



## The Evolving Roles of Engineering Units in UN Peacekeeping Operations: Challenges and Opportunities

Seminar Report  
March 2013

### Executive Summary

On 20 March 2013, the Permanent Missions of Japan and Brazil to the United Nations, together with the International Peace Institute (IPI), held an afternoon seminar at the Japan Society. The seminar examined the evolving roles of military engineering units in UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>1</sup> It highlighted their contribution to early peacebuilding efforts, in particular as part of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in the aftermath of the devastating January 2010 earthquake, and the UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET). It also highlighted specific challenges encountered when undertaking such new functions, as well as examples of noteworthy progress, and provided some preliminary lessons for military engineering units in other UN peacekeeping operations around the world.

A first key conclusion of the seminar was that the nature of military engineering units' tasks in UN peacekeeping operations has evolved and broadened, just as peacekeeping itself has evolved from traditional operations to multidimensional missions. Through engaging in their traditional core tasks, as well as in development and humanitarian-related projects, engineering units have become one of the most visible elements of any peacekeeping operation. Four basic benefits of this engineering work were cited: the essential engineering support to enable the existence of the UN mission; the socio-economic benefits to the local community of works related to basic infrastructure and services; the goodwill and trust enhanced between the mission and the local population through engineering works; and the engineering support to UN agencies and NGOs and the host government in their work to address the roots causes of conflict in the country.

In the final panel on lessons and challenges, it was noted that a peacekeeping mission can link into longer-term development agendas in partnership with other actors in support of the host government, but ultimately is no substitute for them. Therefore peacebuilding support work

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<sup>1</sup> This report represents the rapporteurs' interpretation of the discussions and does not necessarily represent the views of the International Peace Institute (IPI), the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, or the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations.

must be done in partnership with the UN Country Team, NGOs and the host government. Like other components of a peacekeeping operation, military engineering units do not work in isolation either, but must be part of the UN's broader strategy. This requires solid coordination between the engineering units and other mission components. Additionally, it was pointed out that given the changing needs on the ground, both force requirements for engineering units and mission mandates must be adapted to reflect the changing circumstances. As such, there is a need for the military engineering units themselves to progressively adapt to these new sets of related tasks and challenges on the ground, and to display greater flexibility at the same time.

Given the limitless demand for the mission's engineering capacities, it is essential that UN missions choose their projects well. An important principle of peacebuilding is the need to complement and build national capacities, rather than substitute for them. Ultimately, military engineering capacities can be used to greatest effect on projects where: a) the conditions are too unsafe to allow others to do it; b) the host government does not have the machinery or the equipment; or c) the project is not profitable for any local contractors to take on. Those projects that can be maintained with indigenous labor, expertise and technology are ideal, as it allows for sustainable benefits to the host country long after a peacekeeping mission has withdrawn. Finally, seminar participants pointed out that a number of issues require further study and discussion, such as tasking arrangements, procurement rules, and partnership modalities.

## Introduction

The March 2013 seminar on the evolving role of engineering units brought together experts and officials from Member States and the UN Secretariat, former Force Commanders and practitioners who served in engineering roles in UN peacekeeping missions, as well as representatives from the international NGO community and academics. The afternoon was launched by a keynote address from Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and followed with two expert panels. The first panel was entitled: "New and Emerging Roles for Engineering Units: Peacebuilding and Other Support Opportunities." Here, the experiences of engineering units in two missions in particular, UNMISSET and MINUSTAH were examined. In both cases, the scope of activities for the UN's military engineering units expanded beyond traditional mission support roles. In Haiti, the Security Council urged the UN mission to assist the Haitian government in rebuilding its infrastructure following the 2010 earthquake, and increased the number of engineering companies from four to six. Following the initial period of reconstruction activity, four companies still remain, engaging in a wide range of tasks, and increasingly working in partnership with various Haitian government ministries, as well as UN agencies, funds and programmes.

The key questions discussed by the panelists in the first session included: What is the traditional role of engineering units in UN peacekeeping? How has the scope of the tasks of engineering units changed in recent years? How do engineering units play a peacebuilding role (for example

involvement in Quick Impact Projects, developing the infrastructure of state institutions, relation-building with local community, etc.)? What is the impact of these activities and how can it be measured? What are the differing capability requirements of engineering units in different missions / contexts? Are there emerging / context-specific capability needs that are not adequately accounted for in the U.N.'s generic engineering standards? Are the force requirements for engineering units sufficiently context-specific (i.e. aligned to fit the needs of the mission / host country)? Is MINUSTAH a model for the use of engineering capabilities in other missions?

The second panel of the seminar focused on "Future Opportunities and Challenges: Coordination and Coherence." Tasking military engineers to work in the development and humanitarian fields brings opportunities for increasing the visibility of the mission and improving its image among the population, but it also poses a number of challenges. The mission must ensure that its engineering units work to complement, rather than substitute any existing local capacities. It must also not duplicate the work of UN agencies, funds, and programmes, but rather work in partnership to add value to their work. Those partnerships should be easy to facilitate, but in practice are often slowed by bureaucratic or legal hurdles that arise between the mission and UN agencies. Finally, the work of engineering units must be well coordinated both within the mission, including close collaboration with the mission's security components, and with the host government to ensure coherence of action around a common vision for the country's development.

Key questions for this session included: How does a mission coordinate internally to most efficiently use its engineering resources? What are the ideal command and control (C2) arrangements in each context? What are the ideal tasking arrangements to ensure close collaboration with related mission components including infantry battalions, and to realize their full potential with respect to their traditional supporting role and any early peacebuilding role? How are the needs of the mission versus the needs of the local government prioritized with regard to engineering projects? How can the government and the mission work together to efficiently and effectively use this engineering capacity? How can the partnership between engineering units and other relevant field actors, including NGOs, contribute to achieving mission objectives? What are the opportunities and challenges of effective collaboration between engineering units and those actors? Moving forward, what lessons, especially good practices, can we take away from the experiences in Timor-Leste and Haiti for engineering units in current operations like UNMISS, and what are the operational standards for optimizing performance of those engineering units in current and future multidimensional missions?

This report is a summary of the key themes discussed during the seminar, as well analysis drawn from background research and field interviews conducted on the topic.

Military Engineering Units Evolving as Peacekeeping Evolves

The role and tasks of UN peacekeepers has considerably evolved since the first deployment of a small number of unarmed UN military observers to the Middle East in 1948. Over the years, UN peacekeeping has evolved to meet the demands of conflicts of different natures, increasingly intra-state conflict and civil wars. It has grown in size and complexity with over 100,000 uniformed personnel deployed across 15 field missions, most of which have become complex 'multidimensional' missions designed not only to ensure the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements but also to assist in laying a foundation for sustainable peace, i.e. to undertake peacebuilding tasks and address some of the root causes of conflict. This fact was recognized by the UN Security Council and enshrined in a recent Resolution 2086 (2013) adopted on 21 January 2013, which:

"Recognizes that, while primary responsibility for successful peacebuilding lies with governments and relevant national actors, multidimensional peacekeeping missions bring comparative advantages in early peacebuilding by: (a) drawing strength from international legitimacy and political leverage derived from the Security Council mandate; (b) using a mix of civilian, police, and military capabilities under a unified leadership; and (c) utilizing deep field presence."

While UN peacekeeping now includes a broad range of tasks and related military, police and civilian specialized expertise (ranging from helping to reform or rebuild national institutions, to human rights monitoring and security sector reform), the military remains the backbone of most peacekeeping operations. Of particular importance are the military enablers and force multipliers, which traditionally provide critical transport, medical, and engineer support to the mission's infantry battalions. Among these enablers, military engineering units play a key role, particularly during mission start-up in the aftermath of conflict, with the overarching aim of restoring security and providing a safe environment within which the mission as well as humanitarian actors and others can operate. Many operations are deployed in countries where institutions are weak and the basic infrastructure to deliver goods and services is absent. In some cases the lack of infrastructure is the result of years of destructive conflict (Liberia), or from natural disasters (Haiti), whereas in countries like South Sudan, such infrastructure had simply never existed.

Military engineering units assist with the preparation of sites; the erection of secure buildings, camps and fortifications (vertical construction); and the rehabilitation and building of access roads, airstrips and landing sites (horizontal construction) to ensure supply routes from the outside and within the area of operation. In addition, engineering units may also assist with security operations such as mine detection, detonation and demolition tasks, and survivability tasks such as potable water supply and treatment. Typically, engineering units report to the Force Commander under the Head of Mission, and are responsible for field engineer support, accommodation, and construction services in consultation with the mission's Integrated Support Services' Engineering and the Building Management Section.

In addition to these core activities, engineering units alongside other military units conduct Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) projects and occasionally take part in the implementation of Quick

Impact Projects (QIPs). Even in traditional missions, engineering units have at times responded to the transportation or infrastructure needs of UN agencies, government agencies, or NGOs. Through both their core tasks and these “hearts and minds” projects, engineering units become one of the most visible elements of any peacekeeping operation.

With peacekeeping itself evolving, the nature of military engineering units’ tasks in UN peacekeeping operations is expanding to include projects beyond traditional mission support tasks to include a larger role in early peacebuilding. Through this evolution, military engineering units can be seen as a microcosm of peacekeeping itself and the broader metamorphosis from traditional peacekeeping to multi-dimensional peacebuilding. Through building, maintenance and upgrading critical host country infrastructures, UN military engineering companies not only facilitate the work of peacekeepers, but also help to facilitate local trade and improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Such projects play a considerable role in improving the perception of peacekeepers by both local authorities and populations, making the engineering units “an essential bridge between all elements of peacekeeping” as described by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson.

Of course, with new roles come a new set of challenges in terms of resources, command and control, prioritization and remit. In addition, the core tasks of engineering units still remain and cannot be neglected. What impact do these new and emerging tasks have on the mission and host country, and how should this be managed, facilitated or restricted according to the mandate of current and future peacekeeping missions? To address these questions, seminar participants shared lessons from their experiences of engineering units in various UN peacekeeping operations.

### Expanding Opportunities for Engineering Support

In the case of both Timor-Leste and Haiti, the scope of activities for the UN’s military engineering units expanded beyond traditional mission support roles. Haiti provides perhaps the starkest example of military engineering units taking on new roles. Following the devastating January 2010 earthquake, the Security Council in Resolution 1927, recognized “the need for expanded assistance by the international community to the Government of Haiti in order to allow State institutions to continue operations, provide basic services and build State capacity, and acknowledging the valuable supporting role MINUSTAH can play in this regard” and the resolution went on to “encourage[s] MINUSTAH to provide logistical support and technical expertise, within available means, to assist the Government of Haiti, as requested.”

In practice, this Council Resolution increased the number of engineering companies, from two military engineering companies prior to the earthquake to six companies after – with Japan and Korea self-deploying their engineering companies within weeks, and the other two companies arrived one year later. The number of military engineering troops deployed in Haiti reached its peak of 1190 in 2011, and now stands at around 700. The Council resolution also led to additional financial resources for MINUSTAH and the exceptional authorization to use its

“assessed budget” to assist the government of Haiti and its institutions, many of which had been destroyed in the earthquake. Last but not least, additional resources went into QIPs with an exceptional authorization to spend up to USD 100,000 for each QIP instead of the normal USD 25,000 ceiling.

While the two military engineering units with MINUSTAH since its inception in 2004 had contributed to the implementation of certain QIPs in the past, the January 2010 earthquake completely changed the role of engineering units, by creating need on a limitless scale and catapulting engineering units into one of the most important components of the mission. These units engaged in rescue operations, rubble removal and street cleaning, damage assessment and building safety evaluation (the Japanese engineering unit included such experts), humanitarian assistance, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) campsite preparation and burials. This new role and formidable contribution was later recognized by the Security Council in resolution 2070 (2012):

“Commending the wide range of recovery efforts delivered in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake by the United Nations system in Haiti, especially the United Nations-supported housing and debris removal programmes and the successful use of MINUSTAH’s military engineering units”

The Council in this same resolution also encouraged “MINUSTAH, within its mandate, to continue to use existing means and capabilities, including its engineers, with a view to enhancing stability in Haiti while fostering greater Haitian ownership in the context of its condition-based consolidation plan” (para 21). Following the initial period of debris removal and reconstruction activity, four engineering companies still remain in 2013 (the Japanese and Korean engineering units withdrew at the end of 2012), engaging in a wide range of tasks, and increasingly working in partnership with various Haitian government ministries, as well as UN agencies, funds and programmes.

Seminar participants were unanimous in their appreciation of the work of engineering units in general, and in Haiti and Timor-Leste in particular. Representatives from the both host countries made statements in support of the UN missions in this regard, calling the work of the engineering units essential to the success of the mission and beneficial to the broader and longer-term development processes of their countries. Military commanders who led engineering units in peacekeeping operations added that their troops also benefited from such work, seeing a boost to troop morale by providing tangible contributions to the nation and people and opportunities to employ new capabilities and practice new skills. Described below are the key ways in which UN military engineering units benefit both the peacekeeping mission and the country in which they serve.

The first, and most obvious, service of military engineering units is their enabling role in the mission. Engineers enable the existence of the mission – in the capital and around the entire country – and are fundamental to the mission’s ability to fulfill its many mandated tasks. In some peacekeeping operations, this enabling element plays a key role in the mission’s most

important activities. For instance, in South Sudan, the military engineering units assist in the mission's Protection of Civilians (PoC) mandate through the construction of forward operating bases. There, where the eight-month rainy season makes roads in much of the country impassable, it is increasingly vital to expand the reach of the mission by building helicopter landing sites and airstrips, especially in less accessible areas where civilians require protection from violence.

Second, a number of participants signaled that even traditional UN military engineering projects play a dual role by assisting the country economically as well as supporting the mission logistically. The roads, bridges and airstrips constructed to supply the mission and assist in the transport of peacekeepers can have the longer-term benefit of helping the government and other actors provide basic services, as well as creating distribution networks that facilitate trade and bring socio-economic benefits to the local population. Two of the numerous examples in Haiti include the construction of the main road from Malpas to the Dominican Republic built by Japanese peacekeepers, and the improvements to the drainage system around Port-au-Prince built by Brazilian peacekeepers. The international community aspires to build capacity, which is often difficult to measure or recognize, but the work of engineering units is a demonstrable and tangible asset.

Third, such activities help the UN mission to build trust and goodwill among the local population, and are valuable in strengthening its relationship with the government and increasing the mission's ability to operate safely throughout the country. This is the same rationale that guides the typical CIMIC and QIP activities conducted by the military component of UN missions. Such activities not only bring tangible benefits to the local population and are visible evidence of a peace dividend, but increase the trust of the people in the military.

Trust is particularly important – and at times extremely difficult to gain – among populations that have spent years at war (and sometimes decades under colonial rule) and are understandably circumspect of military personnel. In Haiti, engineering works have been a critical element in improving the local perception of the mission following its alleged role in the outbreak of cholera on the island. Both the Japanese and the Brazilian engineering contingents worked at orphanages in Haiti as part of their CIMIC activities, in addition to their normal peacekeeping tasks. In South Sudan, a girls' school lacked a security perimeter and the funds to construct one. It was constructed by the mission's engineers, and the security and goodwill it engendered enhanced local community relations.

Finally, works performed by the military engineering units outside of the mission support role are increasingly contributing to the work of the mission and UN agencies and programmes on the ground to address the underlying causes of conflict in the country, such as underdevelopment and inequality. Working with other components of the mission, as well as UN agencies such as UNOPS, UNFPA, and others, engineering units in Haiti have been able to implement projects that increase the quality of life of the local population, often in the most impoverished areas of the country. Engineering units are assisting MINUSTAH's Community Violence Reduction section in improving the living conditions in Cite Soleil, and are working

with UNOPS and others to help facilitate the “16/6 project.” 16/6 is a priority initiative of the Government of Haiti that aims to improve the quality of life of people displaced from the earthquake returning to their areas of origin, while meeting the urgent needs of physical infrastructure and social problems in selected communities.

Opportunities to support peacebuilding priorities are, however, more easily available to engineering units in established missions like Haiti, where the engineering capacity available now exceeds the routine needs of the mission. These needs are greater during the initial deployment phases of a mission or in response to a crisis when engineering assets are occupied with supporting the mission. This does not necessarily prevent engineering units from undertaking important CIMIC, peacebuilding or humanitarian tasks but they must be weighed against the priorities of the mission.

### Lessons to Learn and Challenges to Address

The role of military engineering units can be analyzed on three levels – political, operational and systemic. At the political level, military engineers can be excellent assets. They build relations with the local population and local government, and help improve public perceptions. At the operational level, engineers are vital the establishment and functioning of any mission. Supply routes built for the mission can also have the beneficial side effect of delivering humanitarian assistance and access to and trading of goods and services for the local population. At the systemic level, however, the evolving role of military engineering units has blurred the traditional division of labor between the mission and other UN funds and agencies in the humanitarian and development domains. Also, the roles and functions taken by military engineering units in the context of the post-January 2010 earthquake relief efforts in Haiti remains the exception rather than the rule.

Unlike the UN Country Team (UNCT), a peacekeeping operation is, by design, a short- to medium-term endeavor. A peacekeeping mission can link into longer-term development agendas in partnership with other actors in support of the host government, but ultimately is no substitute for them. As such, it is unlikely that this division of labor will change fundamentally. However, the goals of a UN peacekeeping mission and the UNCT are similar and their actions can be mutually reinforcing. The recent Security Council Resolution 2086 on multi-dimensional peacekeeping recognizes the importance of this holistic, comprehensive approach to peace and security challenges. As summarized by Jan Eliasson: “there can be no peace without development; there can be no development without peace; and there is no lasting peace without the respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.” All three pillars are needed to achieve success. Like other components of a peacekeeping operation, military engineering units do not work in isolation, but must be part of the UN's broader plan for a mission.

Security Council resolutions and mission mandates are essential in order to give the mission leadership the authority to task military engineering units towards taking on such humanitarian



and development objectives in addition to their traditional mission support functions. In the case of Haiti, Security Council Resolution 1927 (2010), did not make specific reference to engineering units, but did request “MINUSTAH to continue, within its current mandate, its collaboration with OCHA and the United Nations Country Team in supporting the humanitarian and recovery efforts.” Following this, a later resolution, 2070 (2012), did recognize the specific role and contribution of MINUSTAH’s military engineering units to the recovery effort. While the post-earthquake crisis situation in Haiti demanded a more flexible interpretation of the mandate regarding the use of engineering assets, in other contexts mandates might need to recognize at the onset the diverse range of tasks engineering units may be called to take on.

In general, there is a need for flexibility in the mandate and the force requirements for each engineering company. Each mission has life cycle and engineers are critical at the beginning of a mission, whereas later in the mission they may be able to devote more time to training and long-term maintenance. In the initial stages of deployment it is not always possible to provide mentoring and training to the local workforce when the tasks need to be accomplished quickly and efficiently (such as mission accommodation and security). Given the changing needs on the ground, both force requirements and mandates must be adapted continually to the circumstances.

Beyond the mandate itself and as missions take on greater peacebuilding roles, there is a need for the military engineering units to progressively adapt to these new sets of related tasks and challenges on the ground, and to display greater flexibility at the same time. The importance of Japan sending a pre-deployment team to Haiti was highlighted as a best practice that allowed Japan to tailor its unit to the specific needs. Units without adequate – or the right mix of – equipment or manpower may stand idle, which has a dual detrimental effect in not progressing critical projects and creating an unfavorable perception among the local population. The flexibility of that same Japanese unit was also praised, as they responded favorably to a mission leadership request to redeploy from one location to another as needs on the ground had evolved. In Haiti, the Indonesian engineering company was singled out for its continuing operational flexibility. A key lesson highlighted by participants of the seminar was simple: “the less caveats, the better!”

The peacebuilding contribution of a military engineering unit however cannot be assured through goodwill, capacity, and flexibility alone. To maximize the use of equipment and personnel deployed with the unit, it is essential that they be properly tasked, and have the proper resources, including materials, to carry out the tasks. Mission budgets include limited funding for materials and in only a few instances have TCCs bought their own materials without depending on the mission or outside partners. While this may be a good practice and allow getting the unit to work quickly, there is also a risk that such units could go off-script and fund projects which are more in line with their national priorities than the overall objectives of the mission’s peacebuilding plan. In addition, this carries the risk that providing engineering units may become the province of only those countries that can afford extra funds for materials.

Alternative funding options for enabling military engineering units to carry out peacebuilding projects are that either 1) the mission (assessed) budget includes provisions for the purchase of materials (in addition to already budgeted fuel and Troop and Contingent Owned Equipment (CoE) reimbursement) to support their work; or 2) these military engineering units partner with outside organizations, such as UN agencies, the host government, or NGOs. The first option, while it allows greater mission control over project selection, can be hampered by the UN procurement processes, which can create long delays and make local procurement of goods and services more difficult. (Local procurement is one under-utilized element of peacebuilding support). The second option – partnership – has many advantages and can have a multiplier effect, as organizations such as UNOPS (in the case of MINUSTAH) bring both project management expertise, experience hiring local labor, and the systems and processes to do both. One panelist noted the importance of understanding how to collaborate. To facilitate such partnerships with non-UN entities the recurring need for separate Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) may delay the progress, and it was suggested that a global MoU between DPKO/DFS and certain UN agencies such as UNOPS may help reduce delays.

The challenges of competing priorities and demand on limited mission resources were addressed regarding Japan's deployment to MINUSTAH. One key development was the establishment of a Joint Operations Task Centre (JOTC), which functioned as an interface between the NGO community and the military. In this process, NGOs submitted their requests for military or police assistance, the JOTC assessed and prioritized these, and then allocated resources based on site surveys and cluster leader priorities. This mechanism enabled NGOs to remain independent from direct military engagement and enabled the military to manage the requests for assistance. As such, the JOTC was lauded by some in the NGO community as a functional central facilitation hub for joint military / NGO projects.

In the end, many challenges faced by the evolving role of engineering units are the basic challenges inherent in peacebuilding support; deciding what to do, and how to do it well. And the mission bears a great responsibility for supporting military engineering units with overall prioritization, planning and tasking. Many participants noted the seemingly limitless need for engineering units in the countries hosting UN missions. Given such a strong demand for their capacities, it is essential that UN missions choose their projects well. Given past experiences, decisions over the use of non-mission support engineering capacities are best made according to a large plan or set of priorities established prior. Like any peacebuilding support plan, such a strategy should be developed in coordination with the host government, taking due account of its interests and needs. This also helps future partnership efforts in engineering between the mission and the government. Just as engineering units are 'enablers' for the mission, so too can they work to enable the host government to be able to carry out its proper functions.

One of the more novel examples of enabling the capacity of the host government occurred toward the end of the deployment of the Japanese engineering company. Japan worked with 50 local laborers in a project to train them to operate the heavy engineering machinery. In addition to the training program, Japan then donated much of their machinery to the Government of Haiti for its own use. Although it may not be feasible for many countries to

donate such expensive equipment after their deployment, the training program will itself bring value to the capacity of the government and could be replicated by other Engineering Contributing Countries (ECCs).

Finally, in terms of the selection of projects for engineering units, a note of caution was sounded. An important rule of supporting the peacebuilding process of a country is to complement, rather than substitute. Too often the work of international actors has had the effect of substituting local governments and local capacities, which can lead to a continued dependence on external actors, rather than to functional, local institutions. As such, given the amount of demand for engineering capacity, it is just as necessary that mission leadership always question if the project under consideration can be done by local contractors, local NGOs or the host government. Even when the answer is no, it is equally important to look for ways to bring in the government on the project planning, hire local labor, and partner with local NGOs. These lessons are guiding principles for many other peacebuilding actors, such as UNOPS, which makes for a useful partnership between those organizations experienced at peacebuilding and UN military engineering companies. (For instance, UNOPS not only hires 90% of its labor locally, but it also takes pains to include a gender element, ensuring that at least 45% of those local hires are women).

Military engineering units do have a comparative advantage – they often have the heavy equipment that no one else has and they can operate in more dangerous conditions than other actors. As such, these capacities can be used to greatest effect on projects where: a) the conditions are too unsafe to allow others to do it; b) the host government does not have the machinery or the equipment would be too expensive for it to procure; or c) the project is not profitable for any local contractors to take on. A final consideration when developing projects is to understand the sustainability aspects. Some projects of course are urgent and immediate, such as during humanitarian emergencies. Most other projects however, should give consideration to how they can continue to be useful to the local population after the UN mission has ended. Projects that require only local labor/expertise, and that can be maintained with low-cost, indigenous technology are ideal. Other projects will require the government to take over maintenance. In this respect, project planning coordination activities with the government are critical to sustainability. In such a way this will enable the contributions of UN engineering companies to endure beyond the drawdown of the peacekeeping operation.

## Conclusion

UN member states have divergent uses for their armies during peacetime. For example, many armies of Latin American countries, such as Brazil, carry out domestic engineering tasks at home that are easily translated into an international peacekeeping theatre. Domestic experiences can often strengthen the sense that part of the role of the military is to work to help others, which is consistent with the objectives of early peacebuilding. They can also improve the wider skills of peacekeeping units, as the 2004 tsunami and subsequent natural disasters has equipped Indonesian troops to tackle multiple disaster scenarios in a peacekeeping environment. Similarly, Japan's deep expertise in assessing earthquake damage

was critical to Haitians after the 2010 earthquake. In this way and many others, each country that contributes engineering capacities to UN peacekeeping brings with it unique assets to assist the host country and the local population.

Ultimately, as one seminar participant put it, “the first priority is to help people in crisis using all the resources available.” The UN Secretariat and UN member states will continue to work toward refining the role of military engineering units in peacekeeping operations, in part to tap into the deep reservoir of diverse experiences and assets that each ECC brings in order to help people in crisis. As they do, it is important to remember that these assets must be adequately tailored to the unique circumstances of each mission, based on that mission’s lifecycle and the plan in place to effectively support the peacebuilding process of the host country. Furthermore, the activities performed by those units must be done in close collaboration with the substantive elements of the mission, the host government, and the UN Country Team.

Like engineering capabilities, other issues raised during the seminar – tasking arrangements, procurement rules, partnership modalities, etc. – are often specific to each context. However, these issues also demand further exploration and better understanding. This can take place only through continued, productive conversation among stakeholders in New York, ECC capitals, host nation capitals, and others. The 2013 Brazil, Japan, and IPI Seminar, *The Evolving Roles of Engineering Units in UN Peacekeeping Operations: Challenges and Opportunities*, was the start of such a conversation. Participants noted the importance of carrying on that dialogue to improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of such critical enabling capabilities for UN peacekeeping operation in the future.

## Annex A

### ***The Evolving Roles of Engineering Units in UN Peacekeeping Operations: Challenges and Opportunities***

*A seminar co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Japan, the Permanent Mission of Brazil,  
and the International Peace Institute*

March 20, 2013  
Seminar 2:30pm – 6:15pm  
Reception 6:30pm – 8:00pm

Japan Society  
333 East 47th Street New York, NY

#### **AGENDA**

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- 2:30 pm **Welcome**  
H.E. Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, *Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations*  
Mr. Warren Hoge, *Senior Adviser for External Relations, the International Peace Institute*  
H.E. Mr. Tsuneo Nishida, *Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations*
- 2:45 pm **Keynote Remarks**  
H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, *Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations*
- 3:00 pm **New and Emerging Roles for Engineering Units: Peacebuilding and Other Support Opportunities**  
Chair:  
H.E. Mrs. Sofia Mesquita Borges, *Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations*  
Panelists:  
H.E. Ms. Ameerah Haq, *Under-Secretary-General, UN Department of Field Support*  
Lieutenant General Floriano Peixoto Vieira Neto, *Former Force Commander of MINUSTAH, Brazilian Armed Forces*  
Lieutenant General Kishiro Tanabe, *Former Commanding Officer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Group in UNMISSET, Japan Self Defense Forces*
- 4:30 pm Coffee Break
- 4:45 pm **Future Opportunities and Challenges: Coordination and Coherence**  
Chair:  
H.E. Mrs. U. Joy Ogwu, *Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations*  
Panelists:  
H.E. Mr. Edmond Mulet, *Assistant Secretary-General, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations*  
Brigadier General Fnu Witjacksono, *Indonesian National Armed Forces*  
Mr. Masaharu Saito, *Deputy Chief of Program Unit, Peace Winds Japan (NGO)*  
Mr. Adam C. Smith, *Research Fellow, International Peace Institute*
- 6:30 pm Reception at Japan Society