

Speech: Commitment to Global Peacekeeping

Under-Secretary-General, your Excellencies, colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman,

I wish to begin by thanking the most important contributors to the United Nation's proud history of peacekeeping: the peacekeepers themselves. The brave men and women that we send far from home. Often into considerable danger, for months at a time in the service of peace, in the service of the security of others. Let us collectively put on record our deep appreciation of their commitment, their professionalism, and yes, their sacrifice. We thank you and we salute you.

We send our peacekeepers because they are a tangible demonstration of the commitment of United Nation Member States to defend the rights and freedoms contained in the United Nations Charter. We want our peacekeepers to be the best they can. It would be a dereliction of our responsibilities to our peacekeepers, and to those they protect, if we did not give them the very best guidance and training. So we arm them, not just with rifles and rules, but also with knowledge and know-how.

That is why our discussions here are so so important and why the United Kingdom Government backs the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping agenda. Successful implementation of the Peace and Security Architecture reforms is essential to bring about both a structural reorganisation but also a cultural change in working practices. If our peacekeepers are to be the best they can they must better reflect those that they serve and protect.

Yesterday I was delighted to announce a £1 million contribution to the Elsie Initiative, which will bolster women's participation globally. I am also pleased to be able to report that the United Kingdom has 7% female representation in our peacekeeping deployments. But we are under no illusion: we must, and we will, do better.

If our peacekeepers are to be the best then we must get their training right, and we must identify and hold to account those who betray our values and trust by abusing those that they are sent to protect.

United Kingdom forces currently train around 11,000 peacekeepers annually, and we provide capacity building support to peacekeepers from a number of countries. Indeed last year Vietnamese peacekeepers demonstrated what is possible through these partnerships, when they deployed a Level Two Field Hospital in a UN mission for the first time in their history.

The United Kingdom plans to develop and launch a new prospectus of training support, and we therefore look forward to engaging with many of you who may be interested in future training partnerships.

Your Excellencies, Under-Secretary-General, I pledge today that the United

Kingdom's commitment to work with you, today and in the future, to make UN peacekeeping the best it can be. Together to bring hope where there is despair. To bring peace where there is conflict.

Thank you.