



Challenges Forum 2009: Issues and Desired End-State

Presentation by Ms Annika Hilding Norberg
International Coordinator of the Challenges Forum

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman, Partners and Colleagues,

Allow me to join the earlier speakers and warmly welcome you to this Second International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations. We feel quite fortunate that this year's Forum is taking place not long after the launch of the new Horizon non-paper which highlights the importance of a global partnership for peacekeeping. Indeed, that is what Challenges is all about – stimulating dialogue and working in partnership to develop a shared agenda on peacekeeping.

The program for the Challenges Forum 2009 was developed in close cooperation between Pakistan and the Challenges Coordinators. Brigadier Kausar, the then Coordinator at the National Defence University in Pakistan, proposed that we ask the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations what issues they thought it would be useful for the Challenges Forum to address. The issues later suggested largely coincided with those that Ambassador Tariq Osman Hyder proposed from the perspective of a top troop contributor. They included, but were not limited to: the inadequacy of current peacekeeping mandates, the need for better consultations with Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries, and challenges related to UN command and control arrangements.

The Challenges Forum 2009, which was to have been hosted in Islamabad, had to be postponed. I would like to thank our Pakistani Partners for our very close and ongoing positive cooperation and pay tribute to our Pakistani colleagues for their continued contributions to peacekeeping around the world – a contribution without the “ifs” and “buts” often associated with peacekeeping.

We are still very much looking forward to a Challenges Forum being hosted in Islamabad, but we jointly agreed that the issues that were to be addressed could not wait. So, that is why we are now co-hosting this Challenges Forum on: A New Horizon for Peace Operations Partnerships – What are the Next Steps?

The Forum is global and open to leading practitioners, diplomats and academics from all countries. The Challenges Partnership still makes up the steering group of, and co-owns, the Challenges Forum. You find the Partners listed in the files you have received and I warmly encourage you to speak to any one of them today regarding any question or suggestion you may have concerning the Forum. We are particularly pleased to be able to benefit from the unique advice from our Challenges Forum Patron, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, the Challenges Senior Advisers, Lt Gen Satish Nambiar, Maj Gen Robert Gordon and our Research Adviser,

Ms Fatemeh Ziai. We hope that you have found the background studies and papers that have been prepared by Challenges to be of interest. The goal was to provide you, in advance, with analysis on the issues to be discussed so that we can focus our discussions on the way forward.

The format of the sessions is as follows: a Facilitator will open the discussion by highlighting the key focus of the session and what he or she aims to achieve by the end of the session. This will be followed by a presentation by a Key Note or the author of the background study or paper for that session on the analysis and main recommendations. A Panel of Senior Officials and Experts will then be given five minutes each to highlight one or two key points that they believe could make a difference as we consider - what are the next steps?

You will have noted that our programme is very tight. What will make the sessions truly valuable however, is if we are able to bring in the knowledge and perspectives of the Forum participants speaking from the floor also. So we encourage comments and questions from the floor and look forward to an inclusive and interactive discussion.

Building on the first Challenges Forum Annual Report, which is available outside, and which was produced after the first Forum that was hosted by our French Partners, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, we intend to publish a similar volume after this gathering. Further, we have invited the facilitators, speakers and panelists to note down some five points or issues that they consider are the value added of their particular session. These will be collected, put together and posted on the Challenges web-site.

On the “value added” of Challenges: there is no shortage of conferences on peace operations around the globe, but what distinguishes the Challenges Forum is the Partnership. Not only are they united in the goal of supporting and improving UN peacekeeping and peace operations in general, but they have, among their ranks, experts with a diversity of experience and perspective, and spanning the continents. This, I would argue, is what enables the Forum to make a unique contribution.

The concepts and doctrine development project we have embarked on is just one example of how Challenges seeks to support UN peacekeeping. The project aims to provide DPKO with the conceptual underpinnings for the development of guidance for senior mission leaders on how to operationalize the guiding principles of peacekeeping. This fills a gap that the UN has identified as important, but which it does not have the resources to tackle at present.

I would also like to express appreciation for our cooperation, which began last year, with the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations. This is now a standing item in our opening session and participants have found that this overview of current operations provides a valuable framework for our discussions.

We have a lot of ground to cover in the next two days as we discuss some of the most challenging aspects of modern peacekeeping and peace operations. These are not problems that are easily resolved, but what is important is that Challenges and colleagues in this room, seeks to follow up on the problems raised and solutions proposed, in order for it to be real movement and for us all, to take at least one or two, of those next steps. We look forward to what I am certain will be a useful and inclusive discussion.

Thank you.