



**MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**

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Ministerial Conference on Peacekeeping

Accra, 6 December 2023

– Delivered –

Secretary General,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to join all of those who have thanked and congratulated the Ghanaian authorities for organizing this conference at a crucial time, creating a very warm and professional atmosphere.

I would also like to commend the entire UN team, particularly Under-Secretaries-General Jean-Pierre La Croix and Atul Khare.

Dear colleagues,

In this year marking the 75th anniversary of the Blue Helmets, it is important to meet to reiterate the critical role that they play in international security and peacekeeping.

Across the globe, the Blue Helmets have sacrificed their lives to serve the ideal of peace, many of us here have paid tribute to the 4,337 Blue Helmets who have died on assignment since 1948, and the 56 Blue Helmets who were lost in 2023.

I mention these numbers because we cannot remain indifferent when these soldiers who wear this very iconic blue helmet and who defend this very iconic blue flag of the United Nations are being physically attacked on the ground but are also the targets of hate speech, and I can only agree with the panellists and speakers who think that we need to take action collectively to stop these attacks on the safety and reputation of our Blue Helmets.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to talk about three points.

1. First, peacekeeping is still crucial to peace and security in the 21st century.

More than 70,000 Blue Helmets are deployed worldwide in 12 operations.

With the decrease in staff members and the number of missions, and more recently requests for Blue Helmets to leave earlier than planned in certain situations, there have been some negative undercurrents, which have caused the concerns my colleague from Gambia talked about. Some have decided that peacekeeping as we know it is no longer relevant.

We are not alone to think that peacekeeping has never been more necessary. After 43,000 civilians died in 2023, we already know that armed conflicts are going to impact civilians exponentially in the years ahead.

When it comes to the role of peacekeeping soldiers, I think that we talked about the very present and very clear example of Lebanon, where today even the Blue Helmets (9,500 and more than 1,000 civilians as support) are working to enforce the ceasefire, protect civilians from violence and above all avoid a regional conflagration that would be disastrous.

That does not mean of course that the peacekeeping operations we are creating are to go on indefinitely in a given country. The main goal is to create a space so that lasting peace can be established.

Portugal's Minister of Defence explained very clearly this morning that secure areas must be created jointly with local authorities and civil society where a political transition can take place and an electoral process can happen.

We have seen a positive example of this very near here, very near Ghana, in Côte d'Ivoire

where the UNOCI was ended after helping to stabilize the country. It is therefore possible.

2. Second, France wants to play a full part in supporting peacekeeping.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, we are working to craft many peacekeeping operations, and we plan to work in close coordination with the host States and the other countries contributing troops to make the mandates adopted by the Security Council robust, realistic and adapted to the local situations.

Intense discussions are held before Security Council resolutions on mandates are adopted to ensure this convergence between the objectives and the situation and particular context of the country.

In this regard, I welcome the excellent cooperation that has prevailed in the most

recent discussions on MINUSCA with the Central African Republic and MONUSCO with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Many of the speakers before me underpinned that once mandates are defined, it is important to make sure that capabilities are adapted.

To respond to this need, France has invested in peacekeeping by deploying nearly 700 Blue Helmets on the ground, mainly in Lebanon, which I mentioned earlier.

In addition to this presence, as it is important to be familiar with the field and see the peacekeeping operations up close and not simply from our capitals, France has continued to contribute to the training of Blue Helmets.

I am not going to read the pledge to you, but our aim is to train 10,000 soldiers a year in three areas:

- **The first area: 8 peacekeeping training centres worldwide where France has posted military cooperation officers (Ghana is very familiar with one of these centres because it is the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center);**
- **The second area: support for specific training programmes organized by the Secretariat. France will contribute soon to mobile training programmes for Blue Helmets; and we are going to give the first French-speaking sessions in the Gender Military Advisor courses;**
- **The third area: language training sessions; we are directly conducting them, as in other countries in this room have mentioned, in cooperation with the International Organisation of La Francophonie.**

All these efforts require financial resources, of course, and in addition to its contribution to the

whole range of peacekeeping operations of \$300 million a year, France is the leading financial supporter of initiatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Operational Support within the framework of the Action for Peacekeeping+ Programme, with more than \$4 million in 2023.

3. Third, we need to determine the future of peacekeeping.

We have heard many proposals today. That is the purpose of the New Agenda for Peace commissioned by the Secretary-General and to which we have made contributions.

We wish to revitalize the political processes on which peacekeeping operations are based – which has already been said. We cannot maintain peace when nobody wants peace: a

political transition and political objective are needed.

We need to better include the efforts of the United Nations and regional organizations by using all the levers at our disposal.

And like others before me, I would especially like to highlight the effort that is being made in the Security Council to examine in-depth the issue of United Nations support for the regional peacekeeping operations, particularly African peacekeeping operations.

In this regard, Ghana's efforts to put forward a Security Council resolution, and to seek the adoption a framework resolution this year making it possible to establish criteria for shared financing of these operations, are all truly exemplary.

Through this example, we have noted that peacekeeping has evolved: after the first-

generation operations, including some that are ongoing and after the second-generation or multi-dimensional operations, we are going to see an increasing number of regional operations authorized and supported by the United Nations, such as the recent decision concerning the Multinational Security Support Mission to Haiti.

These operations will all co-exist, at one time or another, in order to provide the international community with a broader range of instruments.

This requires cross-cutting strategic monitoring and operational support to ensure the coherence of these different types of operations and adherence to human rights compliance frameworks. It is also key to continue to train in a converging manner, with converging standards, soldiers and police officers who will serve in these operations.

We believe this is an essential task that the Department of Peacekeeping Operation and Member States should collectively accomplish.

Thank you.