

# Opening Remarks for the Multidimensional Peace Operations Course 2019, at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra

Swiss Ambassador, Philipp STALDER, 24.06.2019

- Commandant, Brigadier General Ofori
- Director Training, Christian Eshun
- Course Director, Major Adrian Zurmuehle
- Course Participants & distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen



*Mr. Philipp Stalder, Ambassador of Switzerland to Ghana ©Embassy of Switzerland Accra*

It was exactly 8 weeks ago that I arrived in beautiful Ghana as the Ambassador designate, and today is my first visit to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). It therefore gives me enormous pleasure to be here and welcome you, dear course participants, to your first day as well at the KAIPTC.

Having quickly looked at the participants list, I would like to say that your course seems to me to be a perfect mix of people of different nationalities and professional backgrounds. What I also particularly

like is that there is a good representation of women enrolled. A special warm word of welcome goes to all female participants with my particular encouragement to the women to make sure that your voices will be heard.

As the African Cup of Nations has started in Egypt, I am tempted to say that we have an African Cup of Nations here in Accra as well! The difference is, however, that there are no winners and losers in our course. We want to create win-win situations, learn from each other and benefit from the tremendous experience gathered in this room.

For many years, Switzerland has been an important and reliable partner to the Centre and on an average; the Swiss Ministry of Defence and my Swiss colleagues working at KAIPTC organize two courses a year here. Let me take the opportunity to thank Major Zurmühle for all his efforts in designing and organizing this course for you.

Let me say a few words about the UN, which was founded in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II. In its preamble, the Nations Charter expresses its determination *"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."* Since then, the UN - and the same is valid for the African Union - has been called upon to prevent disputes from escalating into war, to persuade opposing parties to use the conference table rather than the force of arms and to help restore peace when conflict breaks out. Unfortunately, we all know that the international community has failed in too many cases to prevent war. On the other hand, the UN has also helped to contain or end numerous conflicts. In many situations, this was done through the deployment of peace operations.

Peace Operations are based on the principle of impartial presence to ease tensions between hostile parties and create space for political negotiations. Peace Operations can bridge the gap between the cessation of hostilities and a durable peace. Prerequisite however, is the political will to reach the goal. Initially developed to deal with inter-State conflicts, peace and mediation operations have increasingly been used in intra-State conflicts and civil wars, which are often characterized by multiple armed factions with differing political objectives and fractured lines of command.

This changing environment has led to an evolution in the structure of peace operations since the first UN field operations were deployed in the fifties of the last century. Over the last 30 years especially, peace operations have evolved from a traditionally military-based model, to a multidimensional model consisting of a wide range of components including military, civilian police, political & civil actors, the respect for rule of law and human rights as well as other aspects such as humanitarian issues, reconstruction, public information and gender-related topics.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the size and scope of peace operations have expanded dramatically. Important to recall, is the fact that multidimensional peace operations cannot be executed in a "one-size-fits-all" manner. Also important: To succeed, peace operations must have clear mandates and adequate resources and must be tailored to fit the political, regional and other realities of the country or territory in question. And most important, they must respond to the desires and aspirations of the local population.

There are critical voices claiming that peace operations are neither efficient nor effective and therefore a waste of resources. Of course, we all have to be self-critical. But what do peace operations consist of? They consist of human beings like you and me. Therefore, it is our very own responsibility to do everything in our power to make Peace Operations successful. Instead of blaming organisations, we should start assuming ownership for our area of responsibility. Only through the engagement of each of us, can multidimensional peace operations serve as a truly effective tool for a better world and a world at peace.

As I conclude, let me encourage all of us to make this Multidimensional Peace Operations Course organized by Switzerland a success. Please, benefit from the highly qualified facilitators and the knowledge of your fellow participants. Ask questions and challenge statements. Foremost: be curious and have a fruitful time at the course, which I would like to declare on this note as formally opened.

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