

29 May 2008

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,  
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,  
on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**

The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/129, designated 29 May as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. This is the date when, sixty years ago, the first UN peacekeeping mission named the “United Nations Truce Supervision Organization”, or UNTSO, began operations in Palestine. Today we are paying 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.

For many souls rising from the aftermath of a conflict, peacekeeping is the United Nations. Blue helmets are involved in a broad range of activities from disarmament to human rights monitoring and elections. Today the UN peacekeeping has expanded to 17 missions, with more than 88,000 troops, police and military observers. During the 62nd session, Member States decided on the establishment of two new peacekeeping operations, including the largest-ever mission created under the auspices of the UN: the African Union/ United Nations Hybrid Operations in Darfur (UNAMID). In order for the Organization as a whole to address this increasingly complex and multi-dimensional challenge effectively, the Assembly last year supported the restructuring of the peacekeeping machinery, including the establishment of the Department of Field Support.

Our job in the General Assembly is to support the peacekeepers in political, financial and logistical aspects, so that they can get their jobs done on the ground. In doing so, we should always remember those who sacrificed their lives for a noble cause. While we mourn our fallen colleagues today, let us renew our commitment to strive for the goal set by the United Nations Charter: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”.