

**Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Atul Khare
Remarks at Dag Hammarskjöld Medal Awards Ceremony on
the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**

New York, 19 May 2016

Excellencies, Colleagues, Friends,

It is a very great privilege for me to be here today to honour our peacekeepers – uniformed and civilian – who paid the ultimate price while serving under the blue flag. I humbly accept this medal on behalf of our civilian peacekeepers who sacrificed their lives in the service of peace.

Thirty-two civilians died last year while serving on our operations. We honour them and pay tribute to their service and their memory. We are diminished by their loss, but we are determined to honour their sacrifice by carrying forward their work.

Some of the colleagues we lost were deployed in hardship duty stations such as Darfur, the Central African Republic and Mali. Many among them were national staff serving with dedication and courage so that their country can build a better future.

I also join Mr Ladsous in mourning the five peacekeepers who were killed last evening in an attack on our convoy in Mali.

On behalf of the UN peacekeeping family, I convey my deepest, heartfelt condolences to the families of all our martyred colleagues. We mourn with you. But, we are also filled with pride as we remember the contributions of your loved ones. And we thank you, their loved ones, from the depth of our hearts for your sacrifice. We honour the exemplary strength and courage you demonstrate in bearing your tragic loss.

Excellencies,

We are deeply conscious of the responsibilities we carry in peacekeeping. We are expected to operate in complex and austere environments and deploy in poor security conditions. The context in which our uniformed and civilian peacekeepers operate remains insecure and precarious. And despite these challenges, the demand for UN Peacekeeping as a tool to bring stability and peace is increasing.

If we are to successfully implement the mandates given to us, we must work together.

The top priority of the Department of Field Support, which I have the privilege to lead, is to help our international operations succeed with rapid, effective, efficient and responsible support.

We will pursue performance and innovation in our systems and approaches to deliver consistent and sustainable results.

We will deepen our efforts to prevent, pursue and rectify misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse.

In all we do, we will seek to pay tribute to the departed colleagues we honour today.

Colleagues,

I would like to thank our Member States, without whose support – on so many critical aspects related to this complex operation called UN Peacekeeping – we would not be able to function.

Finally, I would like to once again express my gratitude to our civilian staff, who serve with great dedication, commitment and courage. Your continued service, in the name of peace, is the finest tribute we can pay to the sacrifices of our colleagues who are no longer with us.

Thank you.

Last para in French in case the USG prefers to say also something in French

[Pour conclure, je voudrais une fois encore exprimer toute ma gratitude au personnel civil pour leur dévouement remarquable et courageux. Votre engagement continu au nom de la paix est le meilleur hommage que l'on peut rendre au sacrifice ultime des collègues qui nous ont quitté et ne peuvent pas être parmi nous aujourd'hui.

Merci]