

**Speech by Minister of Defense**

**Dr. Ursula von der Leyen**

**On the occasion of Germany's presentation of  
contributions to strengthen UN Peacekeeping**

**On 7 September 2017**

**Check against delivery**

At the outset, I would like to thank you Mayor Sridharan for opening up one of this city's treasures for us today, this wonderful hall. It gives our gathering a rather festive atmosphere.

For decades, Bonn has served as a diplomatic hub, and with its openness and diversity, one could not find a better location for the United Nations on German soil. This is why Bonn has all the reason to be proud of its title as "UN city on the Rhine"! This is all the more significant since the United Nations represents the key venue for German development and security policy.

Dear Mayor, thank you for the hospitality your city has shown to the United Nations and to us today for this occasion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Charter is the international legal foundation for our global coexistence. In the preamble, it reads: We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war [...], have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims." These words express the desire to learn from the horrific experiences of two world wars. Over the decades, the United Nations has been able to accomplish so much. Despite all the setbacks, the United Nations has made our world a more peaceful and safer place for billions of people. The United Nations is one of the key achievements of the modern age.

But the United Nations is only as strong as Member States make it. This is why it is Germany's desire and explicit goal to make the United Nations even more assertive and efficient. And this is also why Germany is willing to accept more responsibility within the UN. Our current candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council demonstrates this commitment.

Germany already makes vital contributions to the United Nations – including with our armed forces (Bundeswehr). Our soldiers currently serve in challenging peacekeeping missions in Mali, off the coast of Lebanon, in Darfur, South Sudan and Western Sahara. We are actively involved in peacekeeping efforts and provide high-value capabilities; in Mali with up to 1,000 soldiers. Our reconnaissance drones LUNA and HERON are helping boost the UN's effectiveness in the crisis-ridden country.

Two German soldiers recently lost their lives during this mission. Their deaths show how dangerous this service for peace and our security can be.

Beyond our involvement in specific missions, we provide many innovative peacekeeping capabilities. For example, we offer the United Nations "in-mission trainings" which give specialized on-site training to personnel at the headquarters of ongoing peace missions.

Furthermore, we offer the deployment of "mobile training teams." These teams train troop contingents in their home countries before their deployment in peace missions.

The first “mobile training team” was recently in Egypt where they conducted training on protection against booby traps and mines. Another training program is scheduled for later this year in Guinea.

We have also provided the United Nations with five “startup kits.” These kits are fully-equipped, high-value management containers which can be used in future missions. These containers help scale up leadership and response capabilities quickly in the country of deployment and greatly improve peacekeeping readiness.

Dear Mr. Lacroix,

I know that you have already been convinced of the efficacy of these “startup kits.” And today, I would like to symbolically present this capability to you.

Furthermore, we wish to support the United Nations in the planning of its peace missions. You created a new overview system, the Peacekeeping Capabilities Readiness System, in which states can register civil forces but also military capabilities. This system is meant to create a pool from which forces can be sensibly assembled and requested – of course in accordance with national consent requirements.

Since its inception, 81 member states have joined this system, including Germany which so far has provided civilian capabilities through its Agency for Technical Relief (Technisches Hilfswerk). Today, I would also like to officially register select military capabilities, including headquarters staff, military observers, military police officers and forces for air transportation, operative communication, mine clearance and reconnaissance as well as medical facilities. We are convinced this represents a substantial contribution to the United Nations.

We understand that security and development go hand in hand. This is the key to reconciliation and stability so people in vulnerable regions of the world can have a better future in their home countries. The United Nations works tirelessly in this cause, and we will continue to support it in these efforts.