

CONCEPT NOTE

2023 UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING MINISTERIAL

Accra, Ghana
5-6 December 2023

The United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial is the seminal high-level event for UN peacekeeping, held biennially with the participation of foreign and defense ministers. Following the 2021 event hosted by the Republic of Korea, the 2023 Ministerial will be held in Accra, Ghana on 5-6 December 2023. All Member States represented in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations will be invited to participate in this event, as well as a series of preparatory meetings to be held in the lead up to the Ministerial.

Objectives and Outcomes

The 2023 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial will focus on achieving concrete outcomes to improve peacekeeping operations in line with ongoing reform efforts, in particular Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), A4P+ and the Digital Transformation Strategy. Building on the success of previous Peacekeeping Ministerials and taking into account the evolving context in which peacekeeping operates, the objective of the 2023 Ministerial is to strengthen UN peacekeeping through (i) the generation of high-performing and specialized capabilities and other pledges that meet UN needs, and (ii) new or expanded, sustainable capacity-building, training, and equipping partnerships in key areas.¹

In consideration of the challenges facing UN peacekeepers and peacekeeping missions, the 2023 Ministerial will specifically focus on the protection of civilians, strategic communications (including mis- and disinformation and hate speech), safety and security, the mental health of peacekeepers, and women in peacekeeping. Peacekeeping is a powerful demonstration of multilateral cooperation and effective partnership and as such, achieving progress in these areas will require creating new and deepening existing bilateral and triangular partnerships. This also includes conduct and discipline and environmental sustainability where partnerships are already having a positive impact.

Protecting civilians is a priority mandate task of the largest peacekeeping missions and involves all mission components. Effective protection is vital to building trust and the legitimacy of UN peacekeeping. It requires capabilities with the right mindset, training and equipment, including for increased mobility and more effective early warning and response. There will also be a strong emphasis on the primary responsibility of the host State for the protection of civilians.

The Security Council recently stressed that strategic communications are an important element of a comprehensive, integrated and effective approach to the protection of civilians, as well as an enabler and multiplier role across all mandated areas (S/PRST/2022/5). Strategic communications are critical for missions to explain their mandates, share and protect vital information, manage expectations and garner trust and support among relevant stakeholders, notably local communities

¹ The [Uniformed Capability Requirements for UN Peacekeeping Paper](#) provides updated information on the types of pledges that are being sought for the Peacekeeping Ministerial.

and host governments. Missions also require additional support and capabilities to counter the growing threat of mis- and disinformation.

Efforts to strengthen strategic communications and to address mis- and disinformation have a direct impact on the safety and security of UN peacekeepers. Peacekeepers are deployed in deteriorating and complex political and security environments, face asymmetrical threats, and have increasingly become a target. By improving the safety and security of peacekeepers, those same men and women will be better positioned to deliver on their mandates, including the protection of civilians. This requires the continued adaptation of the missions' capabilities and capacities, including leveraging technology and mitigating and countering the threat of IEDs.

Extended deployments in harsh, remote and insecure environments puts an enormous strain on the mental health of peacekeepers. Enhancing our collective support to their mental health is long overdue and will be an important focus of the Ministerial, building on efforts to develop a Mental Health Strategy for Uniformed Peacekeepers (to be completed in early 2023) and other initiatives. Many troop and police-contributing countries lack the capacities to provide adequate mental health support before, during and after deployments, making this another important area for capacity-building partnerships.

Women in peacekeeping has been a key focus of previous Ministerials and will be addressed as a theme throughout the preparatory process and the Ministerial. One of the top priorities is to ensure that UN peacekeeping operations deploy more women in the full range of occupational positions and that the work environment supports their meaningful participation. The integration of women into senior level positions is also essential to maximizing their fullest potential and contributions. The UN needs diverse and inclusive leadership and teams, in which both women and men can contribute their skills, experiences and perspectives to the fullest, better reflecting the communities they serve and translating to improved decision-making, planning and results and, thus, to greater operational effectiveness and performance. Strengthening engagement with women leaders and enhancing their meaningful participation at community level and in peace processes at all levels is also important.

[Preparatory Process](#)

Three preparatory meetings hosted by the Co-chairs will lead up to the 2023 Peacekeeping Ministerial. Each preparatory meeting will focus on specific areas and related objectives and outcomes.