

Remarks by Mr. Annabi for the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal ceremony

28 May 2004, 11.00 a.m., Library Auditorium

Excellencies.

Distinguished Guests

I would like to welcome you all to this very special occasion.

And I would invite you to join with me in standing for a moment's silence to honour the memory of those who gave their lives in the service of peace.

SILENCE

Thank you.

During the course of the last year, more than fifty thousand men and women from over one hundred countries contributed their skills and expertise to the cause of UN peacekeeping. They worked tirelessly, courageously and under very difficult conditions, with one aim: to help resolve conflict and pave the way to a lasting peace.

While their work has never been in vain, the extraordinary efforts of these UN peacekeepers has come at great cost. Ninety-four (94) of our colleagues and friends from 38 countries lost their lives while in the service of UN peace operations during two thousand and three (2003). Fifty-eight (58) were soldiers, two (2) police officers and thirty-four (34) were civilians.

We especially remember the twenty-two (22) colleagues who were killed in the Baghdad bomb attack and the seventeen (17) Bangladeshi soldiers who died in the Benin air disaster.

Today, we undertake the sad but proud duty of honouring these fallen peacekeepers with the presentation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Medals.

This Medal is the tribute we pay to those who lost their lives in peace operations under the operational control and authority of the United Nations.

The Medals are created on the authority of the Security Council and according to the regulations issued by the Secretary-General.

I have the honour and privilege to present each of you with a single Medal. For some Member States this single Medal represents the only casualty suffered. For others, it will symbolize more. The total number of medals due each Member State will be transferred to the Permanent Missions upon completion of this ceremony.

The support your countries have extended to peacekeeping operations of the United Nations bears witness to the great importance the international community attaches to this unique and vital endeavour.

We thank you for that support, as do the many nations that have benefited from the presence of United Nations peacekeepers.

Thanking you, we also remember and pay tribute to the sacrifice this support has demanded.

Concluding remarks

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

I would like to thank you all for your participation in this ceremony.

Just as these Medals remind us all of what we have lost, your presence here today and the continuing support of Member States for UN Peacekeeping reminds us also of what the world gains, when through the United Nations you join together in the search for global peace and security.

Thank you