

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE NIGERIAN HONOURABLE MINISTER OF DEFENCE DURING THE PEACEKEEPING MINISTERIAL 2023 AT ACCRA GHANA FROM 5 - 6 DECEMBER 2023

1. It is with profound pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today, as we gather on African soil for the very first time for this peacekeeping ministerial. This is not just a meeting of minds but a testament to Africa's evolving role as a beacon of peace, unity, and collaboration in these transformative times. Nigeria, as a nation, has always held the ideals of peace and unity at the core of its identity. Today, I wish to share with you all, that in our persistent commitment to the United Nations' goals, Nigeria has not just met but surpassed all current and projected targets for female gender parity and participation in the United Nations. For instance, while the 2028 target for females in the deployed contingent is 15%+, Nigeria currently has 22%. For the Formed Police Unit, while the target is 20%+, Nigeria currently has 24%. This gender parity goals cut across all Nigeria's contingents as well as individual uniform peacekeepers. This accomplishment is not merely a matter of statistics but reflects our unwavering commitment to the A4P and A4P+ agenda. Women, peace, and security are intertwined, and we believe that empowering our women is pivotal to achieving lasting peace and ensuring a prosperous future. Nevertheless, our commitment to the A4P+ agenda does not end there. We have deeply invested in pioneering innovative, data-driven, and technology-enabled peacekeeping solutions. In a world where technology is bridging gaps and forging connections, Nigeria is harnessing its power to enhance the effectiveness of our peacekeeping initiatives.

2. Additionally, in Nigeria's bid to support UN's efforts, just last week, the Nigerian Air Force C130 aircraft deployed the UN Base Defence Company and their Contingent

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Owned Equipment to Wau Airport in South Sudan, the first of its kind by a national air force/carrier into that airfield. This deployment shows Nigeria's capacity and support towards UN peacekeeping missions. While Nigeria is proud of these milestones, we recognize that peacekeeping requires a multifaceted approach. To this end, Nigeria is gearing up to augment our contributions to peacekeeping missions. Our strategy includes infusing our peacekeeping efforts with advanced aviation capabilities, ensuring swift and effective responses in diverse situations. Furthermore, we understand that expertise is as vital as equipment. As such, we are dedicated to contributing subject matter experts to missions and supplying gratis personnel to the UN Secretariat. Their insights, experience, and expertise will provide invaluable guidance, in shaping the course of our peacekeeping endeavours. Nonetheless, as we bolster our peacekeeping capacities, we remember that our ultimate strength lies in our people. The Nigerian spirit, characterized by resilience, unity, and a dedication for progress, drives our initiatives. It is this spirit that we bring to the table as we collaborate with nations worldwide to sow the seeds of peace.

3. Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the African proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." In this shared journey towards global peace and prosperity, Nigeria is committed to walking hand-in-hand with all nations. Together, we can navigate the challenges, scale the obstacles, and chart a course towards a world where peace isn't the exception but the norm. In the usual Nigeria's spirit of sharing and brotherhood, Nigeria is extending this renewed hope to the UN as well as all peace-loving people around the world, it is in that spirit I, on behalf of the good people of Nigeria, make the following pledges.

- a. A level 2 field hospital adaptable to any UN field mission.
- b. Two Infantry Battalions modifiable to fit any UN field mission.

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- c. Two Infantry Companies modifiable to fit any UN field mission.
- d. A Signal Company.
- e. An Explosive Ordinance Disposal Company.
- f. A Military Riverine Unit.
- g. Two Formed Police Units.
- h. An Airfield Support Unit.
- i. One Armed Helicopter Unit.
- j. One Fixed Wing ISR Unit.
- k. One Uncrewed Aviation Unit.
- l. Gratis personnel in various fields (Aviation (Crewed and uncrewed, Logistics, Medical and ICT).
- m. Free Training slots at Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Training Centre of Excellence and
- n. Subject Matter Experts in Mission in areas such as intelligence, Base Defence, Force protection, Military police and Investigators.

Finally, as we exchange ideas, share experiences, and forge collaborations during this gathering, let us remember our shared dream - a world where every individual, irrespective of where they come from, can thrive in peace and harmony. Nigeria is ready, and we invite you all to join us in this noble pursuit.

God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and God Bless you all.

Thank you.

PANEL INPUT BY NIGERIAN HONOURABLE MINISTER ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING (MENTAL HEALTH)

1. Training and capacity building are very important in enhancing performance, safety and security of peacekeepers as well as mandate delivery during UN peacekeeping missions. In this regard, Nigeria has a peacekeeping centre of excellence, the Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Centre. The Centre has equipped over 90,000 peacekeepers with the requisite skills and techniques necessary to be effective in dealing with the multidimensional challenges in mission areas. The Centre delivers training to Nigerian personnel and those of other countries to ensure peacekeepers are brought to the required UN standards before they are deployed to the field. Like we all know, capacity building and training are capital intensive and therefore requires partnerships.

2. In terms of partnership with the UN, Nigerian personnel have taken part in many UN courses organised by the Integrated Training Service (ITS) of the Department of Peace Operations. The Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Centre with the support from ITS and sponsorship of the US Government conducted a training of trainers for United Nation Military Observers Course from 6 – 17 June 2022. Participants were drawn from 8 African countries namely Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Togo, Rwanda and Zambia with 52 per cent female representation. Our doors are open as we look forward to hosting more UN courses in the future. It is important to re-emphasize the importance of partnership in capacity building and training by mentioning other Nigerian partners. The Nigerian peacekeeping training centre collaborates with foreign partners like the United States Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance, the German Technical Advisory Group, British Military Advisory and Training Team, Peace

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Operations Training Institute, USA, United Nations Development Programme (with funding from the Japanese Government), amongst others. While Nigeria partners with the world to advance peacekeeping, we believe a lot can still be done to advance the frontiers of partnerships to enable smaller troops/police contributing countries to build more capacity for peacekeeping. We therefore encourage more partnerships in the form of multinational rotational deployments, joint deployments, rapid deployment/handover and the deployment of mobile training teams to field missions amongst others. Nigeria remains open to these partnerships and is willing to engage with any of you bilaterally or multilaterally in this regard.

3. The contemporary peacekeeping setting places some strain on the mental health of peacekeepers who are deployed in harsh, remote and insecure environments. Mindful of this challenge, Nigeria ensures her peacekeepers undergo rigorous medical evaluation prior to deployment, we provide our peacekeepers with diverse range of in-mission welfare/recreational facilities and continuous monitoring after peacekeepers return from the missions. The government of Nigeria places a high premium on early identification and rehabilitation of mental health cases of her personnel and therefore applauds the efforts of the United Nations in the development of a strategic framework for mental health support for uniformed peacekeeping personnel. Nigeria will share lessons learnt on mental health with the UN for the benefit of all, we will provide the UN with mental health professionals and strengthen training on mental health across all military/police training institutions across the country.