

Chiefs of Defence Conference
Chair's Note – 27 March 2015, New York

1. The Chiefs of Defence from 108 Members States, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and other senior UN leaders met in New-York on the 27th of March 2015 in what was the largest meeting of its kind in history. As a continuation of the debates triggered during the High Level Summit on Peacekeeping on the margin of the 2014 General Debate of the General Assembly, it was a unique opportunity for top military leaders to meet at the United Nations.
2. In his remarks, the **Secretary-General** stressed the historic nature of this event. He emphasised the importance of peacekeeping today, with 16 missions deployed around the world, all of them with complex mandates, including the Protection of Civilians under very difficult conditions. He paid tribute to the contribution of TCCs to PKOs, and to the 3300 peacekeepers who have lost their lives since the deployment of the first mission in 1948. He underlined that since the High Level Summit on Peacekeeping, the international partnership for peacekeeping has been growing steadily. It was encouraging to see the ongoing dialogue between the Security Council that authorises peacekeeping operations; the Member States that provide the physical, financial and human resources for missions; and the UN Secretariat, that operationalizes mandates and manages missions on the ground. Such an extensive dialogue was required at a time of increasing violence destroying lives and threatening the stability of entire regions. He reminded all of the diversity of responsibilities peacekeepers had on their shoulders and expressed his confidence that the ongoing review of peace operations would provide important recommendations to ensure peacekeeping remains fit for purpose in the years ahead. The United Nations Secretary-General urged Member States to achieve unity of will and intent with regard to the tasks peacekeeping missions carry out, and the need to strengthen our approach to peacekeeping.
3. After describing the changing nature of the current operational environment in peacekeeping missions, the **Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations** underlined the relevance of peacekeeping operations, a unique global endeavour and a cost effective tool for addressing complex crises. He mentioned the requirement for a broad array of Troop Contributing Countries, properly trained and equipped, to raise the performance of peacekeeping missions. He called for an innovative and more proactive approach to peacekeeping operations to improve the flexibility and rapidity of deployment. Underlining the variety of reasons for Member States to commit to peacekeeping operations, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations mentioned the ongoing work to better engage with Member States, emphasising the role of the newly established strategic force generation and capability planning cell.
4. **The Under-Secretary-General for Field Support** presented the UN operational support model and described recent efforts to improve its ability to fully enable the comprehensive approach peacekeeping missions bring to challenging conflict environments. He mentioned the importance of the Global Field Support Strategy in expediting service delivery in the field, strengthening efficiency, achieving economies of scale, ensuring accountability and improving safety, security

and welfare support. He described some of his priorities for the future including enabling operations in more remote and dangerous environments.

5. The **Military Advisor** focused on the requirement to improve the performance and operational readiness of military components in peacekeeping missions. He emphasized the importance of training and called upon TCCs to send their very best leaders for command positions.
6. In describing future challenges, the **Director for Policy, Evaluation and Training** noted that peacekeeping operations will need to better consider the economic drivers of conflict, including transnational organized crime. He stressed the need to modernize strategic communications to counter the effect of global narratives on local conflicts.
7. The **Chiefs of Defence** shared their views and exchanged their military analysis regarding the evolution of the operational and tactical context of current peacekeeping operations. They expressed their determination to ensure United Nations military peacekeepers have the capability to meet the security challenges. They acknowledged the growing challenges the military is facing in addressing asymmetric threats. They also recognised that at a time of financial difficulties, it is more important than ever to make the best use of all available resources. Further, that better clarity on Mandates was required.
8. The **Chiefs of Defence** agreed that addressing these challenges requires the highest preparation of the units deployed to peacekeeping operations. They acknowledged that such preparations are becoming even more important, as the military components of missions are charged with fulfilling increasingly complex peacekeeping tasks, such as the Protection of Civilians. The preparation of troops requires enduring and consistent efforts. In this regard, the Chiefs of Defence welcomed the standards the secretariat is developing that will help current and potential troop contributors to better understand peacekeeping requirements. They agreed to disseminate the UN requirements in their military organisations, training institutions, operational commands and to those entities in charge of force preparation, along with sharing lessons and expertise.
9. To ensure peacekeeping operations identify the right responses to asymmetric threats and irregular opponents, the **Chiefs of Defence** stressed the importance of keeping the appropriate balance of troops who can foster appropriate relationships with local authorities and populations – and the deployment of agile and specialised mobile units able to better and more directly address the threats. In all cases, the capacity to deploy rapidly and enhance mobility in-theatre was recognised as an absolute necessity, which in turn requires sufficient situational awareness. In this context, the Chiefs of Defence stressed the requirement for appropriate intelligence capabilities in peacekeeping operations. It was proposed that appropriate consultation on intelligence be held, to discuss lessons and to identify areas to improve in. Finally, there was the requirement for more robust logistic capabilities and processes.
10. The **Chiefs of Defence** emphasized the importance of developing international and regional capacities that could be used to support peacekeeping operations. It was mentioned that there was the need to improve coordination between the UN and host nations.
11. The **Chiefs of Defence** proposed that the Chiefs of Defence Conference should be conducted more regularly, to gain a common understanding, establish solidarity and to improve political will, in order to enhance the effect of peacekeeping.