

Looking Back at the New Horizon Process in 2010¹

More than a year after launching the New Horizon reform initiative—aimed at strengthening UN peacekeeping to meet current and future demands—the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) took stock of the process in 2010 with their first *Progress Report*.² While meaningful progress was made in 2010 in terms of important institutional reforms, developments targeted toward more strategic reforms were lacking.

Whereas the New Horizon process was launched in 2009 at a time of considerable strain for peacekeeping amid record high levels of deployment, the 2010 *Progress Report* notes that UN peacekeeping may be entering a period of consolidation where the focus will be less on building new, large operations and more on transition in existing operations with renewed attention to the peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus.

The ongoing efforts are focused broadly in two main areas: strategic and institutional reforms. Of these, strategic reforms, such as increasing the pool of troop- and police-contributing countries, registered little progress in 2010. Institutional

reforms, however, fared somewhat better. For instance, consultations among the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries, and the Secretariat on mandates and operations, and more open and inclusive formal and informal dialogues among peacekeeping stakeholders, became more common. The issue of protection of civilians (PoC) also saw progress at the 2010 session of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, or C34, when DPKO and DFS presented a draft operational concept note on PoC—a major step toward developing and operationalizing comprehensive mission-wide PoC strategies and trainings.

UN member states endorsed the DFS-proposed Global Field Support Strategy (A/64/633), which seeks to improve the resourcing and service delivery of field missions in 2010 in its almost fully proposed form. Its implementation in the coming year is expected to bring more rapid and effective mission startup and timely deployments, in addition to improving conditions for civilian support staff. The Review of International Civilian Capacities is also an important development

in this regard as it strengthens the availability of quality civilian peacekeeping personnel.

The obstacles that divide member states between those who fund peacekeeping operations and those who provide personnel remained. Little action was taken by current and potential force contributors to more consistently support UN operations, as essential questions about the limits and possibilities of peacekeeping remain unresolved. Compounded by financial concerns, member states demonstrated little incentive to back their words with actions on this front.

While some areas of the New Horizon agenda have progressed more than others, the initiative has only just begun. Peacekeeping must remain flexible in order to evolve to changing realities and demands in the field. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen if peacekeeping's so-called period of consolidation will provide the necessary space for tackling specific reforms or hinder their progress. A focus on transition planning and the peacekeeping-peacebuilding nexus appear to continue in the near future.

Notes: 1. To access all the New Horizon Reports, including the first paper *A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping* visit <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/newhorizon.shtml>

2. *The New Horizon Initiative: Progress Report No. 1*