

29 May 2014

Daniel Amoyaw Asamoah, a UN Volunteer from Ghana, serves with the Contingent-Owned Equipment section. He regularly inspects MONUSCO bases in DRC, making sure peacekeepers have adequate and well-functioning equipment so that they are ready for action at any given time. (UNV, 2014)

## Ready for action: UN Volunteers check preparedness of UN peacekeeping troops

Peacekeeping troops of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) must be ready to take action at any time and under any circumstances, if necessary, under the peacekeeping mandate of the United Nations in DRC. Three UN Volunteers make sure this is the case. Deployed with the Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) section of MONUSCO, four times per year they inspect its bases in Katalé, Tongo, Kiwanja, Nyamilima and Ishasha.

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The objective is to verify the presence and serviceability of the material promised by the Member States for their Blue Helmets. In a "back-to-school" atmosphere, machine-guns, mortars, jeeps, shovels, and assault tanks are perfectly aligned and dazzling. The inspectors are hard-nosed; every single piece must be working adequately. Indeed, night vision goggles or positioning equipment can be considered as non-serviceable if the troop does not possess enough batteries to make them work during

lengthy field operations.

Everything is meticulously tested. Peacekeepers must be ready for any kind of event or intervention at any time. Thanks to the work of the COE, they are.

It is also important to ensure that material capacities are duly matched by the mental and physical aptitudes of the soldiers of MONUSCO. Here as well, every little detail contributing to the health and well-being of the soldiers is of major importance: enough washing products to maintain clean clothes and rooms, clean water and healthy food, a good Internet connection, all the medical equipment required to prevent common diseases, heal minor injuries and stabilize the more serious wounds.

Under sometimes difficult, if not dangerous, working conditions, with frequent missions to unstable areas, COE UN Volunteers inspect, four times per year, 66 contingents, that is 20,500 troops and over 11,000 pieces of equipment.

“Without our presence and support, most of the military bases would just fall apart”, explains José Luis Medina, Deputy Chief of the section. “We have to make sure - for their own safety as well as for the security of the local population and UN staff - that they work in good conditions with properly-functioning equipment.”

Daniel Amoyaw Asamoah is one of the three UN Volunteers serving with COE since joining MONUSCO in April 2012. It is not his first experience with peacekeeping operations - he previously worked in the missions in Liberia, Lebanon, Sierra Leone and DRC as peacekeeper with the Ghanaian Battalions.

For him, volunteerism was an absolute need. “I have a passion for humanity. As a UN Volunteer I try to see beyond my job as an inspector and look at the people we serve,” he says. “I personally try as much as possible to help the population we meet on our tours. As UN Volunteers, we are here for the sake of the people. I also believe, deeply in my heart, that the role I am playing helps, even if very marginally, to make the world a better place.”

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Sustainable Development Goal:

