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### **LESSONS LEARNT**

One needs to be well informed of the history and social, economic and political background of the area of the mission. This can be achieved either by the effort of the sending institution, and in my case, the Fiji Police Force or the individuals or group initiative to gather information of the host country but it is of most beneficial that both ways of learning the background of the mission area are of vital importance.

One need to see that all that is needed for his/her family's comfort is taken care of. I had to clarify on who is responsible in decision making, financial, health, and even security issues. I had these sought of issues that I had to discuss with my wife, especially when you are not in the know if communications will always be what you may desire. If I had not made compromising decisions on these important issues of the home, it can cause a lot of unnecessary stress to your spouse and even to yourself. I have learnt that it is not I, who had not made the sacrifice to have come on this mission. I chose to come, I applied, I wanted to, and had been duty bound because of the career that I chose. I had to remind myself that it is my wife who had to make the sacrifice; she sacrificed not having to have her husband with her and to do all the work that I should have done.

Be prepared mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Mentally for me is being knowledgeable. Know the environment that you are coming into. Know what institution you represent and its mandate. Know what you have and are ready to offer. Know your limitations and be willing to admit them because you will be surprised to find out that there are many among you who can fill in for you and you can fill in for them. Do not come in with negative preconceived ideas.

Being prepared physically means health and fitness. To be healthy plays an important role to one's productivity and one's health can be maintained and improved with regular exercise. We have to be careful not to live irresponsibly once pocketing money that we are not accustomed to.

Many of the living conditions that I have come to actually witness are what I have not seen or experienced before. We are drawn to sympathize and overlook security issues. I have learnt to draw the line and be professional in carrying out my duties.

I come from a religious background hence being spiritually prepared was the foundation of my call to service and serve to my outermost best and

not just to maintain the status quo. It helps me grounded in the decisions I make each day in the mission area.

A Police Officer is to be always security minded. Your security is paramount. The UN provides relevant information and applicable security equipment for our own protection but the responsibility falls on the individual to take heed and use the equipment for one's own protection. I have had the experience of overruling advice of security in giving UNPOL clearance to travel into an area, by cancelling patrol into an area upon receiving concrete information that the said area is not safe. In whatever situations, every UN officer has the responsibility of their personal security.

Be willing to learn. I have had the opportunity to work with very experienced officers and I have made every opportunity to draw from their experience and learn to be a better Police Officer.

I have also learnt to better my skills on cross cultural communication. I come from a small nation which is rich with diverse culture but to come into the UN, it has a unique and probably the richest diversity of cultures. Different nations, races, colors and languages called in for one purpose and announce peace with one voice. When given the opportunity to lead UNPOL in Rumbek field office, I got a greater platform to exercise communication cross culturally. Some techniques I have learnt and some I am still learning to master.

Firstly, always have an open mind and respect every opinion that comes, you will end up learning a lot along the way.

Secondly be a diplomat. As Police officers, we are here for almost a year and why waste this little time to burn bridges when you have the biggest opportunity to build them and keep them for life i.e. relationships. I can win all arguments, sometimes I have to choose to lose to win the confidence of my colleague, especially on a thing that is not a matter of life and death.

Be innovative or take initiatives. I had planned to come and work and use every opportunity and resources available to do the same and I was always looking at what new things I could do or what I can make to become better. Be open minded of what legacy you want to leave behind when you return to your home. Make an impact on the institution, the unit or the life of a colleague or a local community member. Whatever it is, leave a mark and in turn return home content that you have given your best.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm the values of the UN which are to be the take of all officers, and I am sure it is also embedded into the values of every policing institution around the globe. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY, INTEGRITY and PROFESSIONALISM.