

Security Council Open Debate on UN Peacekeeping: A Multidimensional Approach, January 21st 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Kelly, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his comments.

Australia welcomes the evolution in the approach to peacekeeping over the past decade, which has seen a recognition of the complex, multidimensional issues that can be associated with such missions. That recognition has in turn led to a concerted international effort in providing the guidance, training and capabilities required to meet those challenges. Given that trend, it is timely that the Council set out the broad themes that will help direct our efforts in current and future missions.

The draft resolution (S/2013/27) we will adopt today serves the important purpose of not only identifying the broad range of military and civilian capabilities that are required for peacekeeping missions to achieve successful peacebuilding outcomes, but also of the need for the true integration of those efforts. That includes not only in the ways and means by which different mission components cooperate and coordinate on the ground, but in the critical planning and preparation phases. That has implications for the way that civilian and military actors conceive of each other and the roles they play. That includes those organizations that are not formally part of peacekeeping missions but play a critical role in moving situations towards stabilization and development by supporting short- and long-term economic issues, the rule of law, good governance and local capacity-building — including funds and programmes, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, bilateral donors and civil society.

In that respect we welcome the work within the Secretariat to enhance integrated mission planning and execution, including the establishment of integrated strategic frameworks and the clarification of roles and responsibilities. That is exemplified by the important step forward of designating the United Nations Development Programme and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as the joint global focal point for the rule of law. Australia is in the process of developing its own integrated approach to strategic frameworks and planning through the establishment of the Australian Civil Military Centre. We look forward to sharing experiences as we all strive to evolve towards true integration.

The draft resolution (S/2013/27) should provide those engaged in planning missions with a convenient list of considerations. As has been stressed, all missions have unique characteristics, but we have had sufficient experience to tell us that there are generic aspects that recur time and again in areas such as the establishment of public security, the management of the displaced, transitional justice, political transition, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and security sector reform. Often, transitional justice will include the need to defuse tensions over land and property disputes and resource equity. Each situation is unique. The key, then, will be doing the necessary analysis to tailor responses to the cultural and specific context.

Acknowledging the relevance of such issues to a mission means that proper allowance can be made in the way a mission is structured and the capabilities provided. This can help avoid serious compromises to the standing of a mission. An example would be the failure to provide the logistic requirements to support proper management of detainees and the corrections sector, along with ensuring that due process issues are catered for.

Of course, all these types of activities must be guided by the fundamental principle of national ownership if they are to be sustainable in the long term. The ultimate aim of peacekeeping missions, as it is with development, is that they must constantly be focused on their own redundancy. Missions will often result in international capabilities being provided to address critical points of weakness. Such measures must not create dependency but be focused from the outset on the means by which transition to national capacity can be initiated and advanced.

In building national capacity, we have readily identified the need for inclusive and transparent political mechanisms and processes. We have increasingly also realized the imperative of evolving national institutions and good governance, which can minimize and, it is to be hoped, eliminate corruption. Nothing is more corrosive to the progress of peacebuilding. To ensure that this erosion does not eventuate and that international aid is deployed to maximum effect, missions must focus on supporting accountability measures from the outset.

Two areas that we believe are central to peacekeeping and peacebuilding are the protection of civilians and women, peace and security. The duty of peacekeepers to protect civilians — whether through direct activities, such as protecting against conflict-related sexual violence or working to build local capacities, such as through the training of the security sector — are central to the restoration of security and moving towards a healthy civil society. This is a central pillar of peacebuilding. We also know that peacebuilding processes involving the participation of women are more likely to succeed. Peacekeeping missions can play a strong role in fostering such participation, including through the work of gender advisers and role models.

Identifying these multidimensional challenges generates the requirement to provide the training and expertise to address them. We need to identify, recruit and deploy people who have the right skills. For example, in addressing security sector reform, military and police trainers and mentors must be properly equipped for this role, including in aptitude for the context. Mechanisms such as standing and rostered capacities can support the rapid deployment of specialists to support early planning or to fill critical gaps. We welcome efforts to improve the deployment of civilians with the right skillsets — including, importantly, from the global South — through the civilian capacities initiative.

Predeployment and in-mission training are critical to ensuring that all components — military, police and civilian — understand what the others are doing in the field. We encourage ongoing efforts to develop and implement peacekeeping training in a coordinated and complementary manner. We as Member States, our training institutes and the Secretariat need to work together to achieve this.

Finally, as one who has worn the blue beret himself, I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the service of the dedicated men and women deployed on peace operations and to honour the sacrifice of those who have given their lives in this noble calling.