# Preparing and Building for the Future: Pathways Towards More Nimble, Adaptive, and Effective Peacekeeping

Summary Report of the High-Level Seminar and Expert Symposium

31 May 2024

The views summarized in this report are those of participants and do not necessarily represent the views or positions of the organizers.

# Introduction

On the occasion of the 76th anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping, a high-level seminar and expert symposium brought together nearly 200 experts from Member States, academic institutions, think tanks, and the United Nations. The aim was to discuss pathways and recommendations for how United Nations peacekeeping can best meet and adapt to key challenges in the global peace and security landscape of today and tomorrow. The event was co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Ghana, India, Norway and Switzerland to the United Nations as well as by the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON), the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GSCP), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the United Service Institution of India (USI) and the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO).

## Why This Symposium?

As the Secretary-General noted in *A New Agenda for Peace*, the world is at a crossroads: "Member States must provide a response to the deep sense of unease which has grown among nations and people that Governments and international organizations are failing to deliver for them." Amid today's geopolitical shifts and intensifying contestation between major and emerging powers, and against the backdrop of complex interlocking threats impacting global peace and security, the need for multilateral responses that are relevant, responsive, and impactful has never been greater. This is particularly true for United Nations peacekeeping: It remains one of the UN's most visible and recognizable tools to address armed conflict, and a true expression of "multilateralism in action". And yet, multilateral responses to conflict are increasingly put into question, and peacekeeping has faced daunting challenges in recent years which have led to questions of its adaptiveness to changing circumstances and its continued relevance.

In the lead-up to the Summit of the Future, and building on the recommendations from *A New Agenda for Peace*, this event provided a space for a forward-looking policy dialogue about actionable options to best prepare UN peacekeeping for current and future trends and challenges such as the effects of climate change, mis- and disinformation, and the need for closer partnerships with regional organizations. In discussing future roles, functions, and operational models for peacekeeping, the symposium considered lessons from UNTSO as a military observer mission. The symposium further discussed how peacekeeping can become more flexible, adaptive and effective; how future peacekeeping can be more people-centered, including internally; and how peacekeeping can help rebuild trust in the rule of law as a foundation for peace and security.

## Key Take-Aways

Throughout the event, participants reflected on the enduring strengths and continued relevance of effective United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Equally, participants underscored the urgent necessity for UN peacekeeping to evolve in response to new and emerging challenges. Key recommendations and take-aways for further consideration include:

1. **Courage and creativity** in exploring novel ways to use the peacekeeping tool. Explore new options and models for peacekeeping driven by emerging needs and challenges, not by existing templates or bureaucratic structures.

2. **Tackle systemic challenges** to ensure effective peacekeeping, including by strengthening strategic guidance and leadership, integration and planning capacity; administrative and budgetary flexibility, and host-state relations and cooperation.

3. **Unified political support:** Reinforce political support for peacekeeping within and well beyond the Security Council. Political support for peacekeeping, and the pursuit of political solutions to conflict, are essential conditions for effective peacekeeping.

4. **Proactive and continuous planning:** Develop and practice scenarios for potential future peacekeeping uses, and maintain preparedness – even in politically sensitive environments.

5. **Recommit to reforming and strengthening peacekeeping,** and safeguard investments made. Retain the UN's ability to mount and maintain physical field presences in the area of peace and security.

6. **Leverage strengths and lessons of UNTSO** for other peacekeeping operations, and consider legitimacy, credibility and national ownership and partnership as important principles. Establish a rapid-deployment capacity of Military Observers (MilObs) to support start-up of other missions, and a centre of excellence for MilObs to conduct research and system-wide induction training.

7. **Defining Nimbleness and Adaptiveness:**
   a. **Nimbleness:** The increased ability to quickly and flexibly mobilize, re-direct and deploy capacities, capabilities and expertise, wherever needed. Leverage and further invest in rapidly deployable capacities and the more flexible use of existing financial, material and human resources. At the same time, maintain and promote realistic expectations, given the political nature and legal and procedural constraints.
   b. **Adaptiveness:** The continuous reassessment of the impact of peacekeeping efforts and making required adjustments on an ongoing basis. Leverage and further invest in key mechanisms that generate the information and analysis needed to assess impact, such as the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS), and the implementation of the Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping.

8. **People-centered peacekeeping:** Focus on ensuring inclusive political analyses and solutions, serving communities by professionalizing community engagement, leveraging the women, peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda to amplify the voices and peace efforts of women, youth and marginalized groups, and strengthening human rights mandates. Involve local and national stakeholders, including civil society, in assessing the impact of peacekeeping operations on communities.

9. **Reinforce support to the Rule of Law**: Rebuild trust in the Rule of Law as a key foundation for peace and security. Peacekeeping must adapt to changing environments and further invest in its unique capacities across the entire justice chain, driven by an analysis of emerging needs.

10. **Harness technology** whilst better understanding its malicious uses: Significantly step up the use of digital technology in all areas of the mission's work to improve efficiency and effectiveness of mandate implementation.

*This high-level symposium was convened to inform reflection and policy development. The views expressed during the discussions are solely those of the participants*

# 1. Setting the Scene: High-Level Opening Session

Moderator:
- *Prof. Cedric de Coning, NUPI*

Speakers:
- *Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Executive Director, GCSP*
- *H.E. Ms. Ruchira Kamboj, Permanent Representative of India*
- *Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations*

In this opening session, panelists stressed the necessity for adaptive and innovative approaches to peacekeeping, driven by the evolving geopolitical landscape. The Speakers underscored the vital role of peacekeepers, acknowledging the political and operational challenges they face. Despite these challenges, peacekeeping remained essential, necessitating a common commitment, partnerships, and collective action as outlined in the New Agenda for Peace. Attendees were encouraged to explore upcoming challenges and consider how peacekeeping operations can become more adaptive and people-centered, drawing on lessons from missions such as UNTSO. Tribute was paid to peacekeepers for their invaluable contributions.

India's significant contributions to UN peacekeeping were highlighted, including its pioneering role in gender equality through the deployment of the first all-women peacekeeping unit. The importance of examining strengths and weaknesses and generating ideas to keep peacekeeping effective and responsive in changing contexts was emphasized. The symposium was urged to delve into the implications of new technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the overlap between terrorism, armed groups, and international criminal enterprises. Flexibility in operations and a thorough examination of relationships with host states were emphasized, along with a call for peacekeeping to embrace novel approaches. While regional peacekeeping can be beneficial, it was noted that it is not a universal solution.

> "This high-level seminar and expert symposium is an initiative to galvanize collaboration and build bridges. To further a common understanding and inspire collective action."
>
> **Ambassador Thomas Greminger, GCSP**

The importance of UN peacekeeping in a divided world and the necessity for multilateral responses to crises were discussed. Peacekeeping was described as inherently political, requiring agreements between conflicting parties. The need for peacekeeping to be accepted by local communities and for building trust was stressed. The critical roles of peacekeeping in protecting civilians, preserving ceasefires, and

advancing political efforts were highlighted, with an emphasis on the importance of maintaining a physical field presence. Institutional reforms, including in the Security Council, were deemed necessary to enhance the acceptance and legitimacy of peacekeeping missions. The need for more prioritized mandates, increased administrative flexibility, adaptation to technological advancements, and addressing regional conflict dimensions through partnerships was emphasized. The exploration of new models for peacekeeping was advocated to ensure readiness and flexibility in response to emerging challenges. Maintaining a visible, physical field presence was considered crucial for the UN and multilateralism in the realm of peace and security.

> **"The New Agenda for Peace has defined the emerging nature of conflict very adequately. But we need to go into greater detail to find its application on peacekeeping."**
>
> **H.E. Ruchira Kamboj, Permanent Representative of India**

## 2. Current and Emerging Challenges - Adapting Peacekeeping for the Future

Moderator:
- *H.E. Harold Agyeman, Permanent Representative of Ghana*

Speakers
- *Ambassador Ahmed Abdel-Latif, Director General, CCCPA*
- *Dr Lotte Vermeij, Senior Expert, NORCAP*
- *Dr Solomon Dersso, Founding Director, Amani Africa*

Reflections by *Ms. Nathalie Ndongo-Seh, Director, Western Africa Division, DPPA-DPO*

This panel discussed how UN peacekeeping could and should adapt to address the multitude of contemporary issues and challenges, including but not limited to the effects of climate change, mis- and disinformation, and the regionalization of peace operations amid shifting geopolitics.

With regard to the impact of climate change, the critical need to scale up climate financing, adaptation, and capacity building in for host countries and communities hit by both conflict and climate was highlighted as was the need to ensure that UN peacekeeping is "fit for purpose" in these demanding contexts. CCCPA noted recent work on enhancing the understanding of these inter linkages through on climate programming for sustaining peace and for peacekeeping, in implementation of Egypt's pledges at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial (2023), and the release of a guidebook to assist peace operations in integrating a climate lens into analysis, planning and programming.

An example from South Sudan illustrated the severe implications of climate change, where extensive flooding has led to the displacement of half a million people, posing significant challenges to implementing peace agreements and protecting civilians on the part of one of the largest UN missions. It was stated that the severe effects of climate change were becoming the new normal for UN peacekeeping and that 60 per cent of the countries most vulnerable to climate change had ongoing armed conflicts. The panelists emphasized that advancing the linkages between climate, peace, and security required more support and partnerships.

Secondly, the severe impact of mis- and disinformation on peacekeeping operations was emphasized, particularly regarding the credibility of missions, their ability to protect civilians, and the safety and security of peacekeepers. Instances of deadly violence against peacekeepers, incited by mis- and disinformation, highlighted the need for enhanced resources, training, and specialized personnel to effectively combat this phenomenon. The Department of Peace Operations has established a dedicated team for this purpose, but additional support from the international community and technology companies was crucial. Panelists noted that mis- and disinformation could be as lethal as physical violence, underscoring the need for enhanced capacities and continued efforts to combat it effectively.

> "Peacekeeping is increasingly grappling with climate change impacts. It is a reality."
>
> **Ambassador Ahmed Abdel-Latif, CPPPA**

Turning to the trend of a regionalization of peace and security, the panel discussed ways of harnessing the resources and comparative advantages of both the United Nations and regional organizations as a vital contribution to for fulfilling the UN Charter's mandate for international peace and security. Current challenges were too complex for any single institution to handle alone, necessitating systematic harnessing of each organization's strengths. The relationship between host Countries, host communities, and the changing nature of conflicts were identified as critical areas needing attention. One speaker diagnosed an "apathy" of Member States towards UN peacekeeping, which began about a decade ago and remained a significant challenge, compounded by issues related to financing, inconsistent support from mandating authorities, and geopolitical frictions. The emergence of ad hoc security coalitions, driven by the increase in conflicts involving terrorist groups, reflected a "product of necessity" but requires a multilateral framework to be truly effective. Security Council Resolution 2719 on UN assessed funding for AU-led peace support operations was noted as a significant achievement.

# 3. Nimble, Adaptive, and Effective Peacekeeping: Lessons from UNTSO for Future Options and Models of Peacekeeping

Moderator:
- *H.E. Merete Fjeld Brattested, the Permanent Representative of Norway*

Speakers:
- *Annika Hilding-Norberg, Head of GCSP Peace Operations and Peacebuilding*
- *Maj Gen (ret) Dr AK Bardalai, former Deputy Force Commander UNIFIL*
- *Lt Gen (ret) Robert Mood, former Head of Mission UNTSO and UNSMIS (virtual)*

Reflections by:
- *Maj Gen Cheryl Pearce, Acting UN Military Advisor*
- *Maj Gen Patrick Gauchat, UNTSO Head of Mission*
- *Darko Mocibob, Director DPPA-DPO Middle East Division (virtual)*

This session focused on lessons learned from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and how they can inform future peace operations. The panelists provided an overview of the UNTSO study, emphasizing the mission's agility and continuous adaptation to changing circumstances. It was noted that UNTSO's mandate, characterized by its simplicity, open-ended nature, and regional scope, had remained valid and effective. The mission's high degree of female observers also contributed to its overall effectiveness.

Two critical recommendations from the study were highlighted. First, the establishment of a vanguard rapid-deployment capacity of Military Observers (MilObs) to support the setup of new missions. This capacity would be low-cost and minimally intrusive, akin to the standing UN Police capacity. Second, the creation of a centre of excellence for Observers to harness institutional expertise and experience, conduct research and provide induction training, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. The discussion stressed that UNTSO's adherence to core peacekeeping principles has provided local legitimacy and earned the mission credibility. The importance of keeping mandates simple and achievable was underscored, along with the need for clear communication and cooperation among different command and control structures to achieve synergy and interoperability.

It was noted that UNTSO's ability to adapt while maintaining relevance is crucial. The mission demonstrated the value of maintaining situational awareness and understanding of the context and current developments. It was suggested that the principles of legitimacy, credibility, and national ownership should be recognized as key success factors. Adaptability was proposed as a fourth factor for mission success, and the

> *"'Nimble' goes very well with 'humble'. It is key to have on board the host countries."*
>
> **Major General Patrick Gauchat, UNTSO**

usefulness of pursuing implementation of the recommendation for a vanguard deployment capacity was echoed.

Reflections were shared on the relevance of traditional missions, and three essential conditions for effective peacekeeping were highlighted: unequivocal, unified, and consistent political support; focused and adequately resourced mandates; and action-oriented partnerships. The need for flexibility and adaptability was emphasized as relevant to all future missions, particularly given the transnational nature of modern conflicts. UNTSO's mandate was seen as potentially relevant to the UN-AU partnership, particularly in light of Resolution 2719, which could enable collaboration in deploying Military Observers. The use of technology for situational awareness, such as real-time satellite data systems, was noted as effective. Strengthening local partnerships was highlighted as a core strength of UNTSO in building trust and cooperation with local actors. Future peacekeeping operations should prioritize community engagement and relationships with government and civil society.

The importance of strong and transparent relationships with host countries was discussed as critical for credibility. It was noted that UNTSO's reporting was never challenged by the five host countries, and pairing officers from different countries helped avoid bias. The mission's success in starting up missions was attributed to its capacity for in-field induction training. The establishment of a centre of excellence to build knowledge, institutional expertise and supporting a global Observers Community of Practice was discussed. Complementing and supporting but not duplicating national UN Military Observer Courses, the centre of excellence would focus on policy applicable research and in-theater induction and continuous training during missions. This could be particularly useful for special political missions and Chapter VIII partnership arrangements that use Military Observers. UNTSO's simple mandate allowed for flexibility and adaptability, which had proven crucial in its operating context.

The linkage between monitoring missions and political processes was emphasized, with potential utility for other regional contexts such as Yemen. The need for better integration with other UN elements like human rights and development was highlighted, along with the importance of moving past the binary distinction between peacekeeping and political missions. Addressing separate budgetary systems was also deemed important. Overall, the session highlighted the value of the Military Observer role in increasing peacekeeping's nimbleness and adaptability.

## 4. High-level Luncheon

A High-Level Luncheon was hosted by Switzerland on the theme of Pathways to more Nimble, Adaptive and Effective Peacekeeping. In her welcoming remarks, Swiss Deputy State Secretary for Security Policy H.E. Pälvi Pulli noted that peacekeeping remained at the core of the UN's peace efforts but needed to adapt to new requirements and to a more dangerous, treacherous environment. Relations between major powers were more strained than at any point in the past decades. Trust needed to be reestablished among all partners for peacekeeping to remain relevant.

In his keynote speech, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix noted that while peacekeeping remained a symbol of global solidarity and multilateralism in action which had continuously evolved, current geopolitical challenges and lack of unified political support posed significant challenges. Missions needed to become much nimbler, which he defined as increasing the ability to quickly and flexibly mobilize and deploy capacities, capabilities and expertise, wherever needed. They also needed to become more adaptable, by continuously reassessing the impact of peacekeeping efforts and making the required adjustments on an ongoing basis. He stressed that this required having lean, prioritized mandates and the operational, administrative, budgetary flexibility.

> **"Peacekeeping remains an irreplaceable instrument to stabilize crisis situations and protect civilians affected by conflicts. It is the core of our efforts to advance security and peace."**
>
> **Pälvi Pulli, Deputy State Secretary for Security Policy, Switzerland**

USG Lacroix also identified trust as the cornerstone of effective peacekeeping. The Summit of the Future represented a once-in-a-generation opportunity to recommit to the UN Charter and reaffirm trust in the multilateral system, and thereby reinvigorate the UN's critical role in peace and security.

In the subsequent interactive conversation facilitated by Annika Hilding Norberg, GCSP, participants spoke about the need for peacekeeping missions to remain time-bound and have clear exit strategies, backed by collective commitment of international and regional actors. Peacekeeping needed to be clearly embedded in a broader international engagement strategy driven by robust political engagement for peace. Amid regional clusters of conflict spanning the Sahel, Great Lakes region and the Middle East, much stronger regional engagement in peacekeeping efforts was required to strengthen tailored approaches to local contexts. Speakers recognized that peacekeeping was a tool rather than an end in itself, and therefore required flexibility and innovation in its approaches.

# 5. Practitioner Dialogues

In the afternoon, three concurrent roundtables discussed persistent issues that inhibit adaptation to changing circumstances, and lessons and good practices that can inform future mission models.

## Roundtable 1: Nimble, Adaptive and Effective Peacekeeping

The first expert roundtable, moderated by Dr. Emma Birikorang, KAIPTC, explored the meaning and practical implications of nimble, adaptive, and effective peacekeeping, and discussed challenges and opportunities in enhancing operational agility, strengthening leadership, and better utilizing technology and expertise.

Participants identified several systemic issues in peacekeeping, including a perceived dilution of the strategic oversight function of the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) which needed to be redressed,

the need for stronger integration within missions and with the UN system, and a tendency towards risk aversion. Host-state support was emphasized as crucial, with a lack of it significantly hampering operations in recent years. Disunity among Security Council members and the presence of alternative actors in peacekeeping spaces further complicated efforts.

One participant criticized the term 'nimbleness' as an unattainable objective given the legal, operational, financial, and political constraints that peacekeeping operations were subjected to, and which significantly impacted their effectiveness and speed; realistic expectations were needed regarding nimbleness and adaptiveness. Others emphasized the importance of continuing to work towards more agile missions that are less burdened by administrative and budgetary strictures– issues which, as one participant argued, contributed to the current trend towards smaller, more specialized missions, including by non-UN actors. In this context, it was raised that the recent Security Council resolution 2719 (2023) on the financing of AU peace support operations through UN assessed contributions could lead to AU-led operations being bogged down by heavy processes and rules, thereby losing their competitive advantage. One participant cautioned that trends towards partnership may lead to further militarization at the expense of civilian aspects of peacekeeping.

> "Today's symposium is a first waypoint in a process to fill these two words – nimble and adaptive – with meaning, and to move us from rhetoric to results."
>
> **Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations**

The roundtable discussed the importance of more decentralized command and decision-making, and for peacekeeping operations to always contribute to political solutions to address the conflict. One participant criticized a perceived lack of leadership on the part of the Secretariat and advocated for proactive, continuous planning to develop scenarios and tailored options for peacekeeping operations in a range of current conflicts.

Participants discussed ways to make peacekeeping more agile by leveraging technologies, along with expanding modalities to mobilize and rapidly provide specialized expertise wherever needed, for example in the area of police, justice and corrections, as is being done by the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (OROLSI). This could also involve virtual deployments. The experience of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS) was highlighted as a key contribution to increasing the adaptiveness of peacekeeping to fast-changing environments. In the Middle East, a CPAS framework was now shared by peacekeeping missions across the region – however, its use remained limited by the fact that it was only used by DPO-led missions and not by the wider UN system. With regard to Protection of Civilians (POC) mandates, participants discussed the difficult trade-offs between proactive POC mandate implementation, the need for better force protection for peacekeepers, and the need to manage expectations of host communities. One participant highlighted that making peacekeeping more effective or agile would also require having peacekeepers with the right capabilities and mindsets

and creating gender-balanced and inclusive work environments. Therefore, these considerations should be factored in future UN recruitment, force generation and training efforts.

## Roundtable 2:  How can peacekeeping become more people-centered?

Led by Dr. Andrew Tchie, NUPI, this session explored practical approaches to enhance people-centered peacekeeping, a key theme in *A New Agenda for Peace*. The roundtable discussed good practices, lessons learned, and how they could inform future mission models, focusing on human rights mandates and engagement with local communities, particularly women and youth.

Participants discussed the evolution of people-centered approaches in peacekeeping. It was noted that a significant shift in thinking had occurred towards to what peacekeeping can do *with* and *for* communities, and learning from them. This involved expanding and protecting civic space amid conflict, facilitating dialogue among diverse actors, and creating safe spaces for inclusive political solutions. Peacekeeping was seen as pivotal in supporting civic dialogues, including on constitution-building, and in transitional justice processes. This included addressing prison situations, which often impacted community cohesion with detainees being neglected or rejected by society. The session acknowledged the challenge of making peacekeeping more people-centric amidst a trust deficit caused by sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) cases in some contexts. Restoring trust required inclusive engagement of women and all stakeholders.

The need to professionalize community engagement was emphasized, with a need for accountability and feedback loops that allowed for greater adaptability. The example of female mixed platoons and engagement teams demonstrated the progress that had been made, but community engagement should become "a routine task for all". Similarly, a better link of local- and national-level engagements was required. It was stressed that peacekeeping, UN agencies, and other stakeholders must work together more effectively, and work with communities more intentionally and collaboratively including in decisions on how funds are spent.

Human Rights mandates were highlighted as a crucial element of people-centered approaches. Participants stressed the importance of positively framing the UN's work in protecting and promoting human rights, rather than primarily focusing on violations. Participants shared, however, that the human rights work faced increasing challenges in several mission settings that would require collective efforts by the UN and Member States to address. The UN's work in protecting and promoting human rights merited stronger emphasis to inform discussions of the future of the UN and peacekeeping, as well as conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Participants stressed the importance for peacekeeping to amplify the voices of people and communities and to be at their service. It was suggested that peacekeeping should be more deliberately geared towards serving as a structure that advances gender equality and strengthens the roles of women and marginalized groups in peace processes including valuing and integrating their perspectives and priorities in mandate implementation. and capacity. Longer-term engagement in various peace operations contexts had yielded demonstrable results in that regard. One participant suggested to reframe WPS engagement through a human security and gender lens in peacekeeping. Another participant noted that people-centeredness was inherent in WPS engagement.

Participants drew attention to the importance of local staff in peace operations, also noting prevailing, unhelpful hierarchies between local and international staff. The important role of community liaison assistants (CLAs) was highlighted as "the bread and butter of civil affairs" and constantly, regularly, engaging with local stakeholders. This was a key comparative advantage of peacekeeping where it is physically present. However, while peacekeeping could build trust through this type of regular engagement, its capacity to reach was often overestimated.

The roundtable debated whether the term "people-centered" accurately captured the complex realities of conflict and societal dynamics. It was suggested that the term might carry different meanings in different contexts, and intersectionality posed challenges. For instance, whether the LGBTQI community would be included under "people-centered" approaches in certain country contexts was questioned.

## Roundtable 3: How can peacekeeping help build trust in the Rule of Law as a foundation for peace and security?

Moderated by Dr. Dawit Yohannes, ISS, the session focused on the potential for peacekeeping operations to further strengthen efforts to rebuild trust in the Rule of Law as a foundation for peace and security. The discussion also addressed models for the future of the United Nations Rule of Law along the full justice chain covering police, justice and corrections. Speakers pointed to the strengthening of criminal accountability and prison management in at least four peacekeeping settings, while recognizing that UN Police and Rule of Law interventions needed to adapt to a rapidly changing nature of contemporary conflict marked by trends such as increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), climate change, increasing socio-economic inequalities, rising influence of non-state actors, and mis/disinformation against the UN and vulnerable communities.

Participants discussed the strong need for more digitalization. It was imperative to step up capacities to manage and use data across all functions. UN Police was uniquely situated to gather and use information, for example in community policing and to support the Protection of Civilians through aggregating crime statistics. However, a wider organizational shift towards data was still missing. Further, the roundtable discussed that to unleash the potential of future peacekeeping, there was a need to sharpen available peacekeeping Rule of Law tools and embrace a needs-based approach to address future challenges in different domains. This required moving beyond unhelpful institutional constraints and structures in the UN Secretariat and a bifurcation into "mission and non-mission settings." Policing, Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform interventions could play a more central role in future peacekeeping approaches.

The lack of capacity of local and national governance structures was highlighted as a key challenge in many peacekeeping settings, and institutional mechanisms needed to be found to sustain Rule of Law interventions during transitions and until well after the drawdown of peacekeeping operations. Participants recalled well-known financing challenges such as the lack of investments in prevention and the funding cliff commonly observed upon closure of a peacekeeping operation. The role of corruption as a conflict driver was highlighted. Corruption led to an erosion of public trust in Rule of Law institutions. A common UN position on corruption was crucial, and peacekeeping mandates should include a dedicated focus on corruption as well as organized crime.

# 6. Wrap-up Session

Moderator:
- *H.E. Pascale Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland*

Closing remarks by:
- *Maj Gen Richard Addo Gyane, Commandant, KAIPTC*
- *Maj Gen (ret) BK Sharma, Director, USI India*
- *Flaminia Minelli, Chief, Policy and Best Practices Service, DPO DPET.*

The final session recapitulated key takeaways and recommendations from the symposium to inform future deliberations on peacekeeping. It emphasized the enduring strengths of peacekeeping, exemplified by UNTSO, and highlighted the urgent need for peacekeeping to adapt to technological changes and emerging challenges, which would require dedicated resources. Participants also reflected on the political conditions and necessary capabilities for the deployment of future operations.

The discussion recalled the significant shifts in peacekeeping since the end of the Cold War, particularly in the African security environment, which now faced threats related to election security, cyber security, migration, terrorism, and violent extremism. Peacekeeping remained essential but was under increasing pressure to adapt to volatile environments and threats from armed groups with powerful weaponry. A holistic overhaul of mission performance was deemed necessary to better design and deliver peacekeeping mandates. A thorough reassessment of what makes peacekeeping effective was called for from UN Member States worldwide.

It was noted that the UN system was under heavy strain due to the zero-sum nature of geopolitics and great power contestation, in a world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. A new approach to peacekeeping rooted in global solidarity was advocated, emphasizing the need to reform the Security Council and strengthen the General Assembly's role in decision-making on peace operations. The need for all countries to embrace the Sustainable Development Goals to address the root causes of violence and conflict and promoting human rights, gender equality, social justice, and adherence to the Rule of Law were also stressed.

> **"We need to revisit our mental maps and our group thinking, and look at a new world and have a *de novo* approach to UN peacekeeping operations."**
>
> **Major General (ret) BK Sharma, Director, USI India**

Looking to the future, suggestions included considering new forms of disaster relief operations under the UN's aegis, creating regional centers of excellence with interdisciplinary staffing to better analyze and address threats, and proactive planning and tabletop exercises for readiness. Comprehensive peacebuilding approaches should involve UN Peacekeepers, regional organizations, and local communities.

Strategic communications were highlighted as essential in an era of fake news.

The lack of unified and strong political support from Member States was identified as one of the most critical challenges to effective peacekeeping. Despite the absence of sufficient political will, the importance of improving the effectiveness of the peacekeeping tool was acknowledged. The need for proactive planning for various potential peacekeeping engagements, including preventative mission deployments in regions with increasing conflict risk, was underscored. The potential role of the General Assembly in authorizing such preventative actions was also suggested. Applying a human security lens in peacekeeping was considered to overcome the trust deficit among populations.

In closing statements, the world was described as facing the most complicated political environment since at least the end of the Cold War, necessitating reform of instruments and institutions despite the lack of will and leadership among powerful nations. Despite geopolitical challenges, the Security Council's continued use of peacekeeping in existing missions underlines its indispensable role and relevance. The collective responsibility of all stakeholders to strengthen the peacekeeping tool for the future was emphasized. Critical factors for the future of peacekeeping were identified as technology, community engagement, strengthening trust with local populations, the centrality of the Rule of Law, and the importance of partnerships.