

Contribution to the Review on the Future of UN Peace Operations

From the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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In response to the invitation from the Secretariat to contribute to the review on the future of all forms of United Nations peace operations, as mandated by the General Assembly in paragraph 42(b) of Action 21 of the Pact for the Future, the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations would like to submit the following views and recommendations, in accordance with the guiding questions for all Member States and questions for current and former Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries.

1. What are the main challenges confronting peace operations today and what challenges are expected to be faced by peace operations in the future?

- UN Peace Operations remain an important tool for maintaining international peace and security. However, continuing and intensifying geopolitical competition and increasing threats from new technologies such as drones and AI have made the operational environment more complex, and the skillsets required of personnel are evolving.
- In addition, with growing difficulty in securing budgets, it is more necessary than ever to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of UN peace operations.

2. How can United Nations peace operations adapt in response to current and future challenges (e.g., in terms of political and substantive work, mandates, operational and administrative requirements, capacities)?

- Political support from Member States and the UN Secretariat for peace operations, and commitment to their political objectives, are crucial. Equally important is having mandates tailored to local realities.
- To enable peace operations to respond flexibly to changing situations, strengthening planning capacity at both headquarters and mission levels is important.
- Ensuring the safety and security of personnel is essential for implementing mandates. Efforts are needed to develop capabilities to counter threats such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and to address misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech appropriately.
- Maintaining discipline among personnel is also vital. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by personnel is unacceptable, and ensuring accountability is key to maintaining trust with local communities.

3. What could United Nations peace operations be expected and mandated to do in the future? Under what conditions are United Nations peace operations least likely to be effective in achieving their objectives? Under what conditions are United Nations peace operations most likely to achieve their objectives?

- Activities related to sustaining peace are important in UN peace operations. To this end, it is essential to have realistic and achievable mandates, incorporating exit strategies and agreed upon by host countries, to ensure sustainable operations.
- Planning exit strategies and other measures to ensure a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding is important. Cooperation among UN entities involved in peace operations, including the Security Council, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34), the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and UN Country Teams, should be further strengthened.

4. What could be the role of partnerships, with regional organizations, international financial institutions, or other actors, in future United Nations peace operations? What are the opportunities and challenges presented by partnerships, and what principles should underpin them?

- The UN Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP) is a good example of an effective international partnership in peacekeeping. Many Member States cooperate under this framework to build the capacity of TCC personnel, contributing to efficiency and effectiveness of peace operations, as well as the safety and security of personnel. TPP is a flexible framework capable of adapting to future capacity needs.
- Strengthening partnerships between the UN and regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union is also important to conduct effective activities suited to regional circumstances. Through mechanisms like TPP, training and capacity-building should be provided to personnel deployed to AU-led Peace Support Operations and other operations. Peace operations should also utilize the expertise of specialists familiar with the political, cultural, and regional context.
- To achieve sustainable peace and development after conflict, it is important to emphasize the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus and to design support measures by drawing on the expertise not only of the UN system including the Country Teams, but also civil society and international financial institutions.

5. Please share any other observations that may benefit the review.

- Sustaining peace should be pursued not only during and after the deployment of peace operations but also in the stages before conflict erupts. From the perspective of human security, peace operations should address the root causes of conflict through nationally owned activities that secure the HDP nexus. It is also important to promote inclusive participation of local communities, including women and youth, in peacebuilding and prevention efforts.
- This review should ensure consistency with discussions under the Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR) and the UN80 Initiative.

6. What factors shaped your country's decision to become a T/PCC to United Nations peace operations? What factors and considerations will determine whether your country will remain an active T/PCCs in future United Nations peace operations?

- Japan, from the standpoint of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation, has dispatched its Self-Defense Forces to UN peacekeeping operations for the sake of international peace and security.
- Participation in UN peacekeeping operations is contingent upon Japan's basic "Five Principles for Participation," which are: 1) Existence of a ceasefire agreement among the parties to the conflict, 2) Consent for Japan's participation by the host country and the parties to the conflict, 3) Strict impartiality, 4) The ability to withdraw the unit if the above principles are not maintained, and 5) Minimum necessary use of weapons to protect the lives of personnel.
- Continued participation depends on maintaining these Five Principles. Even when they are upheld, other considerations include whether meaningful activities can be conducted while ensuring personnel safety, or whether other forms of support, rather than troop deployment, would be more appropriate for the host country.

7. How would you assess the degree to which your views as a T/PCC were, or are, taken into consideration with regard to the mandates of United Nations peace operations and their implementation?

- In reality, during the formulation and renewal of mandates, the views of T/PCCs other than Security Council members and the host countries are rarely reflected. We believe that close communication between Member States and the UN Secretariat, through T/PCC meetings, the C34, the COE Working Group, the Fifth Committee, etc., and reflecting the views of all Member

States, including T/PCCs, will contribute to more effective and stable implementation of mandates.

- At the same time, attention must be paid to the risk that incorporating the views of many Member States could lead to “Christmas tree mandates.”

8. From your perspective as a T/PCC, what are the most pressing challenges confronting the United Nations peace operations that you are involved in?

- Japan has dispatched staff officers to UNMISS to help advance the implementation of the peace agreement in South Sudan; however, the situation remains unstable, with continued tensions between the President’s and Vice President’s factions. We will continue to monitor developments closely.
- In other missions, there have been incidents of attacks against peacekeeping personnel, making the safety of personnel an urgent challenge.
- Furthermore, given the possibility of significant budget cuts to peacekeeping operations and the resulting planned reductions in troop numbers, it is becoming difficult to foresee whether deployments can be maintained and whether mandates can continue to be implemented at current levels.

9. Based on your experience deploying peacekeepers, what capabilities and support would be needed for deployments in the future?

- To ensure the safety of personnel, capabilities are needed to counter threats such as IEDs, mis- and disinformation, hate speech, and new technologies like drones and AI. Strengthening intelligence gathering and protection capabilities is vital. Japan has contributed in this regard, including through training in IED search and detection, PKI (peacekeeping intelligence), use of C4ISR systems for situational awareness, and developing digital infrastructure for telemedicine.
- For peacekeeping operations to deliver results with limited resources, it is necessary to strengthen engagement with local communities to supplement the monitoring capabilities of units. One option is to review unit composition to increase the proportion of military observers.
- Promoting labor-saving measures through the use of unmanned systems and digital transformation is also essential, along with support for the necessary infrastructure.