

Note from the Secretary-General to Member States

Restructuring of the Peace and Security Pillar

Background

1. Since its founding, the United Nations has facilitated or supported numerous successful peace processes, including through its preventive work and the Secretary-General's good offices, and deployed important peace operations, saving millions of lives by fostering and supporting political agreements and creating the conditions for sustainable peace. It is widely recognized, however, that the multiplicity and growing complexity of new and old conflicts and other threats to peace and security have brought new challenges to the Organization, with which the peace and security structures of the Secretariat have not always been able to keep pace. The repeated failure of the international community to act effectively in preventing and resolving conflicts, and the resources it spends on managing crises rather than preventing them, have been some of my preoccupations since well before becoming Secretary-General. While some of these challenges, by their very nature, may not always be amenable to solutions from the United Nations or the Secretariat, there is broad consensus on the need for significantly improving the effectiveness of the Secretariat in the peace and security area.

2. Fragmentation across the United Nations, and within the Secretariat peace and security pillar, is a major impediment for effective engagement on peace and security challenges. The Secretariat cannot continue to address these challenges in separate functional silos, but needs to be more nimble, pragmatic and flexible and able to develop and deploy a diverse range of engagements and operations across the conflict cycle. There is recognition that the UN's capacity to "think" and engage regionally is limited by the lack of regional analyses and structures at Headquarters and in the field. With different aspects of regional responsibilities residing in separate departments, coordinating and integrating our work for maximum effectiveness, including in our partnership with regional and sub-regional organizations, remains inadequate. Addressing these challenges is one of the main objectives of the reform.

3. Upon taking office, I announced steps to address structural and non-structural disincentives and barriers to a more effective performance of core peace and security functions in the Secretariat. I established an Internal Review Team to study existing proposals for change in the Secretariat peace and security architecture, including the 2015 reports of the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture and the Global Study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and to develop and present options for further improvements.

4. After careful consideration of the findings and recommendations of the internal review, the priorities and needs of Member States, and the nature of today's peace and security challenges, I am proposing the reorganization of the peace and security pillar of the Secretariat, as well as an improvement of its working methods and procedures, with a view to making it more cohesive, nimble and effective in its response to the peace and security challenges of today and in anticipation of those of tomorrow. This would involve operating in a more integrated manner across the continuum of different peace and security tools and with the development and human rights pillars as well as the humanitarian system. These proposed improvements are part of my larger agenda of reform of the Organization to make it fit for its core purpose of "saving future generations from the scourge of war" and to place prevention as an overarching priority.

5. Member States have encouraged me to undertake bold and meaningful reforms. This proposal is far-reaching and innovative enough to make a significant positive difference in the way the peace and security pillar is organized and operates. At the same time, it is realistic, manageable and therefore achievable. It does not seek a change of established mandates and functions. Rather, it envisages a reorganization of departments and offices and changes in our working methods and culture. The proposal seeks to enable us to deliver better on existing mandates and functions and to build a stronger cross-pillar approach to addressing peace and security challenges, underpinned by strengthened partnerships. It is intended to be cost-neutral (no additional resources or reduction of costs are foreseen). It does not seek any reallocation of resources from development or other areas to peace and security.

Proposal

6. Reform of the peace and security pillar has two dimensions. This note focuses on the first: the restructuring of the key substantive entities, namely the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), and on related changes in our working culture to ensure more joined up, cross-pillar engagement to prevent conflict and build and sustain peace. The proposal would organize and integrate existing capacities and resources more rationally in order to better channel them towards prevention and sustaining peace, in particular through a surge in diplomacy and the effective use of our good offices, mediation support and peacebuilding capacities; the efficient planning, deployment, backstopping and support of peace operations; and the provision of a range of advisory and capacity-building peace support services, more closely linked to the work on prevention and resolution of conflicts. It would also include non-structural changes including adjusting working methods, coordination mechanisms, and leadership.

7. The second dimension comprises a series of measures that I have proposed under the management reform stream to strengthen our ability to deliver effective, nimble and accountable operational support to peace operations. As already shared with Member States, my proposal for management reform calls for a new management paradigm to support the delivery of mandates across the three pillars of the Organization -- peace and security, development and human rights. Decentralizing decision-making and delegating authority, including to the field, is an essential aspect of our reform. By empowering managers, by building a compact with my senior managers, I will be aligning responsibility with authority and be able to make managers accountable, for the first time. By creating a Department whose principal task will be to monitor, in real time, how the managers dispense their delegation, I will ensure that they deliver on their program of work and are held accountable for the authorities that are delegated to them. By creating a unified Department of Operational Support with a transformational field focussed agenda, my intention is to ensure that not just peace operations but the entire Field Operations of the UN Secretariat receive the type of attention that they rightly deserve.

8. Following are the main features of my proposal to restructure the peace and security pillar:

- a) A single department that combines DPA's political and PBSO's peacebuilding responsibilities, to be called the **Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)**, to ensure a more holistic approach to prevention of conflicts, peace-making and sustaining peace as well as enhanced cross-pillar cooperation. In addition to supporting the Secretary-General's good offices and diplomatic activities, including political aspects of relations with Member States and other intergovernmental organizations, and managing a spectrum of engagements (from early upstream monitoring, early warning and response, to the use of envoys, regional political offices, offices in support of political processes, and other preventive and peace-making activities), DPPA would prioritize strategic partnerships, including through its support to and capacity-building of regional and sub-regional organizations and the development of regional initiatives. The Department would also provide substantive and secretariat support to the Security Council, the General Assembly and some of their subsidiary organs. Electoral assistance and mediation support would be located in DPPA, providing services to work in mission and non-mission settings, as would peacebuilding. The components of today's PBSO (policy, intergovernmental and financing) would remain integrated under the leadership of an Assistant Secretary-General, serving as the Department's bridge for cross-pillar cooperation, managing the Peacebuilding Fund, and supporting the Peacebuilding Commission. The terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund would remain unchanged and a functional linkage would be maintained to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG). The peacebuilding components of DPPA would preserve their ability to work across pillars, facilitate system-wide coherence and play a catalytic

role towards integrated responses. While emphasising prevention and peacebuilding, this will also contribute to the re-vitalisation of PBSO. DPPA would provide support to non-UN entities on peace/security issues as authorized.

- b) A single department, to be called **the Department of Peace Operations (DPO)** that combines DPKO's and DPA's responsibilities for peacekeeping and field-based special political missions.¹ DPO would also house, under the leadership of an ASG, peace support capacities that currently fall under DPKO/Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI). As currently, these capacities would include support for rule of law, justice, and corrections; security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); and mine action. The Office of Military Affairs and the Police Division will be an integral part of DPO. DPO would provide support to non-UN entities on peace/security issues as authorized. This arrangement recognizes the distinct nature of peacekeeping operations and special political missions. At the same time, I am strongly convinced that bringing the management of all peace operations under a single department is a necessary and timely step. It would ensure greater nimbleness, coherence and consistency, and encourage the creation of an integrated "centre of excellence" for UN peace operations. It would also enhance the provision of political guidance, including on transitions, further strengthening our approach to sustaining peace and conflict prevention.
- c) **A Standing Principals' Group of Under-Secretaries-General (USGs) and the EOSG,** to provide leadership for all strategic, political and operational functions and ensure a coherent "whole-of-pillar" approach. The Group would ensure communication and coherence in the implementation of peace and security priorities, support managerial coherence, and provide a high-level entry point for the development and human rights pillars. Interaction with the global operational support and management departments would be facilitated at the level of the Standing Principals' Group as well as through dedicated capacity within the Departments at the strategic and operational levels, including within the integrated operational team concept.
- d) **A single political-operational structure** under three Assistant-Secretaries-General (ASGs) with regional responsibilities, reporting to the two USGs, that links the two departments and responsible for the management of strategic, political and operational issues (mission and non-mission) and coordination with regional partners.

¹ Excluding regional offices, offices in support of political processes or the offices of my special envoys, which will be supported by DPPA.

9. Central to the proposal is combining the current regional divisions of DPA and the Office of Operations of DPKO into a **single political-operational structure** to be shared by the two new departments. This structure will be headed by three ASGs, each with defined regional responsibilities. The shared capacity would be responsible for the entire range of political and operational engagements in mission and non-mission settings, including the provision of strategic and political guidance as well as crisis monitoring and response. Prevention and peacebuilding, including in non-mission situations, would receive highest attention. The three ASGs with regional responsibilities, would report to the USG/DPPA on non-mission issues and to the USG/DPO on countries where there are field-based peace operations while keeping the other USG informed. This arrangement would enable improved regional strategies and responses with combined regional expertise under a single regional leadership; strengthen coherence and integrate the delivery of political and operational mandates and engagements; facilitate early warning and the activation of preventive measures; provide clearer lines of engagement with and provision of substantive guidance and support to field presences; enhance cooperation with regional organizations, among other partners; and ensure continuity of care in transitions between mission and non-mission contexts as well as between special political missions and peacekeeping operations. The dual reporting arrangement represents a new and innovative way of working that enhances coherence between the related responsibilities of the two departments. It requires significant leadership and management investment and highly collaborative working relationships. The respective regional offices under the ASGs would be organized by regional divisions and further organized into teams tailored as appropriate for mission and non-mission engagements with the aim to enhance inter-departmental and inter-pillar coherence, improving on the existing operational teams and coordination mechanisms. The additional ASG in DPPA would be responsible for peacebuilding support across all regions, as described above.

10. I shall, in addition, propose a number of measures to enhance coherence in the peace and security pillar, including through the realignment of capacities. The policy and other responsibilities across the current DPA, DPKO and PBSO would be adjusted to reflect the new peace and security architecture. Work is ongoing to identify additional ways to create greater coherence among the various components of the two departments, such as in the area of peace support functions currently delivered by DPA, DPKO and PBSO.

11. Dedicated capacities would continue to be placed in EOSG to guide planning and evaluation of operations, as well as the enhancement of integrated analysis. To give concrete substance to my call for a “surge in diplomacy for peace” with an increased capacity for preventive diplomacy, I have decided to establish a High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, comprised of senior experienced mediation and dialogue practitioners, to advise me in this effort.

12. The full participation of women and the full implementation of the women, peace and security agenda should be a guiding principle for how the UN carries out its peace and security

mandates. This should include greater efforts to achieve gender parity within the Organization, in particular at senior levels.

13. I recognize, of course, that structural re-organization can enable, but not necessarily deliver, change in the way the Organization executes its peace and security responsibilities. It is imperative for the structural re-organization to be accompanied by important improvements in our working culture, methods, and processes, correlated with the reform of the management reform and the reform of the development system. It is envisaged that a “whole-of-pillar” approach would define the working culture of the departments in the peace and security pillar.

14. Leadership, accountability and performance management will be critical to our success. The implementation of this broad agenda of reform will require the support of Member States, a rigorous, adequately empowered and resourced change management process and dedicated teams at various levels, and the full commitment of staff. If approved, these reforms would introduce far-reaching changes. Thus, it is my intention to closely monitor their implementation and assess the impact on our work with a view to making the necessary adjustments and changes in consultation with Member States, as appropriate.

15. I look forward to discussing these ideas further with Member States, confident that they will help lead us to a more coherent, nimble, flexible, and capable peace and security pillar that is better able to address the disparate challenges we face in the world today.

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