

Implementing the UN Management Reform: Progress and Implications for Peace Operations

WOLFGANG WEISZEGGER



Cover Photo: Secretary-General António Guterres holds a global town hall meeting with UN staff members in New York, January 17, 2019. UN Photo/Mark Garten.

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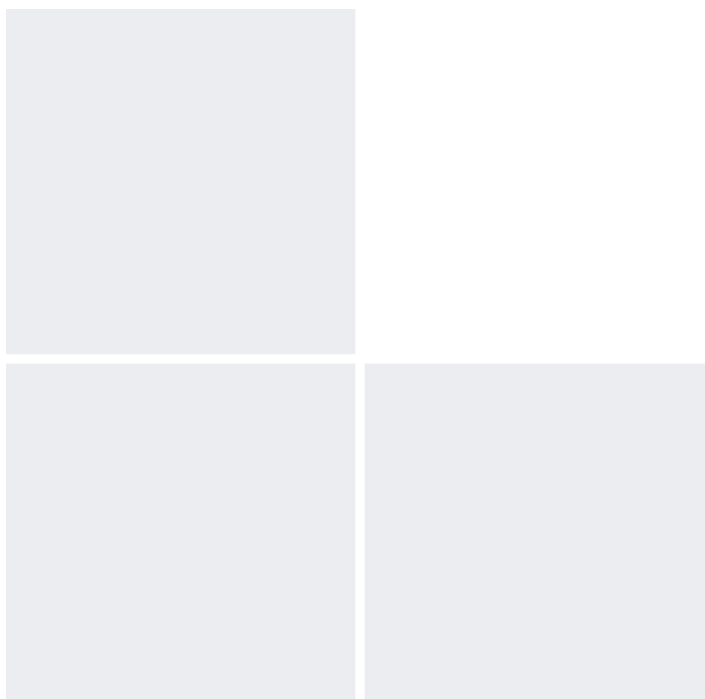
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WOLFGANG WEISZEGGER is the former Director of Mission Support for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

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ABBREVIATIONS

BTAD	Business Transformation and Accountability Division
D/CMS	Director or chief of mission support
DFS	UN Department of Field Support
DM	UN Department of Management
DMSPC	UN Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance
DOA	Delegation of authority
DOS	UN Department of Operational Support
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations
HoM	Head of mission
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
T/PCCs	Troop- and police-contributing countries

Executive Summary

In September 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres proposed a new management paradigm to enable the UN to confront global challenges and remain relevant in a fast-changing world. This proposal was based on consultations that brought to light structures and policies that were unresponsive to changes in peace operations mandates and the dynamic operating environments to which missions are increasingly deployed. To tackle these shortcomings, the new management paradigm would bring decision making closer to the point of delivery, empower managers, increase accountability and transparency, reduce duplicative structures and overlapping mandates, increase support for the field, and reform the planning and budgeting processes.

While the management reform is still being rolled out, several major changes have already taken place. One of the biggest changes has been the secretary-general's direct delegation of authority to heads of mission. This gives them greater leeway to assign financial and human resources without approval from headquarters, allowing them to adapt to changes in the operating environment. While these delegations have been welcomed by many personnel in field missions, some feel they do not go far enough or are not being properly or fully exercised by heads of mission.

Another major change has been the reconfiguration of the UN management structure with the creation of two new departments: the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) and the Department of Operational Support (DOS). DMSPC is responsible for all administrative policy development, management strategy, and quality assurance functions previously held by both the Department of Management and the Department of Field Support. DOS is responsible for providing operational and advisory support to all parts of the UN Secretariat (not just peace operations, as had been the case with the Department of Field Support). However, this new structure is still not widely understood by field personnel, and some have felt less supported during the rollout of the reform.

The reforms have also led to changes in several other areas. New budget procedures have been put

in place to make the process faster and more inclusive. A Business Transformation and Accountability Division has been created within DMSPC—the first time there has been a single entity in the Secretariat responsible for strengthening and mainstreaming accountability. In DOS, the delegations of authority have streamlined financial management and the process of recruiting and onboarding personnel. The creation of a single Office of Supply Chain Management is also helping speed up procurement and integrate the supply chain. Similarly, the creation of a single Uniformed Capabilities Support Division is helping improve engagement with troop- and police-contributing countries.

The following are recommendations for DMSPC, DOS, and member states to consider to accelerate progress toward the reforms and ensure they respond to the needs of field missions.

- **To improve the speed and responsiveness of service delivery**, DMSPC and DOS should further delegate authority, and heads of mission should fully exercise this authority. The secretary-general should also reach out to member states to convey how his human resources strategy reflects the operational requirements of field missions.
- **To increase the coherence of management structures**, the secretary-general should promulgate a bulletin on the organization and functions of DMSPC and DOS and consolidate functions related to the military and police supply chain. DOS and DMSPC should ensure that their policies and procedures are updated to align with new policies, rules and regulations, and delegations of authority.
- **To strengthen the performance-management culture**, DMSPC should establish performance management units in field missions.
- **To enhance transparency and accountability**, the secretary-general should develop a master implementation and project priority plan, DMSPC and DOS should improve awareness of the reforms among UN staff, and senior UN officials should regularly communicate with member states about the reforms.

Introduction

In September 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres proposed a new management paradigm to enable the UN to confront global challenges and remain relevant in a fast-changing world. Coming at the same time as reforms to the UN's peace and security architecture and development system, this proposal was based on consultations that brought to light structures and policies that were unresponsive to changes in Security Council peace operation mandates and the dynamic operating environments to which missions are increasingly deployed. The shortcomings identified included fragmented management structures, micromanagement by governing bodies, a lack of trust among member states and staff, inadequate resourcing, and a lack of transparency and accountability. To tackle these shortcomings, the new management paradigm would decentralize the UN by bringing decision making closer to the point of delivery, empowering managers, increasing accountability and transparency, reducing duplicative structures and overlapping mandates, increasing support for the field, and reforming the planning and budgeting processes.¹

Guterres proposed three major reforms. First, he proposed changing the management and support structures at headquarters to better support mandate delivery in the field. In this regard, he proposed creating two new departments: a Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) and a Department of Operational Support (DOS). Both new departments would support the entire UN Secretariat, including offices away from headquarters, regional economic commissions, resident coordinators' offices, and other field presences, in addition to special political missions and peacekeeping operations. Second, he recommended delegating more managerial authority to program managers in the field and holding them more accountable for mandate delivery. Finally, he proposed streamlining and improving UN processes for planning

and budgeting to support better decision making and better reflect the link between resource use and delivery.

Following this report from the secretary-general and a follow-on report on the proposed establishment of DMSPC and DOS,² the General Assembly formally set the reforms in motion by passing Resolution 72/266 in December 2017.³ This overhaul of the UN's management paradigm came alongside reforms in two other areas: the UN development system and the UN peace and security architecture. To better support the implementation of all three streams of reform in an integrated manner, Guterres appointed Jens Wandel, a seasoned UN official, as his special adviser on reforms at the level of under-secretary-general.

This paper examines the implementation of the UN management reform and its impact on peace operations (including both peacekeeping missions and special political missions) from the perspective of both headquarters and the field. The paper examines the extent to which the reform is fulfilling its promise to empower managers and staff, simplify processes, increase transparency, and improve mandate delivery. It highlights the current state of implementation, identifies good practices, flags areas for possible improvement or attention, and offers forward-looking recommendations for UN headquarters, mission leaders and managers in the field, global or regional support offices, member states, and staff at large.

This paper is based on a desk review of relevant documents and telephone interviews with staff members in field missions and at UN headquarters in New York at various levels, including senior executives. It also draws on the author's personal experience as Director of mission support for the UN Interim Support Mission in Lebanon from 2014 to 2018.

The management reform came into effect just eighteen months ago. For this reason, the paper acknowledges that the UN Secretariat has had

1 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a Better Future for All—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/492, September 27, 2017.

2 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Implementing a New Management Architecture for Improved Effectiveness and Strengthened Accountability*, UN Doc. A/72/7/Add.49, May 25, 2018.

3 UN General Assembly Resolution 72/66 (December 24, 2017), UN Doc. A/RES/72/66, January 15, 2018.

relatively little time to roll out the reforms, particularly given their scale.⁴ It also takes into account that large organizations usually move slowly (“supertanker-syndrome”), noting that the UN has already made considerable progress despite its size, geographic reach, and bureaucratic complexity. This paper is meant to be a timely gauge of how far the reforms have progressed in different areas, how they are perceived, where attention is most needed, and where adjustment may be necessary to ensure that the implementation fully lives up to the aims of the reforms. It is also important to note that the management reforms are progressing quickly and continuous updating of this analysis will be required.⁵

Delegation of Authority and Structural Changes

The management reform has led to several major changes. At the center of the reform is the secretary-general’s direct delegation of authority to assign resources (including both financial and human resources) to heads of mission (HoM) to enable them to better implement their responsibilities. The establishment of new departments overseeing management policy and strategy and field support in the UN is also central to the reforms.

Delegating Authority to Heads of Mission

A central goal of the reform was to empower managers across the Secretariat, both at headquarters and in the field. This was intended to better align responsibility for achieving designated objectives, authority to allocate staffing and financial resources in pursuit of these objectives, and accountability for both the use of those resources and the results. Describing the situation prior to the reform, the High-Level Independent

Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) stated that “United Nations field operations [are] tied to and undermined by an administrative framework that simply does not enable effective and efficient field operations.”⁶ Authority cascaded from the secretary-general through a series of under-secretaries-general and assistant secretaries-general to directors or chiefs of mission support (D/CMS) or heads of mission (HoM), depending on whether the delegations covered financial, human, or physical resources (see Figure 1). As a result, HoM were sometimes unable to shift these resources in response to unforeseen changes in the context or changes in Security Council mandates.

On January 1, 2019, the UN secretary-general directly delegated authority to over 200 heads of entities, including the heads of peacekeeping and special political missions. This system eliminates layers of bureaucracy and empowers HoM by giving them more authority to act and be directly involved in decisions related to the management and utilization of resources in implementing mission mandates.⁷

The delegations of authority (DOAs) issued by the secretary-general allow HoM greater leeway to shift approved funding in response to changing operational priorities without having to seek the approval of the UN controller in New York. The DOAs have enabled HoM to more nimbly adapt to changes in the operating environment, as well as to mandate changes that occur in the middle of the budget cycle due to the time lag between mandate agreement and budget allocation. For example, missions are better able to shift funding to respond to a sudden surge in demand for logistical support during a humanitarian emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic or to scale up their presence to respond to protection needs, as in central Mali.

To maintain financial discipline and adhere to boundaries set by the General Assembly, this redeployment of financial resources is subject to

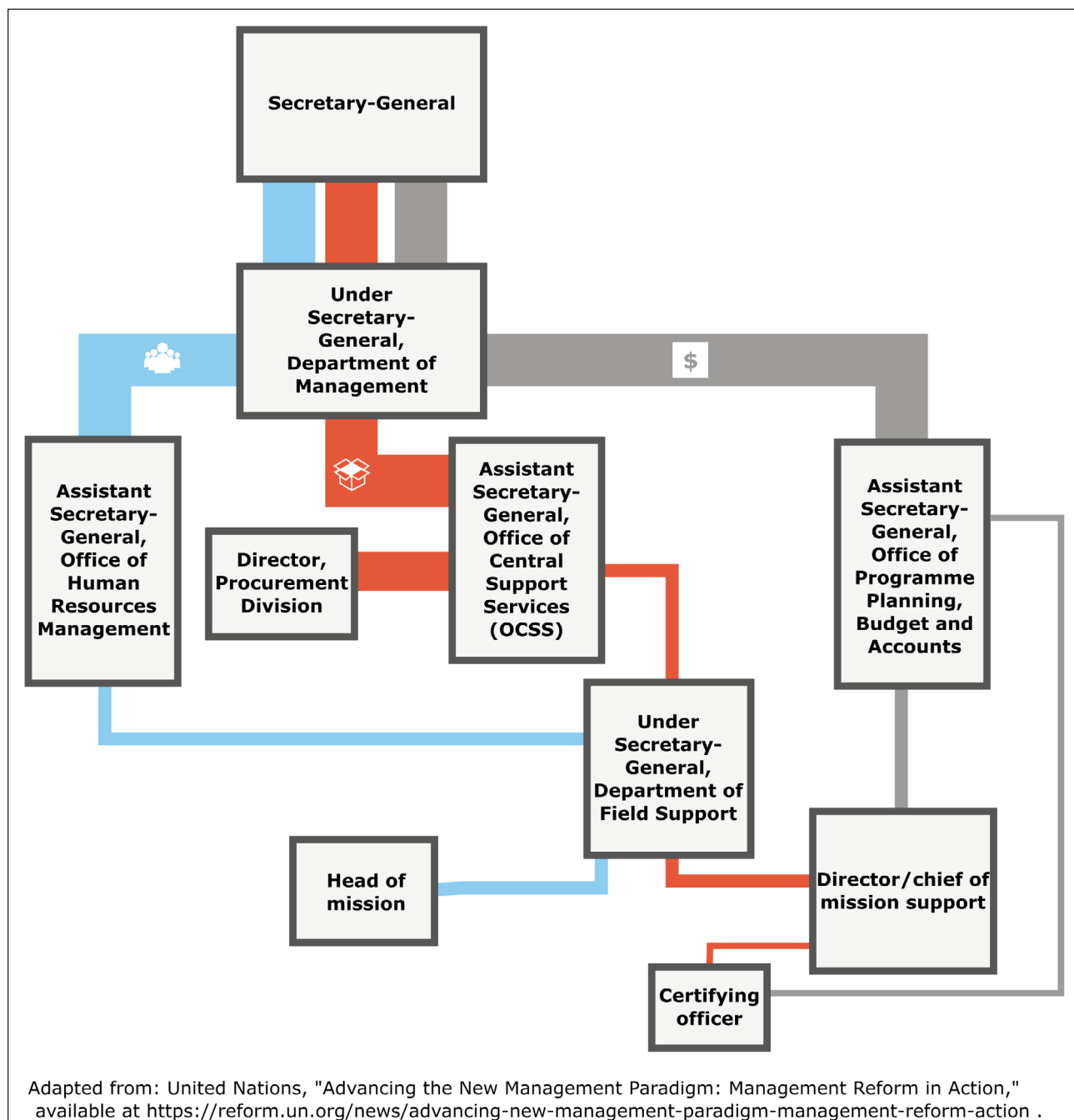
⁴ The General Assembly approved the new structure in Resolution 72/266 on July 5, 2018, and it came into effect on January 1, 2019.

⁵ Comprehensive benefits data on the implementation of the UN reforms is expected to be made public by the UN Secretariat in the second quarter of 2020 and will form the basis of the secretary-general’s report on the implementation of the reforms to be submitted to the General Assembly during its seventy-fifth session.

⁶ UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People—Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, UN Doc. A/70/95–S/2015/446, June 17, 2015, para. 314.

⁷ UN Secretariat, *Delegation of Authority in the Administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules—Secretary-General’s Bulletin*, UN Doc. ST/SGB/2019/2, December 17, 2018.

Figure 1. Delegation of authority before and after the management reform



certain limitations. HoM are not allowed to shift funds between budget groups (i.e., those allocated for expenses related to military and police personnel, civilian personnel, and operational costs) without the prior approval of the controller, who ultimately determines whether there is a need to request additional resources from member

states.⁸ Several field personnel see this requirement for advance consultations as defeating the purpose of delegating authority to HoM. However, they agreed that HoM should not shift funds for the sole purpose of committing them before the end of the budget year and should provide a robust operational argument to avoid perceptions that

8 Communication with DMSPC official, June 2020.

they are circumventing the budgetary decisions of the General Assembly.

Another way the DOAs empower HoM is by allowing them to make exceptions to administrative issuances on human resources, allowing them, for example, to redeploy national and international staff at the same level and function to a different location within a mission. Prior to the management reform, only the senior management of the Department of Management (DM) at headquarters had this authority. Under the new system, HoM no longer need prior approval from New York for exceptions to administrative issuances within the parameters established by the Staff Regulations and Rules and applicable General Assembly resolutions; they can make such exceptions on the spot, reporting them after the fact to DMSPC's Business Transformation and Accountability Office. Staff in DMSPC advised that this ex post facto reporting helps them monitor exceptions and identify how policies and administrative issuances may need to be adapted to the needs of missions. However, many field personnel have the impression that the DOAs allow HoM to make exceptions not only to administrative issuances in the area of human resources but also to the UN Financial and UN Staff Regulations and Rules, which is not the case.

The delegations of authority have largely been welcomed, though many field personnel think they do not go far enough.

Many field personnel think the DOAs do not go far enough in delegating authority, particularly when it comes to human resources decisions such as moving personnel within missions or holding personnel accountable for their performance.⁹ Nonetheless, the DOAs have largely been welcomed. As one UN staff member put it, "The Wild West times in missions, whereby D/CMS [directors or chiefs of mission support] indiscriminately ruled over the use of resources and resource-related policies, regulations, and rules implementa-

tion, have finally come to an end."¹⁰

The new delegation of authority system gives HoM the option to sub-delegate their responsibilities down the mission hierarchy, on a functional not personal basis.¹¹ As of December 31, 2019, only about 30 percent of sub-delegations were coming from HoM, and about 70 percent via the D/CMS. Further sub-delegation to trained subject-matter experts is expected throughout 2020.¹² The difference from the previous system is that D/CMS are delegated authority by—and therefore accountable to—the HoM, not the UN controller. Some personnel, however, felt that HoM have often sub-delegated these responsibilities to trusted staff in their office rather than subject-matter experts (e.g., to the mission chief of staff instead of the director of mission support). Furthermore, they have often ignored or not sought the expertise and institutional knowledge of experienced D/CMS support and subject-matter experts. This can lead to HoM overusing exceptions. It also makes it difficult for D/CMS to fulfill their obligation to ensure that resources provided by member states are managed and used responsibly, effectively, efficiently, and in a timely manner within UN regulations, rules, policies, and administrative issuances and in the service of mandate delivery.

Several personnel interviewed expressed the view that many HoM are not properly exercising their newly delegated authorities. It was widely felt that most HoM have little or no UN-specific management experience and instead have political or diplomatic backgrounds.¹³ Consequently, some do not have prior experience managing large, complex operational entities like UN peacekeeping missions. Some staff in mission support components also felt that HoM have not sought—or have even disregarded—the expertise and

⁹ Discussion with a DSRS of a major peacekeeping mission, December 2019.

¹⁰ Phone interview with staff member from the Internal Oversight Services, October 2019.

¹¹ Where the Secretary-General has delegated the authority to administer the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules to heads of entity, such delegation shall be understood to be on a functional, rather than personal, basis unless the Secretary-General has expressly indicated otherwise. UN Secretariat, *Delegation of Authority in the Administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules—Secretary-General's Bulletin*, UN Doc. ST/SGB/2019/2, December 17, 2018, para 2.4.

¹² Phone interview with DOS staff member, November 2019.

¹³ One of those sharing this sentiment was a former senior-level staff member at UN headquarters.

institutional knowledge of experienced D/CMS and subject-matter experts who could accommodate their needs within existing UN regulations, rules, policies, and administrative issuances.

Several mission personnel, including one HoM, said they did not initially receive sufficient or comprehensible guidance on how to implement the DOAs.¹⁴ This reportedly caused consternation and anxiety among HoM as they were flooded with transactional responsibilities they were unprepared to take on. It also creates a risk that HoM will take an inconsistent approach to risk. To better equip them to manage UN resources, the Secretariat has since launched a three-day executive program for HoM and other senior mission leaders in organizational governance and resource stewardship. DOS is also developing online professional certification programs in human resources and finance for other staff.

Other mission staff indicated that their HoM had not yet used the DOA to its full potential. For example, some missions are still following cumbersome procedures for quick-impact projects when the HoM could instruct the D/CMS to immediately issue a purchase order based on three quotations (e.g., to purchase a pump to assist a community in need). At the same time, personnel in one mission described proactive steps taken to sub-delegate financial certifying authority to substantive staff and to provide them training in this process, allowing the “owners” of funds to certify their own expenditures without the need to involve mission support staff.¹⁵

Reconfiguring the Management Structure

One of the secretary-general’s goals for the management reform was to reduce fragmentation in management structures. Prior to January 1, 2019, all authority was vested in the Department of Management (DM), which performed both policy and operational functions. Operational support to peacekeeping missions and special political

missions was delegated to the Department of Field Support (DFS). As a result, policies developed by DM (which apply to the entire Secretariat) were largely informed by the experience of entities not involved in peacekeeping and were increasingly not fit for the purpose of peace operations. Moreover, the support that DFS provided to peace operations was not available to other parts of the Secretariat.

The secretary-general therefore proposed changing the structure to eliminate duplicative functions, establish a clearer division of roles and responsibilities and segregation of duties, and ensure appropriate checks and balances.¹⁶ This led to the replacement of DM and DFS with two new departments: the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) and the Department of Operational Support (DOS).

DMSPC is responsible for all administrative policy development, management strategy, and quality assurance functions previously held by both DM and DFS. In addition to providing operational support to peace operations, DOS is responsible for providing operational and advisory support to all parts of the UN Secretariat, including offices away from headquarters, regional commissions, and the resident coordinator system that coordinates the work of UN country teams (see Figure 2).

The management reform also involved the creation of a single Office of Information and Communications Technology, which reports to both DOS (for operational matters) and DMSPC (for policy matters), enabling system-wide technological solutions. Prior to the reform, information and communications technology functions for the field and headquarters were split between DFS and DM, respectively. At times this resulted in the departments using different hardware or software that was sometimes redundant or incompatible. As a result of the reform, the entire Secretariat, irrespective of location, is on the same network and is using Microsoft Office 365 (and Outlook), which allows remote work and collaboration within and between duty stations. During the COVID-19 pandemic,

¹⁴ This included feedback received from a peacekeeping head of mission.

¹⁵ Phone interview with substantive and support staff in a peacekeeping mission in Africa, October 2019.

¹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Implementing a New Management Architecture for Improved Effectiveness and Strengthened Accountability*, UN Doc. A/72/492/Add.2, March 21, 2018.


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graph TD
    DOS[Department of Operational Support] --- IC[Information and Communications Technology (Dual Reporting to DMSPC & DOS)]
    DOS --- DMS[Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance]
    DOS --- DSA[Division of Special Activities]
    DOS --- DSM[Division of Administration, New York]
    DOS --- OSO[Office of Support Operations]
    DOS --- OSM[Office of Supply Chain Management]
    DMS --- BTA[Business Transformation and Accountability Division]
    DMS --- OHR[Office of Human Resources]
    DMS --- OPFB[Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget]
    BTA --- GSPD[Global Strategy and Policy Division]
    BTA --- ALD[Administrative Law Division]
    OPFB --- FD[Finance Division]
    OPFB --- PPBD[Programme Planning and Budget Division]
    OPFB --- FOFD[Field Operations Finance Division]
    OSO --- HRS[Human Resources Services Division]
    OSO --- HCO[Health Care Management, Occupational Safety and Health Division]
    OSO --- COTS[Capacity Development and Operational Training Service]
    OSM --- EOS[Enabling and Outreach Service]
    OSM --- LD[Logistics Division]
    OSM --- PD[Procurement Division]
    OSM --- UCS[Uniformed Capabilities Support Division]
    DSM --- HCS[Headquarters Client Support Section]
    DSM --- FACS[Facilities and Commercial Activities Service]
  
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The organizational chart for the Department of Operational Support is structured as follows:

- Department of Operational Support**
 - Information and Communications Technology (Dual Reporting to DMSPC & DOS)**
 - Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance**
 - Business Transformation and Accountability Division**
 - Global Strategy and Policy Division
 - Administrative Law Division
 - Office of Human Resources**
 - Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget**
 - Finance Division
 - Programme Planning and Budget Division
 - Field Operations Finance Division
 - Division of Special Activities**
 - Division of Administration, New York**
 - Headquarters Client Support Section
 - Facilities and Commercial Activities Service
 - Office of Support Operations**
 - Human Resources Services Division
 - Health Care Management, Occupational Safety and Health Division
 - Capacity Development and Operational Training Service
 - Office of Supply Chain Management**
 - Enabling and Outreach Service
 - Logistics Division
 - Procurement Division
 - Uniformed Capabilities Support Division

these functions have been essential, as large numbers of “nonessential” mission staff are temporarily working remotely outside of mission areas.

Finally, to rectify the lack of adequate field representation in policy development, a Management Client Board (MCB) was established to ensure that both DMSPC and DOS are responsive to the requirements and concerns of the entities they are supporting. Co-chaired by the undersecretaries-general of both departments, the MCB includes rotating representatives from all the different types of entities within the Secretariat, including different types of peace operations (e.g., both small and large, operating in both stable and dynamic environments, etc.), to ensure that policy development takes into account the requirements of the entire Secretariat.¹⁷

Following consultations with member states, the secretary-general determined that support for reform could only be guaranteed if done with existing resources. Therefore, he clearly and consistently messaged to member states that the restructuring would be “post-neutral” (i.e., that no new staff would be required). Considering the scope of the restructuring, however, there has arguably been insufficient staff capacity in the Secretariat to implement the management reform. Many of the initiatives are handled by headquarters staff on top of their other day-to-day responsibilities, and it was widely felt that such a reform cannot be handled exclusively by “part-time” staff.¹⁸

For many field personnel, the new management structure remains unclear.

Improving Communication and Consultation

For many field personnel, the new structure remains unclear. When they need to request policy or operational support from headquarters, senior

field mission staff often do not know whether to go to DMSPC or DOS. While the responsibility for finance and budgeting clearly falls to DMSPC, staff are less clear about where to turn for human resources questions (all human resources questions are now handled by DOS). Peacekeeping missions previously had DFS support officers embedded in the integrated operational teams that backstop them at headquarters. While DOS has six support officers under the new structure, many field staff said they no longer know who their counterparts are at UN headquarters, particularly in DOS. As one frustrated staff member put it, “Nobody knows who is who in the zoo.”¹⁹ Both departments have recognized this issue, prompting them to organize a retreat and form working groups to tackle it. Nonetheless, despite the clear division of responsibility between the two departments, this has not been clearly communicated to end users.

This lack of understanding of the new organizational structure speaks to a gap in perceptions of the reform’s impact. A recent internal staff survey found that while 75 percent of under-secretaries-general saw improvements resulting from the management reform, the same was true of only 24 to 27 percent of lower-level professional staff.²⁰ This may be partly attributable to the lack of a multi-year operational master plan, road map, or project priority plan for the implementation of the management reform and of a solid communications strategy. It could also result from an information-sharing gap between senior mission leadership and working-level staff.

The MCB is one of the primary mechanisms for improving consultation with the field. However, it operates at a very high level (heads of entity), and only a few peace operations are represented on it at any time.²¹ To address this, each MCB representative is supposed to coordinate with its respective

¹⁷ For UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Implementing a New Management Architecture for Improved Effectiveness and Strengthened Accountability*, UN Doc. A/72/492/Add.2, March 21, 2018.

¹⁸ Phone interviews with DOS and DMSPC staff, November 2019.

¹⁹ Phone interview with staff member from the UN mission in Haiti, November 2019.

²⁰ Colum Lynch, “A Grunt’s View of U.N. Leadership,” *Foreign Policy*, February 28, 2020.

²¹ As of June 2020, the peace operations represented were the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen.

constituency so that peace operations have their own lower-level coordination mechanism that feeds into the MCB. The MCB's working-level groups also include a feedback loop to the MCB to ensure that operational inputs from the field are considered and integrated into the development of UN-wide policies and standard operating procedures applicable to field missions.

Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance

The Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance (DMSPC) is comprised of three pillars: program planning, finance and budget; human resources; and business transformation and accountability, which combine capacities for monitoring, risk management, performance measurement, and Secretariat-wide project management.²²

Making Peacekeeping Budget Procedures Faster and More Inclusive

The new budget procedures for peace operations are seen as a significant improvement. Previously, budgets prepared by missions were reviewed by DFS and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in a multi-step process before being submitted to the controller. From start to finish, the process typically spanned seven months, meaning that planning assumptions made at the start of the process were no longer relevant by the time the budgets were submitted to the Fifth Committee. Following the management reform, missions submit their budgets directly to the controller, streamlining the process. The mission and controller then engage in dialogue to ensure the final budget submitted to member states is credible and frugal and supports both the implementation of the mission's mandate and

overall organizational objectives.

Another change welcomed by field missions has been the inclusion of HoM in the deliberations not only of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) but also of the General Assembly's Fifth Committee. Field personnel had never understood the rationale for being excluded from Fifth Committee negotiations prior to the reform (according to headquarters officials, the reason was that experts from DM, DFS, and DPKO were more aware of intergovernmental dynamics and closer working relationships with delegates). Now, the Fifth Committee hears directly from HoM about their resource requirements. This direct interaction seems to be increasing transparency between member states and missions.

Reforming Human Resource Management

Prior to the restructuring, human resources functions were vested in both the Office of Human Resources Management in DM and the Field Personnel Division in DFS.²³ When Secretary-General Guterres outlined his vision for UN reform to member states, he highlighted human resources management as one of the areas most in need of improvement.²⁴ The HIPPO was even more blunt, stating that "there is no topic that elicits greater frustration in the field across all levels of staff. Existing procedures for recruiting staff and bringing them on board are onerous and slow. Tools for accelerating recruitment, such as rosters, have not delivered sufficient results."²⁵

Under the new departments, responsibilities are clearly separated between, on the one hand, strategic-level activities like policy development and establishment of accountability and compliance frameworks (the responsibility of DMSPC) and, on the other, operational activities like managing recruitment and rosters, providing surge support,

22 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Implementing a New Management Architecture for Improved Effectiveness and Strengthened Accountability*, UN Doc. A/72/492/Add.2, March 21, 2018.

23 For an in-depth analysis of human resources management for UN peacekeeping operations, see: Namie Di Razza, "People before Process: Humanizing the HR System for UN Peace Operations," International Peace Institute, October 2017.

24 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a Better Future for All—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/492, September 27, 2017, para 23.

25 UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People—Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, UN Doc. A/70/95–S/2015/446, June 17, 2015, para. 321.

and downsizing (the responsibility of DOS).²⁶ The secretary-general has taken steps to implement several changes related to human resources management within his existing authorities (for example on recruitment, covered below). At the same time, human resources management is a routine agenda item for the Fifth Committee, and member states have been unable to reach agreement on these issues for several consecutive General Assembly sessions. The Secretariat has also been delayed in putting forward proposals to member states, such as a new mobility framework to enable rotation of staff between the field and headquarters.²⁷

Strengthening Individual and Institutional Accountability

A central goal of the management reform was to increase both individual and institutional accountability within the UN.²⁸ The secretary-general observed that “by greatly simplifying resource management policies and processes and aligning resource management delegations of authority with programme and mandate delivery authorities and responsibilities, managers can be held to full account for what they achieve and deliver and the resources expended and decisions taken to that end.” He further noted that, to do so, managers need clear and fair standards to know what is expected of them.²⁹

In this regard, one major achievement has been the establishment of the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) within DMSPC. This division brings together functions previously held separately by DM and DFS, including

For the first time, there is a single entity in the Secretariat responsible for strengthening and mainstreaming accountability.

monitoring and evaluation, organizational performance management, risk management, analytics, and organizational transformation. It is the first time there has been a single entity in the Secretariat responsible for strengthening and mainstreaming accountability.³⁰

Managing Individual Performance

BTAD is responsible for holding managers and staff accountable for their performance. HoM are held accountable through annual compacts with the secretary-general, which include goals and key performance indicators. While these compacts are available through the UN’s internal iSeek portal, many field staff are not familiar with their HoM’s compact. DMSPC has set up dashboards to track the implementation of compacts and standardize their format, though this information is not yet automatically input from the Umoja and Inspira systems.

Furthermore, the Management Performance Board, initially created in 2013 to monitor, oversee, and advise on these compacts, has been reactivated.

Below the level of HoM, DMSPC has piloted a 360-degree performance-management system, which it plans to roll out throughout the UN Secretariat during the next performance cycle (2021–2022), starting with senior managers, followed by middle managers and then other staff. At the structural level, the reforms have led to the consolidation of Secretariat entities responsible for conduct and discipline within DMSPC. This has reportedly fostered the sharing of best practices, improved case management, and enhanced background checks for candidates applying to the UN.³¹

²⁶ The secretary-general presented his rationale to member states for splitting human resource functions along policy and operational lines between DMSPC and DOS in a 2018 report. UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Comparative Assessment of Human Resources Structures—Report of the Secretary General*, UN Doc. A/73/366, September 5, 2018.

²⁷ The mobility framework, as well as policy on downsizing, was promised in the secretary-general’s September 2017 report.

²⁸ The UN General Assembly, in Resolution 64/259 defined accountability as “achieving objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, in fully implementing and delivering on all mandates to the Secretariat approved by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies and other subsidiary organs established by them in compliance with all resolutions, regulations, rules and ethical standards; truthful, objective, accurate and timely reporting on performance results; responsible stewardship of funds and resources; all aspects of performance, including a clearly defined system of rewards and sanctions; and with due recognition to the important role of the oversight bodies and in full compliance with accepted recommendations.” UN General Assembly Resolution 64/259 (May 5, 2010), UN Doc. A/RES/64/259.

²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Implementing a New Management Architecture for Improved Effectiveness and Strengthened Accountability*, UN Doc. A/72/492/Add.2, March 21, 2018, para. 56.

³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Ninth Progress Report on Accountability: Strengthening Accountability in the United Nations Secretariat—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/74/658, January 20, 2020.

³¹ Phone interview with senior staff from the Office of the Under Secretary-General for DMSPC, November 2019.

So far, however, personnel interviewed at UN headquarters and in the field did not perceive significant changes when it comes to performance management. There was general agreement that the existing performance-management system does not lead to objective, honest assessments. Managers are often wary to report under-performance for fear of a protracted appeals process that requires providing voluminous documentary evidence to demonstrate that enough opportunities for improvement were provided. Mandatory work plans and performance improvement plans are generally not quantifiable, measurable, or specific and do not clearly link to organizational and mission objectives. Many field staff called for a complete overhaul or abolition of the current performance-evaluation system. Staff at the supervisory level called for linking the system to the contract-extension process and making it easier to terminate contracts, provided they follow due process. Although in 2017 the secretary-general committed to introducing a performance management system, he has not yet done so.³²

Managing Performance, Risk, and Accountability

BTAD also oversees the DOA accountability framework, which came into effect when the DOAs were issued on January 1, 2019. The framework, which includes sixteen key performance indicators in the areas of finance, budget, travel, human resources, procurement, and property management, is intended to help heads of entities show that they are using the authorities in a transparent, responsible, and accountable way.³³

The results of these efforts are not yet clear. The Secretariat has argued that the accountability framework has started to yield some positive results: for example, it has made data more reliable so that member states can make better-informed

decisions about resource requirements. However, several major financial contributors argued that they have yet to see evidence of this in recent budget documents.³⁴ The action points issued by the Management Client Board co-chaired by DMSPC and DOS were also seen as enhancing accountability, though there is no mechanism for implementing the board's decisions in the field. However, some feel that the accountability framework needs to be supported by a robust risk monitoring, analysis, and management framework, both in New York (in DMSPC at the strategic and reputational levels and DOS at the operational level) and in field missions. It was also suggested that the framework and related trainings should ensure that HoM respect not only the letter of UN policies but also the organization's spirit and values.

Shifting the UN's approach to risk management is critical to enabling missions to deliver their mandates in fluid, often high-risk environments. The past approach to risk management was criticized as being unsuited to the needs of field operations and erred on the side of compliance, at the expense of flexibility and responsiveness.³⁵ With the management reform, the secretary-general has articulated a new approach. This approach "is pragmatic and action-oriented, taking principled and practical action to deliver on mandates, balancing administrative and operational risks and erring on the side of action when necessary to prevent and address human suffering."³⁶ A new training program on enterprise risk management has been finalized and is being rolled out across peace operations. BTAD has also standardized its risk management methodology and established a registry for fraud prevention, with the next step being to incorporate risk management into departmental and individual work plans.

At the mission level, resource stewardship execu-

32 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a Better Future for All—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/492, September 27, 2017.

33 Reviewing the indicators, the Board of Auditors recommended that "the Administration analyse which data are necessary for the comprehensive monitoring of the exercise of delegated authorities, take stock of how these aspects are currently recorded and identify changes needed." UN General Assembly, *Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for the 12-month Period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 and Report of the Board of Auditors Volume II United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/74/5 (Vol. II), 2020, para. 231.

34 Written communications with member-state representatives, June 2020.

35 See, for example: UN General Assembly and Security Council, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People—Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, June 17, 2015, para. 315.

36 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Implementing a New Management Architecture for Improved Effectiveness and Strengthened Accountability*, UN Doc. A/72/492/Add.2, March 21, 2018, para. 63.

tive groups have been set up in all peace operations. These groups, headed by HoM or their delegates, help DMSPC and DOS monitor the use of resources, as they receive the minutes from the group's regular meetings.³⁷ The comprehensive performance management system for peace operations, which was put in place in 2017, is also intended to help both missions and member states assess where missions are making progress or facing obstacles in implementing their mandates and to allocate resources appropriately. While this system has been piloted in some missions, some still lack performance management units. These units will play an important role in aligning the management reforms with accountability structures at the field level.

In addition to DMSPC, DOS has also established online business intelligence and monitoring systems to track quality of service delivery and provide data for quality assurance and decision making. These systems have been particularly beneficial for peace operations, which already had systems in place. DOS has established an enterprise analytics system to support decision making by senior managers in the field and headquarters with near real-time access to administrative and substantive data for up to 10,000 users in the UN Secretariat, including field missions. This provides a range of tailored analytics for different client groups, from "pre-modeled" complete dashboards to modeling access for advanced users, all of which enhance performance monitoring. For example, power business intelligence is now available across the UN Secretariat as part of Microsoft Office 365 and has more than 4,700 active users, including staff in peace operations. DOS has also been designing a new performance framework for the entire supply chain across the UN Secretariat, including field missions, starting with all goods and selected services (fuel, food, and aviation). DOS is requiring that all its clients report monthly on their performance against this framework.

The UN Board of Auditors and Office of Internal

Oversight Services also play important roles in monitoring performance. However, many staff in field missions argued that these bodies were overly focused on missions' efficiency (i.e., compliance with financial regulations and rules) rather than their effectiveness (i.e., military, police, and civilian activities in support of mandate implementation). Currently, the two main measures of budget performance—budget implementation (where higher is better) and budget redeployment (where lower is better), both of which are assessed by auditors—reflect the inappropriateness of the framework. A recent attempt by the Board of Auditors to assess the performance of troops deployed in UN peace operations as part of its reporting was not well received by the affected member states in the Fifth Committee.³⁸ Without clear guidance from the General Assembly, the two bodies are unable to realign their functions to reflect the new approach to performance management.

Monitoring Implementation of the Management Reform

In addition to ensuring individual and institutional accountability across the UN system, DMSPC is responsible for monitoring implementation of the management reform itself. In this regard, the introduction of a benefits management framework in June 2019 is a major milestone.³⁹ The framework is intended to track whether the UN Secretariat is delivering the reforms it promised. It is considered to be a stepping stone toward a continuous improvement system. The framework, which also covers the peace and security and development system reforms, measures whether the reforms are delivering improvements through a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators, including clear baselines and targets. A public benefits tracker went live on the UN website in March 2020 "to provide a consolidated overview over all key improvement initiatives of the UN reform," including the intended benefits of the reforms, the status of implementation, and key measurements.⁴⁰

37 Guidelines issued by the UN under-secretaries-general for peace operations and field support on September 1, 2018.

38 UN General Assembly, *Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for the 12-Month Period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 and Report of the Board of Auditors Volume II United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, UN Doc. A/73/5 (Vol. II), 2018.

39 The UN has defined benefits as "the measurable improvement resulting from an outcome perceived as an advantage by one or more stakeholders, which contributes towards one or more organisational objectives." United Nations, "Benefits Management," available at <https://reform.un.org/content/benefits-management>.

40 See: United Nations, "United to Reform: Benefits Tracker," available at <https://reform.un.org/content/benefits-tracker>.

In line with the benefits framework, DOS has been publishing a management reform benefits report. In the latest version, in September 2019, DOS claimed that most of its approximately fifty business processes and other improvement initiatives were directly related to the management reform.

Operational Support

The Department of Operational Support is responsible for supporting “decision-making by empowered senior managers through advisory capacities closely focused on the point of delivery and... the implementation of decisions through operational support, including shared transactional services.”⁴¹

Improving Support Operations

DOS provides support across the Secretariat in areas including capacity development and training, human resources, and healthcare. This represents a major shift from DFS, which provided this support only to the UN’s field presences.

Improving Operational and Advisory Support

DFS was mandated to provide dedicated administrative and logistical support to peacekeeping missions and special political missions. Increasingly, however, many of the services and functions provided by the department were used by other parts of the Secretariat. DOS consolidates these services in a single department serving the entire Secretariat worldwide, as well as providing dedicated “one-stop” services for troop- and police-contributing countries.

The shift from DFS to DOS has led some mission field staff to feel less well supported. Staff at both headquarters and in the field noted that DOS has not been fully exercising its role overseeing, monitoring, and advising on field operations. Instead, it is focused on organizing itself and

establishing working relationships and methods of support for its new clients across the Secretariat. While this has reduced micromanagement, allowing missions more flexibility and autonomy, it has also left a vacuum, particularly in support on human resources. This lack of support was most keenly felt in the absence of updated standard operating procedures, manuals, and other operational guidance documents for managing human, financial, and material resources, which have become obsolete since the reform came into effect.

Recognizing this shortfall, DOS is in the process of finalizing new standard operating procedures on guidance development to direct the updating of internal guidance. It is also partnering with DMSPC on the development of an integrated policy and guidance framework that will support alignment and integration of internal guidance and organization-wide policies, rules, and regulations. Moreover, DOS’s recent launch of a Knowledge Gateway, together with the Policy Portal launched by DMSPC and the Office of Information and Communications Technology, is an opportunity to streamline guidance and best practice through a participatory process. Going forward, DOS is working to identify inconsistent or outdated guidance related to operational support through a global network of knowledge management focal points.⁴²

DOS has also launched an effort to establish a client management model in the Secretariat, headed by the directors of its Human Resources Services Division and the Office of Information and Communications Technology.⁴³ This system is expected to be up and running by October 2020. The UN Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, including its 24/7 hotline for HoM to request urgent policy and operational support, was mentioned as a potential model.

The shift to a Secretariat-wide mandate created budgetary challenges, since DFS had been funded almost entirely from the peacekeeping support

41 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Implementing a New Management Architecture for Improved Effectiveness and Strengthened Accountability*, UN Doc. A/72/492/Add.2, March 21, 2018.

42 Written communication with DOS/DMSPC, June 2020.

43 UN DOS, “Launch of the Project to Establish a Client Management Model in the Secretariat,” Inter-Office Memorandum, November 1, 2019.

account, while DM had been funded by both the support account and the regular assessed budget.⁴⁴ In March 2020, the secretary-general proposed a new financing model for the approval of member states “to establish a clear and consistent approach to financing the two new departments from the support account” and ensure that DOS has the resources it needs to support its expanded client base.⁴⁵ If approved, this financing model will go into effect on January 1, 2022.

Speeding Up the Recruitment and Onboarding Processes

The management reform delegated much of the decision-making authority for human resources to field presences while charging DOS with providing advisory and support services to all Secretariat entities. In addition to advising on all areas of human resources, DOS provides guidance on the overall administrative framework, tailored advice based on individual entities’ unique support requirements, and in-depth operational support in complex areas like management evaluation and performance management.

One of the main initiatives under the management reform has been an effort to make the recruitment process faster and easier, allowing hiring managers to fill vacancies more quickly. The goal is for all UN offices responsible for recruitment, including field missions, to meet the 120-day target for recruitment set by the General Assembly, whether through a job-specific posting or a roster.⁴⁶ This reform was informed by consultations with more than 300 hiring managers and recruiters, as well as an analysis of the recruitment process that revealed that the screening, testing, and interviewing of candidates for field missions was the main chokepoint.⁴⁷

DOS launched its initiative to reform the recruitment process in March 2019 and rolled out a first set of new recruitment tools in August. These include automated two-page candidate summaries, job-specific questionnaires, and revised candidate evaluation templates, all available electronically on Inspira, the UN’s talent management IT system, to help managers assess a candidate’s profile more quickly. Early tests suggest that these tools allow hiring managers to screen candidates up to five times faster. DOS is rolling out further changes in 2020, including the integration of Inspira and the online testing platform Moodle, the creation of an online community for recruiters, and the development of clear standard operating procedures for the recruitment process. A new diversity analytics tool also allows hiring managers to view the gender and geographic distribution of candidates.⁴⁸ According to DOS’s publicly available performance framework, the recruitment time for post-specific and recruit-from-roster personnel is 279 and 53 days, respectively, for the period July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019. This suggests that recent changes have either not been sufficient or have not been rolled out widely enough to bring recruitment time in line with the target.⁴⁹

Work has also progressed on improving the management of rosters, including by increasing the gender and geographic balance, speeding up the selection process, and keeping them more up to date. DOS has also developed several additional rosters, including four for the resident coordinator system, which was made part of the Secretariat under the parallel reform of the UN development system. It has also developed a roster of staff ready to temporarily deploy to the field in the case of an emergency as part of its effort to develop a standing surge capacity.⁵⁰

44 The funds in the support account are “for the sole purpose of financing human resources and non-human resources requirements for backstopping and supporting peacekeeping operations at headquarters,” and “any changes in this limitation require the prior approval of the General Assembly.” UN General Assembly Resolution 73/308 (July 19, 2019), UN Doc. A/RES/73/308, para. 5.

45 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Funding Model for the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/74/761, March 23, 2020.

46 Recruit-from-roster is a process whereby hiring managers, without going through a time-consuming recruitment exercise, select from among a group of pre-cleared candidates. Post-specific job openings are used if no suitable candidates are available on the pre-cleared roster.

47 UN DOS, “Operational Support: Implementation of the New Management Paradigm,” September 2019.

48 Ibid.

49 This reflects the average number of calendar days from job posting to selection, including posting period, based on a methodology agreed upon within the Secretariat. The scope is limited to peacekeeping support account entities. Communication with DOS official, June 2020. See also: UN DOS, “Performance by Indicator,” available at <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/indicator-performance>.

50 UN DOS, “Operational Support: Implementation of the New Management Paradigm,” September 2019.

The process of onboarding new staff has also been enhanced and simplified, with the goal of decreasing the timeline to ninety days for external candidates and sixty days for internal candidates. DOS has developed a dashboard with onboarding status updates for hiring managers, allowing them to better plan and monitor the process. DOS has also streamlined the process for issuing UN travel documents and medical clearances to mission personnel. According to an internal DOS client satisfaction survey, more than 90 percent of respondents are satisfied with the speed and quality of the issuance of travel documents.⁵¹

While DOS initiatives to speed up the recruitment of field personnel seem to be working, further initiatives may be needed to ensure the UN's workforce is fit to address the UN's challenges, implement the secretary-general's reforms, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Consolidating Healthcare Management

Responsibility for healthcare management and workplace safety has also been consolidated within DOS. Previously, these functions were separated, with DFS and DPKO jointly responsible for occupational safety and health and DM for medical services. Consolidating these functions into a single division in DOS is part of an effort to process entitlements more consistently and link workplace incidents to health outcomes to better understand risks and reduce hazards.

At the field level, DOS has set targets to decrease the number of fatalities in high-risk missions through the provision of better medical care at all UN hospitals. DOS conducted a proof of concept in

While initiatives to speed up the recruitment of field personnel seem to be working, further initiatives may be needed to ensure the UN's workforce is fit to address the UN's challenges, implement reforms, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

four level I field hospitals and is working to standardize care at level II hospitals and at UN referral hospitals. It also drafted a manual on healthcare quality with standardized patient safety procedures and has conducted trainings for future UN mission hospital commanders.⁵² Although not directly related to the management reform, DOS has also developed a ten-day course for UN field medical assistants, which it piloted in Entebbe, Uganda, in October 2019. DOS considered this course to be a critical step toward building an integrated trauma-care chain.

The outbreak of COVID-19 was a stress test and validation for the new medical support arrangements. The consolidation of medical support and occupational safety and health functions has allowed for the rapid and coordinated development of operational guidance, sourcing and deployment of personal protective equipment and ventilators, and establishment of new or additional medevac capabilities and level III or IV hospitals.

Improving Supply-Chain Management

Supply-chain management was another area where the management reform consolidated functions. DM's Procurement Division and DFS's Logistics Division were brought together in DOS's Office of Supply Chain

Management.⁵³

Speeding Up the Procurement Process

Peace operations account for the vast majority of UN procurement activities. Before the management reform, the average timeline for finalizing long-term procurement agreements (system contracts) was 177 days.⁵⁴ The process involved

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ While such an integrated supply chain is common in the commercial sector, some experts have questioned this model for the UN, as it could weaken the internal control environment by eliminating the segregation of technical and commercial functions. These critics have argued that these internal controls could have been preserved by keeping the Procurement Division within DMPSC and putting in place service-level agreements for this division to provide procurement services to DOS. This risk could be mitigated by integrating the supply chain into the UN's corporate risk register and including industry-standard risk-mitigation and fraud-prevention measures.

⁵⁴ The secretary-general's report stated that "the process of establishing systems contracts... currently takes approximately 24 months and includes 40 distinct steps, during which action passes between the requisitioning office and the procurement office at 17 handover points." According to DOS, the 24 month was subsequently clarified in a response to the ACABQ, as reflecting the total acquisition time "including planning and preparation activities, such as market analysis,

many cross-functional handovers between numerous staff and sections at UN headquarters and in the field. This timeline made it difficult for the Secretariat to quickly respond to emerging needs on the ground. The lapsing of contracts before a replacement contract could be finalized exacerbated these issues. At one point, over sixty system contracts had expired without replacements or extensions being in place.⁵⁵ Field personnel in one mission providing time-critical “combat-service support” described directly phoning vendors on a monthly basis to get deliveries moving and to obtain feedback on the renewal status of expired contracts.

To speed up the procurement process, DOS issued a revised Procurement Manual in September 2019. The revised manual, which is a living document, outlines and clarifies the new delegated authorities, abolishes duplicative reviews by the committees on contracts in missions and headquarters, and introduces a shift to category management to harmonize the acquisition of goods and services across the UN Secretariat. In addition, DOS set up an independent committee to review vendors and their registration status as a way to increase internal controls. Local procurement authority guidelines are being finalized, and a dashboard to monitor the status of local purchasing approvals has been tested and will be rolled out in 2020.⁵⁶

These changes aim to allow procurement officers to enter into commercial procurement contracts more quickly. Based on the updated procurement manual, the goal is to reduce the minimum tendering lead time from fourteen to five days for requests for quotations, from twenty-eight to twenty-one days for invitations to bid covering most situations, and from forty-two to twenty-one days for requests for proposals. New guidance and processes for local procurement of goods and services similarly aim to reduce the timeline from thirty to only five days. DOS has also reduced the

timeline for registering flight-service vendors, with the backlog of submissions cleared, and put in place arrangements to provide surge and urgent aviation support for unforeseen developments.⁵⁷

Integrating the Supply Chain

DOS has undertaken several initiatives to better integrate the supply chain. To avoid entering into new contracts when existing contracts could meet new demands, DOS published a Global Peacekeeping Supply Chain Plan, leading to a cross-mission review looking at options for improving sourcing. Following this review, demand and source planning data is being digitalized, and an online catalogue of existing systems contracts has been published.⁵⁸ These efforts have allowed DOS to determine that 78 percent of peace operations’ procurement requirements in 2019/2020 could be satisfied through existing contracts (up from 60 percent in 2019). This included \$62 million-worth of requirements that field missions had initially identified as requiring a new contract.

In an effort to integrate the supply chain from end to end and maximize economies of scale, DOS is introducing category management—a strategy for purchasing goods and services on the basis of discrete categories. This could help establish a single supply chain for all the components of a mission. To improve and harmonize supply-chain management across the Secretariat, DOS has also developed and promulgated provisional operational guidance on several supply-chain processes and is in the process of developing several additional guidance documents.

Despite these improvements, it remains to be seen whether DOS’s new supply-chain system can achieve its goals with the limited human resources available at headquarters. This will depend on progress in several areas. For example, the process

identification of needs, development of requirements, and post-award activities. The actual procurement timeline for strategic commodities and services (solicitation, evaluation, review and contract award) takes on average 6-10 months depending upon complexity. The most recent pre-reform data was from 2016-2017, when the average duration of the procurement process in major solicitations was measured at 177 days (a sub-set of the 24 months).” UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a Better Future for All—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/492, September 27, 2017, para. 45.

55 Phone interview with DOS staff member, November 2019.

56 UN DOS, “Operational Support: Implementation of the New Management Paradigm,” September 2019.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

of planning, generating, deploying, rotating, and repatriating uniformed personnel is also a question of supply-chain management.

However, while the administrative and logistical aspects of supporting military personnel are consolidated within the new DOS supply-chain structure, military demand planning and force generation are not fully integrated into the supply chain. Instead, these functions remain in the Military Planning Service and the Force Generation Service, both in DPO's Office of Military Affairs. Tighter integration of all elements of the military and police supply chain—in the same manner as the processes for acquiring goods and services—could allow the Secretariat to provide better, more responsive support to both peacekeeping missions and troop- and police-contributing countries. Moreover, while contracts in field missions are managed by subject-matter experts at the operational and tactical levels, there is no institutionalized and standardized contract-management function at the policy level, which some see as a significant risk. The Office of Supply Chain Management is currently piloting a performance-feedback system and associated guidance to address this, which should be rolled out globally later in 2020.

Building Trust with Member States through Better Support

The secretary-general identified the need to rebuild trust between the UN Secretariat and member states as a priority across all of the management reforms. This includes efforts to better demonstrate results in the implementation of mandates by delegating authority as close to the point of delivery as possible and rethinking how the organization approaches risk; to provide assurance of the responsible and efficient use of resources through improved performance assessment and greater transparency; and to ensure that the UN “is equipped and ready to support Member States as they conduct their own work and take collective action.”⁵⁹

DOS has worked toward this goal by trying to improve the quality and efficiency of its services to troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) through its Uniformed Capabilities Support Division—a one-stop shop for T/PCCs. The unification of these functions within a single division is intended to allow DOS to expedite the process of administering quarterly reimbursements to T/PCCs by streamlining the verification, calculation, and payment processes, with a goal of no more than ninety days for processing reimbursements for contingent-owned equipment and thirty days for personnel.

DOS has also streamlined the process for drafting and signing memoranda of understanding (MOU) with T/PCCs, with the goal of less than 10 percent of units being deployed without an MOU in place, and has undertaken an internal review of how to streamline its approach to letters of assist with T/PCCs.⁶⁰ Bringing these functions together is an important step in addressing fragmentation in the Secretariat. However, as noted above, more should be done at the policy level to institutionalize and standardize management of contracts that support the deployment, rotation, and sustainment of police and troops.

Providing Support in Special Situations

To bolster the Operational Support Team (previously in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for DFS), DOS's Division for Special Activities has been created as a single entry point for supporting crisis response and the start-up, surge, and closure of missions. The division, which issued a “Guide for Senior Leadership on Field Entity Closure” in 2019, has supported the closure of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) and the start-up of the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the expansion of the UN's presence in Burkina Faso, the deployment of the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, the drawdown of staff in

59 UN General Assembly, *Shifting the Management Paradigm in the United Nations: Ensuring a Better Future for All—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/72/492, September 27, 2017, para. 15.

60 UN DOS, “Operational Support: Implementation of the New Management Paradigm,” September 2019.

MONUSCO and the UN–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), and planning for the closure of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).⁶¹ However, DOS has not had the capacity to cater to all requests from missions. For example, the Global Service Centre in Brindisi was not able to assist MONUSCO with the closing of eight deployment locations.⁶²

Conclusion and Recommendations

UN peace operations operate in complex, often rapidly changing environments. If they are to remain an effective means of maintaining international peace and security, peace operations must become more flexible, responsive, transparent, and accountable. Enabling this shift is a central goal of the UN management reform, including by empowering senior managers in the field through the delegation of authority, increasing the organization's tolerance for risk, more clearly linking resources and results, and more clearly delineating roles and responsibilities.

Greater effort must be made to get input from personnel in peace operations to ensure that the reform responds to their needs and constraints.

In an organization as large, geographically dispersed, and multidimensional as the UN, changing the management culture is a work in progress. Since 2019, the management reform has continued to gain momentum on a “learn-as-we-go” basis, and implementation has become more systematic. Nonetheless, greater effort must be made to get input from personnel in peace operations to ensure that the reform responds to their needs and constraints. More work is also needed to fully realize the potential of the management reform and ensure that it aligns with parallel reforms underway in the UN peace and security architecture and development system. These reform streams are interdependent, integrated, and mutually reinforcing and need to be coordinated across the UN system. The below are recommendations for DMSPC, DOS, and member states to consider to accelerate progress toward the reforms

and ensure they respond to the needs of field missions.

Improving the Speed and Responsiveness of Service Delivery

- **DMSPC and DOS should further decentralize and strengthen governance of the delegations of authority (DOA).** As a matter of priority, the Secretariat should roll out the three-day course on “Executive Governance and Resource Stewardship” for heads of mission and mission leadership teams. It should also intensify efforts to align the DOA in the online DOA portal with the staff authorized to exercise the DOA in Umoja and vice versa, where applicable.
- **Heads of mission should exercise their delegated authority for appointments and lateral reassignments (including across duty stations) to better support mandate delivery and meet shifting priorities.** Likewise, they should be encouraged to subdelegate financial certifying authority not only to support staff but also to programmatic staff and to provide appropriate training. In addition, heads of mission should be encouraged to avail themselves of the expertise of directors and chiefs of mission support on resource management to ensure they are adhering to UN regulations, rules, policies, and administrative issuances.
- **The secretary-general should prioritize outreach to member states on his comprehensive human resources strategy for the UN Secretariat to clearly convey how the proposals reflect the operational requirements of field missions.** This will be necessary to build broad member-state support for updating the UN's human resources management system, which represents a significant unfinished portion of the secretary-general's vision.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Phone interview with senior mission support staff member from MONUSCO, October 2019.

Increasing the Coherence of Management Policies and Structures

- **The secretary-general should promulgate his bulletin on the organization and functions of DMSPC and DOS as a matter of priority.** This bulletin should clearly delineate and communicate the responsibilities and roles of DMSPC and DOS, particularly on human resources management for field missions. It should also clearly show which policy matters fall within the purview of DMSPC, which operational matters fall within the purview of DOS, and which policy and operational matters require a joint DMSPC/DOS approach.
- **DOS and DMSPC should ensure that existing UN policies and procedures are updated and aligned with new policies, rules and regulations, and delegations of authority.** Revised administrative issuances from the Secretariat, standard operating procedures, and other guidance documents should be as clear as possible to enable the rapid, effective, efficient, and responsible use of resources. Clear guidance is also necessary to enable DOS to provide high-level operational advisory services and surge support to missions to assist them in implementing their mandates.
- **The secretary-general should consider colocating, if not integrating, the Office of Military Affairs' Force Generation Service and Military Planning Service with the Uniformed Capabilities Support Division in DOS's Office of Supply Chain Management.** Tighter integration of all elements of the military and police supply chain could allow the Secretariat to provide better, more responsive support to both peacekeeping missions and troop- and police-contributing countries.

Strengthening the Performance Management Culture

- **DMSPC should establish performance management units tasked with risk management, compliance, and audit response in field missions.** These units would integrate monitoring, analysis, and reporting on

performance, risk management, and other indicators for all mission field components (military, police, programmatic, and support) to better inform decision making by senior mission leadership, as well as communication with UN headquarters and member-state bodies. They could be incorporated into missions' strategic planning units, report to the mission chief of staff instead of the director or chief of mission support, and fall under the overall policy and corporate guidance of DMSPC's Business Transformation and Accountability Division.

Enhancing Transparency and Accountability

- **The secretary-general should develop a comprehensive, adaptable, and visible multi-year master implementation and project priority plan.** This plan should lay out the projects, timelines, milestones, responsibilities, and resources required to implement the management reform and link it to the ongoing reform of the peace and security architecture and development system. The plan should be virtually accessible to all stakeholders and staff.
- **DMSPC and DOS should improve awareness among UN staff of the management reform through regular communication, including through the UN's "Unite to Reform" website.** DMSPC and DOS should hold regular (at least semi-annual) town halls, organize periodic videoconferences with field missions, and regularly send all-staff emails with reform-related facts and information. They should also use a small team of social media influencers to champion the messages around the reform. Roving management reform change agents should visit and brief field missions on past, ongoing, and future reform activities and obtain face-to-face, candid feedback, which cannot always be obtained through video, telephone, or email exchanges.
- **The secretary-general and other senior officials should regularly engage with major troop- and police-contributing countries, financial contributors, and members of the Security Council, both individually and in**

blocs. This would allow them to update member states on the reform, solicit their feedback, and respond to their concerns, with the aim of identifying options for the secretary-general to more fully delegate authorities while

ensuring appropriate oversight and transparency. Ultimately, this engagement could increase member states' trust that peace operations are effectively implementing their mandates and managing resources responsibly.

The **INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE** (IPI) is an independent, international not-for-profit think tank dedicated to managing risk and building resilience to promote peace, security, and sustainable development. To achieve its purpose, IPI employs a mix of policy research, strategic analysis, publishing, and convening. With staff from around the world and a broad range of academic fields, IPI has offices facing United Nations headquarters in New York and offices in Vienna and Manama.

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777 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017-3521
USA
TEL +1-212-687-4300
FAX +1-212-983-8246

Freyung 3
1010 Vienna
Austria
TEL +43-1-533-8881
FAX +43-1-533-881-11

51-52 Harbour House
Bahrain Financial Harbour
P.O. Box 1467
Manama, Bahrain
TEL +973-1721-1344