**Security Council**

Briefing on Peace Keeping Operations: Police Comissioners

13 November 2015

Statement

Mr. President,

First of all, we would like to thank the United Kingdom for convening this meeting with the Heads of the Police Component of Peacekeeping Missions.

We greet the Under-Secretary General for Peace-Keeping Operations, Mr. Herve Ladsous; the Police Commissioner of MONUSCO, Mr. Pascal Champion; the Deputy Police Commissioner of UNMISS, Mr. Charles Bent; and the Police Adviser of UNSOM, Mr. Christopher Buick.

We would like to point how the members of the Security Council benefit from the briefings, as the ones here provided, by getting a better understanding on the challenges and problems faced by the Police Component of Peace Keeping Operations. We thank the briefers for their insightful remarks on the important mission they are entrusted upon.

Mr. President,

In recent years, the Police component in the Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions has greatly increased, in number and scope, a development that illustrate the challenges facing these Missions, resulting from changes in the character of conflicts and the growing number of threats, ranging from the traditional security problems in the case of insurgencies and civil strife, in the fighting against terrorism and organized crime associated with it, and to the insidious forms of asymmetric conflicts.

A common factor, in all of them, is that civilians became the main victims of conflicts and the impressive toll of civilian casualties, associated with egregious violations of their fundamental human rights attest such dreadful reality.

Mr. President,

Before such circumstances, the Police Component of Peace Keeping Operations plays a crucial role in assisting host countries, and the Missions themselves, in protecting the civilian populations through the delivery of police services, and in cooperating and providing expertise to the local authorities; they are also crucial in supporting security sector reform, restructure and fairly often work to revive collapsed national police forces and other law enforcement structures.

In some cases, namely in weaker countries with a devastated social fabric, policing rules of engagement in Peacekeeping Operations also include law enforcement duties.

Therefore, the Police Component assumes yet greater relevance since it is, in many instances, the first line of contact with local populations, while playing a crucial role in strengthening local police capacities.

In addition to its mission of protecting civilians and providing security, UN Police contributes to restore trust between the population and the local police, in general deeply shattered in conflict situations.

In its core mission, UN policing structures its activities around two axis: protection of civilians against physical violence and the creation of a protective environment.

Concerning protection, it seeks at preventing, deterring and, if necessary, respond to situations where civilians are under threat of physical violence.

The creation of a protective environment involves basically, the establishment of a relationship of mutual trust with populations living under stressful conditions of insecurity, by acquiring their cooperation in ensuring a more secure environment.

Moreover, to a certain extent, problems related to public order originate dangerous security situations, specially for women and children, calling the need to pay special attention to gender issues, by ensuring greater integration of women in the UN policing, as well as in national police forces.

The presence of women in the United Nations Police staff increases the ability of missions to strengthen trust with communities, especially with women. The role of police women is essential in creating an environment in which victims, including victims of rape or sexual violence acquire a level of confidence to denounce crimes and report them.

In this regard, we welcome the establishment of a project for training and selecting police women which led to the unprecedented appointment of about 2,000 women and the holding, in 2014, of three training courses on gender, particularly in Rwanda, Burkina Faso and Cameroon.

Mr. President,

The challenges posed to the UN policing require increasingly sophisticated skills. Besides the traditional vigilant and deterrent posture of the police agent and formed police units, there is an increasing need for specialized police, in the legal, scientific and technological areas, aimed at enforcing national legislation, fighting crime and abuses of human rights of populations they are entitled to protect.

Therefore, increased scientific and forensic knowledge is of paramount importance.

The Police Component's ability to fulfill its mandate and consolidate national police institutions, wherever they operate, depends on the provision of concrete and realistic operational guidelines on the political and technical nature of police reform. Mandates detailing priority areas that require reforms are a fundamental tool for the institutional consolidation of national police forces.

Moreover, strategic planning for police reform must be undertaken, including the establishment of a reference framework, a joint strategic development plan with the national police, and benchmarks for the transition and for the exit strategy.

In this regard, the Strategic Framework for the activities of the International Peacekeeping Police, in the Police Division, has provided a solid model to build police institutions and provide a structured and standardized model for the UN Police.

Mr. President,

To conclude, Mr. President, the extremely complex scenarios faced by the UN Missions Police Component urges the need to increase the number of police deployed in order to implement UN peacekeeping mandates and Special political missions, in which protection of civilians assumes a central feature.

To ensure that peacekeeping needs are met, it is important that police contributing countries pay greater attention to the selection, direction, staff training and skills before deployment.

It is vital to establish feasible relations between the police of the host nation and the UN police, without compromising the United Nations principles of impartiality, and due diligence policy requirements in terms of human rights.

Thank you Mr. President!