

Speech: Collaboration as a key tool in effective peacekeeping

Thank you Mr President.

This is a topic which should concern us all, and I thank China for scheduling this important debate today. Many of the threats and challenges faced by our African partners including violent extremism, terrorism, serious and organised crime and armed conflict, have no respect for borders. In our deeply interconnected world, our security is inextricably linked together and these threats undermine our shared pursuit for a more peaceful prosperous world for all.

So it is vital therefore that we continue to work together to address these complex, shared challenges. Effective partnerships between the United Nations, the African Union and its sub-regional organisations are particularly important in this context. The African Union and its subregional organisations play a vital role not only in peacekeeping but in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. I paid tribute to their work in mediating, brokering political agreements and supporting peace processes, as for example in South Sudan where the Intergovernmental Authority on Development has worked to revitalise and support peace negotiations. And no such discussion will be complete without recognising especially the role of ECOWAS as the most impressive of the sub-regions and particularly efforts in Gambia in 2017-18.

Mr President, peacekeeping remains one of the UN's most effective tools for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. So when we do deploy our peacekeepers, whether in Africa or elsewhere in the world, we need to collectively ensure they are properly equipped to meet the complex threats and challenges that they will face. This is essential not only in ensuring they can effectively implement their mandates, the mandates we set here in this Council, but also in enabling them to ensure their own safety and security. As the Cruz Report made clear safety and capability are inextricably linked. Where units performed poorly they put themselves at risk as well as the civilians they are mandated to protect. That is why I'll be concentrating the remainder of my remarks on performance and again welcome the adoption of Resolution 2436 which set out measures for improving peacekeeping performance.

Let me be clear though that discussing performance in this way should not be seen as just something aimed at troop contributing countries. The Action for Peacekeeping Declaration commits all stakeholders, including the Secretary-General, to provide integrated performance policy framework, performance data, effective field support, clear operational and technical requirements and to work with Member States to generate specialised capabilities. Member States, we commit to provide well-equipped and well-trained personnel to improve pre-deployment preparation and coordinate better on training and capacity building. And of course this Council has been challenged to write

better and more realistic mandates.

So Mr President firstly we believe that missions must be robustly and fairly assessed using accurate data collected from the field. This will improve our understanding of what works and what doesn't so that lessons can be learned and I welcome the work the UN Secretariat has undertaken in this regard to develop and pilot new frameworks for performance assessment. Where assessments do identify issues they must be followed by appropriate action, including repatriating ineffective units and replacing them as necessary.

The principles of robust assessment and accountability are particularly relevant to the conduct of peacekeepers. The United Nations human rights due diligence policy for all UN support and non-UN security forces, including reimbursements, must be implemented in full, as must the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. And as the Secretary-General himself said this morning, "The era of silence is over. The era of accountability has begun."

Secondly Mr President on collaboration, we should make best use of our comparative strengths so that our collective effort is greater than the sum of its parts. That means ensuring for example that African Union peace enforcement operations complement the United Nations peacekeeping missions while respecting relevant competences. When we along with 150 other countries endorsed a declaration of shared commitments on UN peacekeeping operations, we committed to enhance collaboration and planning between the United Nations and relevant international regional and subregional organisations and arrangements while recognising the need for a clear delineation of roles. This includes of course the African Union and the European Union which have deployed several mandate operations in recent years.

Mr President the United Kingdom also recognises the importance of collaboration between organizations and their Member States to ensure that all peacekeepers in the field are willing, capable and equipped to effectively and safely implement their mandates. We are proud that British peace support teams in Africa provide training to over ten thousand African peacekeeping personnel every year. In Somalia for example, the United Kingdom continues to support AMISOM bilaterally and through the EU and UN, including via the deployments of personnel to the United Nations logistical support mission to AMISOM and through pre-deployment training for regional forces. We also of course have a substantial peacekeeping presence in South Sudan.

And thirdly Mr President, we must recognize when peacekeeping missions are not best suited to a particular challenge. For example due to their composition and character UN peacekeeping missions are not suited to engage in peace enforcement and counter-terrorism operations. This fact underpins our support in principle for African Union led peace support operations in line with the commitments set out in resolutions 2320 and 2378, authorised by the United Nations Security Council under its authority under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter to access the UN assess contributions on a case by case basis.

In conclusion Mr President, let me commend the recent successful transition of the United Nations field hospital in South Sudan from British to

Vietnamese forces. This is the first time that unbroken clinical cover has been achieved during the transfer of a UN field hospital, setting a precedent that we believe all future operations should seek to emulate. Many lessons were learned in that process including that some of the existing Department of Field Support regulations constrained our ability to ensure unbroken clinical cover. So it is key that we all learn from that and that DFS regulations are thoroughly reviewed and adapted so that transitions between smart pledges are as seamless as possible.

I'd like to finish by paying tribute to all the members of the British military currently serving in UN peacekeeping missions and to reiterate my admiration and respect for all peacekeepers who work with bravery and dedication and patience in places that we in this Council send them.

Thank you Mr President.