

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
HON. SAMUEL OKUDZETO ABLAKWA, AT THE 2025 UN PEACEKEEPING
MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE TOPIC “PEACEKEEPING REFORM – MORE
EFFECTIVE AND SAFER PEACEKEEPING”

Mr. Chair,
Colleague Ministers,
Senior Officials of the United Nations
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Ghana, I extend my deepest appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Nations Secretariat for convening this UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting. This crucial gathering comes at a time of complex and evolving challenges that require our collective effort and commitment to better address peacekeeping operations in the myriad and often complicated conflict environment.

The challenges that peacekeeping faces, whether traditional or modern, could potentially undermine both the effectiveness and the safety of blue helmet operations, a possibility that I believe we would all dread to see manifest. On that account, Ghana finds this high-level exchange extremely important as it presents us with another opportunity to glean from the perspectives of all who are gathered here on the various issues that constitute safety and security for peacekeeping, as well as the needed reforms that could possibly lead to more effective and safer peacekeeping operations.

In addressing peacekeeping reforms, it is worthy to note and commend strides made in advancing the Secretary-General’s **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)** and **Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+)** initiatives. However, as the challenges of peacekeeping increase and evolve, our responsibility to pursue further reforms maximizes in equal measure. In discharging this burden, we must prioritise the issue of safety and security where peacekeeping reforms are concerned. I am of the opinion that the convergence of our views on the very important subject of Peacekeeping has the capacity to impact on effective delivery mandate. At the core of this should be the strengthening of existing efforts and making actionable new mechanisms that seek to improve safety. This is not only a reasonable cause of action, but also it fulfils Security Council resolution 2518 (2020), which calls for the improvement of safety and security of peacekeepers.

Colleagues,

At the heart of peacekeeping reform for effective and safer delivery of the mandate, is the need for the United Nations Security Council to consider the elements of mandate generation that

more adequately reflect the needs of host countries, as it plays a critical role in the success, or otherwise of a peacekeeping mission. It is incumbent on us all to ensure that the necessary political support, operational capabilities, and logistical resources are provided to enable peacekeepers to operate effectively and safely.

The need for continued investment in training, including pre-deployment and in-mission training, to enhance the readiness and resilience of peacekeepers. Such training is critical not only for operational effectiveness but also for equipping peacekeepers with the cultural sensitivity and contextual awareness, which is needed to engage constructively with diverse local populations. Understanding cultural norms, social dynamics, and community expectations is essential to building trust and legitimacy, and to ensuring that peacekeeping operations contribute positively to local environments while upholding the highest standards of conduct and discipline. It goes without mentioning that consistently reviewing force protection measures and ensuring that those measures are encompassing of actions for mitigating information security, medical exigencies, fire, explosive ordinance, among others goes a long way.

Closely linked to the above exigency, is the imperative of ensuring predictable, sustainable, and flexible funding for peacekeeping operations. Adequate and timely resourcing is vital to maintain robust training, deploy culturally adept personnel, and provide peacekeepers with the capabilities needed to operate responsibly and effectively in often fragile and complex environments.

Another element that warrants the attention of all stakeholders is the importance of strengthening partnerships with regional organisations, particularly the African Union and sub-regional bodies, in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, to ensure coherent and complementary responses to complex crises. These regional partnerships bring invaluable contextual knowledge and cultural proximity that can enhance mission relevance and effectiveness.

Excellencies

I would not have done justice to the subject of peacekeeping reform if I failed to mention the critical role of health and healthcare in the varied and sometimes difficult environment in which peacekeeping operations are carried out. Even though investments in peacekeeping operations factors in healthcare, it is important to emphasise that comprehensive healthcare - medical treatment, basic surgery, diagnostics, vaccines – is a requisite for peacekeeping missions and the populations in affected host communities. Medical research paired with technological advancements should focus on telemedicine capable of supporting frontline medical professionals to provide timely and quality medical care to peacekeepers in real time.

Considering the mental toll of the harsh environments on peacekeepers, the conversation on health and peacekeeping should also prioritise access to psychological medical support. In this regard, I propose that we take advantage of the momentum generated by recent initiatives such as Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), UN System-wide Strategy on Mental Health and Well-being, the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy (2018–2028) and the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations to advance concrete actions to support efforts in the field to safeguard the mental health of the men and women who make the biggest sacrifice in peacekeeping.

Ladies and gentlemen

Warfare or conflict has evolved and has increasingly become technology dependent. In this vein, it stands to reason that measures aimed at mitigating conflict, as well as its attendant effect should include elements that heavily utilises technology in a meaningful way. I must highlight the innovation of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and the huge promise it holds for UN Peacekeeping operations, as these can be utilised to gather real time information about movement and activities of terrorists or armed groups in the Area of Responsibility (AOR) to inform immediate decision making. The capability to use drones or repel drone attacks on UN assets could be a game changer in the efforts to minimize the asymmetric threats and attacks against UN assets. Indeed, there is no doubt that employing cutting edge technology in peacekeeping will help mitigate preventable fatalities.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

As we deliberate today on how to make peacekeeping more effective and safer, Ghana reiterates its unwavering commitment to working alongside fellow Member States, the United Nations, and all relevant stakeholders to accelerate reforms, deepen strategic partnerships, and sustain political engagement. We believe firmly that peacekeeping reforms must be context-driven, people-centered, and anchored in the principles of inclusivity, respect for human rights, and the protection of civilians.

Ghana remains fully prepared to continue offering its expertise, capabilities, and leadership to help shape a future in which United Nations peacekeeping is more adaptable, adequately resourced, safer for its personnel, and more attuned to the needs of the populations it serves. We firmly believe that through joint responsibility, shared accountability, and a collective sense of purpose, we can strengthen a peacekeeping framework that effectively responds to both the complexities and opportunities of our time.

Thank you for your kind attention.