

UNITED NATIONS



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**UN Deputy Secretary-General's Opening Remarks at the UN Chiefs of Police Summit (UNCOPS)**

**3 June 2016**

**[as delivered]**

I warmly welcome all of you to this historic event at the UN and in this legendary General Assembly Hall, the symbol for international cooperation and understanding.

As the Secretary-General said in his video message, UNCOPS is a tremendous opportunity. For the first time, countries which host and contribute to UN Police, key partners and the UN leadership, are joining forces to discuss the complementarity between national and international policing.

I thank you for coming together in this important pursuit – and for doing so at this critical time in the world today.

Last year the UN celebrated its 70th anniversary as you may recall. We marked that milestone by launching major reviews of the tools to respond to conflict – peace operations, peacebuilding and the role of women in peace and security. These efforts were complemented a few days ago by the finalization of an important review on UN police.

Strongly linked to all these efforts is the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

One of the Goals focuses on peaceful societies, access to justice and strong and well-functioning institutions. These factors can substantially reduce the spread of conflict, of violence, of corruption and of organized crime.

The UN reviews and goals reaffirm what we concluded at the UN Summit more than a decade ago - a meeting that I, as President of the General Assembly, was honoured to preside: “There can be no peace without development; no development without peace; and neither without respect of human rights.”

UN Police is central to this equation, to this structure. It has become a central pillar of United Nations peace operations as indicated in the external review of the functions, structure and capacity of the UN police function.

*Check against delivery*

We recognize the integrated nature of the challenges before us.

The number of displaced people around the world has hit a record high. The majority of them are women and children. 80 per cent of all humanitarian needs are driven by conflict, often exacerbated by climate change and resource-based disputes.

Violent extremism has worsened conflicts, which are increasingly transnational and difficult to resolve with traditional diplomatic tools.

UN police operations are making a difference in places where the rule of law is weak or absent.

In Mali – a country where UN faces many problems and perils - United Nations Police are building national capacities, mentoring Malian law enforcement in forensics, counter-narcotics works and crime analysis.

In South Sudan and Somalia, United Nations Police staff are working hard to build up new and reinvigorated national police services.

In the Central African Republic, United Nations Police have assumed important interim responsibilities to support the national police force.

In Liberia, United Nations Police are facilitating the handover of policing responsibilities to national and local authorities.

In striving for effective multilateralism, UNCOPS is a springboard to make sure that United Nations Police becomes ever more “fit for purpose”.

To meet this objective, we have taken an in-depth, external look into our own Police Division, which directs and supports all UN Policing. The Panel has just presented its report.

We are now working hard to implement measures that will address crucial challenges.

In any mission setting, United Nations Police are central to protecting human rights and preventing situations from deteriorating. This is also the spirit and intention of our Human Rights up Front initiative. We want to act on the early signs of crisis – not wait for disasters and atrocities to occur.

I see a growing role for police as we strengthen our work on prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding. There are areas where police have special competence and comparative advantages.

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Today, you will receive vivid illustrations of what it means to serve as a United Nations Police officer.

You will hear what skills and knowledge officers acquire while on deployment with United Nations Police, skills and knowledge which can be useful at home.

You will see what it takes to enhance the capability and performance of United Nations Police, police officers, Formed Police Units and specialized teams of police experts.

Let me close by emphasizing some key requirements and qualities needed with UN Police – and I am sure you agree with them:

- Our officers need to be well-prepared, well-equipped and well-trained.
- They need to be capacity builders.
- They need the latest technology.
- They need access to intelligence, crime data and analytical tools.
- They need to be composed of more women
- They need to be experienced leaders.
- And they need, in particular, to help us root out sexual exploitation and abuse.

UN Police are our police, serving “We the Peoples” of the UN in a spirit of trust, fairness and cooperation.

In closing, I would like to thank you for being a part of this unique meeting. The UN greatly appreciates the role you play and the difference you make every day around the world.

We commend your commitment to work with the UN to advance peace and security as one international community and one global neighbourhood.

Thank you.