

United Nations Security Council Open Debate "Advancing Adaptability in UN Peace Operations – Responding to new Realities" (chaired by Lars Rasmussen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark) - Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus, H.E. Mrs. Maria Michail

Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this timely debate. I would also like to thank the briefers for their insightful presentations.

Allow me first to express our appreciation for the service of personnel dedicated to the pursuit of peace everywhere.

At a time when the world faces complex, multifaceted challenges that threaten international peace and security, Peace Operations have a vital role to play. For decades, they have offered proof that multilateralism works, by helping countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace, thus being one of the most effective instruments for conflict mitigation and stabilization.

In the face of evolving and divergent crises, where Peace Operations are called upon to move beyond traditional tasks, it has become necessary to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency, but also to bolster global peace and security as a whole. In this context, we must build on our commitments in the Pact for the Future and ensure their implementation. Acting in accordance with international law, including the Charter, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Member States, should not be just a catchphrase, but a deeply ingrained part of who we are, individually and collectively.

Cyprus supports efforts to reform Peace Operations, to ensure that they are truly fit for purpose. Improving the performance of Peace Operations is of strategic importance to be in operational readiness to fully implement their mandate, effectively uphold the resolutions of the Security Council and prevent the creation of *faits accomplis* on the ground that may hamper the resolution of conflicts. They must be sufficiently manned, equipped and financed, while *equitable gender representation is an important component*

that further contributes to the improvement of their effectiveness. Cyprus supports the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and welcomes the increasing efforts for greater participation of women in UN Peace Operations.

As one of the few UN Member States that is both a troop contributor and the host country to one of the longest-running peacekeeping operations in the world, as well as a Good Offices Mission, Cyprus, a victim itself of foreign aggression and illegal military occupation, can attest to the necessity of sustaining a UN force that prevents the recurrence of fighting, of the peaceful settlement of disputes, and of supporting UN Peace Operations, particularly in the face of ever-evolving challenges.

In the current global geopolitical context, it is imperative for the UN, and the Security Council in particular, to demonstrate that there are no double standards in the application of the Charter. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of States under attack must be defended, no matter where the attacks are coming from or how much time has passed. The Security Council must stand behind its own resolutions and ensure they have meaning; otherwise, the credibility of the international system is severely undermined.

It is equally essential to ensure that impartiality for Peace Operations translates to adherence to the principles of the Charter, the ability to distinguish victim from aggressor, as well as putting an end to any attempts to interfere with their status and deployment. Transparent and sincere cooperation with the Host State is a sine qua non. Peace Operations must refrain from any action that may affect efforts towards resolving or preempting a political solution to a conflict.

Peace Operations are ultimately not an end in themselves. They can only create and maintain conditions conducive to the fundamental task of achieving lasting political solutions, including by contributing to sustaining dialogue and promoting confidence-building measures. While they must be sufficiently equipped and supported to fulfil their functions, Member States ultimately bear the responsibility for building and sustaining

peace in their own countries, and as such contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security. To this extent, collective efforts are needed to address the root causes of conflicts and their consequences, prevent recurrence, and uphold human rights with no exceptions.

I thank you.