

Langille noted that, once again, speakers at the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping stressed that rapid response was the key to saving lives and reducing costs. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan had also recently urged member states to intensify their attention and response to assist with rapid deployment. However, the focus of attention was changing, with wider agreement that the UN Secretariat had fulfilled much of its share of the bargain to modernize and reform. The onus now is very much on the member states, particularly those from the wealthier developed world who demanded the reforms as a precondition to further participation.

Indicating the need for more ambitious changes, Langille briefly overviewed five areas of recent progress and complementary reforms. First, as a result of the Brahimi report and related efforts, the DPKO had been expanded in a manner that would facilitate planning, management and support. Second, there are now sufficient strategic deployment stocks at the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi to provide the basic infrastructure and kits for prompt start-up of a complex operation. Third, the on-call lists for a military mission headquarters attracted sufficient responses to fill each of the 154 positions with two nominations, possibly giving it some potential as a future rapidly-deployable mission headquarters. Fourth, the UN Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS) was again modified. It attracted conditional commitments of personnel and equipment from seventy-five member states. A fourth 'rapid deployment level' was added to clarify pledges and reduce movement and administrative delays. Fifth, the SHIRBRIG is operational and presumed to be ready for another deployment. This multinational, standby high readiness brigade was designed to complement the UNSAS and to provide approximately 5000 troops, within 15-30 days for up to six months.

Combined, the UN finally has a basic foundation for peacekeeping, including limited operations for protection of civilians. However, it is not yet a foundation capable of ensuring rapid deployment or protection. There are inherent limitations in the current arrangements, particularly the UNSAS and even the SHIRBRIG, which still depend upon the political will of the participants and prompt national approval for any use of their personnel. Due to the preferences of the member states, this foundation was established upon existing arrangements and available resources, not new effective structures.