

The Secretary-General: I thank this month's presidency of the Security Council, Ethiopia, for being such a steadfast contributor to peacekeeping. Its personnel are on the front lines in some of our most challenging missions, and we are extremely grateful for that commitment.

Today we gather to fortify this flagship United Nations activity. Every day, peacekeepers create conditions for lasting peace that protect civilians, such as the hundreds of thousands in South Sudan and the Central African Republic who have sought refuge. Across the years and across the globe, 55 peacekeeping operations have successfully completed their mandates. Many political missions have done the same. Four missions are downsizing or closing soon, their job completed, and the strategies to ensure a smooth transition in these situations are absolutely crucial.

Peacekeeping remains a highly cost-effective instrument. The people of Haiti and Côte D'Ivoire will enjoy a brighter future thanks in part to the support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. I pay tribute to the many peacekeepers who have paid the ultimate price in carrying out this vital work.

(spoke in French)

Despite the evident successes, peacekeeping operations can at times be disappointing and apparently lacking in prospects, unable to bring decades-old engagements to an end. This prompts us to engage in reflection about our goals, the means with which we avail ourselves, and our ability to implement complex mandates and to meet multiple ambitions. Peace operations are deployed in difficult environments where the United Nations is at times the sole party able and willing to act. Peace operations are subject to significant and perhaps overly weighty expectations insofar as they must address urgent situations while contributing to long-term solutions. Peace operations often face situations of such complexity that it is illusory to hope that a solution can be provided over the course of a few years.

(spoke in English)

The High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, whose recommendations remain at the heart of our efforts to advance collective security, called for four critical shifts. My reform efforts aim in part to bring them about.

First, we must recognize the primacy of politics so that peace operations are deployed in support of active diplomatic efforts, not as a substitute. My proposals for the Secretariat's peace and security architecture seek to strengthen the link between political strategies and operations and between peace and security and the development and human rights pillars of our work. If we can do better on prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, we can reduce the unrealistic and dangerous demands on our colleagues in uniform.

Secondly, peace operations should be properly equipped. It is time to fill critical gaps in technology, transportation and situational awareness. More mobility, better equipment and enhanced training and intelligence will allow us to do a better job and, eventually, with smaller numbers.

Thirdly, peace operations must embody United Nations values. Since the earliest days of my tenure, I have sent strong signals of my determination to stamp out sexual exploitation and abuse. In one important sign of progress, Member States are now certifying prior to deployment that none of their personnel has a history of misconduct or human rights violations, and the Secretariat also vets certain senior personnel. We have just appointed the first-ever victim's rights advocate, and we are taking other strong steps to promote accountability. In keeping with an Organization-wide plan to achieve gender parity, I am making a push for more female officers and troops in our operations. More women in peacekeeping means more effective peacekeeping.

Fourthly, we must build stronger partnerships. The Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in April, is a crucial step. Beyond their troop contributions, African States have assumed important responsibilities for peace and security in the continent. All across Africa, we are working closely with regional and subregional partners, from the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad basin. I call on the Security Council to enhance its support, including through the clarity of mandates and predictable funding, in particular to the G-5 Sahel, in order to operationalize the force in the Sahel, and to the Multinational Joint Task Force battling Boko Haram.

Our partnership with the European Union (EU) is also crucial, and I look forward to signing a framework agreement with the EU and to exploring the possibility of establishing trilateral collaborative mechanisms.

These partnerships are especially important given the multiple tasks that are being undertaken. We now face the needs of peace enforcement and counter-terrorism, and the precarious environments in which we operate require additional efforts. It is clear that peacekeeping forces are not supposed to do peace enforcement or counter-terrorism. We need to take advantage of the complementarity that must exist between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. I appeal again to the Security Council to ensure, in that regard, clarity of mandates and adequate funding.

(spoke in French)

In the coming months, we will advance in the implementation of these reforms, which should enable us to better fulfil our tasks. In the short term, I have asked for a review of peacekeeping operations to be conducted so as to consider how our operations under way can better respond to the numerous challenges that I have mentioned.

(spoke in English)

With the Security Council's partnership and support, we can adapt peace operations to meet both the old and the new tests alike and to be more effective and more cost-effective.