

**Statement of USG Khare at the 2023 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial
Session 2: Capacity Building and Training (including Mental Health)
6 December 2023**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks the 75th anniversary of UN Peacekeeping. As we reflect on the remarkable achievements over three quarters of a century, we must also acknowledge the significant challenges we face including safety and security, diminishing host-State consent and increasing divisions during mandate discussions. The ongoing drawdown of our most dangerous mission in Mali, for example, is continuing at an unprecedented pace, with my Department providing support related to logistics, operations and administration. My dear colleague, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wane will be speaking more on these challenges as a panellist.

Excellencies,

Despite the myriad of challenges, I am proud that UN peacekeeping remains an extraordinary enterprise of multilateralism and international solidarity.

Your presence here and our collective commitment to Action for Peacekeeping shows a steadfast commitment to improving the performance of peacekeeping and ensuring more impactful, efficient operations.

Partnerships

Excellencies,

Partnerships are the backbone of UN peacekeeping and a central priority for my Department. The Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP) provides engineering, medical, and C4ISR training to uniformed peacekeepers in Africa and Southeast Asia.

In the true spirit of international cooperation and in line with the new Agenda for Peace which called for strong partnerships with entities such as the African Union (AU), the TPP will soon expand its training programme to better support African Union Peace Support Operations.

The Elsie Initiative for Field Missions is another fruit of the joint labor of Member States and the Secretariat. By designing accommodation, ablutions and camp layouts that make our camp environments more inclusive to women, the Elsie Initiative enhances the safety of both women and men serving on the ground. The Initiative has been expanded to include other areas of supply chain management, such as healthcare, transportation and logistics.

Medical, including mental health

In fact, the Initiative is one of many ways in which we strive to improve the wellbeing of our peacekeepers. Across our missions, providing quality medical care remains a top priority.

Several of our missions are now using telemedicine to provide consultations for limb- and life-saving treatments to peacekeepers in remote locations.

To improve the quality of care, we are also monitoring hospital performance and investing in better casualty evacuations (CASEVAC) processes. Efforts are further ongoing for gender responsive healthcare.

At the same time, we are paying close attention to the occupational safety within missions. There are accidents, such as those related to road traffic and machinery operation, that are preventable and for which better safety measures can be implemented.

While the physical safety of peacekeepers is of the utmost importance, we know it is not the only health aspect which requires care. Uniformed peacekeepers are tasked with protecting civilians against violence and may often themselves be exposed to atrocities, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

To this end, the UN has developed a Mental Health Strategy for Uniformed Personnel. The Framework aims to cultivate mental health literacy and to offer tools that can be used throughout the deployment cycle.

I am grateful for the support that T/PCCs and capacity providers have already expressed for this vital issue and look forward to your pledges in this session.

Environment

Excellencies,

I would like to conclude by offering a few words about environmental management in field missions. Yesterday, we had the opportunity to hear about some of the inspiring initiatives and partnerships that are leading innovation in this area on the ground.

My vision, as set out in the Environmental Strategy, which has been developed in consultation with all of you, is to ensure responsibility, ambition and legacy through our environmental footprint. Missions will be setting concrete performance targets for the years ahead to 2030, looking for ways to reap the operational, environmental and security benefits of a transition to renewable energy by reducing our reliance on diesel generators, taking concrete steps to increase our efficiencies and ensuring vigilance on management of solid and hazardous waste, as well as wastewater.

Troop and Police Contributing Countries are vital partners in this endeavour and I am looking forward to working hand in hand with each of you to implement the pledges that will support these

pressing efforts. My team and I will follow-up with all Member States that express interest to engage on these issues, including to support with identifying possible partnerships where helpful.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I hand over to our distinguished panellists, please allow me to express my appreciation for all the new and expanded initiatives that will be announced today, be they to do with sustainable capacity-building or with partnerships. Your enduring commitment is what enables us to make UN peacekeeping stronger and more effective.

And as you listen to today's sessions, I ask that you keep in mind the remarkable women and men serving in our peace operations, and those who have fallen in the pursuit of peace this past year. Their sacrifice and dedication deserve the highest honours.