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STATEMENT BY
BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
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REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

AT THE

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING
MINISTERIAL MEETING

NEW YORK
FRIDAY 29TH MARCH 2019

**Mr. Secretary-General, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. At the outset, allow me to register The Government of The Gambia's appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres and the various Governments for jointly hosting this Ministerial Conference aimed at working towards strengthening uniformed capabilities, performance and protection of civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Missions. This is a unique opportunity for Member States to once again exchange perspectives on the evolving threats and challenges facing United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, and harness our collective commitment and efforts geared towards the maintenance of international peace and security.

2. The Gambia, as a longstanding troop and police contributing country to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations is therefore delighted to participate in this Ministerial Meeting. Following our active participation in the 2nd and 3rd Preparatory Meetings in The Hague and Addis Ababa respectively, today, I wish to reiterate The Gambia's

full support of all UN efforts aimed at ensuring that peacekeeping continues to deliver hope, save lives and minimize human suffering in conflict situations. In the past 3 decades, The Gambia has participated in over 16 UN Peacekeeping missions around the globe, and these experiences have greatly contributed to the high level of professionalism, dedication and good conduct of our contingents at various levels of assignments.

Mr. Secretary-General,

4. In reaffirming our commitment to enhance our participation in UN Peace Operations, I wish to take this opportunity to announce the Government of The Gambia's decision to make the following non-caveated pledges to UN Peace Operations, with effect from July 2019.

- a. 1 by Infantry Battalion,
- b. 1 by Force Headquarters Company,
- c. 1 by Military Police Company,
- d. 20 by Staff Officers, and
- e. 15 by Military Observers.

In pursuit of this commitment, the Government of the Gambia will continue to ensure that our deployed peacekeepers are well trained and equipped to execute their roles effectively in mandate implementation by strictly adhering to rigorous pre-deployment trainings. These training programmes will continue to be conducted in close collaboration with partners, with the aim of ensuring that Gambian Contingents continue to contribute effectively once deployed. We will continue to place strong emphasis on inculcating exemplary conduct, discipline and excellence in performance throughout our pre-deployment and in-mission training.

Mr. Secretary-General,

5. The Government of The Gambia is currently embarking on addressing capacity gaps through a series of coordinated actions. These are in the form of the revised GAF peacekeeping policy, the selection and nomination of women peacekeepers, development of a Rapid Deployment Force for Peacekeeping, as well as enhanced pre-deployment training and appointment of highly-trained officer, including women, in key command positions.

6. The Gambia has set very ambitious targets to ensure that women's participation in peacekeeping is enhanced, even beyond UN targets. This is reflected in the New Peacekeeping Policy of the Gambia Armed Forces, which would ensure that Women are recruited, well trained and appointed to key roles in the Gambia Armed Forces as well as in Gambian Peacekeeping Contingents. We are determined to meet the national target of 20% participation of female peacekeepers in the deployment of all future units, with effect from July 2019. These efforts are among many geared towards harmonizing our efforts with those of the United Nations to strike a gender-balance in our contribution to UN Peace Operations.

Mr. Secretary-General,

7. Improving performance capabilities is key to attaining better results. As a TCC, we are aware of the need to pay more attention to early warning signs and taking swift action, where mandated, particularly in the protection of civilians, and where necessary to adjust to evolving threats and mission priorities in a more effective and efficient manner.

We therefore wish to underline the importance of strengthening partnerships and encourage more to be done to enhance the capabilities of peacekeeping operations by providing adequate funding, logistical support such as equipment and other force enablers.

8. **In conclusion, Mr. Secretary-General,** allow me to pay tribute to the brave men and women in blue helmets who carry on the daunting task of fostering peace in conflict situations around the world, as well as those UN peacekeepers who have paid the ultimate price while rendering their service to humanity.

I thank you all for your kind attention.