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Opening address to the
**Conference on „Crises Management and Democratization in the
Balkan Region”**

28 May 2010, Budapest

by Dr Ervin GÖMBÖS, Secretary General of the United Nations Association of Hungary,
Vice-President of WFUNA

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

It is indeed a great privilege for me to have the opportunity to participate in this important Conference. I am particularly pleased and honoured to speak at the Opening Session on behalf of the United Nations Association of Hungary which sponsors this great event, as a matter of fact it is one of the co-organizers.

However before commencing on the theme of our deliberations, I should like to take this opportunity to tell you a bit about the organization I represent, the United Nations Association of Hungary.

Since 1947 the UNA of Hungary has been a member of WFUNA which is a federation of UN Associations, a family of UNAs established in every region of the world in more than 100 countries; all working toward a common goal - the promotion of the aims and ideals of the United Nations. Our goal is to bring "the people" closer to the United Nations and the United Nations closer to "the people". We are a people's movement for the United Nations.

The United Nations gives non-governmental organizations or NGOs as we are known, the opportunity for both inputs and outreach. We have the opportunity to contribute to the work of the United Nations through our Category I consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, known as ECOSOC, and the outreach to our affiliates comes through our association with the Department of Public Information, which provides us with in-depth briefings and information. Through our special consultative status we may request the Secretary-General to place items of special interest to the organizations on the provisional agenda of ECOSOC or the Commissions.

One of the main tasks of our Association is the exchange of ideas and experiences, and act as a multiplier and an accelerator for more efficient approaches in the fields of education, research and information on the United Nations.

In the early nineties our UNA established a Peacekeeping Committee involving members of the Hungarian peacekeeping troops. Any former or present peacekeepers are very welcome to participate in the work of this Committee.

More than six decades ago, the United Nations Security Council established the first United Nations peacekeeping mission. Since then there have been a total of 63 UN peacekeeping operations around the world and peacekeeping has developed into a flagship enterprise of the Organization.

The term "peacekeeping" is not found in the United Nations Charter and it is hard to give a simple definition. Over the years, UN peacekeeping goals were primarily limited to maintaining ceasefires and stabilizing situations on the ground, so that efforts could be made at the political level to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. Those missions consisted of military observers and lightly armed troops with monitoring, reporting and confidence-building roles in support of ceasefires and limited peace agreements.

With the end of the Cold War, the strategic context for UN peacekeeping dramatically changed, prompting the Organization to shift and expand its field operations from "traditional" missions involving strictly military tasks, to complex "multidimensional" enterprises designed to ensure the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements and assist in laying the foundations for sustainable peace. Today's peacekeepers undertake a wide variety of complex tasks, from helping to build sustainable institutions of governance, to human rights monitoring, to security sector reform, to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

The nature of conflicts has also changed over the years. Originally developed as a means of dealing with inter-State conflict, UN peacekeeping has been increasingly applied to intra-State conflicts and civil wars. Although the military remain the backbone of most peacekeeping operations, the many faces of peacekeeping now include administrators and economists, police officers and legal experts, de-miners and electoral observers, human rights monitors and specialists in civil affairs and governance, humanitarian workers and experts in communications and public information.

At the end of 2009, more than 120,000 women and men from 116 countries were serving under the blue flag in 15 peacekeeping operations and two special political missions, led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in Africa, in Asia, in Europe and in the Middle East—an historic high. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) was fielding another 11 fieldbased political missions or peacebuilding support offices. Both types of peace operations are supported by the Department of Field Support (DFS), itself in the midst of crafting a new strategy for more efficient support to its vast, diverse and far-flung operations.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon commands more deployed forces than anyone in the world except for President Obama. DPKO and the DFS together employ about 1,000 staff to support more than 120,000 peacekeepers deployed in the field. In NATO, the ratio is one headquarters staff member supporting four people on the ground. The UN peacekeeping operations are providing protection for millions of people. In Darfur, more than two million internally displaced persons need protection. In the Kivu provinces in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), over 10 million people may be threatened by violence.

In 2008 the UN launched the "**New Horizon**" process with the goal of forging a greater consensus on the future direction of UN peacekeeping between three essential partners: the Security Council who decides on the deployment of our peacekeeping operations; the troop and police contributing countries and the UN Secretariat, which plans and manages these operations in order to adapt UN peacekeeping to today's new realities. The success of UN peacekeeping rests on a global peacekeeping partnership between the three actors. Begun in 2008 and brought to fruition in 2009, the "New Horizon" process became the main organizing framework for a major review of the future of UN peacekeeping.

Priority Issues

- A) Bringing in **greater numbers of female troops**, police, human rights monitors and other staff. The UN has had some success recruiting and promoting women civilian peacekeepers—working in civil affairs, human rights, elections, security sector reform, logistics, medicine, public information and beyond. Thirty percent of these staffers are female. The UN Police have doubled the representation of women in their ranks over the past three years, to 8 percent. The percentage of women serving as military personnel in UN peacekeeping missions remains at only 2 percent.

- B) **Going green.** The goal is to achieve a more environmentally sensitive, ecologically mindful mission footprint. And work is under way at UN Headquarters on ways to deploy large peacekeeping operations with a reduced impact on the environment.
- C) **UN Volunteers.** In 2009 more than 2,500 people participated in peacekeeping operations through the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. Their motivations are as diverse as their talents, yet the common thread binding them together is their desire to contribute to peace and development. Approximately 30 percent of international civilian peacekeeping personnel are UNVs, and they play an important role in UN operations.
- D) **Protection of Civilians.** For the past 10 years, the United Nations Security Council has required many peacekeeping missions to include “protection of civilians” as a core part of their work. In addition, in 2009, the Security Council also mandated peacekeeping operations to protect women and children from sexual violence during conflict. A total of 10 UN peacekeeping operations (eight currently) have been explicitly mandated to “protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. The security of civilians in postconflict environments is critical to the legitimacy and credibility of UN peacekeeping missions.

A critical factor for success is the capacity of our global Organization to work effectively with **regional organizations**. Without their unique contributions, UN operations would not achieve their goals and could fail entirely. That is why the UN is doing so much to build up the capacity of the African Union, including its AMISOM mission in Somalia. They are also partners in Sudan.

In the same vein, the United Nations has an ever-expanding relationship with the European Union. Indeed, the EU is one of the UN's most important partners. The EU offers critical donor support for peacebuilding and early recovery. It has well-developed capacities for crisis management, humanitarian relief and rapid response. And of course, the EU can deploy well-equipped missions as part of, or alongside, UN peacekeeping operations.

The EU's bridging operation in Chad was a clear example of good cooperation under very demanding circumstances. The beneficiaries have been tens of thousands of displaced persons, who have received vital protection.

In Kosovo, cooperation between UNMIK and the European Union has been exemplary. The reconfiguration of UNMIK allowed the European Union, through EULEX, to play a more enhanced role. The situation in Kosovo remains stable, although the parties must maintain a careful watch on developments in the north. We are partners in Afghanistan also.

The United Nations and the European Union are present together in many other situations where UN peacekeeping might not be the prescription, but where the international community has an on-the-ground role in the maintenance of peace and security

The UN Peacekeepers Day is an occasion to celebrate, but also to mourn our fallen colleagues. Over these six decades, more than 2,600 men and women have died serving the cause of peace. Just last year alone, we lost 116 brave individuals.

Finally I would like to greet cordially the organizers of this conference, in particular Deputy Director **Dr. Philipp Fluri** of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and **Pol. Brig. Gen. Dr. József Boda**, Director General of the International Training and Civilian Crisis Management Centre of the Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement and their staff. I wish to express my deep appreciation and gratitude for having taken the initiative to gather us here.