

The Road to Seoul: Previewing the 2021 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial

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Executive Summary

The UN peacekeeping ministerial process has emerged as one of the flagship vehicles through which the UN can mobilize concrete pledges of uniformed personnel, enablers, financial resources, and capacity building for peacekeeping operations. This process benefits UN peacekeeping in multiple ways, including by:

- Encouraging member states to make new pledges and follow through on prior ones;
- Leading the UN to establish new units and processes for soliciting contributions;
- Expanding the idea of what pledges can entail;
- Allowing member states to support more diverse areas of peacekeeping reform;
- Affording the Secretariat opportunities to build support for peacekeeping reform; and
- Creating a standing platform for high-level dialogue on UN peacekeeping.

The 2021 UN peacekeeping ministerial in Seoul, Republic of Korea—the sixth high-level conference since 2014—is structured around four substantive sessions: (1) peacebuilding and sustaining peace; (2) partnerships for capacity building and training; (3) performance and accountability; and (4) protection of civilians and safety and security. Each of these themes was featured in a stand-alone preparatory conference, which lays the groundwork for the ministerial by allowing member states to learn about the priority areas and reflect on possible pledges.

The conference also has two cross-cutting themes: technology and medical capacity building. These themes reflect several of the challenges facing UN peacekeepers around the world, including sustained deployments to high-risk environments, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and rapid changes in the technological tools available to peacekeepers.

The 2021 ministerial presents a valuable opportunity for member states to make pledges across these areas. Based on the preparatory conferences, the UN's official pledging guide, and independent white papers commissioned by the Republic of Korea, this paper outlines several of the areas where pledges would be particularly useful.

Introduction

The 2021 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial will be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from December 7 to 8, 2021. It will be the sixth high-level meeting in support of UN peacekeeping convened by member states and the UN Secretariat since 2014. These meetings are intended to sustain political support for UN peacekeeping operations and encourage member states to offer concrete pledges of uniformed personnel, enablers, financial resources, and capacity building. The ministerial process is formally co-chaired by the Secretariat and 12 member states and is supported by more than 130 member states in total, many of which are members of the UN General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34).¹

The Seoul ministerial conference is set to take place at a time of mounting pressure on UN peacekeeping operations. UN peacekeepers are increasingly deployed to complex, high-risk environments where they are asked to implement multifaceted mandates, including to accompany political processes, protect civilians, and support stabilization and early recovery. Growing threats to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers, combined with the enormous geographic areas they cover, challenge missions' long-term effectiveness and day-to-day operations. Many of these challenges are exacerbated by the enduring impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has altered the work both of UN missions around the world and of the host countries in which they operate.²

The formal objective of the 2021 ministerial conference is “to strengthen UN peacekeeping, including by improving the performance and impact of UN peacekeeping operations in line with the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative; and to further

this objective, close capability gaps through concrete pledges, including by facilitating new and sustainable partnerships while strengthening existing ones.”³ The conference will be structured around four substantive sessions, each of which will feature topics previously discussed in detail during dedicated preparatory conferences convened by the ministerial co-chairs between November 2020 and October 2021. As host, the Republic of Korea has identified technology and medical capacity building as crosscutting themes for the conference.

This issue brief offers a preview of the 2021 peacekeeping ministerial in Seoul. It discusses the motivation for and evolution of the ministerial format and its value to UN peacekeeping. It highlights the issues discussed during the four previous preparatory conferences and briefly summarizes topics raised in both the UN's official pledging guide and independent white papers commissioned by the Republic of Korea.⁴

Brief History of the Ministerial Process: What Are the Benefits for UN Peacekeeping?

At its core, UN peacekeeping is a global partnership among member states, each with its own interests and capabilities related to international peace and security. The ministerial has emerged as one of the flagship vehicles through which the UN can mobilize and encourage political, financial, material, and personnel support for UN peacekeeping operations. It also embodies the inherent partnership dimension of UN peacekeeping, as “each member state will have different ideas on

1 The twelve member-state co-chairs of the 2021 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial process are Bangladesh, Canada, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay.

2 UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO), “Impact of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping,” available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/impact-of-covid-19-un-peacekeeping>. The Seoul ministerial conference was originally scheduled for mid-2020 but was pushed back to December 2021 because of the pandemic.

3 Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Defense, “Official Website of the 2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial—Conference Summary,” 2021, available at www.unpko2021.kr/EN/Conference/summary.

4 To help inform member states' pledges and in support of the Republic of Korea's hosting of the 2021 ministerial conference, IPI commissioned papers on the role of UN peacekeeping in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, improving the performance and impact of UN peacekeeping operations, capacity building and training, and technology and medical capacity to support UN peacekeeping. These papers are intended to complement ministerial-related documents circulated to member states by DPO, including the concept note and pledging guide. See: Arthur Boutellis, “Impact-Driven Peacekeeping Partnerships for Capacity Building and Training,” IPI White Paper, June 2020; Daniel Forti and Richard Gowan, “Sustaining Peace and UN Peacekeeping,” IPI White Paper, October 2020; Alison Giffen, “Improving the Performance and Impact of UN Peacekeeping Operations,” IPI White Paper, June 2021; and Jake Sherman, “Technology and Medical Capacities to Enhance UN Peacekeeping,” IPI White Paper, August 2021.

what they can commit to, based on their own national capacities and priorities. There is value in working together to maximize coherence and impact where possible.”⁵

The ministerial process emerged in direct response to two contemporary challenges confronting peacekeeping operations: first, the need for sustained high-level political support for specific missions and for the broader enterprise of UN peacekeeping; and second, many missions’ lack of the necessary capabilities to adapt to—let alone thrive in—complex operational environ-

The ministerial has emerged as one of the flagship vehicles through which the UN can mobilize and encourage support for UN peacekeeping operations.

ments. The 2014 Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping, convened by then-US Vice President Joe Biden and former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, served as the inaugural high-level meeting.⁶ Since then, member states and the Secretariat have convened four additional high-level meetings (see Box 1). Over time, the format has evolved: while it started as a summit of heads of state and government (albeit with most countries participating at the level of defense minister), it later became a conference primarily among defense ministers and, most recently, among both defense and foreign ministers.

Box 1. Chronology of peacekeeping summits and ministerials (2014-2021)⁷

2014 Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping: The inaugural leaders’ summit, hosted at UN headquarters, was formally titled “Strengthening International Peace Operations.”⁸ It was co-hosted by five countries (at the level of head of state or government), with twenty-seven additional countries participating. Explaining his motivation for convening the event, Secretary-General Ban emphasized that “without wide-ranging and tangible support from Member States, peacekeeping missions cannot deploy quickly, operate safely and nimbly, or protect civilians across massive spaces and difficult terrain.”⁹ Thirty-one countries announced pledges at or following the summit, including new commitments of uniformed personnel, training programs, earmarked financial contributions, and enablers such as helicopters and military-level hospitals.¹⁰ During his remarks at the summit, Ban also announced his intention to review peacekeeping operations and special political missions; the following month, he appointed the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) to undertake this review.

2015 Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping: Convened during the General Assembly high-level week on the UN’s seventieth anniversary, the 2015 summit aspired to “help meet persistent capacity gaps, improve the performance and capabilities of uniformed personnel, support rapid deployment and reinforce and enhance the foundation for future peacekeeping efforts.”¹¹ The number of co-chairs expanded from five to nine countries; regional meetings hosted by some of the co-chairs served as the first (albeit informal) preparatory conferences.¹² The summit was also the first to situate the anticipated contributions from member states in

5 Concept note for the 2020 Preparatory Conference on Sustaining Peace and Transitions (on file with author).

6 The summit was formally co-hosted by Bangladesh, Japan, Pakistan, Rwanda, and the United States. UN Secretary-General, “Secretary-General’s Remarks at Summit on UN Peacekeeping,” press statement, September 26, 2014; White House Office of the Press Secretary, “Fact Sheet: Summit on UN Peacekeeping,” press release, September 26, 2014.

7 This list does not include the 2016 ministerial conference on “Peacekeeping in Francophone Environments.” This conference was co-hosted by Bangladesh, Canada, France, Germany, and Senegal and brought together leaders of francophone countries and countries engaged in peace operations in francophone regions, as well as representatives of other international organizations. This ministerial focused on generating additional resources for UN peacekeeping operations deployed in francophone countries, directly supporting francophone troop-contributing countries, and strengthening the bilingual capabilities of all UN peacekeeping efforts.

8 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Summit Meeting on UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO),” September 29, 2014, available at www.mofa.go.jp/tp/tp/page1e_000035.html.

9 UN Secretary-General, “Secretary-General’s Remarks at Summit on UN Peacekeeping.”

10 UN DPO, “Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping,” 2014, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/leaders-summit-peacekeeping-0>.

11 UN DPO, “Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping,” 2015, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/leaders-summit-peacekeeping>.

12 These meetings were held with the “aim of strengthening cooperation among relevant actors, as well as contributing to improving the UN peacekeeping architecture overall.” Ibid.

the context of peacekeeping reform by welcoming the HIPPO report. Fifty-two countries and international organizations announced pledges at the leaders' summit, amounting to over "40,000 troops and police, as well as critical enablers including more than 40 helicopters, 22 engineering companies, 11 naval and riverine units, and 13 field hospitals."¹³

2016 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial: Hosted by the United Kingdom and co-chaired by the UN and nine other member states, the 2016 ministerial was framed as both a high-level gathering to support UN peacekeeping and an explicit follow-up to the 2015 summit. The ministerial was structured to celebrate previous and new pledges, improve mission planning, and improve performance ("the 3 Ps of peacekeeping reform").¹⁴ One of the four plenary sessions was dedicated to the intersection between the women, peace, and security agenda and peacekeeping performance. Seventy-five member states and five international organizations participated in the ministerial, with thirty member states offering new pledges.¹⁵

2017 Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference: Hosted by Canada and co-chaired by the UN and ten additional member states, the 2017 ministerial again focused on pledges, peacekeeping reform, and peacekeeping performance. The plenary sessions focused on four issues, each of which was discussed at a preparatory conference in the preceding months: "smart pledges" (commitments made in partnership between two or more member states); innovation in capacity building and training; protecting those at risk; and early warning and rapid deployment.¹⁶ It also emphasized sustainable partnerships among member states to address critical gaps in peacekeeping capabilities. Some member states used the session to launch the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers.¹⁷ Sixty-four countries announced new pledges or updated prior commitments. Canada also announced the creation of the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations as a centerpiece of its own pledges.¹⁸

2019 Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference: Convened on the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, the 2019 ministerial maintained the high-level objectives of sustaining the momentum of peacekeeping reform and generating specialized capabilities. It also emphasized "mission performance, the protection of civilians and women, peace, and security."¹⁹ This ministerial was the first to invite both defense and foreign ministries in recognition of their complementary roles in spearheading national peacekeeping contributions. Preparatory conferences focused on capacity building and training; protection and performance; and women, peace, and security.²⁰ Forty-five member states announced new pledges of military and police units, training assistance, or financial support.²¹

13 UK Ministry of Defence and UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, "UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial: London Communiqué," September 8, 2016; UN DPO, "Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping," 2015.

14 Michael Fallon, "Opening Speech at UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial: London 2016," speech delivered at the UN Peacekeeping Defense Ministerial, London, UK, September 8, 2016.

15 UK Ministry of Defence, "UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial—Pledge Slides," September 21, 2016, Annex A.

16 These preparatory meetings were held in Kigali, Rwanda; Dhaka, Bangladesh; and Tokyo, Japan, respectively.

17 Government of Canada, "The Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers," November 15, 2017, available at https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/principles-vancouver-principes-english.pdf.

18 Canada Department of National Defence, "UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial: Report," June 22, 2018, available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/un-peace-keeping/report.html>.

19 UN DPO, "2019 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial: Uniformed Capabilities, Performance and Protection—Chair's Summary," March 29, 2019.

20 Preparatory meetings were held in Montevideo, Uruguay; The Hague, Netherlands; and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, respectively.

21 UN DPO, "2019 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial: Uniformed Capabilities, Performance and Protection—Member State Pledges," March 29, 2019.

The ministerial process offers multiple benefits to UN peacekeeping. First, it regularly encourages member states to consider making new pledges and follow through on prior commitments. The UN encourages member-state pledges to be “a commitment from the highest political level with a tangible and concrete outcome that will be delivered in a specific timeframe.”²² Prior to the convening of these ministerials, most member-state contributions were ad hoc and largely motivated by national interests. Through the establishment of a formal ministerial process and dedicated Secretariat teams to facilitate it, the UN is now able to better articulate and prioritize “concrete deliverables and targets” (i.e., detailed “asks” by the Secretariat and “gives” by UN member states).²³

Second, the ministerial process has led the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and Department of Operational Support (DOS) to establish new units and processes to support the UN in soliciting and coordinating member-state contributions.²⁴ Specifically, the UN established the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell in 2015 “to engage actively with member states to address key capability gaps and increase female participation; to ensure that deployments occur more quickly; to widen the base of troop/police contributors; and to improve the performance of peacekeepers.”²⁵ The UN also set up the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) as a system-wide platform for member states to register pledges of uniformed and civilian capabilities and for the UN system to verify these capabilities with the goal of promoting a “greater degree of readiness and predictability.”²⁶

Third, the ministerial process has helped expand the idea of what member-state pledges can entail. It demystifies the traditional conception of peacekeeping partners as either contributors of police

and troops or as financial contributors (through the annual assessed peacekeeping budget) and seeks to address endemic challenges to force generation.²⁷ Through detailed discussions on the capabilities required both by individual missions and by UN peacekeeping more broadly, the ministerial process has reinforced the idea that all member states can contribute. When comparing member-state pledges from 2014 to 2019, there is a clear shift toward more diversified pledges including specialized uniformed personnel (i.e., police with SWAT capabilities); specific logistical or technological enablers such as helicopters; personnel and financial support for training activities; and budgetary or political support to specific initiatives led by DPO or individual member states.²⁸

Fourth, the ministerial and its accompanying preparatory conferences have allowed member states to provide high-level support to more diverse areas of UN peacekeeping reform. While preparatory meetings initially emerged to help member states refine their potential pledges through multi-stakeholder inputs and discussions, they also embody the potential for collaboration among member states with different national priorities related to peacekeeping. Preparatory meetings have also prominently featured issues such as women, peace, and security and sustaining peace that are related to UN peacekeeping but fall outside the traditional domain of force generation.²⁹

Fifth, the ministerial process has afforded the Secretariat opportunities to build support for peacekeeping reform among member states. The secretary-general used the 2014 leaders’ summit to introduce the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), and the panel’s report the following year became a cornerstone of the 2015, 2016, and 2017 summits. The 2017 report on

22 UN DPO, “2021 Seoul UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Pledging Guide,” August 18, 2021, available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/210816_pkmin_pledging_guidepotential_list_of_pledges.pdf.

23 UN DPO, “Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements for United Nations Peacekeeping,” June 2021.

24 Much of this work started prior to 2019 when DPO and the Department of Operational Support (DOS) were operating in their previous incarnations (the Department of Peacekeeping Operations [DPKO] and Department of Field Support [DFS], respectively).

25 Security Council Report, “Peacekeeping Operations: Strategic Force Generation,” September 28, 2017.

26 UN DPO and DOS, “Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System Guidelines,” UN Doc. Ref. 2019.01, January 1, 2019, p. 3.

27 See: UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People*, UN Doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, June 17, 2015, para. 35.

28 UN DPO, “Summit on Strengthening International Peace Operations: Informal Pledges,” September 26, 2014; UN DPO, “2019 Peacekeeping Ministerial: Final Pledge List,” April 24, 2019.

29 Women, peace, and security was the subject of preparatory meetings in 2017, 2019, and 2021. Sustaining peace was the subject of a preparatory meeting in 2021.

“Improving the Security of UN Peacekeepers” (the “Cruz report”) emphasized many issues at the heart of what the UN seeks from member-state pledges. Similarly, the secretary-general’s Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the accompanying Declaration of Shared Commitments have provided context for the UN’s priorities and requests of member states in the run-up to the 2019 and 2021 ministerials.³⁰

Finally, the ministerial process has created a standing platform for high-level political dialogue on UN peacekeeping among many member states. There are already routine conversations between the Secretariat and permanent missions in New York (including through the C-34 and the Security Council), as well as high-level bilateral meetings and the occasional conference convened by another international organization. The ministerial complements these interactions by providing a dedicated forum for defense and foreign ministers (and their respective bureaucracies) to reflect on the strategic and operational challenges confronting contemporary UN peacekeeping, learn from existing bilateral and multilateral partnerships, and identify new areas for collaboration. This kind of dialogue is exemplified by the growth in the number of ministerial co-chairs and the diverse partnerships they have formed.

Takeaways from the Preparatory Conferences

The 2021 UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Seoul is structured around four substantive sessions, each of which was featured in a stand-alone preparatory conference convened virtually between November 2020 and October 2021:

- Peacebuilding and sustaining peace (co-hosted by Bangladesh, Canada, and the United Kingdom);
- Partnerships for performance and accountability (co-hosted by Rwanda and the United States);
- Partnership for training and capacity building

(co-hosted by Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Japan); and

- Protection of civilians and safety and security (co-hosted by the Netherlands and Pakistan).

The practice of convening preparatory conferences began in the run-up to the 2017 peacekeeping defense ministerial and has been used in every ministerial since. Preparatory conferences lay the groundwork for ministerial conferences by providing dedicated sessions during which member states can learn about the priority areas and reflect on possible pledges to announce in the following months. They also allow the host and the co-chairs to emphasize specific priorities that align with their own national interests and capabilities while strengthening the overall effectiveness and impact of UN peacekeeping operations.

This section summarizes key issues raised during each of the 2021 peacekeeping ministerial preparatory conferences. It also briefly introduces some of the ideas for member-state pledges raised in the preparatory conferences, white papers, and UN pledging guide. While these preparatory conferences addressed the ministerial’s priorities in four distinct discussions, many of the issues and possible pledges overlap and intersect with one another.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

The November 2020 preparatory conference on peacebuilding and sustaining peace was the ministerial process’s first stand-alone discussion on the intersection of this issue with UN peacekeeping operations. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace has been an important priority for the UN system since the adoption of the twin General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on this subject in 2016.³¹ The sustaining peace agenda emphasizes the linkages between the UN’s peace and security, development, and human rights pillars; engagement during all phases of the “conflict cycle”; and the importance of addressing multiple levels of conflict.³² UN peacekeeping operations have

³⁰ This includes the A4P agenda released in 2018 as well as the A4P+ priorities for the period 2021–2023.

³¹ UN General Assembly Resolution 70/262 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. A/RES/70/262; UN Security Council Resolution 2282 (April 27, 2016), UN Doc. S/RES/2282.

³² Forti and Gowan, “Sustaining Peace and UN Peacekeeping,” p. 1.

consistently been viewed as important contributors to comprehensive strategies for sustaining peace. The 2015 reports by HIPPO and the Advisory Group of Experts on the UN peacebuilding architecture both spoke to the role UN peacekeeping operations can play in sustaining peace alongside UN peacebuilding and development entities. This role has since been reaffirmed through Security Council presidential statements, the A4P initiative and its Declaration of Shared Commitments, and recent reports of the General Assembly's C-34 committee.³³

The UN's increasing focus on peacekeeping transitions has also put a spotlight on the contributions of peacekeeping operations to sustaining peace. By prioritizing national ownership and capacity and working with other UN actors to provide integrated and coherent support, peacekeeping operations are well positioned to "lay the foundations for sustaining peace beyond the lifetime [of a mission]."³⁴ Underscored by recent experiences with the closure of four long-standing missions, as well as the notion that "all UN missions are in transition,"³⁵ the sustaining peace agenda is becoming increasingly integral to mission transitions.³⁶

Despite this growing consensus on the role of UN peacekeeping operations in sustaining peace, there have been few discussions on how member states can make concrete contributions to these efforts. Much of the recent progress has come from within the UN system rather than from member states. For example, the UN has increasingly focused on system-wide integration, transition planning, early warning and conflict prevention, and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.³⁷ It has also championed the flexible deployment of experts on the rule of law and peacebuilding, particularly as

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host-country priorities change. And the UN has consistently advocated for member states to provide missions dedicated peacebuilding funding that complements mission-mandated priorities, whether through UN mechanisms or other international frameworks.

The virtual preparatory conference broke new ground by emphasizing how member-state pledges could complement and supplement the peacebuilding priorities of UN peacekeeping operations. Discussions focused on mission-specific gaps in capacity for sustaining peace; coordination and integration on sustaining peace between peacekeeping operations and UN country teams; predictable and coordinated peacebuilding financing; and support to national peacebuilding and development priorities. The conference also featured breakout discussions on the women, peace, and security agenda; UN support to institution building and training; and sustainable financing in transition contexts.

With these priorities in mind, member states could consider three categories of pledges: expertise, funding, and indirect support. Regarding the first category, member states are well positioned to provide dedicated expertise on core sustaining-peace priorities identified by missions. This could include experts on mandate-relevant substantive areas (including military gender and protection advisers), strategic analysis and planning experts (uniformed or civilian and within missions or at UN headquarters), and police (either individual police officers or specialized police teams, in line with needs identified by the Police Division).³⁸ Member states could also support UN efforts to strengthen its standing capacities, such as through secondments to the UN Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law.

33 UN Security Council Presidential Statement 2017/27 (December 21, 2017), UN Doc. S/PRST/2017/27; UN Security Council Presidential Statement 2018/20 (December 18, 2018), UN Doc. S/PRST/2018/20.

34 UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*, UN Doc. A/74/976-S/2020/773, July 30, 2020, para. 16.

35 Jean-Pierre LaCroix, "Preparatory Conference on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace—Chair's Summary" (on file with author), November 2020.

36 UN Security Council Resolution 2594 (September 9, 2021), UN Doc. S/RES/2594.

37 Forti and Gowan, "Sustaining Peace and UN Peacekeeping," p. 11.

38 These mandate-relevant substantive areas could include inclusive political processes, provision of justice, local dispute resolution, governance, rule of law, security sector reform, and basic service delivery.

Second, member states could provide financial support to UN missions in support of their peacebuilding and development priorities. They could make these contributions through established vehicles like the UN Peacebuilding Fund for projects in transition settings—one of the fund’s priorities in its 2020–2024 strategy.³⁹ When peacekeeping operations downsize, member states could also provide financial support to resident coordinator’s offices to maintain the UN’s capacity, particularly on political analysis and situational awareness. Providing programmatic funding for other UN peacebuilding actors to work alongside DPO and UN peacekeeping operations is another medium-term priority.

Finally, member states could indirectly support peacekeeping operations by supporting national and international entities that work alongside them on their mandated priorities. They could do this through bilateral arrangements with the host country, through partnerships organized via the Triangular Partnership Program and Light Coordination Mechanism, or through other UN entities. Possible pledges could focus on training for national security institutions and militaries as well as logistical enablers that peacekeeping operations could use to support UN agencies and humanitarian partners. More broadly, member states could better coordinate their financial support to host countries based on nationally defined peacebuilding priorities.

Partnerships for Performance and Accountability

Improving the speed, capability, and performance of uniformed personnel in UN peacekeeping operations has been an organizational priority since the HIPPO report.⁴⁰ One of the A4P initiative’s eight pillars is dedicated to prioritizing “effective performance and accountability by all peacekeeping components”; this pillar is also an A4P+ priority for the next three years.⁴¹

The July 2021 virtual preparatory conference on partnerships for performance and accountability sought to unpack how performance and accountability impact the implementation of peacekeeping mandates in increasingly complex environments. It included sessions on the role of partnerships in these efforts, the impact of performance and accountability on protection of civilians (POC) mandates, and member-state partnerships to address gaps in the capabilities of specific missions.

The UN Secretariat has undertaken several initiatives to strengthen performance and accountability in missions and build the architecture to sustain these efforts. The Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System and Strategic Force Generation and Planning Cell verify the capabilities and readiness of troop- and police-contributing countries’ (T/PCCs) units to deploy. The Secretariat continues to improve policies, guidance, training, and standards for military and police components; it complements these efforts with performance-evaluation systems and inspections, including those undertaken by DPO’s Force Generation Service and Military Performance Evaluation Taskforce.⁴²

The UN has also broadened these discussions beyond the performance of uniformed components to consider whole-of-mission and whole-of-system performance. Toward this end, the UN has focused on the actions of mission leadership, civilian personnel, and the Secretariat in the context of how mission mandates, structures, policies, and incentives shape performance. Two specific initiatives stand out. The first is the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS), which is an integrated tool for assessing the performance of an entire mission through “context mapping, comprehensive results frameworks, and performance assessments of outputs and impacts.”⁴³ The second is the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework, which offers an overview of all

39 UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), “Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund: 2020–2024 Strategy,” March 2020.

40 UN Doc. A/70/95–S/2015/446, p. 13.

41 United Nations, “Secretary-General’s Initiative on Action for Peacekeeping,” available at www.un.org/en/A4P/.

42 Giffen, “Improving the Performance and Impact of UN Peacekeeping Operations,” p. 5.

43 Namie Di Razza, “The Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping (CPAS Fact Sheet),” International Peace Institute, December 2020; UN Security Council, *Letter Dated 16 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council Addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the Members of the Security Council*, UN Doc. S/2020/911, September 17, 2020, Annex 1.

performance-related tools and measures in order to strengthen organizational coherence.⁴⁴

To improve peacekeeping performance, the UN and member states need to uphold their commitment to increase the number and strengthen the capabilities of women peacekeepers. Participants in the preparatory conference emphasized the need to systematically include women peacekeepers at all levels of seniority and in all mission functions. They also noted the importance of mobilizing domestic and international support for peacekeeping-training initiatives and encouraged more dedicated support to help member states deploy engagement teams and engagement platoons.⁴⁵

Potential member-state pledges related to peacekeeping performance fall into two categories: contributions to fill gaps in capabilities and capacity, including enablers for mission mobility, mission-specific uniformed capabilities, and capacity for analysis, planning, and evaluation; and support to accountability efforts.

Improving performance requires filling missions' capability and capacity gaps.

For example, the UN's pledging guide highlights the UN missions in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and Mali (MINUSMA) as two missions in need of specific uniformed capabilities to improve their performance, including utility and armed helicopters, a company-size quick-reaction force, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Beyond filling such capability gaps, participants also encouraged member states to shift from one-off pledges toward those that build T/PCCs' long-term capacity to deploy. Such capacity-building and training efforts (discussed above) help member states analyze their performance and build the institutional knowledge needed to improve in the long term.

Improving mission performance also requires

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pledges to support accountability efforts, including on issues related to conduct and discipline as well as accountability for mandate implementation and operations.⁴⁶ During the preparatory conference, discussions on accountability also focused on the issue of caveats. Participants highlighted that member states should be more transparent and predictable on the conditions they place on their uniformed contributions.⁴⁷

The DPO pledging guide suggests that member states make pledges on accountability related to both performance and conduct and discipline. Based on the A4P+ priority of "accountability of peacekeepers," member states could support conduct and discipline by signing the voluntary compact on eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse. They could also focus on making pledges that support peacekeeping operations and uniformed components in reducing their carbon

footprint and integrating renewable energy into their operations. Based on the A4P+ priority of "accountability to peacekeepers," member states could pledge to "generate additional political, financial, and operational support to bring to justice perpetrators of

criminal acts against peacekeepers" and help host-country authorities investigate and prosecute these cases.⁴⁸

Partnerships for Capacity Building and Training

Capacity-building and training initiatives are among the most prominent areas for member-state partnerships on peacekeeping. These initiatives have not only been at the heart of recent peacekeeping reform initiatives like A4P, the A4P+ priorities, and the Action Plan for the Safety and Security of Peacekeepers, but they have also featured in member-state pledges and dedicated preparatory conferences for the 2016, 2017, and

44 Giffen, "Improving the Performance and Impact of UN Peacekeeping Operations," pp. 6–7.

45 Gretchen Baldwin, "From Female Engagement Teams to Engagement Platoons: The Evolution of Gendered Community Engagement in UN Peace Operations," International Peace Institute, November 2021.

46 Di Razza, "The Accountability System for the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping."

47 Giffen, "Improving the Performance and Impact of UN Peacekeeping Operations," pp. 5–6.

48 UN DPO, "2021 Pledging Guide."

2019 ministerials.⁴⁹

The ministerials' sustained emphasis on capacity building and training underscores how all member states and the Secretariat are responsible for the effectiveness of peacekeepers. T/PCCs have a core obligation to provide well-trained and well-equipped personnel, but other member states play critical roles in securing the resources to deploy and sustain operations in the short and long term. For its part, the Secretariat is expected to establish relevant policy frameworks, provide updated training materials, and verify the capabilities of all uniformed contributions.⁵⁰ Partnerships among these actors help them share innovative practices and experiences and strengthen their common commitment to improving peacekeeping operations' impact and sustainability.

The September 2021 virtual preparatory conference offered a platform for member states to discuss the challenges facing their efforts to train and capacitate UN peacekeepers, as well as a space to share experiences and best practices from the domestic and international arenas. The preparatory conference also included specific sessions on the capacity-building and training needs of women peacekeepers and on medical capacity building and training. Across these sessions, discussions highlighted areas where the UN and member states have demonstrated progress during the past seven years. Two flagship efforts embody the kinds of capacity-building partnerships the UN aspires to foster. One is the Triangular Partnership Program, which coordinates and oversees member-state contributions of instructors, funding, and equipment to train uniformed peacekeepers in core capabilities.⁵¹ The second is the Light Coordination Mechanism, which matches member-state training needs with training providers and helps T/PCCs improve their knowledge-management processes around training

All member states and the Secretariat are responsible for the effectiveness of peacekeepers.

initiatives.⁵²

In recent years, member-state partnerships have evolved to meet T/PCCs' growing demand for capacity building on peacekeeping-related areas. The white paper prepared in advance of the preparatory conference identified four kinds of innovative capacity-building partnerships: (1) multinational rotations where multiple member states provide an advanced capability for a sustained period of time; (2) joint deployments where T/PCCs work together and learn from one another's experiences and structures; (3) rapid-deployment and handover partnerships where member states support a T/PCC in deploying rapidly and effectively; and (4) in-mission trainings conducted by member states to provide specific skills.⁵³ These efforts, among others, have helped the UN and its member states expand support to T/PCCs on substantive and operational priorities such as conduct and discipline; safety and security; gender analysis and the women, peace, and security agenda; leadership; and strategic planning and analysis.

Despite this progress, capacity-building and training partnerships face perennial challenges.⁵⁴ Participants in the preparatory conference highlighted the supply-driven and short-term nature of most training interventions. Others emphasized that pre-deployment and in-mission trainings are insufficient for improving the performance and impact of uniformed components. Member states also have not prioritized evaluating these initiatives or building institutional memory, and initiatives do not always address the mandated tasks or operational conditions that trainees confront on the ground.

In general, member states' pledges could address these challenges by supporting capacity-building and training initiatives that address the specific

49 A4P includes pillars on the security of peacekeepers, UN-AU capacity building for AU peace support operations, expanding triangular partnerships, and supporting performance and accountability, while A4P+ prioritizes capabilities and mindsets.

50 Boutellis, "Impact-Driven Peacekeeping Partnerships for Capacity Building and Training," p. 2.

51 UN DOS, "Triangular Partnership Fact Sheet," December 16, 2019.

52 Mark Pedersen and Herbert Loret, "LCM Introduction—Aims, Roles, and Activities," presentation at the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) Light Coordination Mechanism meeting, November 19, 2019.

53 Boutellis, "Impact-Driven Peacekeeping Partnerships," pp. 6–7.

54 Ibid., p. 8.

needs of T/PCCs and missions, help T/PCCs build domestic institutions and processes to sustain high-performing deployments, and allow T/PCCs to deploy and rotate uniformed personnel more quickly.⁵⁵ They could undertake these initiatives bilaterally or through UN mechanisms like the Triangular Peacekeeping Partnership and Light Coordination Mechanism.

More specifically, capacity-building pledges could focus on capability gaps including engineering skills, medical support, logistics, air operations, aircraft management, and airfield and runway rehabilitation.⁵⁶ Member states could also support trainings for police and for senior mission leadership and trainings on conduct and discipline as well as language. In addition, member states could offer sustained, multi-year pledges to build the capacity of troops in unit-level intelligence, analysis, coordination, strategic planning, and evaluation. These areas constitute “the nervous system of peacekeeping operations” but have not been addressed in detail by previous preparatory conferences.⁵⁷ Toward this end, they could provide secondments or conduct trainings to support command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR), particularly civil-military coordination, geospatial information systems, and the operation of unarmed UAVs.⁵⁸ They could also support the full rollout of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS) in all peacekeeping missions.

Gender and the women, peace, and security agenda were raised throughout the discussions on capacity building and training. One of the goals of the preparatory conference was to help member states increase the number of women peacekeepers they deploy and provide them adequate support. Participants highlighted that T/PCCs need to focus on integrating women into domestic security institutions and should account for the intersection of gender with broader political and social issues. This would help sensitize troops and police to gender issues prior to deployment to UN missions and

reduce gender biases in national deployment processes. Other speakers encouraged the mainstreaming of gender analysis into all capacity-building and training initiatives, especially in regards to conduct, discipline, and accountability. Member states were also encouraged to nominate qualified women to UN trainings on protection and trainings for military gender advisers, to ensure a 50/50 gender balance among participants in all training sessions, and to commit to deploying women to operational roles.

Another suggestion was for member states to strengthen the global network of training initiatives. Member states could host and support training-of-trainers exercises, improve cooperation between their domestic training centers and other national and regional training centers, and convene events to disseminate new and revised UN training materials. More systematic information sharing and coordination through the Light Coordination Mechanism would help the Secretariat coordinate these national and regional initiatives. Participants also emphasized the importance of multilingual instructors and training curricula, as well as the need for member states to finance the translation of these products.

Protection of Civilians and Safety and Security

The protection of both civilians and peacekeepers is critical to effective and sustainable mandate implementation. Protecting civilians is at the heart of many contemporary peacekeeping mandates, and over 90 percent of uniformed personnel are deployed to peacekeeping operations with POC mandates. Similarly, reinforcing the safety and security of UN peacekeepers has become a prominent focus for the UN in recent years, with more troops deployed to environments where fragile political situations and asymmetric threats make them targets.

Member states, the Secretariat, and peacekeeping operations alike have thus emphasized the protec-

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁵⁶ UN DPO, “2021 Pledging Guide,” pp. 10–11.

⁵⁷ Giffen, “Improving the Performance and Impact of UN Peacekeeping Operations,” p. 11.

⁵⁸ UN DPO, “2021 Pledging Guide.”

tion of both civilians and peacekeepers. Recent policy initiatives exemplify these efforts, most notably the UN's updated POC policy (2019) and the Cruz report and its subsequent action plan (2017).⁵⁹ The protection of civilians and peacekeepers also features prominently in the A4P initiative and its Declaration of Shared Commitments.

The October 2021 preparatory conference on the protection of civilians and safety and security sought to help member states identify concrete pledges they could make in these areas. In addition to these two thematic areas, participants analyzed their intersection with issues such as capacity building and training, technology, mission performance, community engagement, health and medical support, and operational integration. Discussions on POC and the safety and security of UN peacekeepers therefore cut across many of the preparatory conferences, and many relevant pledges are thus covered elsewhere in this issue brief.

High-end capabilities from member states are imperative to making protection and safety and security efforts more sustainable.

Increased mobility is critical for missions to implement their mandates and protect themselves.⁶⁰ More mobile forces help missions respond more rapidly to armed attacks and cover wider geographic areas. They also can help civilian staff working alongside a mission's uniformed components, including in joint POC teams and joint human rights investigations, by allowing them to reach otherwise inaccessible areas faster.⁶¹ Greater mobility requires higher-quality equipment and more skilled troops and police, as well as more flexible directives. Possible pledges from member states to improve mobility could include rapidly deployable battalions and quick-reaction forces, military assets like utility and armed helicopters, UAVs, and surveillance units. T/PCCs could also enhance the mobility of peacekeeping operations

by removing preconditions or restrictions on where their contingents can be deployed within a country.⁶²

Operational integration is central to both POC and peacekeepers' safety and security. Participants highlighted that operational integration can improve how missions conduct surveillance and share information, standardize their medical practices, and apply new technologies. They also shared their experiences with peacekeeping operations that have struggled with operational integration because member states and contingents do not always share a common understanding of what integration means or may have different perceptions of which stakeholders are responsible for fostering a clear strategy and operational plan for

integration. To improve operational integration, member states could pledge to deploy uniformed staff who have experience in integrated settings and prioritize capacity-building efforts that

explicitly focus on integration. They could also earmark resources for planning posts and exercises in missions or at UN headquarters.

Community engagement and people-centered peacekeeping also improve the effectiveness and sustainability of peacekeeping operations' POC and safety and security efforts. They can help build trust with communities, improve the mission's understanding of the operational environment, and provide a more complete picture of opportunities and threats. The UN's Civil Affairs Handbook and recently published Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace provide a solid foundation of policy and practice.⁶³ To support missions' community engagement efforts, participants mentioned that T/PCCs could build language skills within their contingents and deploy uniformed leaders with more diverse

59 UN DPO, "The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Policy," UN Doc. Ref. 2019.17, November 1, 2019; Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, William R. Phillips, and Salvatore Cusimano, "Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We Need to Change the Way We Are Doing Business," UN DPO, December 19, 2017; UN DPO, "Summary of the Action Plan to Implement the Report on Improving Security of Peacekeepers," available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/action-plan-to-implement-report-improving-security-of-peacekeepers>; UN Security Council Presidential Statement 2021/11 (May 24, 2021), UN Doc. S/PRST/2021/11. Multiple Security Council resolutions have been adopted on the protection of civilians agenda.

60 Giffen, "Improving the Performance and Impact of UN Peacekeeping Operations," p. 8.

61 Namie Di Razza and Jake Sherman, "Integrating Human Rights into the Operational Readiness of UN Peacekeepers," International Peace Institute, April 2020.

62 UN DPO, "2021 Pledging Guide"; Giffen, "Improving the Performance and Impact of UN Peacekeeping Operations."

63 UN PBO, "United Nations Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace," August 2020; UN DFS, "Civil Affairs Handbook," 2012.

experiences. Other member states could support these efforts, including by dedicating funding to support the work of missions' community liaisons. Discussions also focused on how T/PCCs and missions can improve community engagement by deploying more women peacekeepers and addressing the structural barriers that inhibit them from undertaking their mandated responsibilities.

High-end capabilities from member states are imperative to making the protection of civilians and safety and security efforts more sustainable. DPO's capabilities study and pledging guide both identify pledges that could help missions improve the speed and reach of their tactical responses. The most needed pledges identified in the UN's Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System include infantry battalions, quick-reaction forces, specialized military and police forces, reconnaissance companies, armed aircraft and helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, and francophone formed police units with SWAT capabilities.⁶⁴ Technological systems for air-to-ground targeting and UAVs, which could enhance missions' intelligence collection and reconnaissance activities, are also in short supply.⁶⁵

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive ordnance are major threats to the safety of both civilians and UN peacekeepers.⁶⁶ Missions require dedicated equipment (both high-tech and low-tech) and specialized expertise to mitigate these threats. Participants emphasized that efforts to counter IEDs and dispose of explosive ordnance should be demand-driven, gender-sensitive, and compliant with international humanitarian law. Specific pledges needed by the UN include dedicated uniformed personnel with expertise in weapons intelligence, counter-IED, and explosive-ordnance disposal, as well as advanced IED-detection technologies that can link to other mission intelligence systems and mine-resistant vehicles. Member states have also been encouraged to support mobile training teams with counter-IED expertise, to strengthen counter-IED training-of-trainers programs in francophone countries, and to

support the UN Mine Action Service's (UNMAS) Threat Mitigation Advisory Team based at UN headquarters.

Improving medical evacuation and casualty evacuation are also crucial priorities for the UN. DPO and DOS continuously stress-test their casualty and medical evacuation policies in response to member states' emphasis that these services should be decentralized, simplified, and readily available to all UN personnel deployed to peacekeeping operations. Nonetheless, the UN requires additional air assets from member states with the capability to quickly transfer injured personnel to appropriate medical facilities following attacks.

Cross-Cutting Themes: Technology and Medical Capacity Building

The Republic of Korea has identified technology and medical capacity building as cross-cutting themes for the 2021 ministerial conference. This choice reflects several of the unprecedented challenges confronting UN peacekeepers around the world: sustained deployments to high-risk operational environments, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and rapid changes in the technological tools available. By better integrating both technology and medical capacity building into their operations, missions can more effectively implement their mandates and protect themselves and host populations. At the same time, both focuses present risks to the UN.

This section outlines current trends related to technology and medical capacity building in UN peacekeeping and highlights categories of pledges that member states could make in these areas. Many of the possible pledges identified in the UN pledging guide and during the preparatory conferences overlapped with these cross-cutting themes. Therefore, this section largely focuses on issues and pledges not covered elsewhere.

⁶⁴ UN DPO, "Current and Emerging Uniformed Capability Requirements," p. 6.

⁶⁵ UN Security Council, *Central African Republic—Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2021/867, October 12, 2021, para. 68.

⁶⁶ Security Council presidential statement 2021/11 (May 2021) requested that the secretary-general provide the council with "an independent strategic review of United Nations peacekeeping operations' responses to improvised explosive devices, assessing capabilities and measures necessary to better mitigate this threat" by December 15, 2021. UN Doc. S/PRST/2021/11.

Technology

Attention to the use of technology in UN peacekeeping has increased dramatically since the first ministerial in 2014. This increase is reflected in multiple initiatives and reports by the UN Secretariat and member states, including:

- The independent report published by the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping in 2014, which affirms the strategic and operational imperatives of modernizing UN peacekeeping operations;⁶⁷
- The Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping initiative, established by the Secretariat in 2014, through which the UN convenes a periodic symposium to share information on field technology;⁶⁸
- The 2015 HIPPO report, which identifies technology as a key reform agenda for the UN;
- The 2017 Report on Improving the Security of UN Peacekeepers, which discusses the importance of both basic and sophisticated technologies to protecting peacekeepers; and
- The 2020 UN Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and the 2020 UN Data Strategy, which focus on the broader organizational structures that peacekeeping operations depend on.

Improving the safety and security of UN peacekeepers in high-risk environments requires them to be fully equipped with basic technology and to gradually incorporate more sophisticated tools.

These efforts accelerated in 2021 with two landmark efforts: the secretary-general's Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping and the UN Security Council presidential statement on technology and UN peacekeeping.⁶⁹ During the Security Council open debate on technology and peacekeeping, the secretary-general emphasized that "it is now essential that [UN peacekeeping] fully embraces the digital world

in which we live, to improve the UN's agility, anticipation and responsiveness to conflicts, and to be able to address the challenges of today and tomorrow."⁷⁰

Against this backdrop, the peacekeeping ministerial conference offers an opportunity for member states and the UN Secretariat to increase their investment in the digital transformation of peacekeeping. Specifically, the Secretariat has asked member states to make technology-oriented pledges, including by supporting trainings, seconding expertise, and partnering with other member states to overcome capability gaps and help T/PCCs use technological solutions sustainably.⁷¹

Improving the safety and security of UN peacekeepers in high-risk environments requires them to be fully equipped with basic technology (such as night-vision systems and long-range sensors) and to gradually incorporate more sophisticated tools (such as counter-IED technologies and tactical drones). Upgrading technological capabilities can help peacekeepers "improve situational awareness, enhance early warning, and improve survivability following incidents."⁷² Pledges could help missions and units close gaps in basic enabling technologies, operate and service advanced technological systems used by missions for base protection, and build the capacity of T/PCCs to use and sustain these tools.

Missions also increasingly use technologies to improve their conflict monitoring, analysis, and forecasting. Current focuses include technologies for visualizing patterns of conflict incidents; addressing misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech; and monitoring stakeholder sentiment.⁷³ In addition, missions have sought to incor-

67 UN DPO, "Performance Peacekeeping: Final Report of the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping," December 22, 2014.

68 UN DOS, "Partnerships for Technology in Peacekeeping," available at <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/partnership-technology-peacekeeping>.

69 UN DPO, "Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping," available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/strategy-digital-transformation-of-un-peacekeeping>; UN Security Council Presidential Statement 2021/17 (August 18, 2021), UN Doc. S/PRST/2021/17.

70 UN Secretary-General, "Secretary-General's Remarks at Security Council High-Level Open Debate on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Technology and Peacekeeping," press statement, August 18, 2021.

71 UN DPO "2021 Pledging Guide," pp. 8–9.

72 Sherman, "Technology and Medical Capacities to Enhance UN Peacekeeping."

73 Ibid., p. 7.

porate machine-learning and artificial-intelligence techniques into these processes. To support these efforts, member states could pledge to second uniformed staff officers with expertise in these areas and provide dedicated funding to invest in new technological tools.

Capacity building and training is another area where pledges could support missions' application of new technologies. The UN has mainly provided technology-oriented trainings through its C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations (UNCAP, formerly the UN Signals Academy).⁷⁴ Member states could pledge to provide financial support to UNCAP, trainings on how to use technologies deployed to peacekeeping operations, and online training courses on specialized technologies.

Recent UN efforts have also prioritized emissions-control optimization technology (ECOTEC) to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint of missions, most notably through the "smart camp" program.⁷⁵ Member-state pledges in support of environmentally sustainable technologies could focus on providing contingent-owned equipment that incorporates renewable technologies, including through new triangular partnerships with member states, private companies, and nongovernmental organizations.⁷⁶

Member states could continue offering pledges to support the UN's COVID-19 response and the creation of a disease-surveillance system for field missions.

Medical Capacity Building

Medical support is another growing area of focus for peacekeeping operations. Gaps in missions' provision of medical support to uniformed personnel were identified in both the HIPPO report and the Cruz report. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the critical role of the UN's medical infrastructure.

The UN has recently undertaken several initiatives to improve medical support. DOS has raised the standards for UN medical personnel deployed to missions and improved the process for accrediting them. It has also consolidated medical policy-making and logistics into a single entity at UN headquarters. The UN and some member states have delivered trainings to improve immediate life-saving responses, provide basic first-aid skills, improve the overall quality of healthcare, and raise patient safety standards at UN medical hospitals. Emerging priorities for the UN include gender-sensitive healthcare that responds to women's health needs, the mental health and well-being of uniformed personnel, telehealth systems, and technology-supported medical services.⁷⁷

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN Secretariat and member states have also supported UN peacekeeping operations' efforts to mitigate transmission of the virus within both peacekeeping operations and host communities and to improve treatment for peacekeepers who become infected.⁷⁸ Toward this end, they have sourced personal protective equipment, testing kits, mechanical ventilators, and emergency medical supplies for UN personnel (and, in certain instances, for national health departments).⁷⁹

Moving forward, the UN has identified multiple areas where member states can make pledges to improve medical capacity. These include support to the extension of electronic medical records to all T/PCC-run healthcare facilities, the development of a proposed digital app for tracking casualties, and the launch of an e-learning system on women's health.⁸⁰ Member states could also provide training in areas such as basic first aid and field medicine; support medical evacuation capabilities; deploy

⁷⁴ UN DOS, "United Nations C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations," available at <https://operationalsupport.un.org/en/united-nations-c4isr-academy-peace-operations>.

⁷⁵ UN DOS Global Service Centre, "Unite (FRIM) [Field Remote Infrastructure Monitoring]," available at <https://www.ungsc.org/InFocus2>. An experimental model of a smart camp is currently underway at the UN Mission in South Sudan.

⁷⁶ Sherman, "Technology and Medical Capacities to Enhance UN Peacekeeping."

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 12–14.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁹ UN DPO, "Impact of COVID-19 on UN Peacekeeping."

⁸⁰ UN DPO, "2021 Pledging Guide," p. 8.

more medical personnel to level II and III hospitals in difficult operational environments; and second medical-support planners and military psychiatrists or psychologists.⁸¹ In addition, they could continue offering pledges to support the UN's COVID-19 response and the creation of a disease-surveillance system for field missions.

Conclusion

The evolution of the ministerial process over the past seven years affirms that this tool remains central to the global impact of the UN's work. It

reinforces the partnerships that drive UN peacekeeping and helps missions remain flexible, adaptive, and focused on the delivery of complex mandates in difficult conditions. The 2021 ministerial conference in Seoul presents a valuable opportunity for member states to pledge personnel and operational capacity, targeted capabilities, financial resources, and political support for UN peacekeeping operations around the world. With dedicated sessions on critical substantive and operational issues affecting UN missions, the conference should help to promote this invaluable tool at a time of pressing geopolitical challenges.

81 Sherman, "Technology and Medical Capacities to Enhance UN Peacekeeping," p. 16.

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