

Excellencies, honorable Ministers, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

For 75 years, more than two million peacekeepers have worked to save and change lives in the world's most fragile situations. I would like to express my deep respect and appreciation for all military, police and civilian personnel currently serving in those missions.

The motto of this conference rightly is "Peace begins with me". We all have a duty to peace. To fulfil our duty, we have to adapt to the conflicts of today and tomorrow. This I why in 2018, the Netherlands played a key role in the Action 4 Peacekeeping initiative to keep Peacekeeping Operations fit for purpose. We are proud to be a 'champion' on the Protection on Civilians and Performance & Accountability themes. We are a proud co-sponsor of this meeting, and of course, we also support the New Agenda for Peace and the upcoming Summit of the Future. With joint efforts, we can provide peacekeepers and their missions with the right tools and mandates.

For the Netherlands a people-centered approach based on inclusion is essential for the future success and legitimacy of UN Peacekeeping. The needs, experiences and ideas for solutions of people and communities themselves should be front and center in all our UN Peacekeeping efforts.

This is the central tread through our financial pledges, which include support for the Peacekeeping Intelligence Academy in Entebbe, Uganda, support for the implementation of the UN Mental Health Strategy to improve UN Peacekeepers' access to mental healthcare, to reduce the stigma and to lower the threshold to help our troops, the new DPO Civilian harm Mitigation project to better prevent and limit injury to civilians that may arise accidentally as a result of military and police action during UN Peacekeeping Missions and the development of Women's Body Armor with the United States, Ghana and Zambia. Also, we will continue supporting the implementation of A4P+ priorities and we continue our support to Protection of Civilians through new strategic partnerships, which are currently underway.

The Netherlands will continue to encourage women to serve in UN Peacekeeping. As stated during the WPS event yesterday. We need women to bolster the success of our missions and increase the effectiveness of our operations; greater diversity brings broadened skillset and new perspectives. Many WPS initiatives we do not support alone, but together with partner countries across the globe including with the Elsie initiative.

Let me end with sincere words of thanks. To Ghana, for organizing this important and timely conference, and for being a leading country in Peacekeeping and WPS, to all of you here today and to our Peacekeepers deployed in countries far from home.