

**Collective Action to Improve United Nations Peacekeeping Operations:
Supporting greater impact and performance in today's complex and high-
risk environments**

Statement by H.E. Brian Flynn

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Security Council Chamber

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Thank you Mr President,

And I would like to thank Prime Minister Rutte and the Netherlands for convening today's timely discussions. I would also like to thank the Secretary General and the other briefers we heard from this morning.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

This year Ireland marks the sixtieth anniversary of our contribution to UN peacekeeping operations. Not one year, not one month has passed since that date without Irish troops wearing the blue helmet abroad - it is part of who we are at the UN.

With 86 Irish soldiers having lost their lives in the service of such missions, Ireland is in no doubt as to the significance of this debate. Unfortunately, such losses are becoming all too frequent. It is our responsibility to determine how to prevent such sacrifices.

This is not the first time that we have considered this issue. Previous discussions have demonstrated that while we are often frank about our shortcomings we are less adept at addressing them.

Repeatedly, we have acknowledged the disconnect between mandates and strategic direction, between mandates and adequate resources.

For peacekeeping missions to be successful and for peacekeepers to be safe, missions must be more than a means for demonstrating political resolve - they

must be a meaningful tool for the attainment of peace. Mandates must match the needs presented by the conflict, resources must match the mandate, and they must be reinforced by political support.

Strategic reviews of peace operations are a welcome additional tool to ensure that operations remain fit for purpose. However we must ensure that proper analysis is conducted at the very outset so that - from conception to implementation - we are assured that mandates are designed and operations resourced to meet the real security challenges that such missions face on the ground.

Equally we must be transparent and open when we identify failures. Only by learning from our mistakes and holding ourselves accountable can we ensure that our words of support in this Chamber are not hollow and that mistakes are not repeated. This goes to the heart of the credibility of this Council.

The Cruz report highlighted the incoherence that often exists between mandates and capabilities. This is not a bureaucratic or theoretic concern. If we continue to fail to act on this call we will, as the Cruz report states, “...be responsible for consciously putting our personnel in harm's way.” Effective, focussed and appropriately resourced operations drive efficient operations - we must ensure that our drive for efficiencies does not blind us to this fact.

Key Regional Partner Organisations, such as the European Union, are developing capability platforms that could help address some of the resource challenges that UN peacekeeping missions face. Ireland is ready to work with the UN in the framework of PESCO to develop and utilise these tools for the benefit of all.

Effectiveness is also strengthened through the increased participation of women as peacekeepers, an aim to which Ireland is committed, along with doubling female participation in our Defence Forces. Ireland recently co-hosted an event in the Netherlands with the Dutch Foreign Ministry which focused on the challenges that remain in addressing structural and societal barriers to such participation. We need to listen more to those women peacekeepers in the field to allow us strategically effect change.

Similarly we need to be more strategic on the issue of capacity. We know training is a key issue and many members have provided offers in this area. We now need to identify where gaps continue to exist and consider how best we address those.

Now more than ever the UN needs to demonstrate that it is capable of fulfilling its obligations. This requires developing the capacities of those who we call upon to carry out that role.

Mr President,

Responding to and addressing conflict demands the use of the widest possible range of tools and instruments: security is just one step on the path to peace. To that end, Ireland fully supports the Secretary-General's reform efforts, in particular the increased emphasis on prevention and political strategies. The most effective means at our disposal for the protection of our citizens, for the protection of our peacekeepers, is taking action that means they need never be deployed.

Thank you.