Lesson 2.0

Introduction to Module Two

Minimum lesson duration: 20 minutes

Welcome to Module Two: Mandates and Priorities

Module 2 builds on the overview of UN peacekeeping provided in Module 1. It covers in detail the mandates and priorities of UN peacekeeping. Lessons in Module 2 describe peacebuilding activities, protection mandates and cross-cutting priorities. The module also contains a case study focusing on the protection of civilians.

Module One Structure

Slide 1

The following discussion of the challenges facing UN peacekeeping and the UN's response to the changing nature of peacekeeping will set a background to the lessons in Module 2.

Challenges to UN Peacekeeping

In recent years, peacekeeping missions have been deployed to increasingly difficult and complex situations and environments. These have included lengthy conflicts, difficult-to-find political solutions, increasingly dangerous environments and attacks against peacekeepers.

In addition, peacekeeping operations are being tasked with more and more complex mandates in contexts where political support can be uneven.

Compounding these challenges, new technologies have enabled a wide range of actors to become influential players in peacekeeping missions, spreading misinformation and disinformation about them. Armed groups use social media to recruit fighters and they make weapons out of new technologies. Climate change does not directly cause violence, but it adds several new risks in peacekeeping mission environments. These include conflict over scarce resources that extreme weather conditions make even scarcer, changing rainfall patterns and the destruction of farmland by flooding or drought. All this can cause people to move elsewhere, often on a large scale.

UN Responses to the Changing Nature of Peacekeeping

For peacekeeping to succeed, everyone involved has to play their part in an environment in which people work together more than ever before.

Slide 2

Action for Peacekeeping

To improve the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, the Secretary-General launched the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative in 2018. A4P aims to make sure that everyone involved in peacekeeping, whether people, States or organizations, plays their part. It is important to make the most of this multilateral tool.

To ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, 155 Member States and the UN agreed to a set of shared commitments in the **Declaration of Shared Commitments.** The Declaration confers responsibilities upon both the UN Secretariat and Member States.

A4P Areas of Commitment

The implementation goals of A4P are centred on the following areas:

- Politics
- Women, peace and security
- Protection
- Safety and security
- Performance and accountability
- Peacebuilding and sustaining peace
- Partnerships
- Conduct of peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations.

In 2021, **Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)** was launched as a strategy to implement the A4P initiative. It focused on progress across seven priority areas that were designed to improve peacekeeping operations and enhance their impact. It was also intended to keep UN peacekeeping relevant and effective.

A4P+ did not replace A4P, which remains the core agenda of UN peacekeeping. It aims to accelerate A4P by focusing on a few priorities.

These should be structured and each should cover more than one area. Working on A4P+ priorities will also boost A4P in several areas. A4P+ priorities are as follows:

- Priority 1 – **Collective coherence behind a political strategy**. This priority means that peacekeeping missions should follow a common strategy. The strategy should be the same both inside the mission and when working with key partners. Such partners include regional organizations, Member States, international financial institutions and UN agencies, funds and programmes. Missions will also use the power they have to bring people together to make sure that all resources that all partners have are used.

- Priority 2 - **Strategic and operational integration**. This means that strategic and operational work is combined in peacekeeping missions. This combination is important for making a greater impact.

- Priority 3 - **Capabilities and mindsets**. This means that peacekeeping missions must have the right skills and attitudes to implement the mandate.

- Priority 4 - **Accountability to peacekeepers**. There is a need to try harder to improve the safety, security and well-being of peacekeepers. Holding perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers accountable remains a priority.

- Priority 5 - **Accountability of peacekeepers**. Peacekeepers need to be more accountable for conduct and discipline issues. There should be a focus on prevention, enforcement and remedial action. There should be more support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Missions should also be accountable for the effects they have on the environment (i.e. for their environmental footprint) and should work to reduce these effects on people, societies and ecosystems. Missions will try harder to assess their performance regularly and to recognize good performance. They will also be more accountable for performance.

- Priority 6 - **Strategic communications**. This is a way of receiving and sharing information to help an organization achieve its goals. Strategic communications will be included more in planning and risk management. This should promote successes, manage expectations and help address misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. It must also be recognized as a senior leadership responsibility and function, requiring a whole-of-mission, coordinated approach.

- Priority 7 - **Cooperation with host countries**. Working with host countries cooperatively and constructively is important to political solutions. It can also increase peacekeepers' safety and security, improve performance and support successful transitions.

A4P+ Themes Covering Multiple Areas

The women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and innovative, data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping, including through the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping, are integrated into the seven A4P+ priorities.

Integrating WPS throughout A4P+ encourages women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peace and political processes. It also systematically includes gender and WPS in all aspects of peacekeeping. The emphasis on women's participation is central to enhancing operational effectiveness in peacekeeping and sustaining peace.

A4P+ responds to UN Security Council and General Assembly mandates

Several activities conducted by the Secretariat within the A4P/A4P+ workstream have been mandated by the Security Council and/or requested in by the General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping.

These include:

- SCR 2382 (2017) on **Peacekeeping Performance:** this resolution showed how performance and safety and security of uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel were linked. It recognized that making a culture of

performance a permanent part of UN peacekeeping will contribute to better delivery of peacekeeping mandates and improve the safety and security of peacekeepers.

- SCR 2518 (2020) on **Safety and Security:** this resolution showed how important peacekeepers' safety and security in the field are. It highlighted the need for missions to have enough resources and for all peacekeepers in the field to be willing, capable and equipped effectively and safely to implement their mandate.

- SCR 2589 (2021) on **Accountability for Crimes Against Peacekeepers:** this resolution wants to make people who commit crimes against peacekeepers accountable for them. It requested the Secretary-General to include updates on this in the annual briefing to the Security Council on peacekeeping reform, and called for a comprehensive online database of crimes against UN peacekeepers.

- SCR 2594 (2021) on **Peacekeeping Transitions:** this resolution addresses the crucial role peace operations play in finding sustainable political solutions and building peace. It emphasises the need for peace operations to start early in planning and organizing transitions with the host State and other people and groups involved (these are called stakeholders).

- S/PRST/2022/5 on the **Importance of Strategic Communications in Peacekeeping:** this is a presidential statement from the United Nations Security Council that emphasizes the importance of strategic communications in peacekeeping operations. The statement was presented by Ronaldo Costa Filho of Brazil, the Council President for July 2022. The statement highlights the need to improve the culture of strategic communications across the military, police and civilian components of peacekeeping operations.

- **Reports by the General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping:** The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, also known as the C34, is mandated to carry out a comprehensive review of all issues relating to peacekeeping operations. In this role, it makes recommendations in annual reports to peacekeeping stakeholders that are adopted by consensus. In response, the Secretary-General publishes an annual report on the implementation of these recommendations, outlining the measures taken by the Secretariat.

References

- Security Council Resolution 2382, United Nations Peacekeeping: Police Commissioners (2017)

- Security Council Resolution 2518, Safety and Security of Peacekeepers (2020)

- Security Council Resolution 2589, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2021)

- Security Council Resolution 2594, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2021)
- S/PRST/2022/5, Statement by the President of the Security Council (12 July 2022).

New Agenda for Peace

In 2023, Secretary-General António Guterres presented to Member States his policy brief on *A New Agenda for Peace*. It outlines his vision for multilateral efforts for peace and security for a world in transition. It contains many recommendations based on international law that recognize that many of the challenges facing UN peacekeeping are connected with one another.

A *New Agenda for Peace* is framed around the core principles of trust, solidarity and universality that are the foundation of the UN Charter and of a stable world. It presents concrete proposals for action, recognizing that peace operations are an essential component of the diplomatic toolbox and calling for strengthened UN peacekeeping operations that are:

- Agile, versatile and adaptable to fast-changing circumstances
- More integrated with civilian capacities across the UN system and with partners as part of a broader system of networked multilateralism
- Fully leveraged by innovations, technological advancements, and the use of data, in line with the Secretary-General's efforts towards what he called a UN 2.0.

Reference

- United Nations, *A New Agenda for Peace*, Our Common Agenda, Policy Brief 9 (2023).

Lesson Closing

Slide 3

Trainer Tips: *If you have time, summarize the lesson, recalling the aim and learning objectives. Mention that the key messages support the learning objectives. Ask participants if they have questions. Ensure you distribute the Handout – Summary of Key Messages to all participants.*