

**Remarks of Jean-Marie Guéhenno
Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations
to the
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations**

Monday, 27 February 2006

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to appear before you this morning. This is my fifth year to come before the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to review the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and to share with you our assessment of the priorities for the year ahead. Each year I have been encouraged by your commitment to the principles and the practice of United Nations peacekeeping. We come from very different backgrounds and perspectives but in this forum we are united in a common objective to support and strengthen UN peacekeeping.

I want this year to express my particular gratitude to the Special Committee for its active support in 2005. You met regularly throughout the year to be updated on specific peacekeeping issues and providing important guidance and support in key areas in our work. Members of the Committee engaged with the Department in useful discussions in informal working groups on the Standing Police Capacity and on how the military reserve capacities of UN peacekeeping operations can be enhanced. These two initiatives are designed to put in place efficient, cost-effective frameworks that can be swiftly operationalized to meet urgent field mission needs. With your cooperation and hard work, we have made good progress, particularly on the Standing Police Capacity initiative. We will need the continued support of the Special Committee to achieve the goal of implementation of the Standing Police Capacity in 2006, so that it can begin to fulfill its primary function as a start up for the police component of future UN peacekeeping operations.

I look forward to similar progress on the issue of reserve military capacities to existing peace operations during 2006. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Cote d'Ivoire are two of our missions that demonstrate clearly just how urgent this capacity is for the success of our missions and the security of peacekeeping personnel. The more complex operations we are tasked to undertake in volatile environments, and the more we stretch scarce resources across the globe, the more the need for a military reserve capacity grows. The strategic reserve model that the Secretariat proposed to you last year is one of the ways in which this need can be addressed in an efficient and cost-effective way. It may not be the only one, and we are willing to explore parallel, complementary solutions. The overriding criteria are predictable, responsive and effective capacities to support UN peacekeeping operations when required.

Our collective efforts have produced substantial accomplishments in another area of urgent concern, namely the combat against sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. Meetings across a whole range of issues were held throughout the year to follow up last year's extraordinary session of the Special Committee and to ensure that your recommendations are properly implemented.

Working together with you and your experts, we have made good progress in the establishment and enforcement of uniform standards for peacekeepers. Achievements include the creation of multidisciplinary conduct and discipline teams in headquarters and in eight peacekeeping missions; the development of systems to track allegations of misconduct; and communication of the policy of zero-tolerance, including through delivery of training to between 75 and 90 percent of field personnel.

Success in combating sexual exploitation and abuse, however, comes at a price. One of the first signs that our efforts are working is the increasing rise of allegations of misconduct across field missions. The Office of Internal Oversight Services is responsible for investigating all serious cases of misconduct and I commend its efforts to address this thoroughly. However, there is a real risk of backlog and delays in investigating allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, which can be damaging to the

victims of that abuse, to the individuals under examination, and to the reputation and morale of the mission in the field. This puts an additional burden on the newly established field conduct and discipline teams, which must be made permanent. The team of 8 professionals at Headquarters must support them through the provision of policy guidelines and procedures, effective data collection and analysis and training. All this requires sustained capacity at headquarters and in the field if our joint efforts to address misconduct in a substantive, fair and effective manner are to succeed. The specialized capacity of the OIOS to investigate complaints must also be strengthened if they are to undertake the job that they are asked to do.

In the end, the eradication of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel rests on our ability to prevent it. Great strides have been made in developing training, information and public outreach programmes for peacekeeping personnel and host populations. It is Member States that play the crucial role in prevention. The message that you send to your personnel shapes behaviour on the ground. The evidence of your determination to deal swiftly and punitively with perpetrators is the most powerful deterrence the UN has at its disposal. This is why we so urgently need to continue the work we have begun on revising the memorandum of understanding, on setting out the role of processes for investigations that satisfy both UN and national requirements for due processes; and also on improving welfare and recreation for peacekeeping personnel. Above all, we need you to send an uncompromising message against prostitution in peacekeeping missions.

I urge the Special Committee to renew its determination to make progress on these issues in the coming year. Your engagement will be particularly necessary when the Secretary-General presents his proposals for victim assistance in the coming months. The Secretariat stands ready to work with you and your national experts in whatever format is most effective to further elaborate these policies and related technical documents and bring them before the Special Committee for approval at its next session.

Today is a poignant moment for all of us. As you, Mr Chairman, just reminded us, one cannot begin this session without recalling the memory of Glyn Berry. Glyn was one of the people who contributed most to making the Special Committee the productive, collegial body it is today. His death resonated personally with me. I was in Afghanistan in December and visited Kandahar. I saw first hand the difficult and often dangerous environment in which Glyn Berry worked to bring peace and security to people who have experienced devastating violence. In so doing, Glyn fell victim to that same violence. Here in this Committee, this morning, Glyn is the face of the 136 UN peacekeeping personnel who have died in the field since 1 January 2005.

I want to pay tribute to the colleagues and families of all those who have died in the service of UN peacekeeping. 32 of the 136 people who died in the past thirteen months died, like Glyn Berry, as a result of deliberate, hostile attack; 21 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 8 in Haiti. A peacekeeper was killed in three additional peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire, in Kosovo and in the Middle East. These 32 fatalities are all military and police personnel. The rise in fatalities through malicious acts is worrying, particularly because it goes against the progress we are making in improving safety in the field. Notwithstanding an increase of around 8,000 in field personnel between 2004 and 2005, deaths due to accident fell from 46 to 30. Death due to illness remains the single highest cause of fatalities in the field: 52 in 2005.

Concern for the security of UN military, police and civilian personnel in the field is one of the fundamental reasons for the reform agenda proposed in the Secretary-General's report to the Special Committee. We have an obligation, at a time when UN peacekeeping operations are being called upon to carry out an expanded set of peacekeeping tasks in highly volatile environments, to do our utmost to protect the security of our men and women. We cannot tackle this in an isolated or piecemeal way. The security of our missions and our personnel has to be addressed comprehensively as part of a process to improve all aspects of our capacity to plan and conduct peacekeeping operations.

The Brahimi Panel Report recognized UN peacekeeping as a core activity of this Organization. It set out the guiding principles for the deployment of UN peacekeeping operations and the resources and capacities they require. These principles remain the lifeblood of UN peacekeeping: consent of the parties to a conflict; use of force only in self-defence; support of regional and international partners, and sufficient resources to carry out mandated tasks. The protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence has become another core principle, for which we have put in place sufficiently robust rules of engagement.

Peacekeeping is the culmination, not the replacement, of a political process. It can never be a reaction to a policy vacuum. We need to keep these doctrinal principles uppermost in our minds at a time of increasing demand for UN peacekeeping to deploy to difficult and protracted conflicts.

When the Brahimi Report came out in August 2000, there were 17 UN peacekeeping operations underway with a total of around 48,000 personnel. That figure was perceived to be exceptionally high. As late as 2003 we continued to characterize mounting demands as a temporary aberration – a surge, as we described it. At the end of 2005, we had exactly the same number of peacekeeping operations – 17 – with almost double the personnel, over 86,000. It is time for us to acknowledge that peacekeeping is a flagship of the UN Organization and as such requires a sustained and comprehensive approach.

Let me be clear about the consequences of this acknowledgement. It does not mean never-ending peacekeeping operations. Our task is to deploy integrated UN missions to protect and strengthen peace in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. We demonstrated effectively in 2005 that once this has been accomplished, UN peacekeeping operations transition swiftly to longer-term peacebuilding missions. It does not mean huge additional expenditures. UN peacekeeping has repeatedly demonstrated its relative cost effectiveness and our objective is to maintain this value.

What it does mean is an institutionalized, professional, and responsive UN peacekeeping capacity as a core and integrated function of this Organization.

This translates into five reform priorities: well-trained, effective and responsible people, working with sufficient guidance and resources, in a responsive, transparent organization that cooperates efficiently with a whole range of peacekeeping partners to successfully provide security and support to post-conflict countries.

The priorities for the reform agenda set out in Secretary-General's report are the result of three interrelated processes. The first is an assessment of the record of implementation of the reforms agreed by you in the Brahimi Panel Report over the past five years. The Secretary-General's report summarizes the areas where reform progress has been weakest. Most of it will not come as a surprise to the Special Committee, given the regular discussions we have had with you on the status of reforms.

The second is a reflection of needs and requests from the field. My senior management team – the Military Adviser, the Police Adviser, and my two Assistant Secretaries-General – and I travel regularly to the field. We hear from your military and police personnel about the challenges of operating without standardized procedures and clear directives. We hear from senior mission leaders of the frustration of trying to launch large-scale operations in remote environments with rules and regulations established sixty years previously for a headquarters-based organization. We hear from talented civilian staff how they cannot build a career in an organization that gives them no perspective of stability, career development, security for them and their families, or even contracts longer than 6 months.

Despite all of this, we see everywhere what a tremendous job these men and women are doing in bringing security to post-conflict situations. We see how their presence can turn around a town or a province from a violent, fear-ridden environment to a place of some hope and of opportunity for peace. I think we occasionally lose sight of that contribution, here in New York, and we fail to articulate sufficiently our appreciation for the job being

done by UN peacekeepers. Sometimes, the view from New York for our personnel scattered around the world is primarily in the form of an audit or an admonishment. In 2005 alone 144 management and financial audits and enquiries were carried out at 23 field operations and at DPKO Headquarters.

Fraud hurts the reputation of all those who are doing a good job, all of whom want any sign of it to be aggressively attacked. Audits are an important instrument in this collective effort, as well as a useful tool in helping us to improve performance. My Department therefore welcomes and accepts many of their recommendations. It is important, however, that audits do not result in hard-working, dedicated individuals being judged by standards drawn from a regulatory framework that is ill-suited to the exigencies of the field and in which they may have little formal training or expertise. In addition, and here I speak as a former auditor, a distinction must be made between management audits and forensic investigations. These are distinct processes with significantly different consequences for the individuals and institutions involved. If an individual is found guilty of fraudulent behaviour or gross negligence, he or she must face the consequences of our policy of zero impunity.

It is no coincidence that the General Assembly, as well as the Security Council, is addressing procurement days before the Secretary-General presents to the General Assembly his report on Secretariat reform. The recent audits demonstrate the urgency of system-wide reform of UN operational procedures and human resource policies for the field. We simply must align rules and regulations to the demanding, unpredictable and dangerous environments in which we operate and put in place trained experts under appropriate conditions of service. The Special Committee knows the difficulties we have long confronted with regard to personnel policies. In some areas, most recently in relation to military Staff Officers, we manage to find specific solutions. In this case, it is moving Staff Officers to the same support mechanisms and financial arrangements applied for military observers and police.

But in the much bigger area of internationally recruited civilian staff, we have no such flexibility. The more we are required to undertake multidimensional peacekeeping operations, with large budgets and staff, the more we require leaders, managers and technical personnel who can manage them. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has identified the need for 2,500 career civilian peacekeepers to provide the institutional cornerstone of field operations. We will present proposals to establish this capacity to the General Assembly at its resumed sixtieth session. We look to the Special Committee to support us in this crucial reform priority.

The third strand feeding into reform priorities is the vision set out at the World Summit. The Summit's commitment to a comprehensive, integrated approach to countries emerging from conflict is crucial for UN peacekeeping. The inter-linkage between security and development is something our personnel grapple with every day in the field. How sustainable is the security UN peacekeepers bring, if the youths we disarm and demobilize are not quickly provided with alternative means to earn their livelihood? How can our police, judicial and corrections officers function if there are no courts, no prisons and no assistance forthcoming to build them? The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission is therefore very welcome. It will provide the basis for a more coherent, timely and sustained approach to post-conflict countries. I also hope it can provide a way to enable early funding to cover the crucial gaps that arise between the deployment of peacekeepers and the resumption of longer-term development programmes.

The role of the Commission, and the Peacebuilding Support Office, will be to chart the overall strategy for international engagement. Where that strategy includes an integrated UN peace operation, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will lead its planning, management and conduct. To ensure coherence between the strategic and operational levels, we will need efficient communication and procedures for the closest possible cooperation with partners within the UN system and outside. That is why we are placing priority today on improving the structures and practice of UN integrated missions. The Secretary-General has issued revised guidelines to clarify functions and authorities and we are leading an inter-agency team to improve the integrated mission planning process.

With our UN partners, the next task will be to look at how we can minimize duplication and maximize the efficiency of our integrated response to post-conflict contexts.

It is too early, at this point, to identify the precise nature of the future relationship between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office. Once these structures are in place, we will move ahead to establish close and effective partnerships. Our interaction must be pragmatic, and be driven by field needs. Our goal should be to improve the connection between headquarters and the field, not to add new layers in the already complex network of relationships.

Commitment to the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacities was another key decision of the World Summit. This is an issue on which the Special Committee has repeatedly expressed its interest. We already have close links with the African Union and African subregional organizations that cover a wide range of peacekeeping concerns, and on which we have regularly reported to this Committee. Our interest in supporting the enhancement of AU peacekeeping capacity is not to defer responsibility for conflict in Africa but rather to engage regional partnerships to strengthen our collective capacity to meet global peace and security needs. It is a way of bringing the UN, and all its Member States, closer to Africa and its peacekeeping challenges.

To achieve the goal of peace and security in Africa, we need a systematic and sustained partnership with the African Union. This partnership should be focused on assisting the African Union to achieve the goals it has set for itself over the next 10 years. The UN, with over five decades of peacekeeping experience has much to share with the African Union, as much from our mistakes and lessons learned the hard way, as from our successes. We are not here to dictate. But the AU has clearly set out the help it wants from the UN. In order to provide that assistance, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations requires dedicated and sustained capacities in headquarters and working side-by-side with the AU in Addis Ababa. The focus of our assistance efforts is support to capacity building. It may also include other areas in which needs have been identified,

such as assistance in the mobilization of donor funding or a clearing-house mechanism. The criteria by which we will measure any action is, first, that it is an Africa-led initiative or request; and second, that it brings added value to the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacities. We look forward to discussing this partnership with you in more depth during the session and hope for the Special Committee's endorsement for dedicated capacities.

The five priorities of the Department's reform agenda: people, partnerships, doctrine, organization and resources, add up to an ambitious agenda. It is not something we can accomplish in one year. The Secretary-General's report suggests a target of five years. Within that time frame, we will set specific targets to be accomplished on an annual basis in each of the five priority areas. In 2006, for example, the goal for organization is the establishment of flexible templates for mission structures and the implementation of Joint Operations Centres and Joint Mission Analysis Cells in the field. Once progress in these areas is achieved, we can turn to other organizational needs, at headquarters and in the field. This pragmatic, steady approach is the only way in which we can maintain our operational capability and focus while, at the same time, strengthening our capacity for effective action.

The second important benefit of this approach to reform is that it ensures that you, the Membership, will be an integral part of the effort. Your support is vital at every phase of the process. In the course of the interactive debates over the next few days, I hope we can discuss further how the Special Committee can engage with us in taking forward our collective reform agenda. We need your support for this process, and for the reform priorities we have established within it. We need your commitment to stay the course with us over the next five years and to ensure that we do not become deflected by the day to day operations and external pressures that are an inevitable part of UN peacekeeping.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Special Committee will observe, my entire senior management team is assembled here this morning. I would like to introduce, in particular, the newest addition to our

team, Max Gaylard, who has just joined us as head of the Mine Action Service, after many years in the field.

The presence of the Department's senior management is a reflection of the significance of the Special Committee for UN peacekeeping. It is also a testimony to the essential nature of our partnership. We hope that this session of the Special Committee can further deepen the cooperation between us and that we can emerge from it with an invigorated agenda for peacekeeping in the years ahead. We stand ready, over the course of the next three weeks to assist you in your deliberations.

In this connection, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Gilbert Laurin as chair of the working group of the Special Committee. Canada has been a consistent friend of UN peacekeeping and of the Special Committee and I am very sure that Ambassador Laurin will uphold this great tradition.

I want to conclude, Mr Chairman, by thanking the individuals who are not here. The tens of thousands of individuals who, as we deliberate in this Chamber, are going about their daily business; removing the last weapons from former combatants in Sinoe County, Liberia, patrolling streets in post-election Port-au-Prince; monitoring local community police projects in Kosovo; visiting a prison in Kinshasa; assisting elected officials in putting in place provincial governance structures in Kandahar. These soldiers, police officers and civilian staff translate our words into tangible actions. It is an honour for me to lead them.

Thank you.