

OCHA on Message: Integration : Structural Arrangements



OCHA

What is integration?

Integration refers to the principle that wherever the United Nations has a presence involving political and/or multidimensional peacekeeping missions alongside humanitarian and development actors, these parts of the United Nations should work closely and coherently together. Integration is rooted in the belief that linking the different dimensions of the United Nations engagement (political, development, humanitarian, human rights, rule of law, social and security aspects) creates a greater chance of achieving peacebuilding aims. From a humanitarian perspective, United Nations peacekeeping and political work can aid the delivery of humanitarian assistance and promote the protection of civilians. Therefore, the aim of integration is to enable the United Nations to maximize its collective impact and the impact of its individual components in support of countries emerging from conflict.

When designing a United Nations peace operation in a context where the principles of integration will apply, a key challenge lies in creating the most effective working relationship between the political and humanitarian aspects of a United Nations presence while simultaneously respecting and protecting humanitarianians' need to be politically neutral. The integration approach also recognizes that United Nations humanitarian work needs to remain consistent with the core principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

There are three main structural models from a humanitarian perspective:

Model 1: Two feet in

In stable post-conflict settings where a United Nations peacekeeping or political mission with widespread in-country support is deployed alongside a United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the UNCT is led by a combined Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG)/Resident Coordinator (RC)/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) position. In these situations, the humanitarian crisis has passed, the HC position may be phased out and there will be no identifiable OCHA field office. However, OCHA may continue to provide humanitarian support through the HC's office. This example can be seen in Burundi and Timor Leste, where OCHA maintains staff in the HC office.

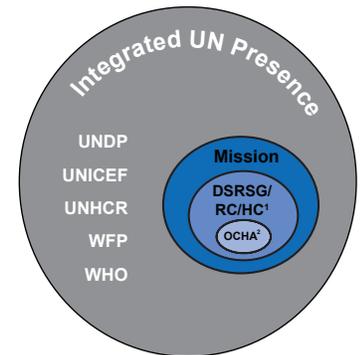
Model 2: Two feet out

When a United Nations peacekeeping or political mission is deployed in situations of high instability (persistent and widespread conflict, lack of a credible peace process, or where the peacekeeping force is not widely accepted and/or significant spoilers are active), the HC and OCHA will remain entirely separate from the mission structure in order to preserve the independence and neutrality of their humanitarian work. Examples include UNAMID in Darfur, Sudan, MINURCAT in Chad/north-east CAR, and UNPOS in Somalia, where the RC/HC and OCHA remain structurally separate from the missions.

Model 3: One foot in, one foot out

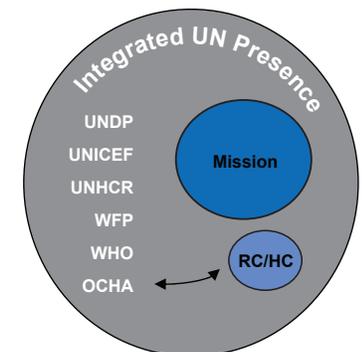
This form of structural integration is applied to peacekeeping or political missions that are deployed to countries emerging from crisis where there is a relatively stable political process, minimal spoilers and the importance of humanitarian action is decreasing. It involves a combined DSRSG/RC/HC post

Two feet in

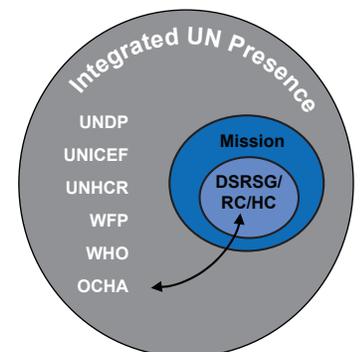


¹ HC may be phased out if conditions warrant.
² Field presence based in RC office if needed.

Two feet out



One foot in, one foot out



within the mission, with a clearly identified OCHA presence outside the mission structure. Examples include UNMIS in Sudan and UNOCI in Côte d'Ivoire.

In all models, a key part of OCHA's role is to facilitate liaison between United Nations political and military actors and the humanitarian community outside.

What is OCHA's role in determining structural arrangements?

Many factors determine OCHA's position within an integrated United Nations presence, i.e. which of the above models is used and what variations apply. Current policy states that the relationship an HC and an OCHA office have with a peacekeeping or political mission is best determined by a careful analysis of the political and security contexts, while also considering the role of non-United Nations humanitarian actors and national authorities, and external perceptions of the peacekeeping/political mission.

OCHA actively participates in planning processes for peacekeeping and political missions at the United Nations Headquarters and field levels. In participating in these processes, the HC and OCHA advocate the appropriate structural relationship between the HC, OCHA and the mission based on the factors outlined above and in consultation with United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian partners, particularly in the field.

In these situations, it is particularly important that OCHA is guided by the views of the humanitarian actors (United Nations and non-United Nations). OCHA exists to support and coordinate these actors who provide up to 80 percent of the assistance to suffering populations. Perception of neutrality is vital to their operations. If the HC and OCHA are not seen as impartial because they are considered too connected to a mission that is perceived to be politically partial, the humanitarian actors may refuse to participate in coordination efforts. The result is that the HC and OCHA cannot fulfill their mandate. In this regard, OCHA is accountable to Member States, the Secretariat and the host Government. A failure of coordination may also further undermine efforts to consolidate peace.

What does OCHA say?

- OCHA is and always will be absolutely committed to humanitarian principles in its own operations and in the operations of the organizations it coordinates.
- For humanitarian agencies to function, it is crucial that all parties and local populations perceive humanitarian aid as independent from political activities. A perception of partiality can expose staff to danger, make access negotiations and delivery of aid extremely difficult, and have serious implications for organizations and beneficiaries.
- Regardless of the structural relationship, OCHA recognizes the need for close cooperation with peacekeeping or political missions. OCHA will help support efforts to achieve a shared vision, integrated planning and a set of agreed results and timelines for achieving the consolidation of peace.
- OCHA supports strategic integration, as called for by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee, June 2008.

To find out more

- Policy Instruction: OCHA's Structural Relationship Within An Integrated UN Presence. May 2009
- OCHA.net integration thematic page
- Forthcoming additional OOM on Integration for field and HQ planning

Case study

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the HC provided strong leadership in encouraging the military to take account of humanitarian concerns, including appointing an individual with significant experience of protection issues to work on a new coordinated approach to protection. This is because the HC believed that the military had a role to play in providing physical protection and that every United Nations peacekeeping operation should be mandated to protect civilians. As a result, MONUC peacekeepers are gradually learning to take account of the concerns of humanitarian organizations in their military planning. In South Kivu, prior to the launch of an operation against the Rastas, the military had several meetings with civilian protection agencies to discuss how to minimize the impact on the local communities and provide safe passage for those fleeing the fighting.¹

¹ Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Democratic Republic of Congo Case Study by Tasneem Mowjee, October 2007, pp25

Contact

Allegra Baiocchi,
Policy Development and
Studies Branch, OCHA
NY, baiocchi@un.org

Lia Copeland,
Coordination and
Response Division,
OCHA NY,
copeland@un.org