

Open debate of the Security Council on UN Peacekeeping Operations

New York, August 26, 2011

Mr. President,

Let me at the outset congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of August and commend you for the excellent manner you have steered the work of the Council. I thank you for your initiative to convene this open debate on the peacekeeping operations of the UN.

Hungary fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

In the preamble of the UN Charter, the founders express their strong commitment „*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war*”. Nonetheless, one of the most important activities undertaken by the UN today to maintain international peace and security and to save people from the “scourge of war” was not originally enshrined in the UN Charter. This invention is peacekeeping.

Since the establishment of the first UN-mandated operation in 1948, peacekeeping has gradually expanded and developed into one of the flagship activities of the Organisation. Today, globally more than 120 000 people – among them Hungarian peacekeepers and civilian personnel – serve the solemn cause of international peace and security.

The world has changed a lot since the first 'blue helmets' appeared in the late 1940s. We consider it an important and urgent task to continue the review of UN peacekeeping in order to adapt it to the challenges of the 21st century. In this regard, Hungary supports all reform proposals that will enable peacekeeping operations to respond effectively and in a timely manner to violent conflicts in order to protect civilian populations and to establish the conditions necessary for long-lasting peace.

The question of capabilities and resources lies at the heart of the peacekeeping reform debate. Developing military and police capabilities is an important tool to enable complex peacekeeping operations to carry out their mandates effectively. Regarding the improvement of capabilities, Hungary attaches an utmost importance to the training of peacekeeping personnel. The Hungarian Defence Forces Peace Support Training Centre (PTSC), located in Szolnok, Hungary, has a long history and a unique expertise in training peacekeepers coming from different parts of the world. Our country's goal is to contribute to the improvement of UN peacekeeping capabilities by preparing both Hungarian and international peacekeeping personnel for their future assignments.

Mr. President,

The present global economic crisis has sharpened the focus on the financing of peacekeeping operations. Against this background many UN Member States, including Hungary, put greater emphasis on the need for enhanced efficiency in the implementation of the UN peacekeeping budget. As a troop contributing country, we also understand the added burden that many troop and police contributing countries face in this difficult economic climate. It is becoming more difficult for every one of us to find the resources needed for sending further troops, offering additional technical advice, and spending more money on peacekeeping activities. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance to provide the necessary resources to implement effectively the complex mandates of today's peacekeeping operations. Thus, new solutions need to be found to meet those new challenges.

First of all, preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention must play a bigger role in the activities of the UN. Peacekeeping is part of the political solution and not an alternative to it. We must individualize our processes and have a well-defined exit strategy for each peacekeeping mission in order to avoid a prolongation of the operations without clear prospects.

Secondly, cooperation with the regional organizations must be improved in all regions of the world. There are good examples and best practices we can build on and which should be used more widely. In order to increase efficiency, emphasis should be put on developing local know-how and capabilities. Africa, where the largest part of UN forces is concentrated, is a case in point.

Most important of all, we must preserve and further improve the global peacekeeping partnership. Troop and police contributing countries play an essential part in this partnership and they deliver first-hand experience which is indispensable for the work of the Security Council. We must further enhance this cooperation by relying more on the participation of TCCs and PCCs as well as of host countries, in particular in informal discussions with Council members. We encourage the Council to further strengthen this cooperation as part of the reform of the working methods.

Mr. President,

Hungary reiterates its strong support and highest appreciation for the work of the peacekeeping missions of the UN. We would hereby like to express gratitude to the peacekeeping personnel who serve, or have served, in UN missions and pay deep respect for those who have lost their lives in service of the cause of international peace and security.

Thank you, Mr. President.