

**Special Remarks at the 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping  
Ministerial**

*8 December 2021, Seoul, Korea(virtual)*

Honorable Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong,  
Honorable Defense Minister Suh Wook,  
Honorable Ministers, Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is my great honor and privilege to speak to you at the occasion of the 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial.

My gratitude goes to the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their hard work in both preparing for, and successfully hosting, this important Peacekeeping Ministerial in spite of the ongoing pandemic.

My special appreciation also goes to Ministerial Co-Chairs, the 12 Member States and the UN Secretariat, as well as UN Secretary-General António Guterres, for helping to

ensure the realization of this timely Ministerial.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to recognize the valiant UN Peacekeeping soldiers who have devoted their lives and made the greatest sacrifice on behalf of the guiding values of the United Nations, particularly, international peace and security.

Their courage and steadfastness have helped keep the peace in nearly every corner of the world.

They have shined a light on some of the darkest conflicts during the last 75 years.

They have donned the storied blue helmet to help uphold the vision the UN laid out in its 1945 Charter, pledging to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

To all of the men and women peacekeepers, both past and present, I take this opportunity to humbly salute you all.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

This year's Ministerial is quite meaningful for me to witness take place here in my home city of Seoul.

Indeed, this very process was started by my own initiative as UN Secretary-General in 2014. Alongside then-US Vice President Joe Biden, I hosted the High-Level Summit on UN Peacekeeping and some 30 Member States made concrete pledges to strengthen PKO.

This was followed by the High-Level Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping held in September 2015, which I co-chaired with then-US President Barack Obama and resulted in substantial commitments from over 60 countries.

So, not only to participate now in this 2021 Seoul Ministerial, but also to proudly follow up the hosting footsteps of New York, Vancouver, and London, is both special and rewarding.

Kick-starting this Peacekeeping Ministerial initiative was based on my firm belief as UN Secretary-General that it was critical to both reinvigorate and reform UN PKO.

And such a process needed to be advanced with a view towards ensuring that UN PKO was fit for purpose to help maintain international peace and security in our rapidly-changing world.

This was a continuation of my tireless work as UN Secretary-General to both reform and strengthen the structure of UN PKO with a focus on filling capacity gaps vis-à-vis the changing realities on the ground.

The very first thing I did during my tenure leading the UN was to split the existing Department of Peacekeeping Operations into two departments, namely the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Field Support, both headed by an Under-Secretary-General.

I did this to provide the requisite support and enhanced responsiveness for those serving at the ground level, and better bridge the divide between needs and capabilities.

I continue to believe that not only PKO, but the United Nations more largely, continues to be stronger, more streamlined, and more effective as a result.

During my time as UNSG, two missions successfully concluded in Africa, laying the groundwork for a brighter new era for people in Sierra Leone and Burundi.

I vividly remember traveling to Freetown in 2014 to celebrate the end of UNIPSIL, which followed the successful conclusion of UNAMSIL.

There, I heralded Sierra Leone as one of the world's most successful cases of post-conflict recovery, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

This is just one example of the transformative achievements that are possible all around the world, as a result of the UN's holistic and integrated peace approach underpinned by cooperation and partnership.

But to ensure such a process was reflexive enough to meet the rapidly-changing realities on the ground, as well as the emerging needs of the future, I continued to pursue landmark PKO reform initiatives.

I am proud to have convened the High-level Independent

Panel on Peace Operations(HIPPO) to undertake a thorough review of United Nations peace operations in 2014, which offered over 100 key recommendations to reinvigorate the UN peace architecture and improve the protection of civilians.

HIPPO helped advance the prevention agenda and initiated the historic 2016 adoption of the twin General Assembly and the Security Council resolutions on sustaining peace.

As UN Secretary-General, I also strived to elevate and enhance gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels all around the world, and this was included in UN PKO.

I am extremely proud to have appointed female leaders in the peacekeeping mission and police adviser. They include Ms. Ann-Marie Orlor from Sweden as the first woman Head UN Police Advisor for the UN Department of

Peacekeeping Operations in its history.

I also appointed Ms. Ellen Margrette Loj of Denmark as UNSG's Special Representative in Liberia (UNMIC), Ms. Karin Landgren of Sweden in Nepal and Liberia, Major General Kristin Lund of Norway as UNPKD Commander in Cyprus.

I did this in spite of very strong resistance from male leaders at the time, but I believe it helped inspire a broader systemic change in gender empowerment throughout the Organization, particularly in peacekeeping operation and police unit.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

Today, the UN faces unprecedented challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the deepening climate crisis. Both of these are inherently global

challenges that necessitate strong global responses.

And both of these two challenges also have the potential to precipitate increased insecurity and conflict; which requires a strengthened and well-funded, innovative, reflexive as well as dynamic UN PKO moving forward.

With this in mind, I highly commend Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' continued strong efforts in support of ongoing UN PKO reform initiatives, particularly Action for Peacekeeping Priorities (A4P+), and in enhancing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

I extend my warmest wishes for his success in steering this ongoing PKO Ministerial process forward in a future-oriented manner, both in 2021 and beyond.

I am confident that Secretary-General Guterres' robust leadership and forward-looking transformative vision for

the United Nations at such a pivotal juncture can be further realized through concrete pledges, meaningful action, and elevated high-level political commitments here in Seoul.

I am also grateful for the ongoing support of Member States, especially the C34 countries. Your support for this 2021 Seoul Ministerial, and UN PKO more largely, is essential to ensure that present and future missions are not only better equipped together with advanced medical support and tech capabilities, but also underpinned with elevated gender equality.

In this connection, I, once again, extend my sincere appreciation for your concrete pledges here in Seoul in line with Action for Peacekeeping commitments and A4P+ priorities.

I thank you for your attention and ongoing support in making the 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial such

an overarching success./END/