

Peacekeeping Ministerial: "Uniformed Capabilities, Performance and Protection"

New York, 29 March 2019

Mr President,

Let me begin by reiterating **Belgium's commitment to the "Action for Peacekeeping"** process launched by the Secretary-General last year. This initiative cannot be seen in isolation from the three ongoing reform initiatives of the UN, the objectives of which Belgium fully supports. The first assessment of progress since the launch of the Action for Peacekeeping will be made in September. Today, I would like to highlight some of the aspects through which Belgium contributes to achieving the objectives, in particular in terms of training and education.

Mr President,

The quest for improved performance must continue to guide our efforts. The robust nature of some of our peacekeeping operations, and the asymmetric threats that increasingly expose our peacekeepers, demand that we review the way we organise our peacekeeping missions and make them more effective in implementing the mandates set out by the Security Council. Belgium congratulates the Secretariat on the progress achieved since the Cruz report.

Improving performance requires more training and education. One of the Secretariat's lines of approach in improving the performance of operations involves the recruitment of **Mobile Training Teams** (MTTs). Based on the experience gained by the former Belgian Commander of the MINUSMA Force, Belgium has decided to develop this concept, and contribute to it.

Belgium will make these mobile training teams available to MINUSMA for four six-week periods. The teams will carry out targeted training, based on the needs of the Force. The first team is already on the ground, in Mali, to develop this project. It is a new and lightweight coordination unit, based on a partnership between the United Nations, an instructor-contributing country, and troop-contributing countries. We are already pleased to see that this pilot project has been welcomed by various troop-contributing countries.

In the context of improving the performance of missions, let me stress the importance we attach to a coherent and comprehensive approach to the risks associated with mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, as well as the illicit circulation of small arms and circumvention of embargoes. These two issues require careful monitoring, as they concern both the protection of local populations and the safety of our peacekeepers.

Mr President,

Belgium is involved in **other innovative initiatives**: the joint-deployment of our NH-90 helicopters within a German unit, the deployment of our C-130 as part of the multinational rotating mechanism, and the integration of a detachment into the German ISR company. This approach makes it possible to improve the predictability of forces generation in the provision of critical resources to the United Nations. Within the European Union, Belgium encourages further reflection between Member States to improve consultation, share information upstream and, ultimately, extend these methods to the various theatres of operations.

Last but not least, for both Belgium and the European Union, better operational performance requires effective implementation and full application of the **command and control policy**. Better integrated planning within missions will make it possible to

- (1) Enhance the protection of personnel serving under the United Nations flag (in particular in the area of CASEVAC/MEDEVAC)
- (2) Improve the conduct of operations - particularly in missions pursuant to Chapter VII - in order to give greater flexibility to the Force Commander.

Mr President,

Belgium actively contributes to **training initiatives** related to civilian protection, an objective which is at the heart of the mandates of peacekeeping operations. Our partnership with the DPO and DOS Training Divisions has made it possible, over the last 2 years, to organise training in French for staff officers and "trainers of trainers" - particularly in Civilian Protection - in Entebbe. A Belgian trainer followed this training in English, before providing it herself in French.

This partnership has continued in order to create effective pre-deployment learning tools. Belgium has translated the complete Civilian Protection training set, prepared by DPO and DOS, into French. We are now continuing this effort by translating the brand new Buddy First AID into French. I am delighted to inform you that five Belgian medical trainers were recently certified by the UN. These five "Buddy first aid trainers" are now qualified for medical training in all UN troop-contributing countries, both in Belgium, in their own countries and in operations. This is essential training that can save lives by focusing on a post-incident rapid response. The training will also cover the procedures for communicating the precise location of victims. Of course to this we can also add the appropriate air resources - as Belgium did between 2017 and 2018 with the provision of NH-90 helicopters in Mali - as well as a command and control policy adapted to the needs on the ground. **It is in our joint interest that our peacekeepers receive all the necessary medical assistance at a time when peacekeeping is becoming increasingly dangerous.**

Mr President,

For Belgium, Action for Peacekeeping represents a new starting point. Throughout our presence on the Security Council, we will remain attentive to ensuring that the mandates of operations are (1) realistic and achievable, (2) sequential and prioritised and (3) intelligible. It is essential that the people on the ground who need to implement the mandates can understand them. Let us not forget either that any peacekeeping operation must be part of a comprehensive approach that respects the primacy of political solutions.

Thank you.