

**Speech by Sarah Fountain Smith, Deputy High
Commissioner for Canada in the UK**

RUSI Peacekeeping Conference, 23 May 2019, 9:30 am

- Lord Ahmad, Dr. von Hippel, distinguished guests
- Good morning. Bonjour. Thank you to RUSI for the invitation to speak this morning.
- As Lord Ahmad so eloquently said, today we celebrate peacekeepers and the vital work they do in preventing conflict and protecting civilians.
- Canada is pleased to support this event again this year, and we welcome the focus on the essential, but sometimes overlooked role played by police peacekeepers.

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- Rendre les missions de maintien de la paix plus efficaces et sécuritaires dans un monde en constante évolution est une priorité pour le Canada.
- The skill set and experience of police peacekeepers is well-suited to address the crime that can flourish among civilian populations in conflict situations: theft, sexual assault, organized crime, the trafficking of arms, narcotics and human beings, extortion and murder.
- Police peacekeepers help provide crucial public order and protection functions, while also helping to build the capacity of local police services to restore the rule of law and protect local populations.

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- They help to re-establish trust between a government and its citizens, helping to create the conditions for peacekeeping missions to end.
- They put their lives at risk, in extremely challenging environments, and we have a responsibility as UN Member States and as police contributing countries, to enable and empower them to be as efficient and effective as possible.

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- Last year at this conference, I spoke to you about Canada's renewed efforts in support of peace operations since the Vancouver Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in 2017.
- Today, I'd like to provide a brief update on the progress made, and next steps.

Smart Pledges

- At the Vancouver Conference, Canada introduced the concept of Smart Pledges, to ensure the predictable and reliable provision of mission-critical enablers to UN peace operations through partnerships between UN Member States.

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- Smart pledges are about providing what the UN actually needs, when they need it, with clear parameters and provisions for sharing responsibility between Member States.
- For example, in response to a direct request from the UN, Canada deployed an Air Task Force to the UN mission in Mali, MINUSMA, last August.

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- This consists of heavy lift and armed medium utility helicopters, as well as approximately 250 military personnel, tasked with providing 24/7 aeromedical evacuation capabilities, as well as transport and logistics support.
- Since its deployment, Task Force helicopters alone have transported more than 6200 passengers, and moved more than 800,000 pounds of cargo in support of MINUSMA, further supported by the C-130 airplane supporting the Task Force.

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- In line with the Smart Pledge partnership concept, Romania has committed to take on the next rotation, after Canada's rotation ends later this summer.
- Canada's contribution of an aviation task force to MINUSMA is just one component of a wider effort.
- Canada remains a top-ten contributor to UN peacekeeping, paying our assessed contributions in full and on time, and providing a further \$160 million in voluntary contributions aimed specifically at meeting critical UN peace operations capacity shortfalls and training needs.

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- In addition to investing \$30 million in support of peacebuilding and stabilization efforts, Canada will also be providing up to 20 police officers to MINUSMA and the EU civilian capacity-building mission in Mali to serve until 2021.
- These officers play a key role in training Malian police to protect the communities they serve, with the aim of facilitating the implementation of Mali's Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.
- Canada is also working with the UN towards the deployment of a Tactical Airlift Detachment to the UN Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, to provide flexible and reliable airlift to multiple UN missions.

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- This approach will increase efficiency in the use of air assets, and generate critical cost savings at a time when UN peace operations are facing major financial challenges.

Vancouver Principles

- At the 2017 peacekeeping ministerial, Canada also introduced the Vancouver Principles on the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, now signed by 86 UN Member States.

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- The aim of the Vancouver Principles is to better prepare mission personnel to respond effectively to situations where parties to a conflict may be using child soldiers.
- Later this year, we will launch Implementation Guidance for the Vancouver Principles – a handbook developed in cooperation with the UN, Member States and civil society. This implementation guidance will help us all to develop more effective doctrine and approaches for responding to, and ultimately ending the use of child soldiers.

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Elsie Initiative

- At the Vancouver Conference, we also launched the Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, to increase uniformed women's meaningful participation in UN peace operations, particularly in military and police roles. To date, more than 20 countries have joined the initiative from all regions and we hope this will grow.
- In March, we worked with the UN to launch a global fund – dubbed the Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations.
- Troop and police contributing countries can access this Fund to help increase their own deployment of women.

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- The call for letters of interest for the Fund is forthcoming. The Fund includes a premium for the deployment of gender strong units, which applies to both formed Police Units and military battalions.
- Canada has provided \$15 million to the Fund, and we are happy that other donors, including the UK, Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands are also supporting this important initiative.

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Police Peacekeeping

- Canada has a long history of deploying large numbers of police peacekeepers to the UN missions in Haiti, including the current MINUJUSTH Police Commissioner, Serge Therriault.
- Serge and other Canadian police in Haiti are helping develop the Haitian National Police; strengthen Haiti's rule of law institutions; prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence; and promote and protect human rights.
- Since 1989, more than 4,000 Canadian police officers have participated in 66 peace and stabilization operations abroad.

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- Canadian police provide expertise training and mentoring for local counterparts to address issues such as serious and organized crime, intelligence-led and community policing, sexual and gender-based violence, and counterterrorism.
- They work closely with domestic and international partners to rebuild and strengthen police services and related public institutions in countries experiencing conflict or upheaval.

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- My colleagues Andrea Meyer and Inspector Gastaldo will speak more about Canada's police peacekeepers during the panel discussions, but I wanted to highlight one important priority for Canada, which is to continue our efforts to meet the UN's call for Member States to ensure that, this year, at least **21%** of the Individual Police Officers they deploy to peace operations are women, and that they increase that number in future years, aiming to **reach 30%** in 2028.
- Evidence shows that having more female police officers on mission, including in senior roles, increases effectiveness. It leads to increased trust with the local population; improves protection of women and children from violence; and facilitates gender-sensitive police approaches and mentoring.

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Rules-Based International Order

- I've talked about The Elsie Initiative, The Vancouver Principles and Smart Pledges. These are all innovative approaches that require partnership to have an impact.
- Canada recognizes that more than ever, we need to work with others, share our experiences and show leadership on fundamental issues at home and abroad.
- That is what our engagement in peacekeeping is all about.

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- That is what drives our broader commitment to defending a rules-based international order, based on values of respect for diversity, inclusion and the rule of law.
- It is the reason why, last week, Canada joined the Christchurch Call to Action to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online.
- It is why we are hosting the Women Deliver 2019 Conference in Vancouver from 3-6 June, which will be the largest ever gathering of gender equality advocates and activists in the world.

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- It is also why we are co-hosting with the UK a media freedom conference in London in July,
- And why we are consistently joining with others to speak up for human rights around the world.
- Canada is a believer in the power of multilateralism to address some of the key challenges facing us today. History has shown that our ability to act against challenges alone is limited. Meaningful action requires cooperation.

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- We are seeking a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2021-2022, because we believe that we can make an important contribution to international peace and security in these uncertain times by working together with others and bringing our values, skills and experience to the table.
- Dans un monde où les conflits armés persistent malgré tout, nos casques bleus jouent un rôle indispensable dans la prévention de la violence, la protection des civiles, et l'égalité entre les genres.

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- Today, we rightly celebrate military and police peacekeepers around the world for their vital contribution to conflict resolution, and we honour those who have made sacrifices in the service of peace.
- Thank you.