

President Kaljulaid: I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate. We in Estonia remain committed to Secretary-General Guterres' reform agenda. Reforms should take us to a more effective United Nations, with a clear emphasis on conflict prevention and mediation. Our peacekeeping operations must have tangible targets and exit strategies. To be effective, the operations must have built-in flexibility, as the surrounding situation is inevitably volatile.

The best information about the changing needs come from our mission commanders and other field entities. Applying their suggestions guarantees automatic adaptation to changes on the ground. In addition, listening to those in the field and taking into account what they have to say is good for the motivation of our field staff. We need those with courage to reach out to us decision makers. These people are with us only if we respond in a receptive manner. Thus, we create a positive circuit of adaptation necessary to achieve our peacekeeping objectives.

To achieve sustainable peace, partnership with regional organizations, host Governments and local communities is vital. It is best done by demonstrating day after day how important it is for us to protect civilians, assure the sustainability of the rule of law, respect for human rights and international law, and to involve local actors in supporting the core values underlying all our actions.

Peacekeeping operations need to be complemented with activities aimed at effectively improving the living conditions of the affected populations, including the quick implementation of effective and visible projects that create jobs and deliver basic social services in the post-conflict phase. Also, all mechanisms to support women's full participation in peacebuilding and security issues are vital, as they will also guarantee the best protection of children in mission areas.

We can achieve sustainable peace only if we have a thorough and broad understanding of conflicts and their root causes. In that regard, it is unfortunate that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali will be left without its intelligence unit. The latter provided decision makers on all levels with unique understanding of the issues at hand.

United Nations peacekeeping operations have an essential role to play in securing peace and stability globally. Unfortunately, peacekeeping operations are sometimes seen as a waste of resources, with a lack of positive outcomes, but we know that the truth is quite the opposite, and we must find ways to make that common knowledge. Communication is an important guarantee of the continued support of general public.

Wide attention via modern channels is difficult to achieve, but it is rapidly becoming one of the most efficient tools for sharing our objectives, actions and achieved results. As research shows, peacekeeping reduces the number of civilians killed. Moreover, it is also cost-effective. The United Nations peacekeeping budget is less than half of 1 per cent of global military spending, and it is shared among all 193 United Nations Member States. That is the simple truth that we

have every right to be proud of while we continue to aspire to the constant improvement of our peacekeeping activities, as we should do in this unpredictable world.