

Opening Remarks by Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN at the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Preparatory Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, 3rd & 10th November 2020

(Bangladesh, Canada and United Kingdom)

Thank you, Ambassador Richard Arbeiter.

Excellencies, USG Lacroix, Director General Lee, Distinguished Delegates, good morning.

On behalf of the co-organizers, I am very pleased to welcome you all to the Conference on Sustaining Peace: the first Preparatory Meeting of the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2021. I thank you for joining us from different time zones; your presence and participation is very important as we prepare for the upcoming Ministerial Conference.

This Conference is being held at a time when the entire world is going through the unprecedented crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has upended lives, societies and institutions - making our pursuit for sustaining peace ever more challenging. In many conflict settings, new challenges have emerged, threatening escalation as well as roll backs on hard-earned progress.

The UN peace operations have also suffered; often due to lack of, or insufficient health related infrastructure in host countries. The tasks of

peacekeepers have also multiplied as the threats to peace and risks of relapse in violence have heightened in many situations.

In view of such multidimensional challenges, that could impact peace operations, we consider this Conference to be extremely important and timely. We expect to have constructive discussions on the existing and emerging challenges that the UN peace operations face today, and to come up with practical, concrete and innovative ideas; and new partnerships; to further consolidate and sustain peace. We are expected to come up with concrete pledges.

The Conference coincides with the ongoing negotiations on the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture review. During this current review cycle, we have seen that there is a clear recognition of positive interlinkages between peacekeeping and peace-building, particularly in conflict affected situations. While peace operations lay the foundations for peacebuilding in host countries, on many occasions the peacekeepers perform specific peacebuilding related tasks aimed at sustaining peace.

Sustaining peace is the outcome that can be best achieved by conflict prevention and sustainable development. National ownership, institution and capacity building, adequate financing, as well as, integration of the WPS agenda at all stages of peace operations to ensure inclusiveness, are essential and effective tools in this regard.

Interactive discussions on these thematic areas would be held on the second day of the Conference, i.e. on the 10th of November. We hope that the breakout sessions would help with an objective assessment of the prevailing conditions for sustaining peace on the ground and to determine the priorities, contexts and sequences of the mandate.

Before I conclude, I would like to recognize the excellent support that we, the co-hosts, have received from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the host of the 2021 ministerial meeting. We thank the Korean Government for commissioning a White Paper on Sustaining Peace, which provides important inputs for our discussions.

I am especially happy to know that Korea has decided to have medical capacity building as the overarching theme of the Ministerial Conference. This would be so relevant given the current challenges that we are facing in the pandemic situation. We look forward to hearing more on this from Director General Lee Joon Ho.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Canada and the United Kingdom for being a close partner of Bangladesh in peacekeeping, WPS and other areas of our common interest. This comes from our shared commitment to sustaining peace and development.

I thank you all once again for your kind presence and support. I wish the meeting all success and a productive outcome. Bangladesh remains fully committed to providing all support for the successful holding of the Ministerial, and the preparatory meetings.

I thank you all.