

**Opening Remarks by Mr. Svein Sæther
Director General
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Seminar on Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations.

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Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

First of all, on behalf of Deputy Minister Mr. Raymond Johansen, I would like to welcome you to this seminar, and thank you for attending this important gathering. Deputy Minister Johansen would have liked to be with you, but some last minute demands on his time made it impossible for him to attend.

I'm very happy to be here and to address this crucially important gathering on a theme that governments, mine included, and international organisations alike are grappling with these days:

How do we manage our domestic and international efforts to strategically focus and realign our many-faceted presence in conflict-ridden countries with a view to assisting war-torn societies in their transition from war to peace?

Despite of the rumours of its “imminent demise”, the UN has seen a growth in activity over the last three to four years that makes it the largest actor in multinational peacekeeping in the world. The UN is currently controlling more operations and more personnel than NATO, the EU, the African Union and other regional organisations combined – and it is doing so under severe resource constraints and tremendous political pressure and expectations.

The last few years – and not the least the experience of the Iraq war – have shown that global legitimacy is more necessary than ever. While the UN is gradually getting better at dealing with the issues at hand, it is also becoming even more necessary. Thus, the alternatives may not be as attractive as some of us might have thought only a few years ago.

The transformation of the very nature of conflicts also demanded a change from a narrow framework, designed simply to mitigate the impact of war, to one that transcends traditional peacekeeping. At the same time, there has been a growing awareness of the need to acknowledge the shifting features and nature of modern conflicts and their non-linear nature – and the fact that more has to be done to link together peacemaking, conflict management (including peacekeeping) and peacebuilding in order to achieve greater impact and early dividends on the ground. The increasingly multidimensional mandates adopted by the UN Security Council reflect this shift in the strategic approaches of peace operations in recent years.

Experiences from places as diverse as Kosovo, East Timor, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Burundi and the Sudan underline the importance of early and effective security dividends. Sustainable security also goes beyond the scope of any single actor and cannot be restored or maintained in a vacuum. A common understanding has emerged across all sectors and among all stakeholders that efforts for peace

must be more strategic and more closely coordinated if they are to have the ambitious impacts intended. The debate on integration and system coherence is nothing new in a UN context. The latest “integration surge” emerged in response to an identified need to improve the delivery of a post-Cold War peace dividend. The UN and the international community have always wrestled with the perennial problem of how to make all the moving parts work together to ensure a coherent approach to crisis, conflict and the aftermath. Until quite recently, it was presumed that the many initiatives and parallel efforts being made by a increasingly growing number of actors would automatically add up – an assumption that eventually had to give way to efforts to promote explicit coherence and even formal integration, where appropriate, among the interveners to achieve more impact.

It is against this backdrop that Norway launched an initiative in 2004 to support the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs’ report on Integrated Missions – included in your conference file.

With a view to sharing experiences and views from the field, capitals and practitioners, a series of regional consultations and seminars have been held around the world, including in Beijing, Addis Ababa, Geneva, New York – and now – Johannesburg. We will continue in Brussels next month before concluding in Oslo at the end of October.

The seminars have provided a forum for key stakeholders in multidimensional peace operations to exchange views and propose improvements to current practices related to the integrated missions’ concept. A final report, which will synthesise the concluding discussions, is to be consolidated and discussed at the meeting in Oslo.

On the basis of the work we have done thus far, we have chosen five key questions that we feel merit more attention and discussion in the time ahead. They are as follows:

- How to reconcile mandates/efforts to improve the coherence and impact of the UN response in conflicts;
- How to better support the peace processes by linking the peacemaking efforts with the conception, planning and implementation of a multidimensional and integrated peace operation;
- How to improve the alignment of mandates, resources and practices;
- How integrated peace operations can enhance effective protection of civilians, while safeguarding the independence and impartiality of humanitarian efforts; and
- How integrated peace operations can augment a demographically and gender sensitive approach.

I hope that this seminar will provide a more in-depth understanding of these and the many other trends, challenges and dilemmas that face UN peacekeeping today. I believe it is vital that member states engage in this vitally important debate. Increasing the UN’s capacity to implement effective and efficient peace operations should not be to the responsibility of the Secretariat alone. I look forward to engaging with you on this over the next days.

I am also particularly pleased to co-host this event together with South Africa, which has been a long-term strategic partner. South Africa, with its solid standing both globally and regionally, has an important role to play in this regard. South Africa has also been at the forefront of the strategic thinking in and around international peace operations for years.

Moreover, with nearly half of the UN peacekeeping missions since the end of the Cold War taking place in Africa, combined with the evolving, highly dynamic and fluid security architecture in Africa and the fact that the continent currently hosts the largest UN peacekeeping engagement in history, South Africa is a critical partner for discussing the issues in front of us today.

Indeed there is already enough experience for us to draw some general lessons and identify some trends. I have had the privilege of following this process at close hand and from a number of different vantage points, and it has been encouraging to note how the debate has matured over the last few years. So, I would like to share a few preliminary observations with you here today:

- While normative changes in UN policies have expanded the reach of peace operations, institutional reforms have not necessarily kept pace.
- There is thus a need to better link the overall call for integration with the need for a larger and more comprehensive systemic reform of the UN. Many of the obstacles are directly tied to the need for better understanding of the concept and what it entails and implies among member states, key donors and troop-contributing countries.
- Achieving integration also requires a clear and shared understanding of what it actually means in practice.
- Integration cannot be based on fixed templates. Nor is it a goal in itself, as any form of integration needs to be determined by the functions it seeks to deliver and the desired impact of our actions. Integration is a tool aimed at improving impact on the ground through more efficient delivery, less bureaucracy, less duplication of effort, and more effective engagement with partners
- Peacekeeping should be seen as part of a larger strategy on integrated peacebuilding strategies.
- We need to strive towards better realignment (or in some cases alignment) of mandates and resources. It is the authorizing resolution of the Security Council that sets the direction and decides the mission mandate. However, resolutions authorizing missions are usually the result of a hard won compromise, which means that there is a danger of a mismatch between the means and the mandate and, as a consequence, between expectations and outcomes. A lack of coherence at that level can well affect the credibility of a peace operation and by extension the peace process. Coherence and credibility go hand in hand.
- Integrated strategies must be linked with integrated funding; otherwise their implementation will not be possible.
- Differing rules and regulations and budgeting and oversight systems can and have impeded deeper efforts to integrate programmes. Thus, revamping the current administrative and budgeting structures and procedures is crucial to success or failure in this area
- A better coordinated resource mobilisation effort is needed to ensure that the funding environment reinforces integration and does not undermine the ability of the UN to actually integrate, as is the case in several missions today.
- Leadership remains critical as regards better profiling in the initial selection process as well as tailoring the mission preparedness package to build substantive competency about the UN system as a whole. The Secretary-General's selection procedures need to be considerably revamped.
- Mutually support, reconfigure and adapt our responses efficiently, and on a regular basis, to meet the actual demands and changing conflict environments on the ground.

- It is increasingly acknowledged that any form of integration needs to be determined by the functions it seeks to deliver, and the desired impact of our actions. At the same time, some of the inherent dilemmas involved in integration remain:
 - Balancing the need to maintain impartial humanitarian space in times of conflict. .
 - The local ownership dilemma: building credibility and capacity around local structures and actors, while keeping in mind that the actors we thereby empower may not always be striving for the same direction of change as that presupposed by the overarching peacebuilding strategy. While the ideal scenario is a full realignment between national and international programming, the reality is much more complex.
- Joint planning and assessments are critical. Jointly agreeing on benchmarks to assess the impact of the planning (did it meet the objectives, deliver on mandate responsibilities) and evaluating (to better attune/re-configure our planning parameters) during the mission set-up (real-time) and the aftermath equally important.
- Leadership is and remains critical.
- Further greater accountability for the impact by all actors.
- There is also another aspect that merits more focus: how to better integrate to mutually support and reconfigure and adapt our responses efficiently and on a regular basis to meet the actual demands and changing conflict environments on the ground.
- Partnerships remain crucial.
- We must also overcome the tendency to see elections as an exit strategy for international engagement, and to equate elections with a formal definition of democracy.
- Another very important trend is the growing acceptance of the protection of civilians as an organic part of the mandate of any peace operation.
- Cognizance of the importance of basic security is one of the most visible and immediate dividends for communities in conflict. The ability of the peacekeepers to provide security.
- Ensure that the mandate, planning, programming and launch of a UN multidimensional and integrated peace operation are sufficiently “integrated” and attuned to the demographic realities on the ground and fosters a gender sensitive approach. This needs to be maintained and revised throughout the mission, by all implementing partners.
- Finally, an integrated approach must be taken to the resources and training necessary for its implementation. No two operations are alike. But common to them all is the need for better knowledge of the different organisational mandates, better integrated planning, more robust guidelines, and, most importantly, the demonstration of mutual respect.

To sum up: There is a clear need to revisit the very definition of integration. We must identify what to integrate and when it should be integrated in order to achieve the desired impact. We also need to focus on what objectives we should integrate around, what outcomes we should expect to achieve through integration, and how we can measure our impact and create incentives for integration.

One message/observation stands out from all our work so far, across all sectors – the call to bring “politics back in”. This has been a common theme throughout all the seminars around the world – in all the various constituencies. What does it mean? Well, it means, of course,

different things to different constituencies, but the common thread is that interventions into conflicts need to be backed up by a robust political framework.

In Africa in particular, the issue of regional integration has come up numerous times. By that I am not referring to improving cooperation between regional organisations, which is how it is commonly defined. I am talking about integration across borders to counter what is commonly referred to as regional conflict formations. Modern conflicts do not respect boundaries, but travel across borders: sometimes due to natural migration, other times due to purely economic or political incentives or simply the principle of the highest bidder. It also calls for an active commitment on the part of the relevant regional organisations to engage with and find better ways of responding jointly to regional conflict formations.

In spite of the fact that the UN continues to operate at the limits of its capacity, there is little doubt that the collective ability of the organisation to plan and lead complex peace operations has significantly improved over the last few years. While there is still substantial room for improvement, we believe that the glass is half full, not half empty.

As UN member states we have a responsibility to provide resources for peace operations and to take part in the global debate on how this essential instrument can be improved and adapted. A responsibility that calls for a similar reform in the way we operate within the organisation and among ourselves. Increasing the UN's capacity to become a more effective, efficient and accountable organisation should not be left to the Secretariat alone.

Against this background, and in that spirit, I look forward to our discussions over the next two days.

Thank you for your attention.