

Statement of USG Pollard at the 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial

Session III: Performance and Accountability

8 December 2021

21:40-23:00 (KST)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset let me express my gratitude to former Secretary-General Ban ki Moon for his remarks, and his tireless commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. The progress that we have made in strengthening performance and the accountability of peacekeeping personnel is in no small part due the efforts he spearheaded, leaving an honourable legacy on which we continue to build.

It is my pleasure to open this session on Performance and Accountability. My department is committed to measuring and improving our performance and accountability, at all levels and everywhere we serve.

With the Secretary-General's reform agenda actively under implementation, and the renewed commitment to strengthening peacekeeping through the A4P+ framework, this ministerial is a moment of opportunity.

I look forward to hearing our panel members' perspectives on how we can enhance our collective ability to perform, and how our performance is inextricably linked to accountability.

Under the framework of Action for Peacekeeping Plus, our areas of focus on strengthening performance and accountability in partnership with Member States are: performance evaluation, performance and accountability of civilian personnel and leadership, and, critically, conduct and discipline. To realize our highest performance ambitions, we must also honestly discuss how Security Council mandates can be fully and appropriately resourced.

We are seeing significant results in our efforts to improve the performance of our missions. Missions are doing more to carry out robust and pro-active operations. We continue to strengthen performance evaluation systems for military and police components, as well as for our hospitals. Pre-deployment and induction trainings, and activities to raise awareness of UN standards of conduct, are all critical. Through evaluations we also identify good lessons and practices to share.

More broadly, an Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework has been developed, bringing together all our policies, guidance and tools on performance and accountability. We have rolled out a comprehensive planning and performance assessment system in every mission to support the review of progress towards mandate implementation, thereby enabling more informed decision-making.

On the performance and accountability of civilian personnel and leadership, we are working to ensure that authority is delegated while providing safeguards through greater transparency and strengthened accountability.

Conduct and discipline is an area of particular concern. Conduct that is aligned with our standards underpins all aspects of the performance of peacekeeping personnel, civilian and uniformed alike. Most of our peacekeepers serve with honour, but every violation sets us back enormously, with the actions of a few damaging the image and credibility of the entire UN, and adversely impacting mandate

implementation. And these acts impact victims, who suffer enormous harm. Where our standards of conduct have been violated, strong accountability actions must be taken swiftly, and national laws must be aligned to deter and punish sexual exploitation and abuse.

Under the framework of A4P+, we are exploring with Member States good practices in conduct and discipline that can be expanded and adapted and so that we can learn from each other. We have just launched a page on our website dedicated to these good practices and are developing a platform for Member States to work with each other to find solutions.

Together we have made significant progress, but serious challenges remain. Sexual exploitation and abuse is an ever-present risk that applies to *all* of peacekeeping, also implicating our civilian staff as well as our humanitarian partners. Managing the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, with a focus on prevention, is a collective responsibility, and we are enhancing an integrated approach to risk management for peacekeeping missions.

We rely on Member States to deploy with the capabilities necessary for successful performance. This includes aligning self-sustainment with managing the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly in remote areas. When allegations of misconduct occur, we call on Member States to conduct timely investigations, conclude all long-standing open matters, and ensure strong accountability actions, including for criminal conduct.

We must also bring meaningful resolution to paternity and child support claims that arise from sexual exploitation and abuse. We will be engaging with Member States to develop a framework of practical actions that can, and must, be taken, to realize the rights of these children.

And linked to all these issues is the need to work in partnership to enhance women's roles in peacekeeping as an integral element of strengthening the women, peace and security agenda. A work culture and environment that is enabling and inclusive and free from sexual harassment is achieved through exemplary leadership, meaningful training on gender equality, and a wider sense of responsibility and accountability by each member of a UN peacekeeping mission.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Strengthening peacekeeping relies on our joint commitment and action to go further, to push harder for results, to be increasingly accountable to ourselves and to the people whom we have the privilege to serve.

I would like to express my appreciation for the Republic of Korea as host and to all the Co-Chairs of the Peacekeeping Ministerial. In particular, I would like to recognize the co-hosts of the prep meeting on Performance and Accountability, Rwanda and the United States of America, that has helped inform today's discussions and pledges.

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This concludes the list of speakers for our session today.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, performance is at the heart of peacekeeping. To perform at our highest we must also hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards.

The Member States who have spoken today and expressed support through their pledges demonstrate the seriousness with which they take this essential commitment.

I am deeply grateful for their partnership, and I look forward to our ongoing collective efforts to align performance with accountability in the implementation of our mandates and our exercise our duty of care towards the people we serve.

We will take a brief break and followed by Session 4 on Protection of civilians and Safety and Security, chaired by my colleague, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix.

Thank you very much for the pledges and expressions of support made today.