

**USG Susana Malcorra's Remarks to the Security Council Debate on
Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding**

26 March 2012

I would like to join Herve's recognition of the importance of the United Nations engagement in peacebuilding in our mission areas, and note the fundamental role of effective transitions in ensuring that we leave behind a sustainable peace.

Delivering an effective response to the peacebuilding needs of post conflict countries requires the same agility and flexibility from field support systems, in equal measure as for other peacekeeping tasks. Indeed, the magnitude and extent of field missions and the funding involved throughout the duration of a missions life cycle, can have a significant impact on the social and economic life of host countries, for example through job creation and local procurement, each of which contributes to the building of peace. At the same time it is recognized that the impact on socio-economic situation can also be negative such as seen through environmental degradation and distortion of the job market.

In our Global Field Support Strategy (GFSS) due consideration has been given to the potential social and economic impact of our missions, and the need to support mission goals in peacebuilding. I would like to take this opportunity today to talk to you about some examples where support to field operations has had a positive impact in this area.

The economic impact of large multidimensional field missions is significant especially when considering that deployment often occurs in post-conflict nations without a stable macroeconomic climate. This makes local acquisition of goods and services difficult. We are introducing as part of the GFSS mechanisms that can

promote local and regional procurement, an activity which can be at the root of private sector development.

To this end, the GFSS will enable our teams on the ground to clearly communicate procurement requirements and target local vendors, where possible in the official language of the nation. In the start-up phase of a mission this can be very challenging, trying to rely on the local market. However, over time, local vendors can get a sense for the requirements of the mission and hopefully their business sense and ingenuity will encourage them to start offering these goods and services. There are certain products and services for which the local market can have a distinct advantage, this may represent a low percentage of our overall procurement but can have an important impact on the local market. The flow on effect in the private sector can be considerable, and if properly planned, can generate a sustainable and growing process for propelling individuals into long term development, contributing to efforts to break from poverty. It goes without saying that all of this must be framed in the context of UN rules and regulations.

Efforts have also been made to focus on a mission's ability to address critical social issues such as unemployment. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) provided clear and positive examples in this regard. High levels of unemployment and slow economic recovery made it difficult for youth and war-affected populations to find legal income-generating opportunities locally.

As was articulated in the World Development Report last year, such a situation presents a serious impediment for war-affected populations to establish alternative livelihoods and encourage sustainable reintegration in local communities. In response to this need UNMIL and its partners – the World Bank, WFP, UNDP and the Ministry of Public Works – designed a series of labor intensive road repair projects increasing accessibility as well as short-term employment opportunities. These projects were concentrated around vulnerable communities, such as communities along borders and those in close proximity to desirable natural resources.

Such projects created over 75,000 jobs and channeled almost US \$6 million into local communities, with the workforce including representation from all communities, ex-

combatants, returnees, and women. 600 kilometers of primary roads and 300 kilometers of secondary roads were rehabilitated which improved access year round to many parts of the country.

The impact of these projects was reviewed through an independent assessment which concluded that:

- The security situation in communities established along the roads improved, as there were real job opportunities;
- Income was re-invested in small businesses;
- Income was used to repay debt;
- Income was put towards longer term expenses such as education and housing.

In other words, the project was building peace.

From a DFS perspective the issue of transitions from one UN presence to another is equally critical, often requiring drawdown or sometimes a surge in operations. In Burundi and Sierra Leone, for instance, the liquidation of one mission coincided with the start-up of another.

One of the key lessons we have learned from these transitions is that we need to prepare contingency plans to lay the foundation for adequate support to the possible follow-on presence, as well as building a sustainable peace.

Transitions may be inherently political processes, but they can only succeed if they are well prepared and executed. For this to happen, it is crucial that the “substantive” side and the support side plan in an integrated manner. This is particularly important as we need to recognise that many support issues are highly political, such as the question of asset liquidation, whilst also dealing with the issue of expectations management, and a fear of mission exit in terms of socio-economic impact.

In many countries, peacekeeping missions provide major support to national authorities with regard to infrastructure maintenance, transport and logistics among others. As with our efforts in peacebuilding, we have to work with national

counterparts to prepare for the impact that mission drawdown is likely to have on national resources, capacities and budgets.

UNMIT and UNMIL experiences demonstrate how joint planning with national counterparts can address these challenges and, to the extent possible, mitigate the impact of reduced logistical and infrastructural support to national partners through coordinated planning and capacity building.

That being said, such a reduction in peacekeeping resources has wider implications for all partners, not only the national government, as it is likely to both impact on those partner's programmes and require increased commitment by them – both within the UN and beyond.

Against this background and recognizing the importance of integrating support services, we are working with our partners in the Integration Steering Group and its sub working groups to harmonize support costs across the UN. This will this extend our services to Agencies, Funds, and Programmes and create greater transparency on how a smaller role of one UN entity will impact the resource requirements of others on the ground. This will also be facilitated through greater cooperation on the issue of trust funds and support costs applied to them. In this regard, the Peacebuilding Fund and the UN Secretariat have signed an MOU which has overcome past funding constraints on the PBF. The broader cost recovery policy directed by the Controller is well underway.

A different yet important contribution the UN brings to post-conflict societies is in the form of national staff capacity development. Several of our missions have introduced specific strategies and programmes such as certification programmes that are aimed at strengthening national staff capacity (Sudan, Liberia, DRC, Timor-Leste). This should be our priority from the outset, given that national staff will play a critical role in the development of their country beyond our presence.

Our ongoing work on Civilian Capacities will be another vital part of this effort. Accessing more effectively the needed civilian experts and deploying them into

missions to support the development of national capacities, and to help us plan and execute peacebuilding tasks, as well as effective transitions, depends on stronger partnerships between the UN and external providers – principally Member States. As such, we have to work together if we are to succeed.

Critically, national ownership underpins the entire Civilian Capacity initiative. This was identified clearly in the recent regional consultations in Bali where Emilia Pires (Finance Minister of Timor Leste and co-chair of g7+ group of conflict-affected states) stressed her country's wish to lead its own peacebuilding process, and direct international support in accordance with their own priorities.

Better supporting national capacity building is therefore a priority for civcap, which in turn must be a priority for peacebuilding, and effective transition. UNDP is leading a system-wide group to look at how we can do better in post-conflict contexts and are carrying out a survey of UN field presences to understand what tools are needed to do this more effectively. We expect they will be able to make recommendations this summer.

The situation does remain challenging however. We still fail to deploy timely, effective civilian capacities to countries emerging from conflict and face persistent capacity gaps in five core areas (safety and security, rule of law, inclusive political processes, core government functionality, economic revitalization). Much like with our sourcing of key enabling assets for peacekeeping, we are also finding difficulty in accessing niche capacities to respond to specialized needs.

We are however working out how to tackle these challenges. We are focused on building partnerships with Member States, regional organizations, NGOs and others, and focusing on south-south cooperation in this regard. We are also recognizing the added value that comes from real world experience of post-conflict recovery, democratic transition or building national institutions from scratch or very low capacity. This is the sort of capacity that those nations emerging from conflict find most useful – experience of those who have actually confronted and worked through the same challenges they are now facing.

We must ensure we are working to our strengths, or as we term it, delivering based on the principle of comparative advantage. Missions do not have to implement everything themselves, and of course other partners may be better placed to deliver on the wide range of tasks that are expected. We will continue to work towards realizing mechanisms and modalities to best support this process.

Each of these activities, be they focused on the building of peace during a mission, effectively transitioning to a sustainable and nationally owned peace as we withdraw, or on the deployment of the right civilian personnel to the right place, and playing the right roles alongside our partners, are all aimed at delivering on our mandates, building national institutions, and ensuring we do not have to return again once our missions have left.

The Security Council plays an enormous role in this, setting the direction for our efforts through mandates, but also through building and maintaining the political support required for delivery. In addition, we count on the Council and its Members to work with us as partners in ensuring a coherent, coordinated and sustained response to the complex challenges we face in building peace, before, during and after the departure of our missions.