

MESSAGE BY H.E. RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN

Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

I am truly pleased that the 13th International Seminar on the Challenges of Peace Operations into the 21st century is being held in Ankara at a time when international developments mandate a thorough assessment of the topic. I commend the Centre of Strategic Research of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Folke Bernadotte Academy of Sweden, the Turkish National Police Force and Bilkent University for this timely initiative.

At the outset, I wish to pay tribute to the memories of the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, Under Secretary General and UN Special Representative for Iraq and his colleagues as well as the late Anna Lindh, Foreign Minister of Sweden. This seminar regrettably coincides with the tragic loss of our innocent citizens during the heinous terrorist attacks in Istanbul on 15 November 2003. This criminal act has once again proved that no nation or region is immune from terrorism, which requires international solidarity and joint action. We are determined to continue our fight against this global scourge in every possible way.

The contemporary security risks and threats can no longer be defined in conventional terms. Conflicts are increasingly occurring not between but within nations. Terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human and drug trafficking, organized crime and corruption, racism, xenophobia, fundamentalism and environmental degradation among others are multidimensional threats to international peace and security. These challenges do not threaten only specific nations or interests, instead they challenge humanity as a whole and therefore need to be addressed through international solidarity. The need for effective international organizations is more pronounced than ever.

The United Nations was indeed created in response to the security threats of a former era. However, it still has a central role to play in confronting contemporary challenges. In this context, the ongoing process of adapting the United Nations to the swiftly changing realities of our world is a high priority for the international community. Today, dedicated UN officials serve on the front lines in new risk regions of the world with a whole range of tasks from peacekeeping to humanitarian assistance. Within the framework of the ongoing reform process, increasing the security and ameliorating the working conditions of the United

Nations personnel is a crucial task. With this understanding, Turkey has recently taken the necessary steps to become a party to the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Furthermore, a UN Standby Arrangement System is being established in order to provide the UN with instant peacekeeper deployment capability in case of a threat to international peace and security. Turkey has announced that it is prepared to provide a contingent of 100 personnel from the Ministry of Interior, in addition to a battalion already pledged since 1997.

In the volatile geography that Turkey finds herself, we seek to actively contribute to peace and stability. This active endeavour is a result of a growing demand in Turkey, as well as in the world, for the realization of a peace dividend. I believe that our highest priority should be directed towards preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. However, effective peacekeeping capabilities are also essential. My country, in close cooperation with the United Nations, has accumulated over the years a vast experience in regional cooperation, conflict prevention and peacekeeping and has participated in a wide range of United Nations peace operations. We maintain that peacekeeping missions should be conducted in accordance with clearly defined mandates. Appropriate training is vital for the success of peacekeeping forces. We also believe that the UN must be endowed with the necessary resources to fulfil peacekeeping tasks.

Turkey is determined to remain a major contributor to peace, security and stability in her region and beyond. My government pursues a multidimensional and balanced foreign policy that is active in various geographies and continues to believe in the fundamental role of the United Nations in the current international environment. Against this background, in a bid to serve international peace and stability, Turkey has decided to present its candidature for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the term 2009 – 2010. I am confident that the deliberations at this seminar will help improve UN peacekeeping in accordance with the needs of our time.