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**Welcoming Remarks by Mr. Hervé Ladsous,  
United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations,  
at the United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit (UN COPS)  
3 June 2016  
UN Headquarters, New York, General Assembly Hall**

Mr. Deputy Secretary-General,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Police Executives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations peacekeeping family, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you. I am grateful that you have travelled from every corner of the globe to help us consider ways in which we can strengthen United Nations Police.

United Nations police peacekeeping has come a long way.

When I visited Haiti in 2014, I was given statistics relating to crime: a reduction of 21 per cent for homicides, and 53 per cent fewer kidnappings. Fast forward 10 years, and the difference could not be more striking.

The Liberian National Police is about to take over the security in the country. This is a sea of change for the country that had no police in 2003.

The progress is real. And much of the credit goes to the United Nations Police.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

United Nations Police officers make a real difference in the lives of people in post-conflict countries. They help worn-torn societies lay the foundations for sustainable peace.

When people see police officers walking the beat, when people can call their “911 emergency number” and get help, when they see a new police station to report crimes to – they feel a return to normalcy. They feel they can start rebuilding their lives and their country.

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The international community has increasingly recognized the value of the United Nations Police.

United Nations Police have unrivalled comparative advantages.

They can provide international legitimacy to police development efforts. United Nations Police officers are independent, impartial and committed to United Nations values. They can help create strong positive expectations and foster popular confidence in the host State police.

No wonder United Nations Police have experienced unprecedented growth in the past ten years. In 1999, there were 2,400 United Nations Police officers. The number increased to over 10,000 in 2009. And, as we have just heard from the Secretary-General, today more than 13,500 police officers serve in peace operations - a testament to the growing demand for police peacekeeping.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The job of United Nations Police is unique.

In domestic policing, many things are often taken for granted. Police have the authority to enforce the law. They understand the culture and speak the language of the communities they serve. They know their police colleagues have been trained and have served in much the same way that they have themselves. They are confident that they, by and large, have the equipment and back-up needed to ensure public safety.

United Nations Police can rely on none of these things. Instead, they work in a fragile environment, in which authority, power and rules for social interaction are fluid. They navigate an unfamiliar terrain and perform their duties side by side with colleagues from 90 different countries.

As United Nations Police numbers expand and tasks evolve, we need to ask ourselves: Do we do our utmost to support our men and women in the field? Do we provide United Nations Police with appropriately skilled people, equipment and strategic direction and guidance they can count on?

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations rightly pointed to existing United Nations Police doctrinal, training and personnel gaps.

The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support are working hard to improve and to give our men and women in uniform the support they deserve.

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The Police Division has made significant progress in developing a strategic guidance framework, or the SGF as we call it. It is an overarching policy architecture for international police peacekeeping. The framework – developed with the African Union, the European Union and you the Member States – is already helping us achieve coherence and learn so that we reproduce our past successes and avoid former mistakes.

The Police Division is leading the United Nations effort to attract more women police officers to United Nations Police. We need them not as poster models. Operational effectiveness of United Nations Police requires adequate numbers of women police officers.

New, innovative models of deployment have emerged when countries second teams of police officers, well-versed in a specific police specialty, such as sexual- or gender-based crimes. This promising development will no doubt help us secure those specialized police skill sets we need. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is now reviewing and updating the police pre-deployment curriculum on the basis of the SGF – a prerequisite for the successful integration of seconded police officers into the mission environment.

Together, the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, are working to give effect to the Global Field Support Strategy so that contingents can be rapidly deployed to the field and better served while in theatre.

Mr. Khare and I have made it a personal commitment to prioritize the implementation of the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping.

Our police peacekeepers must have the twenty-first century technology as they confront sophisticated networks of criminals who prey on fragile states.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

All these efforts are futile unless supported by Member States.

This is the reason we have gathered here today.

We need your support to make United Nations Police stronger.

We need more skilled police officers from a greater pool of police-contributing countries.

As the Secretary-General repeatedly stated, the biggest asset of the United Nations is the knowledge, skills, experience and enthusiasm of its staff.

We need more police planners, criminal intelligence analysts, integrated border management specialists, public order management experts, and, not least, police leaders for our missions.

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We need more French- and Arab-speaking personnel and, as I have just mentioned, we need more women police officers.

I know it is hard for your governments to send your best qualified staff, fluent in foreign languages, to remote and dangerous corners of the world. “What’s in it for me?” – you might wonder.

In our globalized world, national security of one country is indivisible from the rest of the world.

Your police officers in United Nations field missions are at the forefront of our common effort to frustrate the activities of extremists and criminals, who seek to establish operational bases or transit hubs in weak or fragile states.

While in the service of the United Nations, your police officers serve national interests of your countries. They also acquire important skills and additional qualifications that provide them with new perspectives and knowledge when they return home.

We urge you to recognize and promote police officers who have served under the UN flag.

Let me also extend the hand of cooperation to INTERPOL, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, regional organizations and development institutions and other actors in the field of international police peacekeeping and assistance.

We hope to work hand in hand with you through joint guidance, joint assessments, joint planning, joint implementation and joint funding streams.

In doing so, we will reinforce each other’s work and deliver more with less.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a pressing need for the discussion we are about to start. To sum up: numbers increase, mandates grow complex, new kinds of peace spoilers take center stage.

Much remains to be done to give United Nations Police all they need to confront these challenges.

We need guidance in areas where it does not yet exist.

We need more police officers with specialized skill sets.

The number of women police officer must increase.

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And the geographic pool of police-contributing countries needs to broaden.

Above all, we need your support in keeping the issue of United Nations Police peacekeeping on the radar of decision-makers in your capitals.

Let me once again commend you for coming to New York and showing your support for United Nations Police.

United Nations Police is a wise investment with tangible returns.

Let us make them stronger together.

Thank you.