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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION I
OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

TO: Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno
A: Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping
Operations

DATE: 16 February 2006

FROM: Dagfinn Knutsen, Chief
DE: Peacekeeping Audit Service
Internal Audit Division 1, OIOS

REFERENCE: AUD-7-1:9 (00098/06)

SUBJECT: **OIOS Audit No. AP2005/600/15: Management audit of the
Department of Peacekeeping Operations: Integrated Mission
Planning Process**

1. I am pleased to present herewith our final report on the audit of the above subject, which was conducted during September to October 2005.
2. We note from your response to the draft report that the Department of peacekeeping Operations has accepted all 12 recommendations. In order for us to close recommendations, we request that you provide us with the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and a time schedule for their implementation. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its recommendations, particularly those designated as critical, i.e., recommendations 1, 2, 3, 6, 9 and 11 in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.
3. IAD is assessing the overall quality of its audit process and kindly requests that you consult with your managers who dealt directly with the auditors and complete the attached client satisfaction survey form.
4. I take this opportunity to thank the management and staff of DPKO for the assistance and cooperation provided to the auditors in connection with this assignment.

Copy to: Ms. Jane Holl Lute, Assistant Secretary-General, OMS/DPKO
Mr. Philip Cooper, Acting Director, ASD/OMS/DPKO
UN Board of Auditors
Programme Officer, OIOS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

Internal Audit Division I



Management audit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations – Integrated Mission Planning Process

Audit no:	AP2005/600/15
Report date:	16 February 2006
Audit team:	Prances Sooza, Auditor-in-Charge Kishan Sirohi, Auditor Kasonde Mwenya, Auditor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Management audit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations:
Integrated Mission Planning Process

As part of a comprehensive management audit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO or the Department), requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/296 of 15 August 2005, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Department at the Headquarters and field missions to identify risks and exposures to duplication, fraud, abuse of authority, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness in the mission planning process. The audit focused on integrated mission planning and the role played by various key participants in the planning process for new missions, with a particular emphasis on the planning for the peacekeeping mission in Sudan.

The integrated mission planning process has undergone remarkable improvements over the years as noted in the effective participation of system-wide United Nations key departments in the planning process for the Sudan mission. While OIOS found no evidence of the mission planning process being exposed to risks of duplication, fraud or abuse of authority, the audit identified several areas which need improvement to make planning more comprehensive and effective.

The audit found that the integrated mission planning process lacks strategic guidance and direction that reflects not only a problem within the Headquarters but also highlights deficiencies in strategic and operational planning at the mission level. The planning is operationalised through ad hoc working groups with no decision-making authority and unclear terms of reference to steer the operation for progressive planning. The results based budgeting requirements and best practices are not fully integrated in the planning process. In addition, OIOS raises the following major recommendations:

- There is a need for clear guidance, policies and procedures to support the action and implementation of the process, and for the institution of appropriate training programme;
- Relevant organizational structures or dedicated planning entities both at the Headquarters and in the field should be established to take full responsibility for coordination, monitoring, and reporting of the planning process;
- There should be early involvement of senior leadership in the planning process, and a system for continuation of key planning staff during the transition from the Headquarters to the field needs to be developed; and
- The results based budgeting requirements should be integrated in the planning process with lessons learned from past missions translated into best practice for adoption in the future planning exercise.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/296 of 15 August 2005, requested the Secretary-General *“..as a matter of priority, to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) with a comprehensive management audit to review the practices of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and to identify risks and exposures to duplication, fraud and abuse of authority in the following areas: finance, including budget preparation; procurement, human resources including recruitment and training; and information technology, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.”*

2. To address the above request by the General-Assembly, OIOS identified nine audit areas touching on all activities and aspects pertaining to managing peacekeeping operations at DPKO level and field mission level. The audit areas identified include: DPKO risk assessment, Mission Planning, Substantive Operations, ICT, HRM, Financial management and budgeting, Procurement and supply, Transport operations and Best practices. The scope of this audit was confined to the integrated mission planning process. DPKO’s comments on the audit recommendations are shown in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

3. The main objectives of the audit were to identify risks and exposures to duplication, fraud, abuse of authority, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness in the mission planning process at DPKO and field mission levels.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

4. This audit focused on the integrated mission planning process and the role played by various key participants in the planning process for a new mission, with particular emphasis on the planning process for Sudan Mission. Auditors conducted interviews and analyzed questionnaire responses from key planning participants from the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and all Divisions/Units in DPKO. A field visit to United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) was also conducted to further review the continuity of mission planning process at field level.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

5. Overall, the integrated mission planning process has undergone significant improvements over the years as noted in the effective participation of system-wide United Nations key departments in the planning process for the Sudan mission. However, taking into account the comments and recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the results of the audit, there is room for further improvements in the following areas: formalization and promulgation of the concept of Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) to all departments and agencies in the UN system; establishment of relevant organizational structures to take full responsibility for the coordination, monitoring, reporting and oversight of the IMPP, early identification and designation of mission’s senior leadership for their early involvement in the integrated mission planning process, integrating the results based budgeting and lessons learned with the mission planning process and formalizing training in IMPP.

V. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Lack of policy and guidance for IMPP

6. The shift to multidimensional aspects of peacekeeping makes the mission planning process including the implementation of operations extremely complex and challenging. The complexity is further compounded due to diversity of players, timelines and other variables that must be coordinated and integrated into a multi-disciplinary effort. For greater efficiency and cohesion, it is essential to have a common integrated approach to mission planning and strategic guidance for its application. OIOS commends DPKO's effort to develop a doctrine including IMPP in order to standardize a common planning framework for DPKO's functional elements to integrate and synchronize their planning activities.

7. DPKO has further developed a generic template that streamlines the IMPP and requires that all mission planning to be guided by the methodology outlined in the template, the responsibility for integrated planning to rest with the Office of Operations (OO), and the Director, Change Management on secondment to OO to be the guarantor and keeper of the process. However, OIOS noted a lack of terms of reference (TOR) for the Director, Change Management in respect of his involvement in the planning process. It was pointed out that although Change Management's mission was to drive the reform process in DPKO including IMPP, the efforts had been severely hampered from the outset due to unrealistic TOR, paucity of resources and senior managements' focus on operationally immediate rather than strategic priorities. Moreover, the template had not been widely disseminated within DPKO, particularly, to the working staff in relevant branches and to field missions.

8. OIOS further noted a general lack of strategic guidance, well defined policies and supporting standard operating procedures (SOPs) for IMPP. Strategic guidance is necessary to formalize the need of involving major stake holders, including UN development and humanitarian agencies, regional organizations and contributing countries early in the planning process. It was pointed out that excessively broad TOR and lack of commitment by DPKO leadership to implement change in certain key areas such as restructuring and an integrated approach with key peacekeeping partners undermined the implementation of change in the department. OIOS also noted a lack of sufficient guidance for human resource planning for complex and large missions. It was pointed out that the staffing requirements for UNMIS had lagged behind as they had not been built into the mission planning from start. The absence of a strategic guidance reflects not only a problem within Headquarters but also deficiencies in strategic and operational planning at mission level. For example, in UNMIS, some seven months after the formal start of the mission, there is still no approved Mission Implementation Plan corresponding to Level 5 strategy of IMPP. In OIOS' opinion, either Change Management or 'a dedicated planning cell' is best placed to take the lead in the development and dissemination of relevant guidance and oversight of the planning process.

9. OIOS took note of efforts to develop a handbook detailing the process and methodology for IMPP. However, it was pointed out that minimal consultation had taken place on IMPP development. Few had provided inputs to the draft IMPP and many who did, had not received return response. A few respondents felt that the actual practitioners of mission planning should be involved in the development of IMPP and not external consultants who know little about mission planning. Commending DPKO's efforts, OIOS recommends reviving the IMPP project development which

should promote strategic thinking at all levels of the process and in fostering a sense of ownership through participatory approach. The IMPP should factor different levels of the planning process, integrate with programming and budgeting processes and include lessons learned from previous operations at every stage of the process.

Recommendation 1

DPKO should expedite development of strategic guidance including policies and SOPs for IMPP and promulgate system-wide for uniform application (AP2005/600/15/01).

10. *DPKO accepted the recommendation and commented that for developing strategic guidance, endorsement of the recommendations made by the IMPP Review Team to the Policy Committee will be required first, particularly as the process encompasses the wider United Nations system. It was further elaborated that the strategic guidance covers both the application of the endorsed policy, and specific direction that will be given to planners when the process gets underway. With regard to specific direction, DPKO clarified that formal planning directives will be issued for each new mission. The development of SOPs must be conducted in conjunction with the development of doctrine and aligned with an instructional programme to teach the IMPP. Work had not yet commenced on the instructional programme. OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending the development of the doctrine and instructional programme on IMPP.*

B. Lack of dedicated Mission Planning Cells

11. The organization structure of DPKO should provide appropriate support to the mission planning process. This includes having dedicated mission planning cells with adequately skilled and experienced staff with appropriate reporting lines, and sufficient resources for planning at both the Headquarters and the mission level. The main risks of lack of dedicated planning cells include difficulties in preparation, review, coordination, and monitoring of plans, lack of authority, responsibility and accountability of planners, un-clarity of plan ownership, lack of prudent use and accountability of resources, and loss of institutional memory. It is also possible that the unqualified and inexperienced staff could do the planning assignments thereby compromising the quality of the resultant plans.

12. The mission planning at DPKO and mission levels was done in working groups on a part time and ad hoc basis. There were no positions for mission planning in the organization structure at both levels to take full responsibility for leading, coordinating, monitoring and reporting the planning process.

13. The key staff involved in planning the Sudan Mission at DPKO level in Logistics, Finance, Mine Action Service, Civilian Police and Humanitarian Affairs divisions that were interviewed, highlighted lack of a dedicated planning cell as one of the main constraints to effectiveness and efficiency in the planning process. This was the same at UNMIS where planning was also done on part-time and ad-hoc basis with no dedicated cell. The mission recognized the need for a planning position and budgeted for it but was not approved.

Recommendations 2, 3 and 4

DPKO should:

- (i) Establish a dedicated planning cell with skilled staff at Headquarters to lead, coordinate and monitor the mission planning process. The cell should work with appointed focal points in other divisions (AP2005/600/15/02);
- (ii) Ensure that all new missions should establish planning cells at their headquarters and have skilled staff to undertake mission-planning duties. The planners would work with appointed planning focal points in all sections of the missions (AP2005/600/15/03); and
- (iii) Include planning skills and experience in the job descriptions of all staff involved in planning both at Headquarters and mission levels (AP2005/600/15/04).

14. *DPKO accepted recommendation 2 and stated that establishment of a Strategic Plans Cell would provide the link between work conducted prior to DPKO assuming planning responsibility and would be the point of contact with the PBSO, other departments, agencies, funds and programmes. It would also address cross-cutting issues and be responsible for continuing the further development of the IMPP. OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending establishment of dedicated planning cell at Headquarters.*

15. *DPKO accepted recommendation 3, and informed that the Strategic Plans Cell in each mission would be similar in many respects to its counterpart in DPKO, maintaining oversight of the implementation of the mandate in accordance with the Planning Directives, and be responsible for developing the integrated mission plan, assessing implementation and addressing cross-cutting issues. OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending establishment of dedicated planning cells in new missions.*

16. *Accepting recommendation 4, DPKO clarified that this requirement would be supported by the implementation of an IMPP training programme. OIOS will close the recommendation upon receipt of a documented evidence of its implementation.*

C. Concept of Integrated Mission Planning Task Force

17. The Panel on United Nations peace operations had visualized a concept of Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF) comprising staff on secondment from headquarter elements mirroring the functions of the mission and charged with key decision-making authority. To monitor programme implementation, and to serve as an integrated planning mechanism for coordination of activities and swift decision-making, such a framework was essential.

18. Such an arrangement did not materialize for mission planning for Sudan. The planning for Sudan was entrusted to an Interdepartmental Task Force (ITF) established with representatives from all involved departments and UN agencies. The group headed initially by DPA and subsequently by DPKO held regular and ad hoc meetings to share information and coordinate the process in

accordance with general concept of operations. To facilitate planning and coordination at departmental level, DPKO had established ad hoc working groups such as the DPKO Working Group or Mission Deployment Working Group (MDWG) to coordinate deployment. In addition, sub-groups were formed for smaller programmes like DDDR and Rule of Law. Video-Tele Conferencing (VTC) was used for increased coordination with planning team in the mission area.

19. No clear terms of reference, guidelines or SOPs were available to steer these group's functioning for progressive planning and deployment. Moreover, as compared to IMTF, the ITF had reduced functional responsibilities and owing to middle to lower management level representation, it lacked any decision-making authority. Noting the challenges in planning of unified missions, it is essential to entrust ITF members with some form of working level decision-making ability as there are situations that could necessitate decisions at the level of ITF members and usually in short time frames.

20. To provide clarity on functional responsibilities and accountability, it is important that the structure, composition and responsibilities of each of these groups are clearly defined and widely promulgated. Absence of clear guidance could also result in duplication of effort if their responsibilities and functions were not properly harmonized

Recommendation 5

DPKO should review the composition and terms of reference for Interdepartmental Task Force/Mission Deployment Working Group and clearly articulate responsibilities including working level decision-making authority (AP2005/600/15/05).

21. *DPKO accepted recommendation 5, and stated that the IMPP review supports the idea of a permanent core planning team for each mission, and recognizes the need for it to have clear terms of reference that define its responsibilities, and to which it is held accountable. It further clarified that the IMTF principle of a dedicated team remains valid but its actual structure has to be determined, and is likely to be influenced by the future shape of DPKO's own structure. The replacement of ad hoc, or informal mechanisms for which specific terms of reference were not possible, by properly established planning teams will mean greater clarity generally and will facilitate decision making at the appropriate level. OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending receipt of a documented evidence of its implementation.*

D. Early identification and involvement of mission's senior leadership in the integrated planning process

22. Ideally, the mission planning process should be as inclusive as possible by bringing together not only the key departments at both headquarters and field levels, but more importantly the key members of the senior leadership of the new mission being planned. The experience gained by the senior leadership in their involvement at the initial phase of the IMPP will assist them greatly in the development of the Mission Plan and the Mandate Implementation Plan at field level. Also, the involvement of staff experienced and conversant with the UN system in the mission planning process both at headquarters and subsequently at the field level on temporary assignment further enhances the smooth transition of the mission planning process.

23. Even though DPKO endeavours the early appointments of the senior leadership of a new mission, OIOS takes cognizant of the fact that appointment of senior leadership is a matter subjected to political process. Nevertheless, such early appointments and participation had taken place for example for the planning of UNMIL. Non-involvement of senior leadership at the initial phase of the planning process, may contribute to the risk of operational planning in its initial phase of the planning process not matching the considerations of the senior management designated for the new mission at the later stages.

24. OIOS noted that for the Sudan mission, some of those who participated in the initial mission planning process were temporarily assigned to the field mission to continue with the planning process. In particular, the chairman of the ITF established for the Sudan Mission was appointed as one of the senior management team member of the mission. DPKO should consider formalizing such an involvement of key members of the planning group both at headquarters and field levels for smooth transition. However, discretion is required while assigning key administrative personnel such as those with financial authority as there is a possibility that planning assumptions may not be sufficiently validated if the same personnel who are making them (Mission Assessment Team) are also responsible for finalizing the planning at the implementation stage.

Recommendations 6 and 7

DPKO should:

- (i) Identify and designate senior leadership of a new mission early to ensure their involvement at the initial stage of the planning process and to facilitate smooth transition from headquarters to the field (AP2005/600/15/06); and
- (ii) Assign staff involved in the initial planning of a new mission to the field on temporary basis to ensure the continuity in the transition phase of the planning process (AP2005/600/15/07).

25. *DPKO accepted recommendation 6, and stressed that early identification of senior leadership is essential. Prior to the mission assuming responsibility, the core planning team should remain in the lead but with the inclusion of key mission personnel and in consultation with the SRSG should he / she have been nominated.* OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending implementation.

26. *Accepting recommendation 7, DPKO stated that the IMPP review recommends that the core planning team as the vehicle for the crucial transition phase should be the source of personnel who may be embedded within the mission headquarters for a period, specifically during the transition phase. In addition to DPKO staff, there is considerable value in staff from other departments, agencies, funds and programmes, who have been working with the planning team, deploying on a short-term basis during the transition.* OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending implementation.

E. Integration of lessons learned

27. One of the underlying principles of IMPP is that planning must take note of lessons learned and incorporate best practices from previous operations at every level of the process. This ensures the planning stays on-course and mistakes committed in previous operations are not repeated.

28. OIOS observed that most personnel involved in Sudan planning at the Headquarters and in the field were not familiar with any guidance on lessons learned or with procedures for translating them into policy or practice. It was pointed out that even without a formal assessment, important lessons from UNAMA like the imperative of early integration of mission planning in the areas of rule of law and security sector reforms and of implementation capabilities in UNAMSIL could have been applied to Sudan planning. A senior military planner at the Headquarters emphasized the importance of analyzing the advantages in establishing an advance mission prior to the main peacekeeping mission as in Sudan. In his opinion, the advance mission in Sudan (UNAMIS) had not proved as effective as envisaged.

29. In OIOS' opinion, there should be an effective mechanism established for translating lessons learned from previous missions into best practice and incorporating them into IMPP.

Recommendation 8

DPKO should review the lessons learned in mission planning and incorporate in the Integrated Mission Planning Process handbook with plans for periodic updates (AP2005/600/15/08).

30. *DPKO accepted recommendation 8, and commented that the IMPP doctrine, handbook and supporting training programmes will be subject to periodic review to capture lessons learned and evolving techniques.* OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending its full implementation.

F. Non-maintenance of database for planning documentation

31. It is good practice to have all documentation for key activities, like mission planning, stored in a database. A database assists management to securely store information and efficiently and effectively retrieve it when required.

32. OIOS noted that there was no central database maintained for mission planning documentation. For example, in the case of UNMIS, neither DPKO headquarters nor the mission have any such database where documentation pertaining to mission planning was available. The staff involved in planning maintained the documentation individually.

33. OIOS could not get a complete documentation of the planning process for Sudan mission from any section or unit in DPKO or at the mission level. This was due to a lack of dedicated planning cell to take responsibility for record keeping of the planning process. Augmented to this, the mission planning at DPKO and mission levels were done by establishing ad hoc working groups. With the frequent movement of staff, the absence of institutional memory on the deliberations and documentation of the mission's planning process. Furthermore, there was no tracking system put in place to report periodically on the progress of the mission planning process to the senior management in the Organization.

34. The non-maintenance of a database for mission planning could result in loss of information or inefficiency and ineffectiveness in obtaining it. The institutional memory could also be lost as mission planning was done on an ad-hoc basis and there was a high turnover of staff. This could adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of planning future peacekeeping missions.

Recommendations 9 and 10

DPKO should:

- (i) Examine the establishment of a database that will also serve as a repository for future planning and evaluation purposes both at the Headquarters and the mission level (AP2005/600/15/09); and
- (ii) Put in place a formalized progress reporting framework for tracking the status and implementation progress of the Integrated Mission Planning Process (AP2005/600/15/10).

35. *DPKO accepted recommendations 9 and 10, and informed that it was planning to establish a benchmarking database as part of DPKO's ongoing reform process, "Peace Operations 2010".* OIOS will keep the recommendations open in its database pending receipt of a documented evidence of their implementation.

G. Integrating the results based budgeting with the mission planning process

36. The mandate of a new mission as established by the Security Council becomes the main reference criteria both for mission planning as well as the Results Based Budgeting (RBB) processes. The IMPP is intended to provide a sequential, integrated planning framework for new missions and should integrate with the planning, programming and budgeting processes used in the United Nations to support peace operations. The RBB process focuses on pre-defined objectives and expected results to be achieved. The results justify the resource requirements and performance measurement is done using objective performance indicators.

37. However, the mission planning process takes place independently of the RBB process. The IMPP and RBB planning processes were not integrated. In the case of UNMIS, the two planning approaches were done independently. This was because the IMPP was still being developed and did not have detailed implementation guidelines that integrated with RBB that was already implemented in the United Nations. The lack of integration could result in:

- i. Lack of a common view of managing risks involved in mission planning as the two planning approaches could operate on different assumptions.
- ii. Inefficient and ineffective use of resources as mission critical activities may not be budgeted for or resources could be used on non-critical areas.
- iii. De-motivation of staff involved in preparation of the both IMPP and RBB due to "excessive" planning requirements. Therefore, staff may not put in their best efforts.

38. Some of the key participants involved in the planning of Sudan mission that were interviewed commented that the RBB format of defining expected achievement, output and performance indicators should be integrated into the mission planning process. At UNMIS, it was also brought to our attention that the effectiveness of the mission planning process was adversely affected by a disjointed planning and budget approval process. For example, the 2005/06 budget for UNMIS was still pending approval at the time of this audit in October 2005. The mission had also not received the ACABQ and Fifth Committee recommendations/observations that should be reflected in its 2006/07 budget that was under preparation and targeted to be completed by December 2005.

Recommendation 11

DPKO should integrate Results Based Budgeting requirements upfront into the mission planning process (AP2005/600/15/11).

39. *DPKO accepted recommendation 11, and informed that the USG's Planning Directive which will state the objectives, outline the broad tasks, identify the constraints and act as the authority for planning will align the RBB process, the Pre-Mandate Commitment Authority and the operational plan. OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending receipt of a documented evidence of its implementation.*

H. Lack of formalized training in IMPP

40. Given the complex nature of IMPP, it is important that staff receives integrated training and education in mission planning process. The training is essential to promote common understanding and uniform application of the process, its elements and to emphasize the role of integrated planning in successful establishment of a peacekeeping mission.

41. The audit noted some efforts to develop a standardized training curriculum for IMPP. A draft IMPP training curriculum had been prepared but was yet to be formalized. Also, a short capsule on IMPP training was included in the training workshop held recently in Durban, South Africa but was considered inadequate. It was noted that during Sudan mission planning, an ad hoc training was conducted for mission planners on Level 2 and 3 strategies but did not include the application of IMPP procedures and guidelines or follow-up capacity development.

42. The lack of a formalized approach to IMPP training can adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process. There should be early formalization of the training including a standardized training curriculum in partnership and collaboration with other UN departments, agencies and stake holders. The curriculum should aim to improve the basic skills of staff and enhance planning capacity.

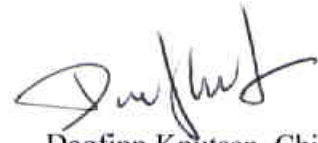
Recommendation 12

DPKO should develop a standardized training curriculum to enhance the skills and capacity of mission planning staff involved in IMPP (AP2005/600/15/12).

43. *Accepting recommendation 12, DPKO informed that the development of doctrine and SOPs and the implementation of lessons learned are key elements in training. Once the doctrine and SOPs are complete, training package will be developed to support the introduction of the IMPP at both Headquarters and in the field. OIOS will keep the recommendation open in its database pending development of the related training package.*

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

44. I take this opportunity to thank the management and staff of DPKO for the assistance and cooperation provided to the auditors in connection with this assignment.



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