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**MESSAGE BY
THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
H.E. MR JAN ELIASSON,
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS**

The General Assembly first designated 29 May as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers four years ago. On this day, we pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication and courage of all the men and women serving in UN peacekeeping operations, and honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

The proud history of United Nations peacekeeping reaches back more than 50 years. In this span of time, countless lives have been saved thanks to the bravery of our uniformed and civilian personnel. Invariably, the presence of blue helmets has eased tensions, spurred progress and sent an important signal to the affected populations that the United Nations supports their efforts to restore peace in their country.

For all the civilians saved thanks to the presence of peacekeepers, there have been those who were lost – the United Nations personnel who sacrificed their lives for a noble cause. Even as we mourn our fallen colleagues, we are all uplifted by their unflinching commitment and are inspired to strive even harder for the collective cause so eloquently envisaged in the United Nations Charter: a world free from the scourge of war.

More than half of all members of the General Assembly supply troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Representatives from those countries will now join other actors in the newly established Peacebuilding Commission. The creation of this body is an historic achievement that will support countries in fragile post-conflict situations on their way to recovery and sustainable development.

Together, we are giving meaning to the ideal of collective security as foreseen by the founders of the United Nations.

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