

**STATEMENT**  
**by the Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania**  
**H.E. Raimundas Karoblis**  
**at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial**

*New York, 29 March 2019*

*Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me start by expressing our gratitude for all the organizers of this UN Peacekeeping Ministerial.

As our environment is getting more complex and challenging, Peacekeeping operations continue to be a vital instrument in advancing peace and security in the world. Under ever-increasing pressures in the field faced by our blue helmets, this Ministerial is an important opportunity to discuss our capabilities and readiness to adapt to the growing challenges. Improved performance and better capacity building, in this regard, are fundamental to ensure both the safety and the security of peacekeepers and civilians.

As a troop contributing country Lithuania is a strong and active supporter of peacekeeping efforts, including Action for Peacekeeping initiative, aimed at making the UN's delivery more effective and efficient on the ground, and highlighting the need for a stronger focus on performance.

Let me stress that safety and security of the personnel deployed to the peacekeeping missions is the highest priority for us. To this end, Lithuania is constantly investing in the modern equipment as well as improving the programs of pre-deployment training. The main provisions of Secretary's General initiative to combat sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians and Vancouver principles for child protection are already incorporated into national pre-deployment training programs.

Recognizing the indispensable role of women in UN peacekeeping, Lithuania took practical steps to implement goals of Women, Peace and Security agenda. I am proud to inform that Lithuania increased the number of women officers serving in missions as Staff Officers as well as in military contingents of UN peacekeeping operations:

- 20% of Staff Officers or Military Observers positions are filled by women officers since October 2017.
- and more than 8.0 % of Force Protection Unit positions were filled by women and we are going to keep such proportion from the beginning of April 2019.

Before concluding, I would like to reconfirm that Lithuania will maintain its involvement in MINUSMA in the nearest future and will consider a possible increase of troops deployment for the years 2020–2021.

Finally as a troop contributing country, Lithuania has a great interest in making UN peacekeeping more efficient and capable of addressing the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is not just our wish, but also a moral imperative for the United Nations as a whole to make sure that the unique tool of peacekeeping does deliver and protect. We simply cannot afford to fail.

I thank you.