

2021 Seoul United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Chair's Summary

Seoul, 8 December 2021

Overview of the Ministerial

On 7-8 December 2021, Ministers of Defense, Foreign Affairs, and high-level officials from 83 Member States and intergovernmental organizations took part in the 2021 Seoul United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Ministerial, virtually held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, to discuss and generate the capabilities and support necessary to strengthen performance, protection and the impact of UN peacekeeping in line with Action for Peacekeeping + (A4P+), with a specific focus on technology and medical capacity, as well as strengthening the role of women in UN peacekeeping. The Republic of Korea, the United Nations secretariat and 11 Co-chairs – Bangladesh, Canada, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Rwanda, Uruguay, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (USA) welcomed the participation and contribution of the Ministers and official delegations to the Ministerial.

The Seoul Ministerial was the latest in a series of meetings at head of state, government or ministerial level held since 2014 on United Nations peacekeeping. Building on the outcomes from the past meetings, the Ministerial successfully elicited new pledges and advanced existing ones to close gaps in peacekeeping capabilities; advance bilateral or multilateral peacekeeping partnerships; and promote implementation of the A4P+ initiative. During the Ministerial, Minister of Foreign Affairs Chung Eui-yong and Minister of National Defense Suh Wook announced the Seoul Initiative on Technology and Medical Capacity Building in Peacekeeping. The Initiative, announced in partnership with the UN Secretariat, will help advance UN peacekeeping towards an agile, data driven and technology-enabled one, as well as enhance its medical capacity in the face of the increasingly complex, constantly shifting, and high-risk operating environment. During the Ministerial, many participants expressed support to the Seoul Initiative.

The Ministerial drew on the progresses made from its four preparatory meetings to garner concrete outcomes for strengthening UN peacekeeping. The preparatory meetings were virtually held by Co-chairs Bangladesh, Canada, and the UK on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in November 2020; Rwanda and the USA on partnerships for performance and accountability in July 2021; Ethiopia, Indonesia and Japan on partnership for training and capacity building in September 2021; the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Islamic Republic of Pakistan on safety & security and protection in October 2021. Each meeting focused on advancing the priority areas of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative as well as the A4P+ priorities in the run-up to the Ministerial.

The event began with an opening ceremony on December 7, 2021. President Moon Jae-in, via pre-recorded welcoming remarks, warmly greeted the delegates from around the world and encouraged them to continue their commitments to UN peacekeeping. In his video remarks, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged Member States to redouble their efforts toward more

impactful and efficient peacekeeping. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea delivered opening remarks, encouraging participants to announce concrete and significant pledges during the Ministerial.

On the margins of the Ministerial, the Republic of Korea also hosted a special public exhibition on UN peacekeeping, with a particular focus on the UN Smart Camp model that the Republic of Korea is developing in partnership with the UN Secretariat.

Objectives

The aims of the Ministerial were to strengthen UN peacekeeping, including by improving the performance and impact of UN peacekeeping operations in line with A4P and A4P+ initiatives, and to further this objective, close capability gaps through concrete pledges including by facilitating new and sustainable partnerships while strengthening existing ones. The Ministerial also sought to highlight the importance of peacekeeping technology and medical capacity building in achieving these goals.

Plenary Discussions

The meeting agenda was made up of four formal sessions: Sustaining Peace; Partnerships, Training and Capacity Building; Performance and Accountability; Protection of Civilians and Safety and Security. Discussions built on the four preparatory meetings held in the lead-up to the Seoul Ministerial.

During the meeting, participants renewed their mutual commitment to UN peacekeeping and voiced their support for the Secretary-General's A4P initiative and A4P+, its implementation plan for 2021 -2023. They made specific pledges of key peacekeeping capabilities which were aligned to the Ministerial's cross-cutting themes and requested by the United Nations, including contributions to implement the digital transformation of peacekeeping, enhance peacekeeping technological capacities, and strengthen UN medical capacities. Specific pledges were made by Member States that included specialized enabling capabilities for high-risk missions, rapidly deployable units, training and capacity-building support and related partnership initiatives. Member States announced new and enhanced partnerships with and among troop and police-contributing countries as well as participation in well-established UN triangular partnership training initiatives. The Republic of Korea, aligning itself with other Member States, announced a set of specific new pledges, including the pledge of helicopters, which are expected to make a significant impact in the field, to be used in partnership to deploy new aviation units to UN peacekeeping missions.

Sustaining Peace

Member States engaged in discussions on the challenges of integrating peacebuilding objectives into UN peacekeeping. They called for all stakeholders to recognize the importance of successful mission transitions, and to strengthen linkage between missions and UN country teams, civil societies, and regional bodies. Member States also discussed the importance of integrating the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda into peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the role of peacekeepers in supporting development of effective and accountable host state institutions, and

financing for peacebuilding activities. Increasing support for peacebuilding activities in line with the needs of the host state was also discussed as a way to build more sustaining peace in the region.

Partnership, Training and Capacity Building

Speakers highlighted the best practices and acknowledged the existing gaps in partnership for training and capacity building. They emphasized the need for long-term, sustainable partnerships to strengthen capacity of peacekeepers and build institutional capacity based on the needs and priorities of troop- and police-contributing countries. Participants also discussed the progress and setbacks in the deployment of women peacekeepers. The need to improve medical capacities, including patient evacuation and field medical facilities, is also highlighted. The speakers also explained the positive impact of Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP) framework which benefits not just the host country but also the region. The best practices and challenges in the UN partnership with the African Union (AU) were also presented. The need to augment coordination between the UN and regional organizations was underscored.

Performance and Accountability

In the face of complex operational environments, Member States highlighted the importance of enhancing peacekeeping performance. They shared the views that deliberate mission planning, mission-tailored training, sustainment and evaluation of peacekeeping form the groundwork for better performance. It was also discussed that effective, need-based partnership for providing peacekeeping capacity building is essential in elevating performance of UN peacekeepers. Participants acknowledged the importance of the appropriate mindset for implementing conduct and discipline in achieving peacekeepers' accountability. Noting that accountability to and for peacekeepers are included as key priorities of the A4P+ initiative, Member States underlined the need for further advancing both agendas.

Protection of Civilians and Safety & Security

There was an increasing call that safety and security of peacekeepers and a bigger role of peacekeeping in protecting civilians dictates that UN peacekeeping ensure adequate resources and more rigorous training and mission planning. Member States also emphasized the important role of peacekeepers with regard to promoting human rights, humanitarian access, and the rule of law. It was pointed out that community engagement has emerged as a key component of protection efforts, and that the protection of civilians and peacekeepers' safety and security are intrinsically linked. Participants noted the need to strengthen force and base protection, counter-IED capabilities, peacekeeping-intelligence, basic medical preparedness, mental health support, casualty and medical evacuation and the provision of medical and hospital coverage.

Other Cross-cutting Issues

Echoing the A4P+ priorities, better integration of mission components was said to improve, among others, delivery on political goals, protection efforts, safety and security of peacekeepers, managing the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as effective and efficient operational support. The importance of tailored mandates and adequate resources was also addressed.

Participants expressed strong appreciation for the continued mandate implementation by peacekeepers despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants highlighted that the pandemic has exacerbated the operational environments where UN peacekeeping operations are deployed, bringing about the urgent needs for more robust and impactful pledges from Member States for more effective peacekeeping, including those in the areas of peacekeeping technology and medical capacity building.

Participants reaffirmed their commitments to the WPS agenda, including to recruit, train and deploy more women peacekeepers, especially in command and other operational roles and stressed the importance of creating an enabling environment for women within our missions. Ministers and other Member State representatives emphasized the importance of conduct and discipline and adherence to the UN's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and the importance of resolving paternity and child support claims arising from these acts. Reducing the UN's environmental footprint results, including through increased use of renewable energy, as well as strengthening peacekeeping medical capacities in line with the A4P+ priority on "accountability to peacekeepers" were also key themes discussed.

In closing, the host of the Ministerial and UN leadership expressed their deep appreciation to Member States for the strong support they have shown and the broad range of concrete pledges they made to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.