

**Speech by Under-Secretary-General of the Department of
Peacekeeping Operations, Mr Alain Le Roy**

**Better World Campaign and Stimson Center
International Day of UN Peacekeepers Reception
24 May 2011**

I am honoured to be here today to celebrate the International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

Each year on this day, the United Nations honours those currently serving with such professionalism and dedication and remembers those who lost their lives in the cause of peace.

For over 60 years, United Nations Peacekeepers have worked with dedication and courage to help the disenfranchised, poor and displaced when they are most vulnerable. Their work is invaluable for maintaining peace and security and in giving people a fighting chance in some of the world's most dangerous and inhospitable places. For millions, they are the last, best chance.

But their efforts come at a high cost. In January 2010, 102 members of our peacekeeping family tragically perished in the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Overall in 2010, 173 peacekeepers lost their lives due to natural disasters, acts of violence, accidents and disease. And 2011 has brought a series of unprecedented tragedies in rapid succession. In early April, the killing of seven personnel in an attack on a UN Mission compound in Mazar-e-Sharif shocked us all. Just a few days later, 32 lives, many of them UN staff, were lost in the fatal MONUSCO plane crash in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our missions in Liberia, Darfur and Cote d'Ivoire also suffered fatalities during these tragic two weeks. We remember our colleagues and we pay tribute to their sacrifice.

The number of United Nations Peacekeepers has increased dramatically over the past decade, with more than 120,000 military, police and civilians currently serving worldwide under the UN flag. In 2010, UN Peacekeeping entered a phase of consolidation, yet the challenges we face are by no means diminishing. The referendum in South Sudan, the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire and elections in Haiti are true examples of recent challenges that we have successfully met.

Twenty-first century peacekeeping demands expertise and long-term vision. Virtually every mandate from the United Nations Security Council for a new multidimensional peacekeeping operation now includes provisions on strengthening rule of law, justice systems or correctional services.

This year, DPKO and DFS chose to highlight this crucial work by dedicating the International Day of UN Peacekeepers to the rule of law. Reinforcing rule of law institutions, helping to develop a viable national police, restoring confidence in an independent judiciary and supporting the construction or renovation of prisons according to international norms, helps to make future development possible.

Today, DPKO has more than 14,000 police, 340 corrections officers and 175 judicial affairs officers, in nine peacekeeping operations. They are deployed to assist national authorities in the important work of promoting the rule of law, revamping institutions and enhancing the authority of justice institutions.

All this could not be achieved without your continued support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our leading troop and police contributing countries many of whom are represented here today for their continued support to peacekeeping operations.

I would also like to thank the United States for its meetings its peacekeeping obligations and initiatives to strengthen UN peacekeeping capabilities, including by seeking to expand the number, capacity, and effectiveness of troop and police contributors, helping secure General Assembly approval for vital peacekeeping reforms, and working with fellow Security Council members to craft more credible and achievable mandates for operations in such countries as Haiti, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Somalia.

| Finally, I would like to thank the Better World Campaign, Stimson Center, and
| UNA-NCA for hosting this gathering where we give thanks and pay tribute to
| those who make our focus of ensuring the protection of fundamental human
| rights through strengthening of the rule of law a reality.