

Speech: “The men and women of UN policing put their lives on the line to protect the most vulnerable as their communities emerge from conflict”

Thank you Mr President and I want to thank our briefers for sharing their analysis with us today, and particularly to welcome Police Commissioner Makotse to the Council, and to thank the Presidency and Secretariat for ensuring that we hear women’s voices in this chamber, not just on policing, but all the issues we discuss.

And at the outset I would like to echo my Swedish colleague and to ask all of you, the Blue Berets here, to pass on to your officers, the United Nation Security Council’s thanks and admiration for your service and bravery. Your work and sacrifice in fragile and post-conflict states is a vital part of UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions. From Haiti to the DRC, from Afghanistan to South Sudan, the men and women of UN policing put their lives on the line to protect the most vulnerable as their communities emerge from conflict.

Their presence allows people to rebuild their lives, their communities, their livelihoods after the guns have fallen silent. And they help embed longer term stability by promoting the rule of law, human rights, and by helping build capable and accountable security institutions that can stand on their own two feet, without UN support.

Mr President, it is because of the important role of UN policing that it is so vital that we hold these sessions. We are the body that tasks those men and women to risk their lives, and so it’s important that we hear directly from the police commanders about what more this Council can do to support them and their officers.

Because, as we all know too well, the threats that they face do not stand still. And if UN policing is to stay effective, then we – whether Council members, police contributing countries or police commanders – need to be ready to respond and reform.

That’s why we would have liked to have seen today’s resolution go further in terms of reform. There is still much to be done in order to ensure that UN Policing is as effective and efficient as possible.

For example, the UK wants to see a more flexible approach to the police function; one that adapts according to the situation each mission faces. This should be underpinned by a strong analytical capability that can undertake the continuous analysis necessary to ensure support remains appropriate to

needs on the ground.

In parallel, we would like to see the Secretariat making more regular and effective use of specialists with skills relevant to the situation at hand. This would require the introduction of better and more transparent administrative arrangements to absorb and utilise this expertise. Additionally, it is crucial that policing is incorporated into integrated planning and assessment processes both in New York and in missions so that the various mission components complement one another.

In this regard, I want to highlight and commend the good work of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections, a working arrangement between DPKO, UNDP, and UN Women, OHCHR and others which provides joint operational country support in the police, justice and corrections areas in post-conflict and other crisis situations. It is an example of the UN providing more effective, coherent and coordinated country-level assistance which we would like to see more of.

I also want to stress the UK's continuing support for the External Review 2016 recommendations and we are keen to see progress being made on these areas, including those referenced in the Secretary-General's report. Mr President, let me conclude with a final reflection. UN police are present throughout the continuum of conflict; the Blue Berets are usually the first and the last members of the UN family that a local population meet during any intervention or response to a crisis.

So to succeed in their mission, across the duration of their deployment, officers need to establish a relationship with the population, one founded on trust. And that trust is more readily formed if UN police officers reflect the diversity of the world that they're sent to protect.

So let me close by joining my voice to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix in expressing my support for police contributing countries who are addressing the obstacles that prevent more women from entering UN police. And let me encourage even greater efforts within UN police components to consult with communities – including women – and ensure their views and needs are fully part of their day to day work and their reporting to this Council.

Thank you.