January 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission signed a memorandum of understanding to institutionalize the staff exchange programme.

125. The United Nations, through the United Nations Office to the African Union, OHCHR and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, is working with the African Union Commission to develop a joint project proposal for the operationalization of the African Union human rights, international humanitarian law and conduct and discipline compliance framework for African Union peace support operations. OHCHR has also engaged the African Union Commission and African Union member States, ECOWAS, the European Union and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and its executive secretariat on the integration of international human rights compliance and protection in ongoing initiatives in the Sahel, complementing the ongoing support of OHCHR for the operationalization of the Joint Force's human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework. The Department also continues ongoing efforts relating to cooperation in the vetting of personnel and the creation of a database to manage misconduct cases.

126. In Somalia, support provided to the African Union Mission in Somalia included participation in the quarterly assessment visits of the African Union to Somalia and support for the development and review of relevant operational policies and guidelines. In addition, the Department of Operational Support continued to engage with the African Union Commission and key partners to ensure that the United Nations Support Office in Somalia is equipped with the required capacities and capabilities, as well as predictable and sustainable funding to support mandate delivery.

127. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, technical support was provided to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the African Union

Commission in relation to the African Union mission of support against the Ebola virus disease outbreak in that country.

128. The Mine Action Service, in close collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union, provided technical advice and support to the development of the African Union mine action strategy for the period 2020–2023 and the continent’s first strategy to counter improvised explosive devices. The United Nations also actively supports the newly established security sector reform capacities at the African Union Commission. The main disarmament, demobilization and reintegration support framework is provided through the United Nations- and World Bank-supported African Union Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Capacity Programme, which is aimed at strengthening the strategic and operational capacities of member States, regional economic communities and peace support operations in designing and implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives.

## **B. Partnerships with host Governments**

129. Partnerships with host Governments continue to be central to enabling the implementation of peacekeeping mandates. In the Sudan, the United Nations, the African Union and the transitional Government have worked in close coordination on UNAMID, including on the transition and eventual drawdown of the mission. In this regard, particular focus has been placed on ensuring the protection of civilians following the eventual departure of UNAMID and the securing of UNAMID personnel, sites and assets during the drawdown. In South Sudan, cooperation by the Government continues to be uneven, with restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMISS hampering implementation of its protection of civilians mandate. Pursuant to requests of the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Department of Peace Operations began a project to systematically document violations of status-of-forces agreements. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government and MONUSCO have initiated a strategic dialogue on the future of the Mission. In the Central African Republic, cooperation between the Government and MINUSCA continues to be productive, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians, the implementation of the political agreement of 2019 and preparations for the holding of elections. In Mali, MINUSMA continues to enjoy good cooperation with the Government to implement its mandate. Following the coup d’état of 18 August 2020, the de facto authorities of the Comité national pour le salut du peuple expressed their commitment to the peace agreement and their intention to collaborate with MINUSMA in that regard.

130. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic led Governments across the world, including Governments hosting peacekeeping operations, to introduce limitations to entry to and exit from their national territories, as well as other temporary restrictions. Peacekeeping operations have sought to comply with host government requirements related to COVID-19, besides the measures that the United Nations had taken, including the temporary suspension of the rotations of uniformed personnel. Finally, peacekeeping operations have also placed a particular emphasis on ensuring that host Governments do their utmost to hold accountable any perpetrators of crimes against civilian populations and United Nations personnel.

## **C. Triangular partnerships**

131. Strengthening triangular cooperation between the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat has been at the heart of efforts by

the Secretariat to strengthen unity of purpose and the performance and accountability of peacekeeping operations. Beyond the informal and formal briefings to the Council and troop- and police-contributing countries and individual consultations, the Secretariat engaged with Council members and/or troop- and police-contributing countries through the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. The Secretariat also supported the participation of troop- and police-contributing countries at all high-level events on countries hosting peacekeeping operations that were held under the auspices of the United Nations.

#### **D. Triangular partnerships for the provision of training and equipment to troop- and police-contributing countries**

132. The Department of Operational Support continued to make progress in strengthening the engineering, medical and technological capacities of uniformed peacekeepers through the triangular partnership project. Launched in 2015, the project brings together the United Nations, Member States with expertise and resources and troop-contributing countries to strengthen the capabilities of uniformed peacekeepers through the provision of training and equipment. Over the past year, 183 uniformed peacekeepers from 20 countries and surrounding regions in Africa and Asia participated in the operation and maintenance of the project's heavy engineering equipment and in engineering project management courses held in Brazil, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, Uganda and Viet Nam. Twenty-nine uniformed peacekeepers drawn from MONUSCO and UNMISS participated in the project's field medical assistant course, launched in October 2019 in Uganda. Furthermore, 32 uniformed peacekeepers from 18 countries participated in command and control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance technology training in Uganda in 2019. While further on-site courses on the above-mentioned areas, as well as medical and engineering courses, planned for 2020 were cancelled owing to COVID-19, the Secretariat is developing new remote and mixed-delivery training courses to be launched in late 2020 or early 2021 and is planning for on-site training to be conducted when restrictions are lifted.

#### **E. The way forward**

133. Collective action is the essence of United Nations peacekeeping, and strong partnerships enhance impact in that regard. However, a mutual understanding of the types of contributions that diverse organizations can reliably make and of measures to facilitate collaboration is essential. Member States can support the Secretariat by encouraging initiatives such as the United Nations-African Union frameworks and the United Nations-African Union-European Union trilateral partnership, as well as by supporting the African Union in establishing its own capacities. Member States can also advocate shared, coherent approaches to collaborating with the United Nations.

### **XI. Conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations**

#### **A. Conduct of peacekeepers**

##### **1. Conduct and discipline, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse**

134. In order to strengthen the conduct of peacekeeping personnel, the Secretariat launched a comprehensive, adaptable misconduct planning and risk management toolkit for peace operations and other Secretariat entities, to guide practitioners in

better managing risks of all types of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse. An awareness-raising campaign to encourage Member States to integrate the e-learning programme on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse into national training activities was also held.

135. During the reporting period, a joint communication from the Under-Secretaries-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, Peace Operations and Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on managing risks of misconduct during the COVID-19 pandemic was sent to field missions, and a joint communication was sent by the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Victims' Rights Advocate on assistance to victims during the movement and gathering restrictions in place owing to COVID-19. An online information-sharing platform, ALD Connect, was launched by the Administrative Law Division to serve as a capacity-building tool for the existing network of conduct and discipline practitioners in peacekeeping operations, as well as newly designated focal points in other Secretariat entities.

136. The victim assistance tracking system is in use, enabling more effective follow-up with regard to assistance and support provided to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. A secure database to support the work of the standing review committee with regard to Security Council resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#) was also launched to serve as a repository of information and allow for more efficient analysis of matters under review by the committee, in accordance with the provisions of that resolution.

137. Excluding allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, 547 allegations of misconduct were recorded from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. In the same period, a total of 75 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded in nine peacekeeping missions. A full update on efforts to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse will be provided in the next report on the subject. Current data on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse may be found on the conduct and discipline website, available at <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-data-introduction>.

## **2. Certification of prospective personnel**

138. The Department of Peace Operations is committed to selecting qualified candidates for deployment as senior officials and United Nations military and police experts on mission. All troop-contributing countries are required to certify that their prospective personnel have not been involved in criminal offences, have not been convicted, are not currently under investigation and are not being prosecuted for any criminal offence, fraud or corruption, or any violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law. Troop-contributing countries must also certify that they are not aware of any allegation against nominated candidates of their involvement, by act or omission, in the commission of any act that amounts to a violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law. Candidates for police and military positions are required to submit a declaration self-certifying the above in their applications. For senior posts, the Secretariat submits the personal documents to OHCHR for human rights screening.

## **B. Conduct of peacekeeping operations**

### **1. Environmental management**

139. The Secretariat has entered the second phase of a six-year strategy to drive improvements in environmental performance and risk management in peace operations. The main goals for the remaining three years, through 2023, are to demonstrate progress on the ground and to fully integrate environmental considerations into planning, financing and reporting.

140. A key focus for the past year has been to support the response to COVID-19. Missions have been assisted in developing emergency contingency plans on the safe treatment and disposal of biomedical waste, wastewater and general solid waste within the difficult context of movement restrictions or other interruptions. In addition, an emergency procurement exercise was completed to source barrel incinerators, which are critical backup equipment to larger incinerators, since the proper treatment and disposal of biomedical waste largely depends on incineration. The integration of effective waste management into liquidation processes, most recently in the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and UNAMID, has also been a priority.

141. In addition, awareness and training materials, such as the pocket guide on the duties of peacekeepers and technical guidance on liquidation, were promulgated. In the 2020 Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment, issue papers submitted by the Secretariat were approved by Member States for inclusion in the Manual on Policies and Procedures concerning the Reimbursement and Control of Contingent-Owned Equipment of Troop/Police Contributors Participating in Peacekeeping Missions, leading to the potential for increased efficiency in energy use, improved medical waste management and disposal and reduced soil contamination.

## **2. Human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces**

142. Peacekeeping operations continued efforts to implement the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, with the support of Headquarters. MINUSCA, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (later the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti), MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMID and UNMISS used the policy to prevent and mitigate the risks of human rights violations by non-United Nations security forces receiving United Nations support by, inter alia, developing comprehensive risk assessments and targeted mitigating measures. In contexts where United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces is evolving, the application of the policy was reviewed and strengthened, resulting in an increasing need for its consistent and effective implementation, supported by adequate capacity and expertise. Challenges continue, however, ranging from the lack of capacity of the United Nations and recipients to implement the policy to the lack of awareness of the policy and, at times, weak political will.

## **C. The way forward**

143. In spite of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat has continued to engage with Member States to bolster collective efforts to enhance conduct and discipline and bolster standards of conduct. In order to operationalize the Secretariat-wide environmental policy promulgated in 2019, the existing Environmental Policy for United Nations Field Missions will be revised. In continuing their collaboration to implement the human rights due diligence policy, the Secretariat and Member States can build on progress to date.

## **XII. Observations**

144. During the reporting period, United Nations peacekeeping has faced enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even as missions responded to prevent and contain the spread of the virus, including through support to national responses,

they have adapted to continue to fulfil their mandates. Going forward, it is envisaged that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact on United Nations operations and peacekeeping settings beyond 2020. This changed environment presents not only difficulties, but also opportunities to exploit this transformative moment to strengthen peacekeeping.

145. Action for Peacekeeping has enabled the United Nations to strengthen the effectiveness of operations. However, more work remains to be done. Two and a half years after the launch of Action for Peacekeeping, the United Nations is taking stock, evaluating the achievements, challenges faced and the areas where more still needs to be done, including on the basis of recent reviews of peacekeeping missions. On this basis, it will define the next iteration of Action for Peacekeeping in line with the Declaration of Shared Commitments and the evolving challenges to peacekeeping.

146. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that Action for Peacekeeping is a shared agenda, one that requires a results-oriented collective commitment to the objective of strengthening United Nations peacekeeping. This objective can best be achieved if all peacekeeping partners, in their various capacities, fully play their roles. I thank the champions of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative for their leadership. I also thank the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations for structuring its 2020 report along the themes of the initiative and for welcoming the initiative, both of which represent impetus for its implementation. I am heartened by the high level of support enjoyed by peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping, and hope that this will continue as the initiative enters a new phase.

147. Acting on their respective obligations as peacekeeping stakeholders and bringing to bear their respective strengths, the Secretariat and Member States can fulfil their shared responsibility and ensure that peacekeeping – this unique tool of multilateralism – can continue to meet the challenges to international peace and security.

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