

**Security Council Open Debate on UN Peacekeeping: A Multidimensional Approach, January 21<sup>st</sup> 2013, Security Council Chamber**

*Statement by Ms. Anderson, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations.*

A written version of my statement is being circulated, and I will deliver a slightly abbreviated version so as to respect the time constraints.

I welcome the initiative that Pakistan has taken in scheduling this open debate on United Nations peacekeeping. Indeed, for such a crucial and iconic part of the United Nation's work — Blue Helmets are instantly recognized the world over — the Council would undoubtedly benefit from scheduling such debates more frequently.

Ireland is one of the staunchest supporters of United Nations peacekeeping, with our Defence Forces participating continuously in United Nations peace operations since their first deployment 55 years ago. We are also among the top 10 donors to the Peacebuilding Fund. We are therefore keenly interested in the evolving interlinkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. I would like today to touch briefly on four points.

My first point concerns sustainability. Paragraph 1 of resolution 2086 (2013), adopted earlier today, refers to peacekeeping contributing to “a comprehensive strategy for durable peace and security”. There are at least two critical aspects to ensuring such durability or sustainability. First, peacebuilding tasks must be undertaken by peacekeepers in a coordinated and coherent manner within an integrated United Nations framework. Secondly, they must support national strategic priorities and planning.

The question of how quick-impact projects can contribute more effectively to peacebuilding is of relevance here. From the many such projects delivered over the years by the Irish Defence Forces, we have learned one key lesson. While maintaining the flexibility and responsiveness characteristic of these projects, efforts to better coordinate and integrate them into broader frameworks greatly enhance their sustainability, and thereby their impact.

My second point concerns realism. We must do more to engender a sense of realism. Oscar Wilde famously wrote: “I can resist anything except temptation”. Over time, the temptation before this Council has been to add, paragraph by paragraph in mandate resolutions, more and broader objectives. No one objects to these objectives, but missions — even modern multidimensional operations — struggle to deliver them as an entire set, not least because they do not always receive a proportionate increase in resources or clear guidance as to what the real priorities are. As a United Nations community, it is important that we either match our expectations of missions with resources, or alternatively we should temper our ambitions. It is wishful thinking, and even somewhat hypocritical, to try to have it both ways.

In standing back and looking at the peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities currently undertaken by the United Nations, we must also ask ourselves whether we, collectively, are continuing disproportionately to focus on the symptoms of conflict at the expense of addressing the root causes. It is a truism that preventing conflict is far more cost-effective than managing crises, yet we continue to pour resources into the latter.

Perhaps a paradigm shift is needed. Rather than saddling peacekeeping missions with more and more responsibilities, we should instead be thinking about enhancing political peacebuilding missions, separate missions, or separate arms within existing missions. But this is a larger debate for another

day.

My third point concerns the role of regional organizations. Ireland has direct experience of the positive contribution that regional organizations can make to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We have led initiatives to improve cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in relation to peace operations and have given financial support to the expansion of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Liaison Office in Brussels. In the written version of my statement, I set out in some detail how Ireland is utilizing its current presidency of the Council of the European Union as an opportunity to drive efforts to further enhance this European Union/ United Nations cooperation. I also make the point that more prominence could be given to non-United Nations partners, including regional organizations, in the United Nations lessons-learned processes.

The fourth point concerns gender. There is a crucial element common to peacekeeping and peacebuilding that is conspicuous by its absence in the concept note for today's debate (S/2013/4, annex). Perhaps the single most transformative step towards ensuring the success of peacekeepers as early peacebuilders would be the deployment of more women on missions. If deployed peacekeeping missions were to reach out to populations in more traditional societies, the deployment of more women would act as a multiplier of peacebuilding potential.

This is a difficult challenge for all troop contributors, no less for Ireland than for any other Member of the United Nations. The Irish Defence Forces ensure that its personnel receive tailored predeployment training in the human rights of women and minorities, cultural awareness and codes of conduct and behaviour. We also fund and participate in a gender perspective pilot programme in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. But there is an important point to be made. If we are serious about achieving the current targets for women in peacekeeping, we have to think realistically about finding the necessary incentives and innovative ways to advance towards these targets.

I would conclude by acknowledging the sacrifices made by peacekeepers seeking to sustain and build peace in some of the most difficult places on Earth. In the past year, 111 peacekeepers were killed in carrying out their duty. It is our duty here in New York to ensure that the work of those who run such risks makes the maximum possible difference.