

**Statement by Mr. Movses Abelian Director of the
Security Council Affairs Division Department of
Political Affairs**

*Closing Event of the High Level Review of UN Sanctions
31 October 2014*

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the 28 of May of this year, the Deputy Secretary-General provided the keynote address at the launch of the High Level Review of UN Sanctions.

On behalf of the Deputy Secretary-General, who could not be here today, I would like to thank Australia, Finland, Germany, Greece, and Sweden for organizing this important initiative.

Under the leadership of the co-chairs of the review process, the United Nations has had an important opportunity to consider critical aspects of UN Sanctions, with the aim of enhancing their overall effectiveness. A truly impressive number of issues and ideas were explored and debated – over the course of just a few months – with members of the Security Council, its sanctions committees, Member States, the UN system, the private sector, civil society and other international organizations.

From the Secretariat's perspective, four important themes have emerged from discussions in the High Level Review and its three working groups.

The first is the notion that UN sanctions can be designed to support governments and regions working towards peaceful transitions. UN sanctions are not meant to cripple states which are already facing numerous challenges but are, instead, intended to help those states overcome instability, address massive human rights violations, curb illegal smuggling, and counter terrorism.

The second important theme is that Security Council sanctions are not self-implementing; Member States must take steps to implement and enforce sanctions. To improve the capacity of Member States to be frontline implementers of sanctions, we need to improve the delivery of assistance.

Third, if well understood and properly implemented, UN sanctions can be effective conflict prevention and management tools to be used alongside other peaceful means and/or enforcement measures as outlined in Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter.

And, finally, many of the areas for further improvement have now been identified.

To contribute to the High Level Review, DPA established the UN Interagency Working Group on Sanctions. The internal working group brought together 20 UN departments and offices, agencies, funds and programmes working on peace and security, humanitarian, human rights, legal, protection and development issues. Inputs were also solicited, and received from, peacekeeping and special political missions.

The result of our internal deliberations is an insightful set of reflections on ways in which the UN system can effectively interact and support, wherever possible, UN sanctions. We have shared our inputs with the co-chairs of the High Level Review, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my UN colleagues for their valuable inputs.

What was clear from our own internal process is that the UN Secretariat needs to develop a clear and coherent system-wide policy on UN Security Council sanctions. This policy should be accompanied with relevant operational guidance for different UN entities and, in this regard, we remain cognizant of the need to preserve the principles applicable to humanitarian actors.

To assist in the development of this policy and the accompanying guidance, UN entities called for the UN Interagency Working Group on Sanctions to continue as a regular forum for strengthening UN interaction with, and support for, UN sanctions regimes.

Just as the working groups of the High Level Review found that there was a need for general awareness-raising on UN sanctions issues amongst Member States, the Interagency group found that the same could be said for the UN system.

There is also a need for regular briefings, trainings, and the sharing of expertise on UN sanctions issues with UN entities in Headquarters and in the field. The objectives, nature and scope of

UN sanctions should be well communicated to all relevant UN entities, especially at the outset of a new sanctions regime, and particularly when it coincides with the establishment of a new UN presence in the field. Where possible and when appropriate, cooperation with sanctions regimes should be integrated into mission planning for a new peacekeeping or special political mission.

Coupled with this is the idea that the UN system can contribute to the regular review of the impact of sanctions measures on UN activities at the country level. Asset freezes, in particular, should be periodically reviewed in light of their potential impact on humanitarian activities and on human rights.

This year alone, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to conduct two such assessments: one on the partial suspension of the arms embargo on Somalia and the other on the conditions for the lifting of sanctions on Liberia. These were useful assessments, both of which provided good information on how the UN and other technical assistance may be provided to Member States.

Following these assessments, as well as our internal stocktaking, we reaffirmed that the UN system possesses the technical capacity in several key areas to assist Member States in implementing UN sanctions. These capacities, however, need to be better coordinated in-house, better leveraged by the sanctions committees and better utilized by the Member States.

As the Deputy Secretary-General mentioned in May, we have some way to go on the question of enhancing due process when the Security Council and its sanctions committees consider the designation of individuals and entities. Enhancing due process is consistent with the Security Council's continuing efforts to improve the fairness and transparency of the sanctions procedures.

For the UN system, our reference point on due process remains the four elements outlined by the Secretary-General in 2006: the right to be informed; the right to be heard; the right to review by an effective mechanism; and the need for periodic reviews, especially regarding the freezing of assets.

In this regard, we have provided some proposals on how due process may be strengthened throughout the implementation of a sanctions mandate, including the establishment of a clear listing and de-listing framework; enhancements to the working methods of expert panels (including their investigative processes and evidentiary standards); and proposals to improve the current Focal Point for De-listing mechanism.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I complete my remarks, I would like to update you on an important development as we work to further enhance the implementation of UN Sanctions. I am pleased to announce today

that DPA has standardized the format of all UN sanctions lists, as requested by the Security Council.

This effort has also allowed us to establish the long-awaited Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List in the required software formats, which will facilitate the implementation of the sanctions measures by national authorities and by other implementing actors. The consolidated list is now available on the Security Council Subsidiary Organs' website.

Finally, it is clear that we all have more work to do. We will certainly need your support to enhance the elements of UN sanctions implementation listed above and we look forward to working closely with the Security Council, sanctions committees, expert panels, Member States, and other relevant partners in the process.