ENHANCING OPERATIONAL READINESS
OF REGIONALIZED CONTRIBUTIONS

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_Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen_, I am honored to be with this esteemed group of Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of Lt Gen Maqsood Ahmed, the Military Adviser for Peacekeeping Operations, who was not able to travel due to operational commitments, thank you for providing the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) the opportunity to share its view on how to enhance Operational Readiness within Regionalized Contributions.

I would like to begin by saying that the Military Component as part of DPKO and the United Nations has been engaged to date in different types of partnerships scenarios with overlapping characteristics. These include coordinated division of responsibilities (eg. Kosovo, DRC in 2003 and 2006, and Afghanistan); joint missions (eg. UNAMID); regionally led missions in compliance with Chapter VIII (AMISOM); and sequential missions including or not re-hatting (as in UNMIL, MINUSTAH and MINUSMA).

The complex and increasingly multifaceted nature of conflicts has led the DPKO’s leadership to engage Regional Organisations to strengthen the strategic and operational partnership. To illustrate this point, let us consider the fruitful agreement reached by Mr Ladsous, the USG DPKO, and the new African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Smail Chergui on the margins of the 4th AU High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa in Abidjan, last month. It was agreed that they would enhance the strategic partnership, and focus on the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture, in particular the African Standby Force (ASF) and the recently created African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC), including the search for innovative and durable funding mechanisms to allow for the rapid deployment of African forces in peacekeeping environments.

Moreover, DPKO and the African Union Peace Support Team (AUPST) met to identify the work required for further engagements with regional organizations to enhance their complementarity through standby force arrangements. Similar strategic level debates have taken place with the EU on the issue of greater cooperation between the two bodies. In addition, Mr. Ladsous visited Moscow last month to discuss with counterparts possible engagement of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) that has established a 3,600 strong standby force.

Following this direction, DPKO/OMA is now exploring possible options to provide UN peacekeeping with viable standby or rapid response capabilities building on the growing capacities of the regional organizations and, in particular, the African Union and its Sub-regional bodies.
Turning to Operational Readiness, let me please highlight two main factors or indicators to achieve it and to project a more credible deterrent posture, including the use of force to protect civilians under imminent threat: 1) Rapid Deployment and to become fully operational; and 2) Interoperability and Common Doctrine which encompass Unity of Command, Unity of action, common principles, values and procedures, common understanding, discipline, motivation and will, and, last but not least, standardized organisation and equipment which can only be achieved through common training.

1) I would like to begin with the first factor: Rapid Deployment

In different opportunities, we had to deploy military contingents very quickly in new and ongoing missions, but we have not always been able to fulfil the international community’s expectations, and this continues to be a challenge. While thousands of people were suffering every day with the hope of being saved the next day, we were struggling with many difficulties to organise and deploy these assets.

Recent history suggests that regional organisations are able to deploy, in most cases, faster than the UN/DPKO and, at least in some regions, are the “first responders.” In this sense, we should consider standby arrangements with regional organisations in order to address situations requiring early action or to complement a peacekeeping operation. Furthermore, these arrangements could be useful in addressing UN needs in (i) mission start-up (including bridging arrangements); (ii) surges for anticipated critical mandate periods; (iii) in extremis support during sudden crises/emergencies; and (iv) over-the-horizon needs. There are regions, however, where no clear regional actors exist with operational capacity, such as the Middle East and Asia. Here, Latin-American countries have effectively supported Haiti, but not necessarily under the umbrella of a regional organization.

Not only a quick deployment to the mission area is important, but also the capacity of the force to become operational very fast. A quick military presence can make the difference, but if the units are unable to deliver quickly its presence may not be that useful. Sometimes, the troops reach the mission area but as they have to wait for the equipment to arrive or vice versa they cannot protect civilians efficiently. In addition, if enablers (Engineers, Aviation, Medical, Communications, Transport, Intel, and others) have not reached the mission by the time the Infantry units are in place the latter may be unable to reach quickly their sectors due to the absence of engineering capability, for instance, to repair roads and bridges or to build the accommodation, the hangars, runways, helipads and other logistic facilities; even if ground or air transport are fully operational and have put the troops in their Areas of Responsibilities, the inexistence of hospitals may limit the engagement of the infantry to non-threatening missions only. On the other hand, to build the logistic bases and the facilities mentioned before, there is a need of infantry units to provide security. Support of regional organisations with their close proximity to the area can sometimes help break this circle.

But, being timely in critical situations is not enough. The call for peace is so urgent that we should be able to provide the expected support as soon as we reach the mission area. Does this mean that the joint operational mechanisms and procedures should be put into motion even before arriving into the mission area? Would Regional Organizations be willing to train collectively so that the units and enablers have the opportunity to operate and interact well before their deployment into a mission area? There comes the second factor named Interoperability which is fuelled by a common doctrine.
2) **Interoperability and Common Doctrine** are interrelated and interdependent. Interoperability cannot be expected where there is no cohesion, unity of action, common understanding and standardized organization and equipment. The unity of action is unlikely to exist where there is no unity of command and common doctrine. The latter ensures common principles, values, policies and procedures, which are the basis of the desired unity of action, uniformity, discipline, motivation, will and compatibility of organizational structures and equipment which could be coordinated and synchronised through regional joint and combined training and proof tested in regional exercises.

As you know very well, we have over 87,000 military personnel in the field on an enduring basis, with over 90 infantry battalions deployed generating an approximate number of nearly 150,000 personnel which need to be rotated to and from missions every year. These troops come from a very broad number of countries which pose us the challenge of knitting these contingents together, under a unified command, in difficult terrain and often spread over massive geographical areas, and frequently under great threat. A regional approach could ease some of these difficulties.

The common trend is to prepare and respond appropriately in pursuit of mission objectives in a professional and calibrated manner. Maintaining high standards of Operational Readiness is an objective that cannot be achieved only by a particular contingent but it in a holistic way including not only the military component but the other ones and in line with UN policies, guidelines and standards. Interoperability is then a crucial factor that can only be reached swiftly through common training. While the different arms, branches and services have different technical training, it is important that down the road all these capabilities are integrated and proof tested well before reaching the mission area which might be efficiently done in a regionalised synergetic training where the units are organised and trained in such a way that the deployment in all phases is planned and executed systematically.

I might add that a common regionalised training may even provide opportunities for a gradual self-evaluation of personnel and means so that we can ensure that the right capabilities needed to comply with conventional and peacekeeping standards are made available. Operational Readiness is about being able to fulfil mandated missions; therefore, the Mission Mandate is the first reference for training and self-evaluation. In addition, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Status of Forces Agreement (SUR) and the Rules of Engagement (RoE) are considered the cornerstones for such training. Furthermore, the Mission Concept of Operations, the Operational Directives, Orders and Operational Plans, SOPs and mission-specific case studies can also be of importance while planning the mission-oriented training.

As you know very well, doctrine is about unity of action through proper standardised guidance. To achieve this, the DPKO has issued Generic Guidelines for TCC, the COE Manual 2011, TCC Specific UN Peacekeeping Operation Manuals and Guidelines on Peacekeeping Training. Lessons Learnt and Best Practices are also available as well as the After Action Reports and End of Assignment Reports of units and commanders. Furthermore, last year we issued the United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual (UNIBAM), this year we are about to launch a Force HQ booklet for standardization purposes and finally, I have to mention that on 7 November 2013, with the support of 41 TCCs we have launched the drafting of 11 Manuals on functional areas such as Aviation, Engineers, Force HQ Support, Logistics, Maritime, Military Police, Reconnaissance,
Riverine, Signals, Special Forces and Transport. This OMA/DPKO’s enormous and ambitious initiative is part of the capability driven approach in response to the evolving operational environment, with the aim to bolster performance, efficiency, effectiveness, operational readiness and therefore interoperability. By December 2014, the package will be ready to provide unit, sub-unit Commanders and staff with a reference guide to support training, planning, force generation and operations.

Finally, I would like to add some additional benefits of a regionalised approach. It could:

1. Reinforce collective scenario-based training;
2. Integrate and share lessons learnt by different TCCs, using theory in context;
3. Integrate the functioning of “niche capabilities” and enablers within the bulk of military formations by providing an opportunity to combine specific skills;
4. Achieve Operational Readiness before being deployed by testing the equipment and procedures;
5. Broaden the base of troop contributors giving small countries the opportunity to participate and;
6. Elevate the battalion-level training to bigger military combined formations

To conclude, I would like to stress that a holistic and synergetic regional approach may reduce the effects of the challenges posed to peacekeeping and enhance the UN’s overall peacekeeping efficiency and effectiveness. We are now seeing some advances in this area and we all hope there is more to come in the future.

Thank you very much.