

USG Khare Remarks

High-Level Session II – Peacekeeping Reform: More Effective and Safer Peacekeeping

3:30-5:30pm

- 1. How can UN peacekeeping reform contribute to enhanced peacekeepers' safety and security, and more effective mandate implementation by UN Peace Operations? How can the use of technology in Peacekeeping (possibly include drones/UAS, AI, C-IED, C-UAS) contribute to this end?*

Thank you very much for these questions.

It is a pleasure to be here in Berlin with you today. I have had the privilege of participating in every Peacekeeping Ministerial, and each one, thanks to your investments, has moved us closer to more effective peacekeeping.

As we look ahead to the future of UN Peacekeeping, I believe this Ministerial may be the most consequential one yet.

The question rightly suggests that peacekeeping of tomorrow must be both more impactful and safer for the men and women who serve in the field.

These are not competing priorities—they are in fact mutually reinforcing. When missions are equipped to succeed, they are also better prepared to protect. And when peacekeepers are safer, they are better able to deliver.

This is why I see the future of UN peacekeeping as hinging, in part, on our ability to leverage technologies to improve safety and security, implement mandates effectively, and strengthen mission performance.

The UN's Strategy for the Digital Transformation reflects this vision. It guides our efforts to promote innovation across peacekeeping, enhance safety, decision-making, and impact.

Let me share a few examples of how this is already taking shape:

- **Telemedicine**, through our Triangular Partnership Programme, is operational in six missions, providing real-time expert support from the point-of-injury, during medical evacuations, and across different levels of care. We are committed to mainstreaming this capacity to all peacekeeping missions over the next five years.

- Our **Integrated Camp Security and Early Warning system**, which includes Counter-Rocket, Artillery, and Mortar (C-RAM) technologies, has strengthened base security, reduced vulnerabilities, and improved early warning against indirect fire attacks.
- **Unmanned Aerial Systems** are enabling more effective mandate implementation by delivering real-time intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance (ISR).
- And through the **Elsie Initiative**, we are improving the living and working conditions for uniformed women in the field, ensuring that missions are more inclusive and impactful.

These examples show how far we have come. But of course, technology is not a panacea. It requires a perfect human-technology interface, in turn, dependent upon training and capacity-building. In this regard, the Triangular Partnership Programme, which enjoys the support of many Member States including all co-chairs of the Ministerial process, offers a compelling model. By bringing together Member States, the UN, and Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries, the TPP taps into the comparative strengths of each partner to bolster engineering, medical, Counter-IED, technological and environmental management capabilities of peacekeepers in a way that is both scalable and sustainable.

There are other areas we must strengthen to keep our personnel safe.

For one, peacekeepers must be trained and equipped to address false, misleading or manipulated information, which otherwise can undermine mandate implementation, fuel polarization, and incite violence in host countries.

Second, we need tangible progress on strategic and operational integration within missions and UN country team partners.

Third, we require Member State support to generate the capabilities required to implement current and future mandates.

Finally, as the Secretary-General said earlier, none of this is possible without strong, sustained political will from Member States. For peacekeeping to advance, it requires robust support and a consistent commitment to political solutions.

2. *How can UN missions take better care of people and the environment? How can the UN strike the balance between its commitments on mandate implementation, through increased operational resilience for instance, with the reality of resource-constraints?*

Thank you.

Let me begin by emphasizing that our duty of care extends beyond personnel—it includes the communities we serve and the environments in which we operate.

To this end, we have implemented a robust environmental risk and performance management framework across peacekeeping missions. And we are accelerating efforts to reduce our environmental footprint, especially by transitioning from diesel to renewable electricity sources and reducing solid waste, promoting waste-water recycling.

This shift is not just about sustainability. It also enhances operational resilience in remote, high-risk settings: it reduces the need for fuel convoys, which are often vulnerable to attacks; it lowers long-term costs for Member States; and it unlocks opportunities to leave a positive legacy for host communities.

However, I must offer a word of caution. At a certain point, reduced resources can only translate to reduced capacity and reduced results. In March alone, we were unable to reimburse \$149 million to troop and police contributors for contingent-owned equipment. By June, the figure is projected to rise to nearly \$300 million. This is simply unsustainable.

Peacekeeping needs predictable and sustainable financing, requiring all Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries cannot—and should not—be expected to shoulder the financial burden of peacekeeping.

As Jean-Pierre noted in the previous session, we are committed to promoting a culture of efficiency, throughout our missions and in Headquarters.

I am pleased to share that in 2023-2024, through the enhanced efforts of all peacekeeping missions, we achieved, in the areas of operational support, \$22 million in savings—five times our original projection. Looking ahead, we expect this figure to more than double to \$53 million for the 2025-2026 period.

These are more than just numbers on a spreadsheet: they reflect tangible savings for Member States, achieved even as we continue to implement some of the UN's most complex and demanding mandates.

Amidst financial pressures and cost savings, I am proud that we have been able to improve medical care for our peacekeepers, many of whom serve in austere and hostile environments. In that regard, we take a holistic approach to medical support, spanning the full continuum of care: from pre-deployment preparation and training, self-care tools like buddy first-aid kits to mental health support through platforms like the UN Mind Companion, the delivery of high-quality clinical care in the field, and remote access to medical expertise through telemedicine.

In short, taking better care of people and the environment is not at odds with operational effectiveness—it is essential to it. Improved operational resilience saves money in the long-term and enhances prospects of success. But to sustain and deepen this progress, we need more than innovation and efficiency. We also need continued political and financial commitment from all Member States.

Thank you.