



IPI MEETING BRIEF

UN Peace Operations Review: Taking Stock, Leveraging Opportunities, and Charting the Way Forward

The year of the United Nations' seventieth anniversary saw the completion of three major reviews: the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), the review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, and the review of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The three reviews share many ideas, including in their attempt to overcome the organizational silos of the UN's peace and security architecture and beyond, calling on member states to adopt an integrated, overarching approach to prevention—that of sustaining peace. While UN member states agree on the need for change and have expressed strong rhetorical support for prioritizing prevention, strong collective action will be needed to implement change in practice.

These were some of the conclusions from the full-day conference opened by the UN Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, held at the United Nations headquarters on Monday, April 11, 2016. The intent was to take stock of what has been done to date and identify opportunities for moving from rhetoric to coordinated action on logistical, operational, financial, and, most importantly, strategic challenges faced by UN peace operations. The International Peace Institute co-organized the event with the Permanent Missions of Ethiopia, Norway, and the Republic of Korea to the United Nations in support of the upcoming General Assembly High-Level Thematic Debate on Peace and Security, scheduled for May 10–11, 2016.

The ensuing discussion with an audience of diplomats representing more than sixty UN member states, UN personnel, and members of civil society brought out the following insights:

1. Today's global challenges require **coordinated and sustainable policy responses by the UN system as a whole**. Several opportunities were highlighted as possible vehicles, such as **the Peacebuilding Commission** and **UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015)**. A number of upcoming high-level events will provide fora to address the need for a coherent approach to advance synergies among the peace and security reviews.
2. While the three reviews have garnered significant attention from member states, more remains to be done to implement their recommendations. Areas in need of championship by member states include **gender, regional partnerships, enhanced field support, and people-centric**

approaches. Accountability for sexual exploitation and abuse remains a grave concern, and solutions involving **training before and during deployment** must be further explored.

3. Building collective commitment is necessary to make prevention work. **Sustaining peace requires local ownership, and civil society actors and other local stakeholders are critical partners** to include in this endeavor. There is a need to hold both **formal and informal consultative processes, including at the regional level**, to build the level of trust needed to translate rhetoric into action.
4. **Flexible funding is key** to allow for action and activities that integrate the objectives of the UN's three pillars. Organizational responses are hampered by funding that too often comes earmarked, preventing the various UN entities from looking at the broader picture. Moreover, **tailored, realistically prioritized and sequenced mandates** are needed in order to adequately assess and react to evolving conditions.
5. **Leadership and capacity** are necessary to improve the UN's response to crises when they occur. A future area of reflection is how the organization can lead in delivering a more integrated response across its three pillars, as in its response to the Ebola crisis. It was suggested that criteria could be developed for situations where **the secretary-general and his or her representatives could be given special authority to unite the UN system** to be able to deliver in such instances.
6. Participants highlighted the need to keep the momentum and sustain commitment during the transition to the next secretary-general. Finally, participants stressed that recommendations from the HIPPO report, in particular, should be seen as part of a package and that the perspectives of all stakeholders need to be understood so as to chart the way forward for UN peace operations.

A more detailed report will follow. Please find a link to a UN Webcast of the [opening remarks](#).

Olga Abilova, Delphine Mechoulan, and Sabrina Quamber from IPI's Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations served as rapporteurs for this meeting.