

**Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Ms. Ameerah Haq
Remarks at Dag Hammarskjöld Medal Awards Ceremony on
the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**

New York, 29 May 2014

Excellencies, Colleagues, and Friends,

It is a great honour for me to be here today, and to accept this medal on behalf of our civilian peacekeepers who have paid the ultimate price in the pursuit of peace.

Last year, we lost 22 civilians in our peacekeeping missions, including in Liberia, Darfur, and South Sudan. On behalf of the Secretary-General and the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, I extend my deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of the deceased. We take this opportunity to remember our colleagues, their dedication and their commitment to peace.

Excellencies,

Over the past two years alone, the United Nations has supported new peacekeeping operations in Abyei, Syria, and Mali. Today, we are hard at work building the foundations of a new peacekeeping presence in the Central African Republic, so that, come September 15th, when African Union troops are converted into UN peacekeepers, and thousands more blue helmets arrive, we will be ready for the challenge ahead.

To discuss operations in Mali, Sudan, Syria and the Central African Republic in the same breath demonstrates the complexity of the security challenges being addressed by the UN today. To keep pace with this, UN peacekeeping operations must continue to evolve. Member States today, with support from the UN Secretariat, carry the weight of newfound aspirations to do peacekeeping better – peacekeeping that is faster, with greater capabilities, able to operate in ever more difficult operating environments, and all at lower cost.

In this context, we must recognise the absolute necessity of doing our utmost for the safety and security of personnel, uniform and civilian alike. Prevention and risk mitigation are priorities: strengthening our compounds, reinforcing security of staff traveling in convoys, applying new technologies - such as the UAVs in DRC to which Hervé has referred - and

fitting our vehicles with required communications equipment, these are all critical steps in our efforts to safeguard our personnel.

A top priority for all of us is the implementation of the new mobility policy recently adopted by the General Assembly. In my view, this is a “game-changer” with which our civilian colleagues, who have worked for years in missions in hardship locations, will have a realistic chance to take up work in other locations. The personal sacrifice of being apart from your families - that so many of you have endured – was never meant to last a career.

Excellencies,

Our civilian colleagues in the field toil day-in, day-out on the frontlines of today’s conflicts. Whether mediating inter-tribal conflicts, documenting human rights violations, or reporting on the state of fragile ceasefire agreements, they carry out their work at great personal risk and sacrifice. We can pay no greater tribute to those who have lost their lives than to ensure that their aspirations are pursued and ultimately realized.

Thank you.