

Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, speaks at the ceremony marking International Day of UN Peacekeepers

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Today, as we mark the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, we pay tribute to the more than 115,000 military, police and civilians serving worldwide under the blue flag and remember those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

We honour the memory of 111 colleagues who lost their lives in 2012.

As we remember the heavy sacrifices of our colleagues, we also hail their accomplishments.

We want to reach out and thank each and every serving peacekeeper for your efforts to help bring stability and peace to some of the most vulnerable people on earth.

We also want to thank our colleagues serving at headquarters - for your dedication and tireless efforts to support our colleagues serving on the front lines of UN peacekeeping.

This year, the International Day of UN Peacekeepers focuses on how we are adapting to meet the new challenges facing peacekeeping. In the past we saw the evolution from the traditional peacekeeping role of cease-fire monitoring toward a more complex, multi-dimensional approach combining military, police and civilian expertise. This evolution continues today, as we are committed to ensuring that peacekeepers in the field have more and better tools to respond to evolving challenges.

As we work hard to establish our latest peacekeeping operation, in Mali, we know our peacekeepers will confront the possibility of attacks by extremist groups as we help to stabilise the country. In eastern DR Congo, peacekeepers are being given new tools to deal with armed groups who continue to target civilians, as part of a wider political solution to the cycles of violence in the region. In each and every Mission we know that colleagues are constantly developing new and better ways to get the job done, and to meet changing political and security conditions on the ground.

Flexibility will continue to be our focus. We must also keep building our partnerships with the Security Council, the General Assembly, Member States and in particular Troop and Police Contributing Countries, regional and sub-regional organizations, and the wider UN family.

Whether military, police or civilian personnel, wherever you are deployed, you have the privilege to serve a noble cause - to make a difference to the lives of millions of people, every day. It is through our collective and personal efforts and through perseverance in the cause of peace that we best honour our colleagues and pay tribute to the memory of those who have lost their lives in service to the UN.

We thank each and every one of you.

Hervé Ladsous and Ameerah Haq