CCCPA

SPEECH

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H.E. SAMEH SHOUKRY
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Peacekeeping Day Celebration 2018

Dear guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1960 Egypt dispatched its first military contribution to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in the Congo. Since then, our police and military in blue helmets upheld peacekeeping principles, and some sacrificed their lives for the flag of peace to flutter in a total of 38 missions which involved over 30,000 Egyptian peacekeepers deployed in 24 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Through the years, Egypt maintained its posture as a top troop contributing country to UN peacekeeping operations.

Our interest in UN peacekeeping does not only stem from our commitment to the core principles of the United Nations as enshrined in the Charter, but also as an African country that is committed to the promotion of peace and development on the Continent where peacekeeping, peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts are mostly needed and performed.

Today we celebrate seventy years of UN Peacekeeping and Fifty-eight years of Egyptian contributions to this global partnership. Today we mark our resolve for peace, commemorate our fallen heroes, and highlight a vision for more effective and relevant peacekeeping.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Where deployed, UN peacekeeping succeeded in complementing the state's primary responsibility in protecting civilians, preventing conflicts, consolidating peace, strengthening rule of law, and empowering women. However, UN peacekeepers face increasing challenges and unprecedented pressures to deliver complex tasks in unconventional operational environments, while availing fewer resources for their mandates implementation.

We recognize that significant effort is underway in the UN to reform the peace and security architecture, and to make peacekeeping more fit for purpose. As a top troop- and police-contributing country, Egypt has been at the forefront of efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Our contribution to the development of peacekeeping doctrine and policies does not only manifest itself through its traditional and leading role in the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, but also through its recent membership on the Security Council in 2016-2017.

Most recently and in its capacity as the President of the Council in August 2017, Egypt took the lead in introducing detailed guidelines on ways for peacekeeping missions and mandates to contribute to sustaining peace. These guidelines were captured in a Security Council Presidential Statement presented by Egypt and adopted unanimously in December 2017. The timing of this most recent Egyptian initiative was closely linked to ongoing strategic and comprehensive reviews of eight peacekeeping missions, as well as with evolving peacekeeping reform initiatives.

We are convinced that for UN peacekeeping to remain relevant and worthy of the enormous human and financial investment therein, we must take a more comprehensive look at its performance; and objectively assess whether mandates are realistic, and whether the resources availed for their implementation are adequate.

Egypt's contribution to doctrinal and policy debates in the field of peacekeeping is only one feature of its leadership in peacekeeping. Currently, Egypt ranks the world's **2nd** largest contributor of military experts, **3rd** largest contributor of police, and the **10th** largest contributor of contingent troops serving in **6** UN peacekeeping missions. We take great pride in our unwavering contribution with more than **3000** men and women deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, the Central African Republic, and Darfur, among other peacekeeping missions.

I seize the occasion to renew our commitment to the highest standards of conduct and performance. We take pride in the manner with which we train and equip our peacekeepers and in our most recent effort to increase the number of our women peacekeepers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the peacekeeping community is striving to meet the challenges of today's complex and high-risk environments, Egypt affirms the importance of the following principles:

First, the primacy of politics and continuum of UN response to conflicts: Lasting peace is achieved through political solutions and not solely through military engagements. In order to realize peace in conflict areas, the UN need to devote more efforts and resources to respond to all stages of conflict and engage proactively in "peace-making", "peacekeeping" and "peace-building".

Second, adherence to the basic principles of peacekeeping, specifically the consent of parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate. This is crucial to preserve the credibility of the UN and the whole enterprise of peacekeeping.

Third, is our unshakable belief in national ownership and respect for sovereignty. Peace cannot be imposed, and peacekeeping is only a tool to complement the primary role of states in responding to conflicts.

Fourth, is the imperative for enhanced partnerships. As we struggle to position peacekeeping within a more comprehensive and integrated political strategy to resolve conflicts, build and sustain peace, there is a growing need for true and strategic partnerships between the UN, regional organizations and development partners. These partnerships must be based on shared commitments, and guided by nationally-owned and led strategies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to address my words to our uniformed men and women defending and preserving peace under UN flags across the globe.

Today, we salute the exemplary performance and sacrifices of all former and current Egyptian peacekeepers. You represent not only the global values of peace but also Egypt's renewed spirit of hope and leadership .. Hope for a better and peaceful future for millions of people in Africa and beyond. You are representing the world's collective conscious and resolve to address tractable conflicts. For all your efforts and sacrifices we *Thank You*.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of your evening.