

Implementing United Nations Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations

A report on findings and recommendations

May 2008



Introduction

In 2006, Norway launched a project both to take stock of, and to identify lessons and best practices to further improve, United Nations multidimensional and integrated peace operations. While there is a general agreement on the rationale for UN system reform to make the organization more effective and efficient in the area of conflict management, implementation of reform has proven to be a complex and challenging undertaking. It has brought attention to the divide that still exists between integration as a policy ideal and the reality of multidimensional peace operations in practise.

Current peaceoperations are faced with constantly changing situations on the ground, the influence of the overall geopolitical situation, fragmented arrangements for aid, and the growing complexity and scale of the operations themselves. This project has identified a number of challenges that need to be acted upon if the UN is to meet increasing demands in the short and long-term. It has also underlined the importance of understanding the debate on UN system integration in multidimensional peacekeeping operations within the larger UN reform agenda.

Below follows a short summary of areas where action is most critically needed. The final project report elaborates on these and can be read at www.regjeringen.no/integratedmissions.

1. Know the specifics of the country and conflict – integrate as necessary

The planning and the mandate of an operation must be based on the understanding of the dynamics of the country and conflict in question, including the state and non-state actors, and the political, military, economic, legal, social and development sectors. Based on this understanding, a strategic response must be developed in consultation with other international actors, tailored to the needs in the country, the nature of the conflict and the particular peace agreement. These considerations will guide the decision whether or not to integrate, and the degree on integration that is appropriate.

2. Bring politics back

The political post-conflict process in the country must guide the formulation of multidimensional mandates, and the mandates must guide the provision of resources. To secure sufficient and realistic mandates, the Security Council should seek input from and collaboration with other parts of the UN on a more systematic basis before issuing or reconfiguring mandates. Additionally, the Peacebuilding Commission, with the support of the Chief Executive Board and the Peacebuilding Support Office, should seek to fulfil its original role as a “clearing house” for gathering and analysing system-wide-peacebuilding best practices, to ensure consistently realistic mandating and resourcing of peace operations. In close collaboration with those working in the

field, greater flexibility in adapting priorities and reconfiguring mandates during the implementation process should be provided. Operations must be sufficiently flexible to deal with unexpected developments, and to ensure that priorities set correspond with the resources actually mobilized. To these ends, real-time field reviews are needed to enable adaptations at all levels.

3. Align strategically within the UN

All parts of the UN system, be it programmes, specialized agencies, or other entities, need to improve their dialogue and coordination with the rest of the system at headquarters and in the field, and they should have the incentive to do so. The lack of communication and coordination between these entities seriously undermine comprehensive approaches to peacebuilding and result in duplication, inefficiency and delays in the commencement of operations, as well as causing unnecessary costs. Member States need to take a lead role in requesting and supporting these improvements.

4. Improve UN leadership and incentives

In order to for the necessary structural changes within the UN system to take place, strong leadership and incentives need to be in place at all levels. The SG needs to manage and oversee integration processes more closely, to provide necessary leverage and guidance when necessary. Stronger focus should be given in improving today’s weak incentives within each agency for stronger collaboration and alignment with other UN entities. This will encourage integration and foster greater institutional accountability both at field and headquarters level. The active support from the respective governing boards is critical.

5. Delegate authority to the field level

The authority and tools available (political, financial and administrative) to the SRSG and country-level senior leadership teams need to be strengthened. The HQ should focus on the provision of strategic level policy development and advisory services, leaving greater flexibility, delegate authority and accountability for operational planning and implementation to those on the ground. A field-based organization and management structure is desirable because integration is best built bottom-up, around an agreed set of strategic priorities, with a collaborative ideology to guide the process. The practice of establishing a field-based integrated support office to support the DSRSG in implementing her or his many tasks should be regularized.

6. Reform current administrative and procedural arrangements

One of the most trivial, but nevertheless greatest barriers to interoperability and integration at both administrative and operational level is administrative rather than conceptual or political. Different accounting systems and procedural practices make it cumbersome to move funds and personnel between UN agencies. Greater efforts have to be made by the relevant UN entities (the General Assembly, the PBC, the UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies) to identify areas where procedures and systems could be aligned.

7. Improve and secure long-term funding and commitment

One of the most obvious barriers to coherence is the simple fact that Security Council mandates involve several different UN funds and programmes that are not accountable to the Security Council. Unpredictable funding seriously hampers

the UN’s ability to implement its mandate. The SG and the General Assembly should evaluate current budgeting processes, including an examination of budgeting categories and budget timeframes. Mechanisms to better align the assessed budget and voluntary financing should be identified and implemented.

8. Integrate better with other actors

Finally, increased recognition for a more comprehensive peacebuilding approach, supported by the lessons learned from peace-keeping operations since the 1990s, rests on broader coordination and dialogue with not only all relevant UN bodies, but also with other international actors, donors and key regional actors. This would improve the overall coherence of the international community’s engagement. More systematic integration between the UN and other actors, particularly during the development of strategic and operational plans, is definitely required.



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