

Speech: Making UN peacekeeping more effective and efficient

Thank you Madame President,

And thank you for this opportunity for a candid and constructive discussion with our Force Commanders who I thank for their briefings so far and I put on notice that I am going to ask lots of questions to and hope to hear from later. Thank you also to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for everything you have had to say and for your leadership on these issues. I do think it is very important for our Force Commanders that you are able to be here with the Security Council and able to speak truth to us and to be as clear as you need to be with all of us here, so please be candid.

Before I go into some of those questions though, I would like to take colleagues back; some of us were on the Security Council visit to Mali last November where we had the great honour of participating in the dedication of a memorial to all who had lost their lives serving in MINUSMA. And I think it's important that we take the time and the moment to pay tribute to all those peacekeepers that have given their lives in service of the United Nations, and to all the brave women and men that serve now in support of the UN's peace operations. I would like to offer the United Kingdom's thanks for their service and for the service and leadership of our Force Commanders here today.

Peacekeeping is one of this organisation's greatest achievements. It is an integral part of what our peoples around the world think of when they think of the United Nations and we celebrate this year, the 70th anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping. And as we strive for reform in the wider UN system, so we must work to make UN peacekeeping more effective and efficient, through better mission planning, through more pledges of troops and capabilities, and stronger mission performance.

We therefore welcome both the report on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers by General dos Santos Cruz and the UN's Action Plan and the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative that has flown from that. We see three key priorities:

Firstly, that this Council should take a longer-term view of conflicts and set more strategic and sequenced mandates.

Secondly, that peacekeeping should be better coordinated with other UN activities such as peacebuilding and development.

And thirdly, improved peacekeeping performance, including accountability where performance is not at the right standard.

My first question to our Commanders is: how is the Action plan being implemented in your missions? General Deconinck mentioned the importance of

intelligence in peacekeeping, in situational awareness, sending our peacekeepers out with knowledge of what is going on around them. What improvements have been made in the use of peacekeeping intelligence and how can we in New York further support those efforts?

And then in the context of efforts to further improve the performance of peacekeepers, I know the Secretariat has been tasked to develop an integrated performance policy framework. My question would be whether the Force Commanders have a view on what the performance framework should contain? How do we incentivise better performance in missions?

Specific questions on some of the missions: On UNAMID, thank you very much for what you had to say about the reconfiguration work. I would just ask what you think, General, the next steps should be in the mission's reconfiguration. In particular, whether any challenges are being faced alongside the mandate to protect civilians.

On MINUSMA, again I thought that that was a very helpful intervention. A question I would have is: we know of course MINUSMA is working in the same space as the G5 Sahel Joint Taskforce, I'd just like to know how well the military actors are joining up to ensure they contribute in their defined ways to the common objective, and how the link with development humanitarian is going? Is there a coordinated plan that brings together the different military actors and the different development actors behind them to make the most of all of the tools we have at our disposal in Mali?

And then finally to the General commanding UNMISS, I want to say how we talked about this yesterday and it should be in the Council, how impressed we have been by some of the swift and decisive action taken recently in response to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. And I just wonder – this is obviously a big problem still in different missions – whether you could give some examples of the best practice you've used in South Sudan that might help other missions to learn and to be able to respond effectively if it happens to them.

Let me finish there in the spirit of interactiveness and reiterate my sincere gratitude to all of those serving in blue for the good of all of us.

Thank you.