

*Check against delivery*



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**Statement by**

**H.E. Mr. Andrejs Pildegovičs  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative  
of the Republic of Latvia  
to the United Nations**

**at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial**

**New York,  
29 March 2019**

Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,

[Latvia aligns itself with the Statement *delivered/to be delivered* by the European Union].

Peacekeeping is one of the key instruments available to the United Nations in discharging its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Yet, achieving lasting peace in many hotspots has been a tremendous challenge. Security environments affecting peacekeeping is complex and challenging, and, regrettably, attacks on peacekeepers as well as civilians have not decreased.

Let me begin by paying tribute to all those brave women and men who serve under the UN flag to bring peace and security where it is needed most. I bow my head in front of all those who bear sacrifices for a world free from fear, injustice and impunity.

From his first day on the job, the UN Secretary-General has made a strong appeal for peace and the prevention of conflicts. However, he cannot do it alone. It requires our shared commitment. We are ready to step up our efforts, particularly on such issues as the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peace operations and the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping.

In reply to this appeal, Latvia joined the Compact on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in 2017. Latvia supports the policy of zero-tolerance and approach of zero-impunity for all civilian, military and police personnel of the UN. People have the right to see that we will not tolerate such crimes among those who serve to protect. It is our true hope that with the appointment of the first Victim's Rights Advocate for the UN the rights and dignity of victims will be put at the forefront and all perpetrators will be brought to justice.

We believe that education is a key instrument to achieve positive changes in performance on the ground. Moreover, it is also clear that we need to provide adequate financing in order to see efficiency in performance. Pre-deployment training, equipment on the ground and timely medical assistance must be provided to all blue helmets. Always paying its annual share to the UN Peacekeeping budget on time, Latvia strongly invites all Member States to do the same and to provide their troops with all necessary training and equipment in order to allow them to fulfill their duties.

Often the root of the problem lies in the lack of situational awareness and localized intelligence analysis especially when missions are exposed to asymmetric threats. We fully support the UN efforts to better integrate modern technologies and intelligence capabilities into UN peacekeeping. Latvia has contributed intelligence specialists to MINUSMA since early 2016.

We also recognize the inherent value of the involvement of women in peacekeeping as well as the implementation of the principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Gender equality is the best preventative measure against gender-based violence and vital to ensuring international peace and security long-term.

We believe that by ensuring equal opportunities for men and women, we are creating an environment where motivation to become a soldier is a true wish rooted in respect and pride to serve their nation. We are proud to share with you that the proportion of women in Latvian National Armed Forces is 15, 3%. The women of our military also serve in multinational operations, and currently 24% of them carry out their military duty overseas, including in MINUSMA.

Our encouragement for women to choose a military career is the same as for men. We have not created any restrictions nor have we developed propelling instruments to attain their interest in doing so. Latvia is proud of the number of women in our military and we are determined to maintain an equal attitude towards both genders in the future.

We believe that given the meaningful and constructive role that women take in peacekeeping it is of utmost importance to increase their enrollment. Latvia fully supports aspirations of the UN to empower women. Therefore, we applaud the Secretary's General initiative "Action for Peacekeeping" and Latvia is proud to be part of 151 UN Member States that have signed the "Declaration of Shared Commitments". The joint declaration is a roadmap for achieving better delivery on the ground, as well as a more safe and secure environment for our peacekeepers in their everyday duties.

Thank you!