



**The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP  
Assistant Minister for Defence  
Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Assistant Minister for the Republic**

**United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial  
Accra, Ghana  
Wednesday, 6 December 2023**

### **Australian Statement**

I am honoured to speak on behalf of Australia, and I begin by thanking Ghana for hosting this Ministerial Meeting.

The UN was founded in the wake of the devastating experiences of the Second World War with the purpose of maintaining international peace and protecting the human rights of all.

But those important goals are increasingly under pressure as the world becomes more contested and complex.

The UN's peacekeeping mission under the UN Charter is now more important than ever. It is a mechanism that gives States the opportunity to pursue peace and stability, in accordance with international rules and norms, rather than the use of force.

It's for these reasons that Australia has been a committed contributor to UN peacekeeping since the first group of UN peacekeepers deployed in the late 1940s.

As committed supporters of peacekeeping ever since, we frankly acknowledge that today, UN peacekeeping is facing significant challenges.

Peacekeepers are increasingly targets of attacks.

Misinformation and disinformation is fracturing relationships between peacekeepers and the communities they protect.

And peacekeeping needs to keep pace with the technological advances happening around it.

Australia is focussed on supporting regional approaches to peace and security; strengthening peacebuilding and conflict prevention; supporting more effective and inclusive peacekeeping; and innovating for the future.

To achieve that, we need to address the immediate challenges facing UN peace operations, and work together to drive reforms that will ensure they are effective into the future.

Australia's experience in leading and contributing to peace operations in our region shows that regional challenges are often best addressed by regional approaches.

Which is why we support the call from African states for predictable and sustainable financing, including through UN assessed contributions, for African Union-led peace operations.

Australia pledges to contribute to strengthening regional peacekeeping capacity, including through the delivery of UN pre-deployment and preparedness training for Pacific Law Enforcement officers.

We also remain a firm supporter of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and commit new funding to the Elsie Initiative and to delivering the Women in Peace Operations training course in South-East Asia.

Our pledges also reflect our deep national commitment to taking meaningful action on climate change, and our resolve to ensure that UN peacekeeping missions leave a positive environmental legacy.

Australia supports the Secretary General's call for "more nimble, adaptable and effective peacekeeping mission models", recommended in the New Agenda for Peace.

In support, we pledge to establish a research and dialogue series to address contemporary challenges in the peace operations system.

And to promote an ongoing culture of innovation and better integration of technology, we have contributed to the establishment of the Peacekeeping Innovation Hub in the Department of Peace Operations.

Colleagues, it is vitally important that we are meeting today in Africa.

African states have more experience with peacekeeping than any other region in the world.

That's why I'm here today to listen.

It is a signal of my government's commitment to be part of the solution and to be sure that the operation and the function of peacekeeping is appropriate for the modern era.

I make you this promise: Australia will always be an active supporter of peace operations because they are a critical feature of the international rules-based order and central to the UN charter which we all strongly support.

We will bring that resolve to our term on the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which we take up in 2025, and as we seek election to the UN Security Council for the 2029-2030 term.

In these roles we pledge to listen, act and include all stakeholders, to ensure a more stable, secure and prosperous world for all of us.

[ENDS]