

G A O
Accountability • Integrity • Reliability

Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-08-1094](#), a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

The United States is the largest financial contributor to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations—providing about \$1.4 billion in 2008 (about 26 percent of the total UN peacekeeping assessed budget)—and has a strong interest in the efficient and effective management of these operations. The size and scope of UN peacekeeping has significantly increased over the past several years and the UN has pursued management reforms to strengthen its capacity to support operations. GAO was asked to examine (1) the status of the current restructuring and strengthening of peacekeeping management including procurement for the field, (2) the status of reforms to address previously identified problems with peacekeeping procurement, and (3) the UN Logistics Base's support of peacekeeping operations. GAO reviewed relevant UN documents; conducted structured interviews with chief procurement officers at 20 peacekeeping missions; and interviewed UN and U.S. officials.

State agreed with the report and commented that it would draw upon some of the report findings in its discussion with the United Nations. The UN agreed with GAO's assessment of the status of reforms and provided technical comments, which are addressed in the report as appropriate.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-1094](#). For more information, contact Thomas Melito at (202) 512-9601 or melitot@gao.gov.

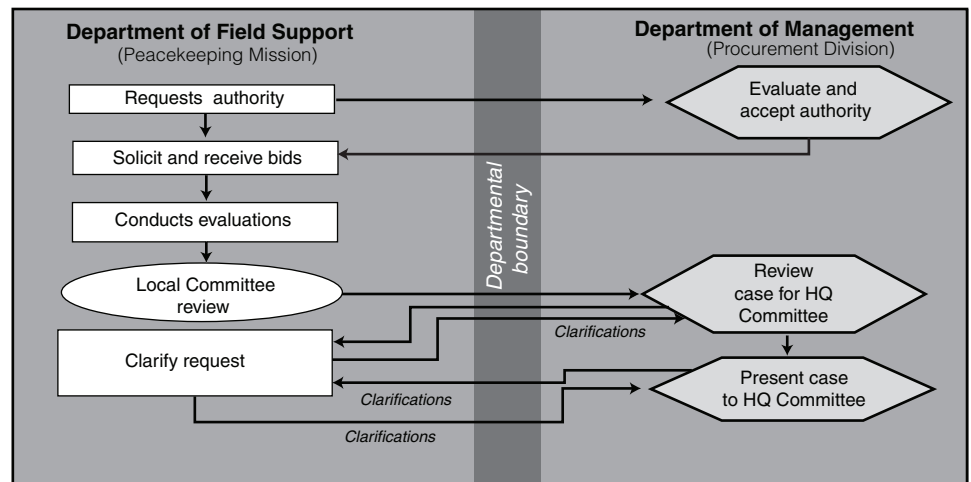
UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING

Lines of Authority for Field Procurement Remain Unclear, but Reforms Have Addressed Some Issues

What GAO Found

The United Nations (UN) is in the process of restructuring and strengthening its organization for peacekeeping management, but has not resolved the issue of authority for field procurement, which is fundamental to the restructuring. Instead, the authority for field procurement remains divided between two departments, leaving the lines of accountability and responsibility for field procurement unclear. See figure. Member states are also concerned that the head of the new Department of Field Support reports to and takes direction from the head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on matters related to peacekeeping missions. The UN has not yet appointed several key senior-level staff for both departments, at a critical time in the restructuring.

UN Field Procurement Process (for procurements requiring HQ review; \$500,000 and above)



Source: GAO analysis. Due to space limitations, this graphic does not represent the full procurement process.

The UN has made some progress in implementing procurement reforms to improve internal controls and processes. For example, the UN Secretariat has established financial disclosure requirements for all staff involved in the procurement process, expanded training for peacekeeping staff and updated its procurement manual. However, these efforts have not addressed some previously identified concerns, including difficulties in attracting and retaining field procurement staff and in applying procurement processes in the field.

The UN Logistics Base (UNLB) in Brindisi, Italy, provides important communications and logistical support to peacekeeping operations and has expanded considerably since 2002. UNLB maintains the UN's worldwide information and technology network and provides peacekeeping missions with stocks that are essential during start-up. In response to peacekeeping mandates, UNLB has further expanded to take on tasks such as training and aviation support. However, its growth over the past 5 to 6 years has raised concerns of the General Assembly, which requested that it clarify its role and future development plans.