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PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON STANDBY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEACEKEEPING

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of the Security Council's request for a report, at least once a year, on the progress made on standby arrangements with Member States concerning their possible contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations (S/PRST/1994/22). It covers developments since the submission of my previous report on the subject on 24 December 1997 (S/1997/1009).

II. CONCEPT

2. The concept of standby arrangements for peacekeeping operations remains as described in detail in previous reports. Its purpose is to have a precise understanding of the forces and other capabilities a Member State will have available, at a given state of readiness, should it agree to contribute to a peacekeeping operation. Such resources may include military units, individual civilian and military specialists, specialized services, equipment and other capabilities. The key element in the system of standby arrangements is the bilateral exchange of detailed information to facilitate planning and preparation for both the participating Member States and the United Nations. The information provided to the Secretariat is stored in a confidential database.

III. CURRENT STATUS

3. As previously reported, 67 Member States had indicated, as of 1 December 1997, their willingness to provide resources to the standby arrangements system, totalling some 88,000 personnel that could, in principle, be called upon. As at the date of the present report, 81 Member States, 14 more than reported last year, have made such pledges, raising the total to some 104,000 personnel that Member States would consider making available for a peacekeeping operation.

4. The 81 participating Member States are:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Of these Member States, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Gambia, Latvia, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Namibia, Niger, Thailand and Togo have joined the standby arrangements system since my last report.

5. A total of 61 out of these 81 Member States have now provided information on the specific capabilities they are prepared to offer.

6. Since my last report, the following eight Member States have formalized their standby contributions through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on standby arrangements with the United Nations: Finland, Germany, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Nigeria, the Netherlands and Romania. This brings the total number of Member States who have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to 21.

7. The capabilities involved are shown in table 1 of the annex to the present report. The total of some 104,000 personnel includes both grouped personnel and individuals, with contributions varying in size and capability from infantry battalions to medical specialists and election monitors: they cover the whole range of components envisaged from multifunctional peacekeeping operations. As the bulk of resources, however, consists of infantry, there continues to be a need for additional resources to complement manoeuvre units with the necessary logistic support. This is especially so in the areas of: strategic sealift/airlift; communications; multi-role logistics; transport; health services; engineering; mine-clearing; and transport utility aircraft, the so-called force multipliers for a peacekeeping operation. The functions within each category of resources are shown in table 2 of the annex. In this regard, the Secretariat is continuing to encourage Member States that have such assets to include them in their pledges. While such additional resources have been pledged in the past year, there remains a need to include more civilian police personnel in the system. Member States are encouraged to add police resources to their contributions.

8. The resources outlined above are grouped, according to their response time, as shown in figure 1 of the annex. Some 43 per cent of the confirmed standby resources have a response time for deployment, from their normal locations, of 30 days or less; 16 per cent have the response time between 30 and 60 days;

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5 per cent have a response time between 60 and 90 days; the remaining 36 per cent have a response time of more than 90 days or have not stated any response time. The Member States that have resources in the last group, without a stated response time, are strongly encouraged to determine a realistic response time for their resources.

9. Much still remains to be done, both to widen the involvement of Member States in the standby arrangements system and to improve the availability and utilization of the resources pledged by them.

10. The standby arrangements system was also promoted during the African peacekeeping training strategy seminar, held on 26 May 1998, and during the visit of a standby arrangements briefing team to six southern African Member States in June 1998. Finally, special attention has also been paid to the need to brief the permanent missions of African Member States. This work has paid off; since the last progress report, 10 African Member States have joined the system, bringing the total number of African countries in the standby arrangements system to 22. The Secretariat is now looking into the feasibility of dispatching a standby arrangements briefing team to the West Africa region during the first part of the year.

IV. INFORMATION, PLANNING AND CONTINGENT-OWNED EQUIPMENT

11. The General Assembly, by its resolution 50/222 of 11 April 1996, authorized the implementation of a new procedure for determining reimbursement to Member States for contingent-owned equipment. This procedure requires a Memorandum of Understanding on contributions to be agreed and signed before the actual deployment of the contingent or resources to the mission area can be carried out. Such a requirement, as well as the time required for the procurement and contracting of necessary transportation to move the resources to the mission area, could delay the process of rapid deployment. Member States that have already pledged to the standby arrangements system may wish to exchange, in advance, the data required to complete annexes A, B and C to the COE Memorandum of Understanding on contingent-owned equipment (A/51/967). This can be done within the framework of the standby arrangements system. The data in the Memorandum of Understanding can be used in the early stages of the support planning process; it can then be adjusted during the finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding, when a Member State eventually confirms its readiness to participate in a specific operation. This should streamline the process significantly.

12. A new form, the Planning Data Sheet, was introduced in order to facilitate the preparation of a preliminary Memorandum of Understanding on contributions. This form requires information on capabilities, organization, movement data, details of self-sufficiency and a list of major equipment for the units, in accordance with the Manual on Policies and Procedures concerning Reimbursement and Control of Contingent-owned Equipment of Troop-Contributing Countries Participating in Peacekeeping Missions. The implementation of the Planning Data Sheet has resulted in a simplification of the Memorandum of Understanding on standby arrangements, which now includes an annex, a summary of contributions covering a description of the resources and their response times. This has, in

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turn, facilitated the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding on standby arrangements between the United Nations and the Government concerned. It is expected that Member States providing resources with a response time of up to 60 days will complete the Planning Data Sheet.

13. Owing to the problems that have surfaced as a result of the reduced manning of the standby arrangements teams (down from six officers and one non-commissioned officer, in December 1997, to two officers at present); it is not currently possible to realize the whole potential of the standby arrangements system. We should expand the database by incorporating the additional detailed information from the new Planning Data Sheet in order to accelerate the process of planning and deployment of units. This should make it easier for units to arrive in mission areas fully equipped and with sufficient provisions to sustain themselves for a period of up to 60 days.

14. The information contained in the Planning Data Sheet may also help in addressing the problem of units being offered that lack the full range of equipment needed for participation in a peacekeeping operation. In this regard, taking into account the very limited capacity of the Secretariat to maintain such equipment, the idea of partnerships needs to be encouraged once again. Such agreements between Governments that can offer manpower but need equipment and those ready to provide it should cover and include related aspects (such as training and maintenance); they could then be made a part of a standby arrangement upon participation in the system. The new procedure for determining reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment allows Member States to take the lead in providing support to contingents from another country whose support is subject to reimbursement by the United Nations under pre-established conditions and rates.

15. It should be pointed out that the standby arrangements information registered in the database has proved most helpful in the planning for and subsequent deployment to peacekeeping operations in Haiti, Angola, Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium), Guatemala, the Central African Republic, Western Sahara, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force), Sierra Leone and Georgia. The data has been used extensively by departmental planning officers and has contributed to better planning and reduced deployment times.

V. RESPONSE TIME

16. Because response time is a key element in the achievement of rapid deployment, special efforts have been made to urge Member States to reconsider the response time for their pledged resources. At the same time, those who have not communicated any response time have been asked to determine one. The goal is to get a better balance of resources into the bracket of a response time of 0-60 days. Response time is defined as the time that elapses between the moment a formal request from the Secretary-General to provide resources is received by the Permanent Representative of the Member State concerned and the moment when the resources are ready to be picked up at specified points of embarkation for deployment to the mission area. It thus includes the time required by

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Governments for domestic political approval and administrative procedures as well as for military, police or individual preparation.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

17. the system of standby arrangements has confirmed its ability to expedite planning by early identification of possible troop-contributors and providing timely, accurate and reliable information to those who have to plan for deployment of troops and equipment. The system has also begun to demonstrate its usefulness as a tool to shorten the time required for the finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding for the provision of personnel, equipment and services in support of peacekeeping operations. This is achieved by providing the possibility of exchanging the necessary information in advance, using the Planning Data Sheet. Work in this area will proceed as manpower resources allow.

18. The Secretariat has also continued to explore suitable arrangements for the establishment of Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters. Notwithstanding recent budgetary decisions that have only allowed for insufficient manning, the Secretariat is convinced of the value that such a headquarters could play in ensuring a quick and effective response to emerging crises.

19. While the Organization still does not have true rapid-reaction capability, standby arrangements have been a step forward. In this regard, I once again welcome the efforts by Member States to increase the readiness of resources pledged for peacekeeping duties.

20. I also wish to invite all Member States to continue to join the system, regardless of the size of the contribution they can make. The overall goal is to achieve wider participation in the standby arrangements. I will also continue to encourage Member States to provide more civilian police personnel and support capacities, mostly in the areas of strategic sealift/airlift, communications, multi-role logistics, health services, engineering, mine-clearance, road transport and transport utility aircraft. This should contribute to the enhancement of the system that has been and will continue to be used for the planning of peacekeeping operations and also help ensure a balanced geographical distribution among the participants in future peacekeeping operations.

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ANNEX

Statistical information on standby arrangements for peacekeeping
