

**Mr. Ramos-Horta:** On behalf of my colleagues who served with me on the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), I commend you, Mr. Prime Minister, and the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia for this very timely initiative. I also thank you, Sir, for the invitation extended to me to participate today. Sitting behind me is my colleague Ian Martin, who will be very familiar to many members of the Security Council.

It is very gratifying to us that our report (see S/2015/446) and recommendations were so well received by Member States. Indeed, our report was not written by Ivy League academics or doctoral students without field experience. I was privileged to work with eminent achievers with deep experience of peacekeeping and special political missions. After crisscrossing the globe in our consultations, our report reflected the collective experience and recommendations of hundreds of people from many walks of life — retired and serving military and police officers who saw wars up-close, and community leaders and activists who live in the midst of conflicts.

We acknowledge the extent to which former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon embraced our recommendations, the consideration they have been given by the General Assembly and by the Security Council, and the work already undertaken by the Secretariat towards their implementation. But the essential shifts advocated by HIPPO remain to be achieved.

The three peace and security reviews — on peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture and of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda — as well as the World Humanitarian Summit, converged on the crucial need for more effective conflict prevention and for working to sustain peace before, during and after conflict. Last month, the Council was reminded of HIPPO's approach to sustaining peace when our colleague Youssef Mahmoud contributed to its discussion of the contribution of peacekeeping operations to this overarching goal (see S/PV.8033). The Council has embraced this priority, and no Secretary-General has made a stronger commitment to prevention and the necessary surge of diplomacy than has Secretary-General Guterres. We see it reflected in his insistence on an integrated system-wide commitment to prevention, in the way in which he has organized his Executive Office, in his proposals for reform of the development system as well as of the peace and security architecture, and in his appointment of a High-level Advisory Board on Mediation — half of whose members are women, consistent with his commitment to gender parity and HIPPO's emphasis on the role of women in all aspects of sustaining peace.

It is national leaders and stakeholders who have the primary responsibility to prevent conflicts and engage in mediation, and the United Nations should seek to support local and regional prevention and mediation partners. Our report emphasized that the United Nations must invest in its own capacities to undertake prevention and mediation and in its capacity to assist others, particularly at the national and regional levels. These core United Nations functions must, we said, be funded under the regular budget, and not be dependent on voluntary funding. Member States should support the Secretary-General in these mediation efforts, both politically and financially.

Secretary-General Ban wisely asked our Panel to review peace operations, not peacekeeping missions alone, and he accepted our recommendation that the United Nations should embrace the term “peace operations”. Our intention was not to move away from the principles of peacekeeping, which we said remained valid, but maintaining sharp distinctions between peacekeeping operations and special political missions should give way to a continuum of responses and smoother transitions between different phases of missions. He accepted our critique of the dysfunction of the present departmental configuration, which has hampered the effective design and conduct of peace operations, but rightly left it to his successor to consider a restructuring.

I believe that the proposals for restructuring the peace and security pillar, which Secretary-General Guterres has now outlined, meet the two greatest concerns of HIPPO. The management of both peacekeeping operations and large field-based special political missions by the same department will enable situation-specific responses tailored to context and smoother transitions as those contexts evolve. The single political-operational structure under regional Assistant Secretaries-General that would link the two reconfigured departments will not only overcome duplication and rivalry, but will ensure that peace operations are designed and managed within their regional context and in closer consultation with the relevant regional organizations. Our report said that the essential shifts we outlined would not be achieved without restructuring. This reform proposal is therefore to be warmly welcomed.

The Council has been concerned with seeing reviews of individual peace operations carried out, and our report itself recommended a review of longstanding missions to assess their effectiveness. We addressed the shortcomings of the Secretariat’s policy, analysis and strategy-development processes, and stressed the need for a core capacity for strategic analysis and assessment, including in the planning and review of peace operations. We also recommended that independent evaluations of peace operations should be commissioned at key decision points. The Secretary-General’s establishment of a strategic planning and monitoring unit in his Executive Office is precisely the reform that has been required to ensure better planning and reviews — with, I hope, an independent element.

The Council’s decisions in mandating peace operations on the basis of such planning and reviews should always reflect the primacy of politics, and I hope the Council will be stronger in its insistence upon and support for the political strategies that peace operations are deployed to pursue. While some reviews may properly lead to reduction of resources, I would remind the Council that both the Brahimi report (S/2000/809) and the HIPPO report emphasized that mandates, resources, expectations and capabilities must be in alignment if peace operations are not to be set up for failure.

It is a pleasure to recall in the presence of Secretary-General Guterres and Chairperson Mahamat the emphasis our report placed on partnerships with regional organizations, in particular the African Union (AU), and to warmly welcome their signature in April of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. I

reiterate here today HIPPO's support for flexible, sustainable and predictable funding for the AU peace operations that the Council authorizes, and for the use of United Nations assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis. I emphasize too our belief in the importance of United Nations regional offices as forward platforms for conflict prevention in partnership with regional actors, of which the successful efforts early this year to resolve the crisis in the Gambia were an excellent example.

In arguing for an essential shift to field-focused administration, HIPPO presented the distinct needs of the field. We know that the Secretary-General, coming to Headquarters from a field agency, fully intends his management-reform proposals to provide the delegation of authority that is absolutely essential to those who provide the services to the field and to expedite service delivery and recruitment. From the HIPPO perspective, both the changes in management and policy and the operational support that is proposed to be provided to both Headquarters and the field by a single department must be rigorously assessed as to their impact in the field. We urge Member States to take whatever decisions are required to fully support such a delegation.

HIPPO's advocacy of an essential shift towards more people-centred peace operations has been widely quoted, and should be taken to heart by the leadership of every peace operation. Critical for the moral credibility of a peace operation is effective action to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. The Secretary-General has given the leadership required and has gone far beyond the recommendations we made in 2015. We urge Member States to enter into the compacts he proposes.

In conclusion, in the course of 40 years — when I first came to the Council, I was 25 years old, the youngest person in the Chamber — today, as I survey the Chamber, I seem to be the oldest — starting as an innocent and romantic believer in the promises and possibilities of the United Nations, I have seen the best — when it lived up to the expectations of the people it deployed to protect — but also shocking betrayals on other front lines. I have engaged with United Nations personnel in my own country and in remote outposts where dedicated field staff have to bear the indifference of Headquarters, whose envoys descended on us, when I was in the field, to evaluate the mission, yet things stay the same. The United Nations can do better. The Council can do better. I trust that today's debate will mark a significant step on the road to the improvements that the High-level Panel has marked out.