INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Evaluation of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

31 May 2016

Assignment No.: **IED-16-004**

INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

FUNCTION

"The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;" (General Assembly [Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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Summary

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is the lead United Nations department responsible for maintaining peace and security by assisting Member States and other international, regional and sub-regional organizations to prevent and resolve potentially violent disputes and conflict. DPA was last evaluated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in 2006-2008. Since then, DPA has evolved from a largely desk-based department into a more field-focused operation, reorienting its activities to support field-based conflict prevention and resolution (CPR) work.

CPR work is undertaken mainly through Special Political Missions (SPMs), which have increased in number since 2008, as well as through United Nations Country Teams in non-mission settings. From Headquarters, DPA supports these various entities through liaison with Member States, other United Nations entities, and others to broadly foster an enabling environment for the field to succeed. At field level, DPA support ranges from general assistance (e.g., policy guidance, administrative assistance) to specialized expertise (e.g., electoral assistance, mediation), aimed at strengthening the field's capacity to achieve its CPR mandates.

This evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of DPA substantive support to field-based CPR from 2008-2015. It relied on a wide a range of qualitative and quantitative sources to support its analysis.

During the period evaluated, DPA supported almost all of the highest-criticality conflict settings. The establishment of DPA regional offices, along with the deployment of Peace and Development Advisers to non-mission settings, has helped broaden its global reach. Beyond the highest-criticality settings, however, the Department's presence is less far-reaching. Although resource constraints have limited its capacity to meet all needs, its strategic planning documents do not demonstrate clear, data-driven thinking on how DPA will focus its limited resources on other settings in need. DPA staff, the field-based entities they support, and OIOS direct observations underline that the Department's shift away from desk-based analysis has left a gap – namely, early-warning analysis that could help DPA better foresee and act on potential threats to peace.

These gaps notwithstanding, there is evidence that DPA support has been effective and that it has contributed positively to field success. Staff from entities in numerous field settings point to such examples. At the same time, they note areas of lesser effectiveness, namely the Department's inability to address system-wide administrative challenges, coordination and intervention with other actors on behalf of the field, and long-term strategic guidance to the field. Its attention to gender and human rights has progressed, but both Headquarters and field leadership remain gender-imbalanced, and neither gender nor human rights is universally a field priority.

While DPA has responded to the support needs of a growing number of field operations, its human and financial resources have not kept pace with demand. Wider United Nations administrative procedures have also hampered its efficiency. In addition, the Department is weakly positioned to monitor overall mission accountability for results, missions' adherence to United Nations principles, and eventual exit. A lack of attention to harnessing knowledge on performance has further prevented the Department from enhancing accountability – and from learning from its successes and shortcomings.

OIOS makes four important recommendations, all of which DPA has accepted, namely that DPA:

- institutionalize its role in strengthening field-level accountability, in consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General;
- fill key analytical gaps, i.e., in overall contextual analysis for early warning and early action, and in evaluation;
- strengthen Headquarters and field-level planning processes; and
- undertake measures to adequately resource core functional gaps.

Contents

I. Introduction and objective

1.   The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS-IED) identified the Department for Political Affairs (DPA) for evaluation on the basis of a risk assessment OIOS-IED undertook to identify Secretariat programme evaluation priorities. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) selected the programme evaluation of DPA for consideration at its 56th session in June 2017.[1] The General Assembly endorsed the selection in its resolution A/RES/70/8.

2.   The general frame of reference for OIOS is set out in General Assembly resolutions 48/218B, 54/244, 59/272, as well as ST/SGB/273, which authorizes OIOS to initiate, carry out and report on any action that it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. OIOS evaluation is provided in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.[2]

3.   The overall evaluation objective was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of DPA substantive support to field-based conflict prevention and resolution (CPR) work from 2008-2015. The evaluation topic emerged from a programme-level risk assessment described in the evaluation inception paper produced at the outset of the evaluation.[3] The evaluation was conducted in conformity with norms and standards for evaluation in the UN System.[4]

4.   DPA management comments were sought on the draft report and taken into account in the final report. The DPA response is included in the annex.

II. Background

DPA History and Mandate

5.   DPA is the lead United Nations Department responsible for maintaining peace and security by assisting Member States and other international, regional and sub-regional organizations to prevent and resolve potentially violent disputes and conflict. Established in 1992, DPA receives its programme direction through General Assembly resolutions and Security Council mandates.

6.   The role of DPA spans the following areas[5]:

   a. Monitoring and assessing global political developments, with the aim of detecting potential crises before they escalate;
   b. Leading operational responses to crises, including deployment of mediation experts and provision of political and policy guidance and strategic direction to special political missions (SPMs);
   c. Providing strategic advice to the Secretary-General and his envoys on conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding issues;

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[1] Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, Fifth-fifth session, A/70/16, June 2015
[2] ST/SGB/2016/6, p. 16, Regulation 7.1
[3] IED-15-006, OIOS-IED Inception Paper: Evaluation of the Department of Political Affairs, 6 August 2015
[4] United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), 2005
[5] A/67/6

d. Providing election-related assistance at the request of Member States, and coordinating system-wide responses on electoral matters; and

e. Providing substantive support and secretariat services to the Security Council, General Assembly and their subsidiary bodies, and other inter-governmental bodies.

7. OIOS last evaluated DPA from 2006-2008. Since then, DPA has evolved from a largely desk-based, Headquarters-focused organization into a more field-focused operation.

Field-based conflict prevention and resolution work

8. While the number and intensity of armed conflicts began declining in the 1990s, this trend reversed in recent years. Civil wars, as well as attacks by governments and armed groups against civilians, have risen for the first time in a decade, and many of today's armed conflicts are more intractable and less conducive to political resolution.[6] Efforts to address these conflicts have focused on two types of field missions: peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and SPMs. As per the 2014-2015 budget, there were 16 PKOs and 34 SPMs.[7]

9. SPMs are broadly defined as United Nations civilian missions deployed for a limited duration to support Member States through good offices, conflict prevention, peace-making and peacebuilding.[8] SPMs are established by the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, or on the personal initiative of the Secretary-General to help prevent and resolve conflict or to build lasting peace in nations emerging from civil wars.[9] SPMs are a primary tool for the United Nations' engagement in CPR, providing a platform for political analysis and diplomacy.

10. DPA categorizes its SPMs in three thematic Clusters:

- Cluster I: Special/Personal Envoys and Special Advisers of the Secretary-General
- Cluster II: Sanctions Monitoring Teams, Groups and Panels
- Cluster III: Political Offices, Peacebuilding Support Offices, and Integrated Offices

11. As Figure 1 shows, the total number of DPA-led SPMs increased from 21 in 2008-2009 to 34 in 2014-2015, with most of this growth occurring in Clusters I and II.

Figure 1 – Number of SPMs led by DPA from 2008-2015, by cluster

	2008-2009	2010 - 2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Cluster I: Special/Personal Envoys and Special Advisers of the Secretary-General	6	5	6	11*
Cluster II: Sanctions Monitoring Teams, Groups and Panels	6	8	9**	12***
Cluster III - Political Offices, Peacebuilding Support Offices, and Integrated Offices	9	12	12	11
Total	**21**	**25**	**27**	**34**

*Sources: A/64/349, A/66/354, A/68/327, A/69/363; ** A/65/328/Add.7, *** A/69/363/Add.8*
*Lead of one mission is shared with DPKO.

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[6] Human Security Report 2013 http://hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2013/overview.aspx
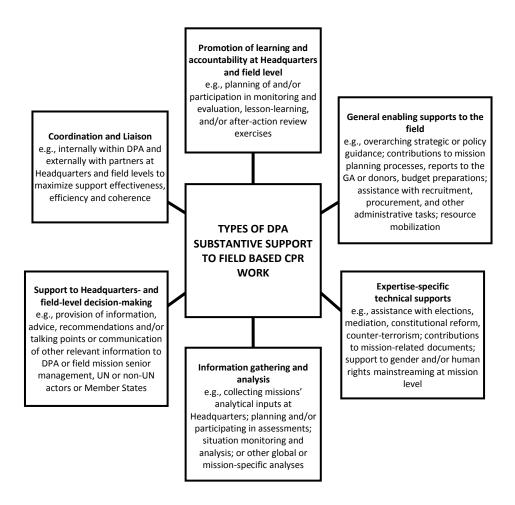[7] A/69/363/Add.8
[8] Ibid.
[9] A/69/363 and ST/SGB/2009/13

12.   The present evaluation focused primarily on Clusters I and III, as these constitute the main field-based conduits of CPR work; Cluster II entities are ad hoc panels of external experts who undertake specific information-gathering missions on behalf of the Security Council with support from DPA.[10] Furthermore, in addition to these three clusters, DPA provides support to a fourth, more diverse, category of countries in non-SPM settings (e.g., PKOs, UNCTs, and others) through the presence of Peace and Development Advisers (PDAs). (See paras 19-24; 31-35.)

13.   Figure 2 summarizes the wide range of support DPA provides. Inferred during the data collection phase of the evaluation, it represents a separate contribution by OIOS-IED to an understanding of DPA support by classifying the Department's work into categories that were less widely known before the evaluation. DPA support, which spans all of the broad programmatic areas highlighted in para 6, aims to facilitate the outcomes assessed in this evaluation. These outcomes are at two levels. At field level, DPA aims to build or complement the capacity of field-level stakeholders, whether at an overarching political level or in specific technical areas, to achieve the various aspects of their mandates. At Headquarters level, DPA aims to create a broad enabling environment to help facilitate the work of the field – e.g., through liaison with Member States, other entities throughout the United Nations system, and others, to serve as a conduit of information, advocacy, support and coordination.[11] DPA is comprised of six regional divisions (i.e., Africa I, Africa II, Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Middle East and West Asia) which, in addition to supporting the Cluster I and III countries (as well as non-mission countries) under their purview, liaise with the other DPA divisions which provide support – e.g., the Electoral Assistance Division, Policy and Mediation Division (PMD), the OUSG, and so on. Support to Cluster II is largely provided by the Security Council Affairs Division.

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[10] OIOS did include Cluster II entities in this evaluation, but with lesser emphasis.
[11] OIOS articulated these outcome levels in a Programme Impact Pathway (PIP) included in the inception paper.

Figure 2 – Types of DPA Substantive Support to Field-based CPR work, 2008-2015[12]

Promotion of learning and accountability at Headquarters and field level
e.g., planning of and/or participation in monitoring and evaluation, lesson-learning, and/or after-action review exercises

Coordination and Liaison
e.g., internally within DPA and externally with partners at Headquarters and field levels to maximize support effectiveness, efficiency and coherence

General enabling supports to the field
e.g., overarching strategic or policy guidance; contributions to mission planning processes, reports to the GA or donors, budget preparations; assistance with recruitment, procurement, and other administrative tasks; resource mobilization

TYPES OF DPA SUBSTANTIVE SUPPORT TO FIELD BASED CPR WORK

Support to Headquarters- and field-level decision-making
e.g., provision of information, advice, recommendations and/or talking points or communication of other relevant information to DPA or field mission senior management, UN or non-UN actors or Member States

Expertise-specific technical supports
e.g., assistance with elections, mediation, constitutional reform, counter-terrorism; contributions to mission-related documents; support to gender and/or human rights mainstreaming at mission level

Information gathering and analysis
e.g., collecting missions' analytical inputs at Headquarters; planning and/or participating in assessments; situation monitoring and analysis; or other global or mission-specific analyses

Source: OIOS-IED interviews and surveys

Financial Resources

14.   DPA and the SPMs it supports are found under the Political affairs budget (Part II, Section 3) of the United Nations regular budget (RB). The 2015 Political affairs budget constituted roughly 20.0 per cent of the total RB financial resources of the United Nations.[13]

15.   As Figure 3 indicates, SPM budgets consistently account for the vast majority of RB resources for Political affairs. SPMs' numeric growth is accompanied by even greater budgetary increases.

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[12] Although a precise calculation of budgetary allocations to substantive support is not possible, substantive support accounts for a large proportion of the DPA budget, as most subprogrammes (and all of its large subprogrammes) contribute a significant proportion of their resources to this objective. See Figure 4 in the inception paper cited in footnote 3.
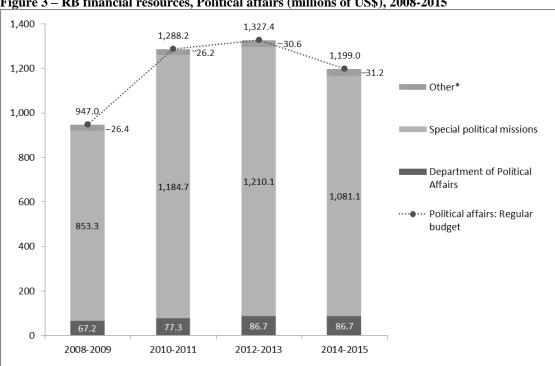
[13] A/68/6 (Sect. 3)

Figure 3 – RB financial resources, Political affairs (millions of US$), 2008-2015

Source: Compilation of data drawn from A/68/6 (Sect. 3), A/66/6 (Sect. 3), A/64/6 (Sect. 3)
Note: 'Other' category contains: Register of Damage, Peacebuilding Support Office, and Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process

16.   Figure 4 indicates how these resources are apportioned among the Clusters over this same period. Three large Cluster III missions (UNAMA, UNAMI and UNSMIL) received the largest proportion of the overall SPM budget.
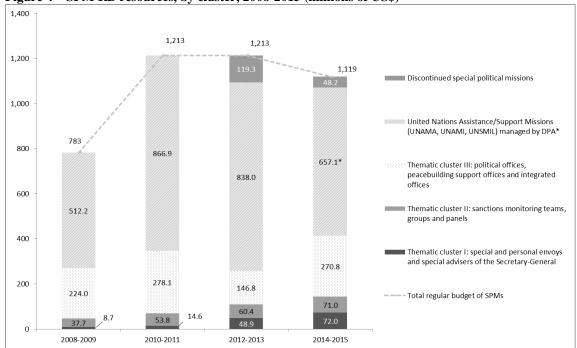
Figure 4 – SPM RB resources, by cluster, 2008-2015 (millions of US$)

Source: Compilation of data from A/69/363, A/68/327*, A/67/346, A/66/354*, A/65/328, A/64/349, A/63/346
* 2015 requirements for UNSMIL/UNAMA reflect six months of interim funding, pending preparation of 12-month budgets.
**Slight decrease in SPM budgets in 2014-2015 is owed to UNAMA and UNSMIL only presenting partial budgets for 2015.
Note: Slight discrepancies between SPM resources cited in Figures 3 and 4 are owed to the different data sources used.

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III. Methodology

17.   The evaluation relied on a mixed-method approach. All evaluation results are based on the triangulation of the following qualitative and quantitative data sources:

  a) **Case study missions, involving interviews, focus groups, direct observations and desk reviews:** 9 direct observations and 5 cross-mission desk reviews, as well as 110 interviews and focus groups with mission staff, UNCT members, governments and other stakeholders, in the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC), Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel (OSES), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), and United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).[14]
  b) **Desk-based case studies:** the same desk reviews indicated above, with United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, and the Office of the Special Adviser for Myanmar;
  c) **Headquarters-level interviews and focus group discussions**: 46 interviewees with DPA staff, 13 United Nations partners and external think tanks;
  d) **Surveys:** web-based surveys of a non-random sample of 59 DPA professional-level Headquarters staff,[15] 85 case study mission staff[16], 14 PDAs,[17] and 25 Cluster II experts[18];
  e) **Structured document reviews**: analyses of selected samples (or universes) of 29 planning and reporting documents; 51 evaluations, After-Action Reviews (AARs), and other learning reports; 9 audit reports; 4 Strategic Assessment Mission (SAM) and Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) reports; 8 Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) End-of-Assignment Reports (EoARs); and 23 SRSG compacts; as well as a review of DPA and mission programme documents.

18.   The evaluation encountered three main methodological limitations: the inherent difficulty of measuring CPR; the scarcity of DPA-generated results data; and the DPA staff survey's low response rate. OIOS-IED addressed the first two limitations by chronologically tracing DPA support and field-level results, while taking into account extant external constraints, through desk review (in addition to perceptual evidence) and thereby derive proxy measures. It addressed the last limitation by undertaking non-respondent analysis, which revealed that the demographic profile of survey respondents closely mirrored that of DPA staff more generally, thus indicating an acceptable level of representativeness to support the survey's use in the evaluation.

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[14] OIOS selected case studies based on mission size and duration, Cluster representation, and geographic spread.
[15] All P2-D2 staff; 22.9 per cent response rate
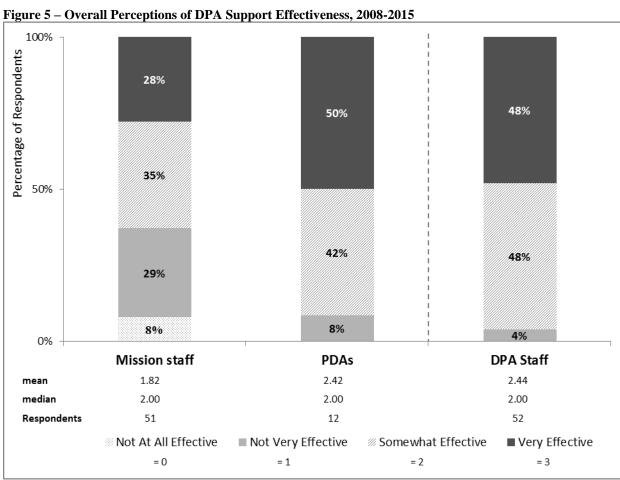[16] 41.7 per cent response rate
[17] 53.8 per cent response rate
[18] 39.7 per cent response rate

IV. Evaluation results

A. There is evidence that DPA substantive support to date has been effective – and despite significant external constraints, this support is reported as contributing to field success in noteworthy ways

Evidence of support effectiveness

19. While a lack of DPA-generated data challenged the evaluation[19], there is nonetheless indicative evidence for the effectiveness of DPA substantive support to field-based CPR. As Figure 5 indicates, supported field-based entities, especially PDAs, rate DPA support relatively highly. This positive feedback is corroborated by field leaders: in interviews, 6 of 9 SRSGs of case study missions commented positively on DPA support, as they did in 13 out of the 19 compacts reviewed. Moreover, of the 29 evaluations, AARs and lesson-learning reports addressing effectiveness, 20 assessed DPA positively.

Figure 5 – Overall Perceptions of DPA Support Effectiveness, 2008-2015

	Mission staff	PDAs	DPA Staff
mean	1.82	2.42	2.44
median	2.00	2.00	2.00
Respondents	51	12	52

⠿ Not At All Effective	▨ Not Very Effective	▨ Somewhat Effective	■ Very Effective
= 0	= 1	= 2	= 3

Sources: OIOS-IED survey
Note: Effectiveness definition provided by OIOS: " the extent to which DPA has provided high-quality support to the field - e.g. through improved capacity, the integration of specific technical expertise they did not previously have, sound advice leading to better informed decisions, and so on"

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[19] See paras 18, 44-50.

20.   Within this broadly positive context, there were differences in field-based entities' feedback, both across field settings and support types. As Figure 6 suggests, smaller missions tend to report higher levels of effectiveness than larger missions. This difference could be owed to smaller missions' higher backstopping needs, like PDAs, or to the relative complexity of larger missions' operating environment: as SRSG EoARs from the two largest missions, UNAMI and UNAMA, underline, larger missions cover more mandate areas, requiring long-lasting support to governance capacity-building.
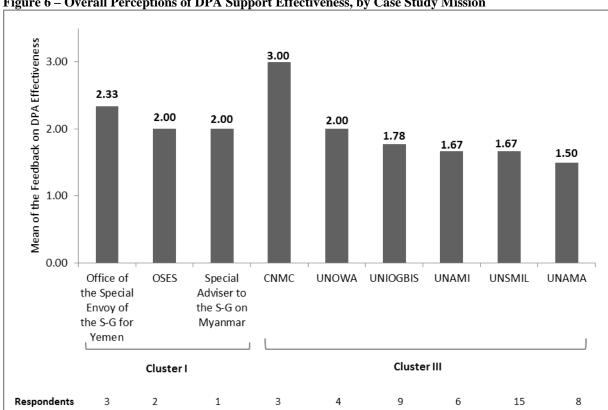
Figure 6 – Overall Perceptions of DPA Support Effectiveness, by Case Study Mission
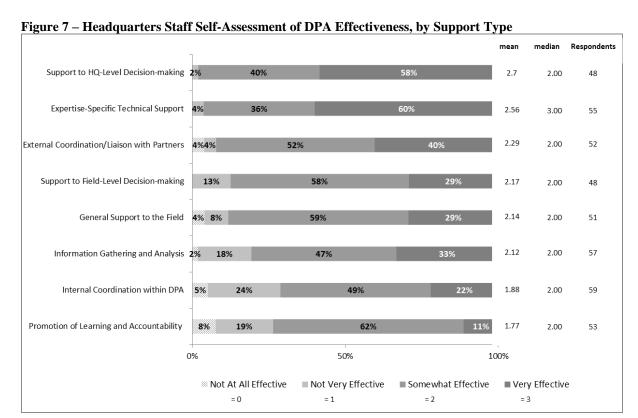

Sources: OIOS-IED surveys
Note: Missions presented by cluster, in descending order of means

21.   These differences between smaller and larger missions could also explain variation in feedback on specific DPA support types.[20] Irrespective of mission size, in interviews and surveys, mission staff highlight expert technical support in electoral assistance and mediation, as well as good offices support provided by DPA senior management (e.g., bringing political gravity to negotiations) as particularly effective. However, PDAs and smaller SPMs, more so than larger missions, further point to overall political guidance as a particularly effective form of support. In addition, evaluations and AARs of DPA-led trainings (e.g., on mediation, conflict analysis, strategic planning) conclude that this support was generally timely and increased participant knowledge. By contrast, long-term strategic guidance was among the

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[20] Correlation r = -0.62: the larger the mission, the lower the perceived effectiveness of support. While OIOS-IED included overall perceptions of DPA support effectiveness among field-based entities, these questionnaires did not ask about effectiveness by support type, as the precise categories of support were less well understood at this stage. See para 13.

least effective support.[21] Similarly, staff in 4 of 9 missions were critical of DPA analytical products , and only 2 were positive.[22]

22.   As Figure 7 indicates, DPA staff self-assessments corroborated views in the field, although they generally rated their own support more highly. DPA technical expertise received particularly high ratings, including by staff in those divisions not responsible for this support. It also corroborates the areas of relative strength and weakness highlighted in the desk review.[23] Another highly rated area is support to Headquarters-level decision-making, a key aspect of the DPA focus on fostering an enabling environment for the field.

23.   Headquarters staff self-assessed promotion of learning and accountability, internal coordination, and information gathering and analysis by DPA to be relatively less effective, however. This self-assessment generally corroborated mission case studies. (See para 21.)

Figure 7 – Headquarters Staff Self-Assessment of DPA Effectiveness, by Support Type

Support Type		mean	median	Respondents
Support to HQ-Level Decision-making	2% / 40% / 58%	2.7	2.00	48
Expertise-Specific Technical Support	4% / 36% / 60%	2.56	3.00	55
External Coordination/Liaison with Partners	4% 4% / 52% / 40%	2.29	2.00	52
Support to Field-Level Decision-making	13% / 58% / 29%	2.17	2.00	48
General Support to the Field	4% 8% / 59% / 29%	2.14	2.00	51
Information Gathering and Analysis	2% 18% / 47% / 33%	2.12	2.00	57
Internal Coordination within DPA	5% 24% / 49% / 22%	1.88	2.00	59
Promotion of Learning and Accountability	8% 19% / 62% / 11%	1.77	2.00	53

Not At All Effective = 0   Not Very Effective = 1   Somewhat Effective = 2   Very Effective = 3

Source: OIOS-IED surveys

24.   DPA effectiveness in supporting gender and human rights has been more mixed. Surveyed mission staff, PDAs and Cluster II experts all perceived DPA support to be fairly gender-sensitive.[24] In addition, 88.0 per cent of all peace processes with UN engagements in 2014 included regular consultations with women's organizations, compared to 50.0 per cent

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[21] This result is corroborated by SAM reports, which rarely recommend strategic shifts despite long-term presence and changes on the ground. In addition, 5 of 9 audited missions lacked exit strategies.
[22] See Result D.
[23] Of the 29 evaluations and other reports that assessed effectiveness, 22 addressed these supports, with 20 rating them positively. Five also addressed coordination in setting up or re-hatting a mission, all positively.
[24] 45.7 per cent of survey respondents claimed support to be somewhat gender-sensitive and 22.0 per cent very gender-sensitive.

in 2011.[25] However, only 4 of 9 case study missions reported receiving gender-related support from DPA; the remaining 5 did not provide any concrete information on how gender mainstreaming was being promoted. Moreover, none reported receiving human rights-related support, claiming that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was their principle source of support. In one mission, senior managers raised concerns that mission leadership had neglected gender and human rights altogether, despite these being core elements of the mission's mandate, in order to focus on his preferred activity: good offices. (See paras 51-56.) More broadly, Headquarters and mission leadership remain gender-imbalanced.[26]

Evidence of contribution of DPA support to field-level CPR results

25.   Based on the limited available evidence, it is plausible that DPA support has contributed to field-level CPR. Supported entities from Yemen, Myanmar, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Iraq, Nigeria (and more anecdotally from Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Venezuela, Guyana, and elsewhere) claim that DPA support (e.g., expert advice on ceasefire negotiations in Yemen, election expertise advice in Afghanistan and political guidance in the Maldives) had positively influenced the trajectory of conflict resolution – e.g., by reaching a relatively gender-sensitive agreement in Yemen or designing the recounting procedure of the 2014 Afghan Presidential elections.

26.   These reported contributions extend to conflict prevention as well – for example by contributing to the peaceful 2015 Nigerian presidential transition, and fostering agreement on the Afghanistan Presidential election result in a peaceful manner. Such examples of conflict prevention successes were few however, owing in part to a lack of existing analysis on this area. (See paras 18, 44-50.) The Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) underscored the low level of investment in conflict prevention more broadly, even as the costs of inaction in this area are becoming ever more pressing to the international community.[27]

27.   While it is difficult to gauge the impact of support effectiveness on mission-level success, Figure 8 summarizes an analysis of the correlation between DPA support effectiveness and missions' CPR results.[28] It plots consolidated ratings of DPA support effectiveness against a summary measure of overall mission success – both calculated by OIOS-IED based on a triangulation of available data on both levels, taking into account the inherent, and often non-linear path to CPR and the many external factors influencing mission success. This analysis does not mean to suggest that the mission outcomes indicated would not have happened without DPA support, but rather that it is plausible that DPA contributed to mission outcomes. The mixed picture resonated with client feedback[29] and DPA staff's self-assessments.[30]

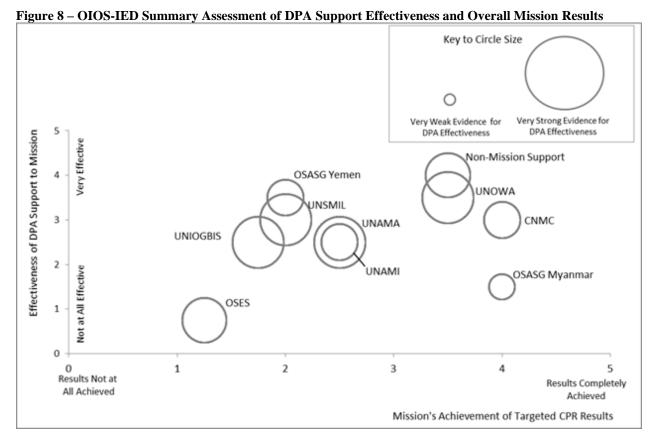[25] Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325

[26] The proportion of women in P5 to D2 positions increased from 18.0 per cent to 29.0 per cent from 2011-2014. The DPA USG and ASGs are all male, however, and mission leadership is even less gender-balanced: of 23 SRSGs/ASGs leading case study missions from 2008-2015, only 1 is female. Most missions' senior managers are also male.

[27] HIPPO report, paras 25, 30, 35

[28] Based on triangulated data sources in para 17.

[29] Though not a primary focus in this evaluation, all Cluster II experts were surveyed. Overall, 73.1 per cent reported DPA substantive support to be effective, including its facilitation of meetings and its promotion of inter-panel cooperation. Eighty-three per cent also noted that DPA had not encroached on their independence.

Figure 8 – OIOS-IED Summary Assessment of DPA Support Effectiveness and Overall Mission Results

Source: OIOS-IED assessment based on triangulated analysis of all available evidence

Factors outside DPA control have constrained mission success – and DPA support to missions

28.   A number of factors outside DPA control have constrained mission-level success – and by extension, DPA effectiveness in supporting it. These factors are documented in the HIPPO[31], and were corroborated in this evaluation. They include the Department's resources relative to a growing number of missions requiring its support. (See paras 11, 29-32.) In addition, the Security Council mandates underpinning missions' areas of focus are often pro forma, with Cluster III mission mandates often covering up to 10 mandate areas – some of which, such as Rule of Law and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, fall outside DPA expertise.[32] Further factors include access and movement restrictions, as well as the inherent unpredictability of conflict settings – and the behaviours of parties to conflict and other interested parties. Finally, staff and supported field-based entities alike assert that

Support areas deemed as least effective were the induction training, which 52.1 per cent of experts said could have better prepared them to understand administrative rules, and criteria on evidentiary standards, which 37.5 per cent rated less positively. Furthermore, 70.8 per cent claimed support on administrative issues was ineffectively managed, thereby hampering their work.

[30] Twenty-nine per cent perceived Headquarters' contribution to mission success was significant, 54.0 per cent that it was moderate, 12.0 per cent that it was very small, and 5.0 per cent that DPA had not contributed at all.

[31] HIPPO report, para 23-28

[32] In its review of all 4 Strategic Assessment Mission (SAM) and Technical Assistance Mission (TAM) reports, in no case was a mandate significantly changed – or downsized. Furthermore, during the period under evaluation only 3 SPMs were closed; all others merely transitioned into another SPM or a PKO. This conclusion corroborates the HIPPO (paras 37-39), as well as OIOS audits, 5 out of 9 which found exit strategies lacking.

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United Nations administrative rules and procedures – particularly those surrounding staffing and travel – significantly hamper field effectiveness.[33] Accordingly, 75.5 per cent of DPA staff assert that external factors strongly influenced support effectiveness.

B.   Globally, DPA is supporting most of the highest-criticality conflict settings, and its support has generally met the expressed needs of the field; however, it lacks a broad strategy to identify what supports it might provide in other settings, and how it might help enable eventual exit

29.   In this evaluation, relevance was defined as the degree to which DPA provided its substantive support to those locations where such support is most critically needed, and whether its support met field-based needs. Defined as such, the Department's relevance was assessed to be generally high, though with some variation – and potentially unmet needs.

High coverage of highest-criticality conflict settings, but less consistent coverage elsewhere

30.   In order to gauge DPA relevance by way of its global reach, OIOS-IED categorised 163 countries and 11 non-country specific contexts analysed by these external sources into six tiers, on three proxy measures of conflict criticality: the Global Peace Index (GPI), an index measure of media coverage of various conflicts, and the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within the countries' borders. These tiers were defined as follows:

		Global Peace Index (GPI) Rating	Average Media Rating	Average IDPs (millions)
Highest Criticality	**Tier 1**	Very Low	Medium-High	2.14m
High Criticality	**Tier 2**	Low	Low-Medium	0.51m
Medium Criticality	**Tier 3**	Medium	Low-Medium	0.10m
Low Criticality	**Tier 4**	High	Low	0.05m
Lowest Criticality	**Tier 5**	Very High	None	0
N/A – Non-Country Conflicts	**Tier 6**	N/A	Low-None	N/A

31.   OIOS-IED identified the Department's support presence in each of these tiers. As Figure 9 indicates, DPA supported almost all of the highest-criticality (i.e., Tier 1) conflict settings, mostly through direct support to missions but also through indirect ad hoc support or through the PDA mechanism. Beyond this top tier, however, its presence was less consistent: there were 8 Tier 2 countries and 22 Tier 3 countries which, though of high criticality, did not receive DPA support. Conversely, 8 countries in lower-criticality Tier 4 did receive support. This mixed picture of relevance was corroborated by DPA staff surveyed.[34]

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[33] Eighty-four per cent of DPA staff claim that internal rules and procedures have hampered their support effectiveness. In addition, in 4 of 8 EoARs, SRSGs cite this area as a major factor jeopardizing field-level results.
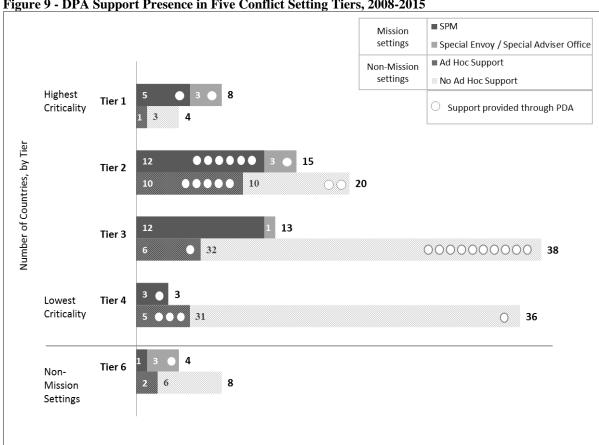[34] Mean = 3.41 (where 1=Disagree strongly and 4=Agree strongly) in response to the statement: "Globally, those missions and non-mission settings DPA supports represent those countries and conflicts where such support is most needed"

Figure 9 - DPA Support Presence in Five Conflict Setting Tiers, 2008-2015

Source: OIOS-IED analysis of data compiled from: Global Peace Index 2015 www.visionofhumanity.org, News aggregator for armed conflict worldwide www.conflictmap.org/conflicts, Internal displacement data www.internal-displacement.org

32.   Notwithstanding these gaps, DPA is supporting more countries than in 2008. (See Figure 1.) Three main initiatives during the period under evaluation have enabled it to do so. First, it has expanded its regional presence through a regional SPM in Central Africa and six Liaison Offices in areas where DPA does not have any SPM presence. Second, it has actively strengthened its CPR partnerships, most prominently through the UNDP-DPA Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention[35] as a vehicle for responding to needs of non-mission settings.[36] The number of PDAs deployed in 2015 was 36, representing an increase of 25.0 per cent over the last two years, and this number is expected to grow to 40 by 2016.[37]   While noting the programme's constraints[38], both the HIPPO and the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture commend the Joint Programme as an example of effective inter-agency collaboration on CPR.[39]   Third, DPA has created new internal support capabilities to support CPR tasks, including the Mediation Support Unit (MSU), PMD, and a dedicated

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[35] DPA and UNDP Partnership Note, September 2015
[36] The normative framework for conflict prevention was recently strengthened through Sustainable Development Goal 16. In addition, the DPA 2016-2019 Strategic Plan outlines efforts to strengthen political and technical support to UNCTs, and it has invested in building relationships with Permanent Representatives and RCs to increase their awareness of its support.
[37] DPA Multi-year Appeal 2016-2017
[38] HIPPO, paras 142-148
[39] S/2015/730 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations conflict prevention: a collective recommitment

(though small) gender office and focal point system. Moreover, in 2008 DPA established a Standby Team of Mediators (STM), a group of full-time, XB-funded mediation experts in areas of constitution-making, gender issues, natural resources, power-sharing, among others, who can be rapidly deployed to provide technical advice and other mediation support. It has also improved its ability to raise XB resources for both staff and field-based projects through a dedicated Donor and External Liaison function.

Support types largely viewed as relevant, with some variation – and potentially unmet needs

33.   As Figure 10 conveys, the overall relevance of DPA support is generally recognized. Some differences exist among these groups, however, with PDAs rating DPA support as more relevant than mission staff – and DPA staff themselves.
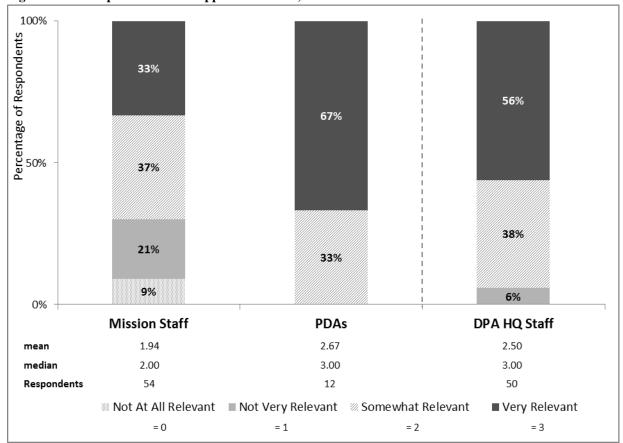
Figure 10 – Perceptions of DPA Support Relevance, 2008-2015

	Mission Staff	PDAs	DPA HQ Staff
mean	1.94	2.67	2.50
median	2.00	3.00	3.00
Respondents	54	12	50

Not At All Relevant = 0   Not Very Relevant = 1   Somewhat Relevant = 2   Very Relevant = 3

Source: OIOS-IED surveys

34.   The more variable ratings of mission staff could be rooted in the diversity within this group. Figure 11 summarizes this group's feedback, broken down by individual missions selected for case study. Overall, smaller Cluster III missions, as well as small Cluster I missions, rated DPA support more positively than larger missions.
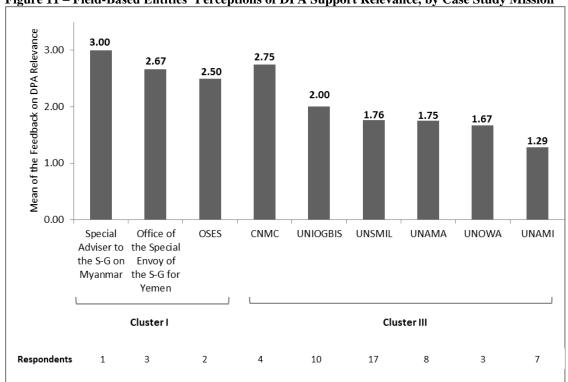
Figure 11 – Field-Based Entities' Perceptions of DPA Support Relevance, by Case Study Mission

Source: OIOS-IED survey
Note: Missions presented by cluster, in descending order of means

35.   Perceptions of relevance varied according to the support type provided as well. For example, electoral support was extremely relevant to UNSMIL, which received support in three Libyan elections, and to UNAMA, where DPA helped to achieve a peaceful resolution to the electoral crisis and carry out an unprecedented audit of 2014 elections, while mediation support and expertise was particularly relevant to UNOWA including deployment of the STM. PDAs, meanwhile, cited DPA support to ensure communication flow among different various Headquarters partners, as well as its political guidance and expertise, as being particularly relevant. DPA staff corroborated this view, as Figure 12 illustrates, rating specific technical support and support to Headquarters-level Decision making among the most relevant.

36.   However, there were potentially unmet needs, as awareness of DPA Headquarters support varied at field level. While most senior managers were aware of DPA mediation and good offices support, SPM staff and several RCs were not fully aware of the services DPA provides. Awareness of administrative backstopping support is higher than awareness of substantive support, and specific issues mentioned as missing was analysis where DPA had a comparative advantage, such as on regional aspects or lessons learned from other similar cases. These gaps were highlighted in 3 of 6 visited SPMs and another 2 highlighted the need for more long-term strategic guidance. (See para 21.)
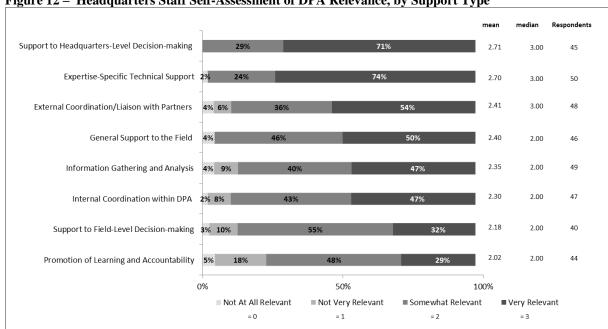
Figure 12 – Headquarters Staff Self-Assessment of DPA Relevance, by Support Type

Support Type					mean	median	Respondents
Support to Headquarters-Level Decision-making			29%	71%	2.71	3.00	45
Expertise-Specific Technical Support		2%	24%	74%	2.70	3.00	50
External Coordination/Liaison with Partners	4%	6%	36%	54%	2.41	3.00	48
General Support to the Field	4%		46%	50%	2.40	2.00	46
Information Gathering and Analysis	4%	9%	40%	47%	2.35	2.00	49
Internal Coordination within DPA	2%	8%	43%	47%	2.30	2.00	47
Support to Field-Level Decision-making	3%	10%	55%	32%	2.18	2.00	40
Promotion of Learning and Accountability	5%	18%	48%	29%	2.02	2.00	44

0%   50%   100%

⫽ Not At All Relevant   ▨ Not Very Relevant   ▤ Somewhat Relevant   ▰ Very Relevant
= 0   = 1   = 2   = 3

Source: OIOS-IED survey

Headquarters planning processes not well informed by systematic analysis, hampering proactive tailoring of support to needs

37.   Desk review of DPA planning documents helps elucidate this variable feedback on the Department's relevance. At a broad departmental level, DPA has improved strategic planning capacity since the 2008 OIOS-IED evaluation, developing its first Strategic Plan in 2013. Its 2016-2019 Strategic Plan will reportedly be complemented by a Results Framework and division-level work plans. It has also improved its strategic planning and guidance within PMD. A small centralized analysis and planning capacity has also recently established within the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), as recommended in the HIPPO, to bring together analytical work from both Headquarters and in the field to inform his strategic decisions regarding strategic assessment and planning for peace operations.[40]

38.   Despite this broad organizational progress, weaknesses remain in how both Headquarters and the field plan. At Headquarters level, while more recent division-level work plans reflect overarching Department priorities and some articulate strategies for achieving these goals, these plans do not consistently or proactively identify which other missions they will support and with what support types, how they will work together with other divisions to achieve shared CPR support objectives, and so on.[41] At field level, numerous OIOS audits note planning gaps, such as a lack of linkage between work plans, mandate implementation plans and logical frameworks; a lack of linkage to UNCT plans; and a lack of exit strategies.[42] This weakness in planning might be rooted in staff capacity constraints (see paras 40-41), the lack of investment in knowledge products that might aid strategic planning

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[40] EOSG analysis and planning capacity was created.
[41] In the OIOS-IED review of 27 division work plans, quality and comprehensiveness varied considerably.
[42] Review of OIOS audits, 2008-2015

(see paras 44-50), or the recent nature of the gains noted in para 37. DPA-supported entities, as well as DPA staff, corroborate this gap.[43]

C.   DPA has adapted its resources to respond to the needs of an expanding field presence, but its own internal structures and procedures, coupled with cumbersome UN administrative processes, have hampered its ability to do so in the most efficient manner

39.   As Figure 13 illustrates, DPA resources have increased, but not at a level commensurate with that of the entities requiring its assistance. Whereas the number of SPMs has grown by 62.0 per cent (and the smaller and potentially more support-dependent Cluster I missions by 83.0 per cent), resources have grown by 50.0 per cent. In addition, DPA has increasingly relied on XB resources, growing from 20.0 per cent of its total budget to almost 30.0 per cent.
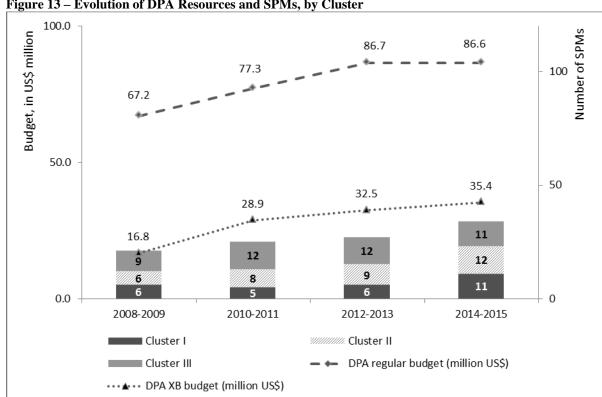
Figure 13 – Evolution of DPA Resources and SPMs, by Cluster

Sources: A/69/416, A/68/9 (sect.3), A/66/6 (Sect. 3), and A64/6 (Sect.3); A/69/349, A/66/354, A/68/327

40.   DPA has adapted to this reality by undertaking a series of steps to meet the needs of a growing field presence (see para 32) – with relatively modest investment in the desk support function: the overall number of DPA desk support staff, ranges from 1 to 5 staff per mission.

41.   Within this context, DPA has struggled to be effective and efficient, however. While field-based feedback on DPA support's effectiveness and relevance varies (see paras 20-23, 33-36), desk officers themselves report being spread thinly, often at the expense of other

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[43] PDA survey respondents and DPA Headquarters staff see areas of improvement regarding DPA planning capacity and in its capacity for early action, further echoed by mission staff who, in addition to strategic planning, mentioned the need for analytical capacity to inform strategy.

important support areas. As Figure 14 illustrates, staff report spending only 41.0 per cent of their time providing substantive support to the field, and 59.0 per cent on administrative work and other areas – and as the pie chart on the right of the figure indicates, of this 41.0 per cent of time staff spend on substantive support, half of this time is spent on internal and external coordination and supporting Headquarters decision-making, only 22.0 per cent on information gathering and analysis, and 17.0 per cent on expertise-specific technical support. These results corroborate the feedback of staff interviewees, desk officers and managers, who reported spending too much time producing talking points and briefing notes for senior management, as well as administrative matters, leaving too little time for political analysis.
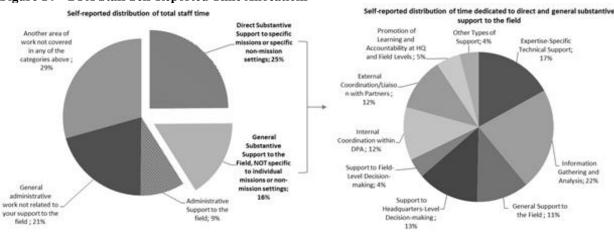
Figure 14 – DPA Staff Self-Reported Time Allocations

Source: OIOS-IED survey

42.   Accordingly, as Figure 15 conveys, Headquarters and mission staff generally rated DPA as being somewhat efficient. The smaller and more backstopping-dependent PDAs, meanwhile, viewed DPA efficiency more positively.[44]

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[44] However, 68.0 per cent of staff report that DPA has become more efficient over time.
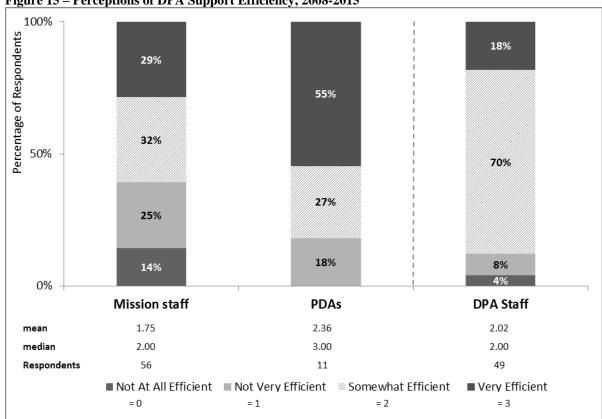
Figure 15 – Perceptions of DPA Support Efficiency, 2008-2015

	Mission staff	PDAs	DPA Staff
mean	1.75	2.36	2.02
median	2.00	3.00	2.00
Respondents	56	11	49

Legend: ■ Not At All Efficient (= 0) ■ Not Very Efficient (= 1) ▨ Somewhat Efficient (= 2) ■ Very Efficient (= 3)

Chart values — Mission staff: 14%, 25%, 32%, 29%; PDAs: 18%, 27%, 55%; DPA Staff: 4%, 8%, 70%, 18%.

43.   Figure 16 breaks down individual missions' feedback, indicating that smaller missions, like PDAs, generally found DPA support to be more efficient than do larger and more broadly mandated missions. Mission staff feedback during case study missions helped explain specific areas of such slippage. In every mission visited, large numbers of staff reported that United Nations administrative rules and procedures, which DPA helps them navigate, represented one of the most significant challenges hampering their ability to deliver on their CPR mandate in an efficient manner. In their EoARs, SRSGs corroborate this view.[45]
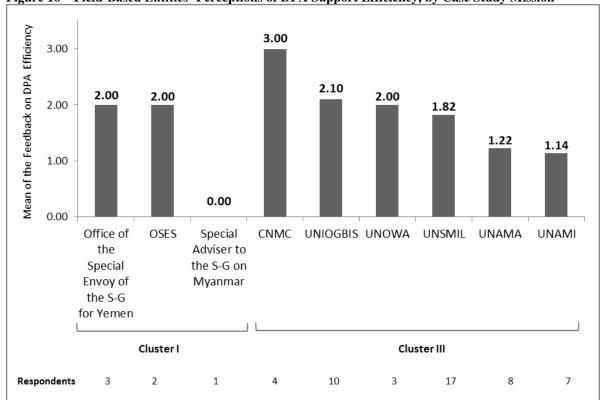
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[45] See footnote 33.

Figure 16 – Field-Based Entities' Perceptions of DPA Support Efficiency, by Case Study Mission

Source: OIOS-IED survey
Note: Missions presented by cluster, in descending order of means

D.   While generating a significant volume of knowledge products, DPA has not adequately harnessed such knowledge to strengthen learning or accountability, either at Headquarters or field level

44.   DPA has made strides in its use of knowledge as a source of institutional learning and improvement. For example, it established the Guidance and Learning Unit (GLU) in 2010, an evaluation policy in 2012, and a Learning and Evaluation Framework (LEF) in 2013 (revised in 2014). Accordingly, in the OIOS-IED 2012-2013 Evaluation Scorecard, DPA was credited with these improvements since the 2010-2011 Evaluation Scorecard.

45.   In the same 2012-2013 Evaluation Scorecard report and in the present evaluation, however, outstanding gaps remained in the Department's systems for harnessing knowledge for learning and accountability. First, DPA is not structured to produce independent evaluations of performance at either the Headquarters or field level: presently, the generation of knowledge products is split between the OUSG, which is tasked with producing evaluations (but has limited capacity to do so), and GLU, which produces a range of non-evaluation products (e.g., AARs, lessons-learned reports). There is as yet no dedicated evaluation office in DPA. This sets DPA apart from most other UN Secretariat entities.

46.   As Figure 17 conveys, during the period under evaluation DPA produced a total of 51 knowledge products. Most of these were learning-oriented AARs and lessons learned exercise. For the entire eight-year period, only three of these were evaluations.[46]
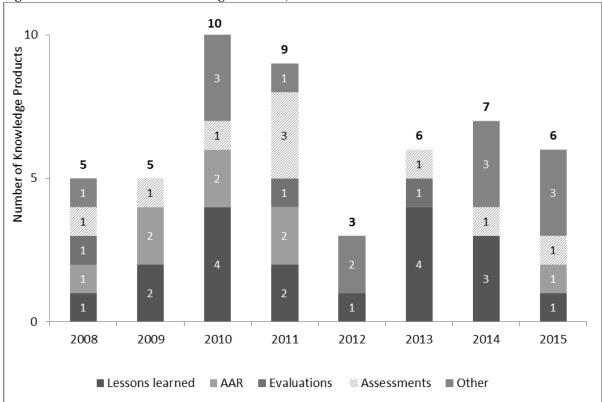
Figure 17 – Number of DPA Knowledge Products, 2008-2015

Source: OIOS-IED document review

47.   OIOS-IED assessed these 51 exercises to be of mixed quality, although they did generate a number of concrete recommendations to improve DPA. However, the number of evaluations is low, especially given the sizeable financial, programmatic and reputational risk associated with DPA; and no evaluations covered broader outcome-level results in SPMs. (See paras 14-16.) Furthermore, although since 2013 DPA systematically selects cases for lesson-learning exercises, this approach does not lend itself to identifying the optimal cases from which to harvest the most valuable lessons.[47] The generation of learning products bore little relation to the diversity of DPA-led missions: Cluster I missions are heavily underrepresented[48] and among the Cluster III missions covered, the generation of learning products bore little relation to mission size.[49] No report addressed human rights, and only the 9 STM reports addressed gender.

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[46] Evaluation of the Multi-Year Appeal 2011-2013 (2013), Evaluation of the start-up of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) (2013), Mid-Term Evaluation of the Rapid Response Funding Mechanism (2012)

[47] Potential topics are canvassed through a participatory process, which can skew selection toward positive examples rather than the most lesson-rich examples. GLU then systematically selects specific cases based on three criteria, but these criteria further skew the process toward positive examples. This positive skew might help explain the positive assessment of DPA in the AARs and lesson-learning reports reviewed. (See para 19.)

[48] Nineteen reports covered Cluster III missions, 8 non-mission settings, and 1 a Cluster I mission.

[49] One product each for the largest missions UNAMI, UNAMA and UNSOM; the rest cover smaller missions.

48.   The roots of this relatively low level of attention to independent, outcome-focused and risk-based evaluation are partly structural and partly resource-related. The 3 evaluations conducted were in fact managed by GLU rather than OUSG, which cited too many competing priorities and too few resources to devote to evaluation. It also lacked the resources for managing evaluations – as well as the clout of the OUSG, leaving it vulnerable to internal barriers to independent evaluation.

49.   In the evaluation policy and LEF, DPA states an intention to link its learning plan to its strategic framework and the USG's compact with the Secretary-General. The DPA 2016-2019 Strategic Plan includes a results framework with clear indicators of success upon which an evaluation plan can build (e.g., a 2015 baseline, 2016 and 2017 targets). However, 63.0 per cent of DPA staff surveyed claimed the Department's overall investment in monitoring and evaluation is insufficient, and 43.0 per cent that DPA does not systematically reflect on its own performance. Mission staff interviewed had generally not received learning products, nor were they aware of the Policy and Practice Database (PPDB) repository, with the exception of mission staff who had previously worked at DPA. These staff acknowledged a greater need for lessons learned.[50]

50.   OIOS-IED had first indicated these knowledge gaps in its 2006-2008 evaluation of DPA.[51] As DPA intends to revise its evaluation policy in 2016, this revision represents an opportunity to redress these gaps.

E.   Headquarters oversight of mission accountability remains weak

51.   In addition to knowledge gaps on overall organizational performance, measures for enforcing field leadership's individual accountability for results have likewise been insufficient. OIOS-IED first highlighted this issue in its 2006-2008 evaluation of DPA.[52] Since then, a range of OIOS audits have raised similar concerns.[53] A decade later, with limited progress documented, it remains a gap.[54]

52.   This gap is rooted in structural factors that are largely beyond DPA control, but nonetheless within its remit to acknowledge – and manage wherever possible, or elevate to the appropriate level.[55] All but two SRSGs and Special Envoys are USG-level leaders, and all are senior statespersons with long diplomatic careers. They report directly to the Secretary-General rather than to the head of DPA, who is likewise a USG. Since 2009, SRSGs are required to develop compacts with the Secretary-General. This action, spearheaded by DPA, represents the single most tangible sign of progress documented for strengthening field-level

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[50] For example, 50.0 per cent of PDA survey respondents did not feel DPA was sufficiently sharing lessons to improve field-based work.
[51] E/AC.51/2007/2/Add.4, para 53
[52] Ibid., paras 46-49, 58, 59(e)
[53] OIOS follow-up audit of the management of special political missions by DPA, 13 August 2009, A/64/294; OIOS audit of DPA's substantive and administrative support to special envoys, 2 September 2011, Assignment No. 2011/560/01; OIOS audit of UNIPSIL, 23 January 2012, Assignment No. 2011/560/02
[54] The 2007 OIOS evaluation focused specifically on Special Envoys' offices. In the present evaluation, OIOS pinpoints these offices as embodying higher accountability challenges, owing to the lack of compacts.
[55] In follow-up to the OIOS 2007 evaluation, DPA correctly noted that most action on the recommendation fell within the purview of the EOSG.

accountability since the 2006-2008 OIOS evaluation.[56] This commitment has not been fully fulfilled, however: as Figure 18 conveys, the proportion of USGs in the missions selected for case study who completed compacts consistently hovered in the area of 50.0 per cent during the period under evaluation.
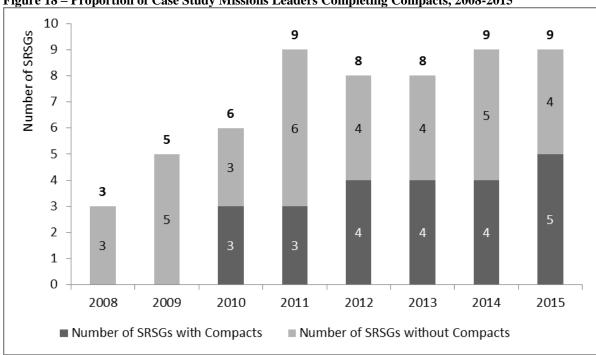
Figure 18 – Proportion of Case Study Missions Leaders Completing Compacts, 2008-2015

Source: OIOS-IED document review

53.   Most strikingly, none of the Special Envoys included in the analysis had completed a compact at any time as they, unlike SRSGs, are not required to do so.

54.   Although the EOSG is primarily responsible for overseeing field-level accountability, DPA plays a role in this area by providing feedback on SRSG compacts. In a positive sign of the EOSG's attention to field accountability, it did complete end-of-cycle performance assessments in response to all compacts produced by the 21 USGs during this period. Beyond the compliance level, however, these performance documents lack a strong focus on individual accountability: among SRSGs' 569 targeted results from 2008-2015, the vast majority (69.6 per cent) focused on output production (e.g., trainings held) rather than outcomes achieved, this despite reported efforts by DPA to instill a stronger results orientation into the compacts. In addition, 63.1 per cent of these 569 results were rated as having been 'Satisfactorily' achieved by SRSGs, 25.4 per cent 'Partially satisfactorily', and only 11.5 per cent as 'Not achieved,' and among the last category in no case did the performance assessment attribute non-achievement to the SRSG; only external factors were cited as the reason for non-achievement. Furthermore, the DPA staff who provide inputs in to SRSG compacts are beneath the staff level of SRSGs; the USG does not serve as an authoritative conduit of the Department's collective feedback on mission performance.

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[56] Establishment of these compacts resulted from the OIOS 2007 evaluation; the subsequent follow-up triennial review of its evaluation of DPA (E/AC.51/2011/3) cites the compacts as the most tangible sign of progress in strengthening mission accountability.

55.   Before this backdrop, the relationship between the DPA OUSG and missions' leadership uniformly appears to be one of collegial support from the former to the latter, rather than one of heavy-handed oversight. In all of the case study missions, the current cohort of mission leaders described their relationship with the DPA OUSG (and the USG himself) as one of mutual trust and as-needed contact. In these cases, mission leaders as well as their senior managers reported that the lack of DPA oversight served as a useful form of support in its own right: without the 'heavy hand' of Headquarters, leaders could attend to the challenging political tasks at hand. However, this sentiment was invariably qualified by the rejoinder that the positive nature of this relationship rests on the personal competence and style of the DPA USG and the SRSG.

56.   From the case study missions, there were numerous positive examples of field-level effectiveness – as well as a handful of cases that underlined the gap in institutionalized oversight. In 3 out of the 7 USG-led case study missions, for example, concerns were raised by mission staff, as well as external stakeholders, over current or previous SRSGs' neglect of broad areas of their mandate, in order to focus on their good offices role. In one case, this conduct reportedly occurred without a plan to entrust these other aspects of the mandate to the mission's DSRSG. In two cases, staff raised concerns over a previous leader's ethical conduct; no performance assessment was located for the SRSGs in question. DPA staff self-reports on the effectiveness of the Department's promotion of learning and accountability, and their ability to dedicate time to this function, underline this gap. (See para 22, Figure 7.)

V. Conclusion

57.   Since the 2006-2008 OIOS-IED evaluation, DPA has adapted to the significant growth in field-based CPR by reorienting its activities, structures and partnerships to support this work. It is currently supporting almost all of the highest-criticality conflict settings, and there are noteworthy examples of how its support has contributed to field success, this despite significant external constraints affecting this success. The entities it supports, particularly smaller and more backstopping-dependent missions, positively acknowledge the Department's achievements in adapting to its more field-focused role in these ways.

58.   Despite these gains, DPA is still adapting to meet the support needs placed on it. Its analytical capacity, for example, once constituted a core focus; it now represents a key support gap. Although resource and structural constraints have hampered the Department's ability to fully meet expectations, its constraints are internal as well. The Department still lacks a dedicated evaluation function with the independence and resources to generate objective, credible knowledge on performance, nearly a decade after OIOS-IED pointed out this gap. Its planning processes do not systematically incorporate analysis as an input into their strategies. Most prominently, DPA remains poorly positioned to oversee field-level accountability.

VI. Recommendations

59.   OIOS-IED makes four important recommendations to DPA, all of which DPA has accepted.

Recommendation 1 (Result E)

DPA, in consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), should seek to institutionalize its role in contributing to field-level accountability, namely by:

- developing an accountability framework to clearly delineate roles and responsibilities of DPA (including that of its USG) in relation to those of the EOSG and mission leadership, in contributing to field-level accountability;
- advocating for requirement that compacts be completed by Special Envoys and Special Advisers; and
- making mission leadership compacts publically available.

Indicators: framework developed, implemented and monitored, leading to enhanced DPA role in strengthening mission accountability; compact requirement made universal; compacts made publically available

Recommendation 2 (Results A, D, E)

DPA should fill two key analytical gaps, both linked to its learning and accountability needs as rooted in the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan and the Department's priorities, namely:

- its political analysis, as a tool for early warning leading to early action and as an input into Headquarters and field-level planning processes; and
- its evaluation function and other sources of evaluative knowledge (e.g., lesson-learning, AARs), by ensuring that the planned revision of DPA's evaluation policy adequately addresses independence, resource and risk-based planning gaps.

Indicators: actions above are undertaken, and their implementation monitored, resulting in analytical products that are tailored to DPA's knowledge needs, of high quality and credibility to key stakeholders, and used to inform decision-making

Recommendation 3 (Results A, C)

DPA should strengthen Headquarters and field-level planning processes by ensuring that:

- All Headquarters divisions incorporate knowledge generated from data-driven analysis (see Recommendation 2) and articulate a well-evidenced rationale for where they will invest their finite resources and through which specific supports, both individually and in collaboration with other divisions; and
- All mission plans and associated documents (budgets, organigrammes) are quality-assured for consistently high clarity on how Security Council and EOSG expectations will be achieved (e.g., structural alignment with mandate, outcome-focused indicators of achievement, exit strategy), in line with Recommendation 1.

Indicator: DPA undertakes quality assurance of all mission plans, and necessary changes made to achieve full alignment with Security Council and EOSG expectations

Recommendation 4 (Results B, C)

DPA, in consultation with the Security Council, other inter-governmental bodies and member State groupings, individual donors, the EOSG, the Controller, and partners, should undertake measures to adequately resource core functional gaps – whether through internal resource reallocations, strengthened resource mobilization to generate additional and more predictable resources, or some combination of both – in the following areas:

- Conflict prevention, including analysis to help better enable early warning and action;
- Evaluation;
- Knowledge management;
- Strategic planning; and
- Resource mobilization itself.

Indicator: consultations undertaken with stakeholders indicated, leading to adequate and more predictable resourcing of the areas indicated

Annex 1

In this Annex, OIOS presents the full text of comments received from DPA on the report of the Office of internal Oversight services on the Evaluation of the Department of Political Affairs. This practice has been instituted in line with general Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

United Nations ⬤ Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM   MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

YESTO: Mr. Eddie Yee Woo Guo, Director   DATE: 24 May 2016
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: Ms. Kyoko Shiotani .
DE: Chief, Office of the Under-Secretary-General
for Political affairs

SUBJECT: **Draft Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the**
OBJET: **Evaluation of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA)**

1.   I refer to your memo dated 9 May 2016 (ref: IED-16-00054) and wish to express my appreciation to Robert McCouch and his team for useful exchanges and the opportunity we have had to provide informal comments and feedback on the draft report on the evaluation of DPA.

2.   I am grateful to note that most of our comments and factual clarifications provided were incorporated. At this stage, we do not have any additional comments.

3.   We believe the report, taking into account its angle and scope, reflects the measures the department has taken since the last evaluation to improve its effectiveness and efficiency in the areas of conflict prevention and mediation. We take note of the recommendations proposed by the report to further strengthen our capacities and working methods.

4.   I am pleased to attach our proposed action plan for the implementation of the recommendations. We take note that some of the recommendations require the support of other actors including EOSG, Member States and the General Assembly and we will endeavour to work with all these entities to ensure their implementation.

5.   Allow me to thank once again your team that has worked on this evaluation for the availability, engagement and constructive spirit shown throughout this exercise.

Recommendation Action Plan

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Programme Evaluation of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

IED-16-004

09 May 2016

IED Recommendation	Anticipated Actions	Responsible Entity(ies)	Target date for completion
Recommendation 1 (Result E) DPA, in consultation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), should seek to institutionalize its role in contributing to field-level accountability, namely by: • developing an accountability framework to clearly delineate roles and responsibilities of DPA (including that of its USG) in relation to those of the EOSG and mission leadership, in contributing to field-level accountability; • advocating for requirement that compacts be completed by Special Envoys and Special Advisers; and	• DPA/OUSG and DPA/PMD to develop guidance for SRSG and Heads of Mission. • DPA/OUSG to coordinate with EOSG to develop templates for Special Envoys and	DPA/OUSG with the support of DPA/PMD and field-based presences, when appropriate DPA/OUSG with the support of DPA/PMD and field-based presences, when appropriate	**By the end of 2016** **2017 cycle**

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• making mission leadership compacts publically available. [*DPA accepts the recommendation with the provision that it will depend on other actors and existing policies as well*] Indicators: framework developed, implemented and monitored, leading to enhanced DPA role in strengthening mission accountability; compact requirement made universal; compacts made publically available	Special Advisers. DPA/OUSG in coordination with EOSG to make the mission leadership compacts publically available (*if in accordance with existing policies*)	DPA/OUSG in coordination with EOSG	**performance appraisals covering 2016 period (*if in accordance to existing policies*)**
Recommendation 2 (Results A, D, E) DPA should fill two key analytical gaps, both linked to its learning and accountability needs as rooted in the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan and the Department's priorities, namely: • its political analysis, as a tool for early warning leading to early action and as an input into Headquarters and field-level planning processes; and • its evaluation function and other sources of evaluative knowledge	• Identify options to strengthen DPA's political analysis tools, including in support of HQ and field-level planning processes, through the allocation of	OUSG to coordinate	**By the biennium 2018-2019**

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(e.g., lesson-learning, AARs), by ensuring that the planned revision of DPA's evaluation policy adequately addresses independence, resource and risk-based planning gaps. Indicators: actions above are undertaken, and their implementation monitored, resulting in analytical products that are tailored to DPA's knowledge needs, of high quality and credibility to key stakeholders, and used to inform decision-making *[DPA accepts the recommendation]*	dedicated human and financial resources, as appropriate • DPA to review its Evaluation Policy to clarify the institutional framework, roles and responsibilities in promoting learning and accountability in accordance with UNEG norms and standards for evaluation.	OUSG, PMD with the support of the Learning and Evaluation Board	**By end 2016**
Recommendation 3 (Results A, C) DPA should strengthen Headquarters and field-level planning processes by ensuring that: • All Headquarters divisions incorporate knowledge generated from data-driven analysis (see Recommendation 2) and articulate a well-evidenced rationale for where they will invest their finite resources and through which specific supports,	• DPA to develop and institutionalize a formal mechanism to track the implementation of recommendations arising from the different evaluative and knowledge exercises.	DPA/OUSG with the support of DPA/PMD, Regional Divisions and field-based presences, when needed	**By end 2016**

IED Recommendation	Anticipated Actions	Responsible Entity(ies)	Target date for completion
both individually and in collaboration with other divisions; and • All mission plans and associated documents (budgets, organigrammes) are quality-assured for consistently high clarity on how Security Council and EOSG expectations will be achieved (e.g., structural alignment with mandate, outcome-focused indicators of achievement, exit strategy), in line with Recommendation 1. Indicator: DPA undertakes quality assurance of all mission plans, and necessary changes made to achieve full alignment with Security Council and EOSG expectations *[DPA accepts the recommendation]*	DPA to develop a dissemination strategy for its evaluations and knowledge exercise to maximise the sharing of lessons learned at several levels: the Learning and Evaluation Board, Senior Management Team meetings, brown bags, Policy and Practice Database, etc. • DPA to incorporate in its existing Annual Strategic Review, an assessment of the Department priorities and changes in context, to optimize the resources allocation. • HQ SPMs budgetary processes shall put emphasis on alignment of structure(s) with mandate(s) and on more clear presentation of indicators of achievement	DPA/OUSG DPA/OUSG with the support of DPA Regional Divisions	**By June 2017** **Budget cycle 2017**

IED Recommendation	Anticipated Actions	Responsible Entity(ies)	Target date for completion
Recommendation 4 (Results B, C) DPA, in consultation with the Security Council, the General Assembly, other inter-governmental bodies and member State groupings, individual donors, the EOSG, the Controller, and partners, should undertake measures to adequately resource core functional gaps – whether through internal resource reallocations, strengthened resource mobilization to generate additional and more predictable resources, or some combination of both – in the following areas: • Conflict prevention, including analysis to help better enable early warning and action; • Evaluation; • Knowledge management; • Strategic planning; and • Resource mobilization itself. Indicator: consultations undertaken with stakeholders indicated, leading to adequate and more predictable resourcing of the areas indicated *[DPA accepts the recommendation]*	• DPA to continue to advocate for the approval of the current proposal of Revised Cost Estimates (A/70/745), currently under discussion in the Fifth Committee aimed at filling the most urgent gaps highlighted by the HIPPO report (A/70/95-S/2015/446) and acknowledged by the SG report on the HIPPO recommendations (A/70/357-S/2015/682) and the subsequent GA resolution 70/6. Further actions shall be considered in the presentation of the budget for the next biennium 2018-2019. • DPA to redeploy extra-budgetary for evaluation in the Department.	DPA/OUSG to coordinate Department's initiatives DPA/OUSG, DPA/PMD	**By the biennium 2018-2019** **By the end of 2016**