

**Statement delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Mr. Jacek Czaputowicz at the General Assembly on 24th April, 2018:**

“Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace”ⁱ

Mr. President,

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin with thanking the President of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly, Minister Miroslav Lajčák, for convening this valuable meeting and for inviting me to participate in this timely discussion.

I would also like to thank the speakers from this morning for their thorough and often moving presentations. The young generation and women play a crucial role in the process of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

We know that in many regions of the world the most vulnerable members of communities – children – are still affected by war and conflict. I agree with them that development is a key factor in building a safe and prosperous world.

Poland aligns itself with a statement to be delivered by the European Union.

In the current state of affairs across the globe, preventing conflicts and building sustainable peace is a difficult task for all members of the international community. Internal conflicts, asymmetric attacks, violation of international humanitarian and human rights law are unfortunately our daily challenges.

In order to tackle these challenges, we need not only a wide spectrum of activities, but also committed actors, including the United Nations, its member states, regional organizations and civil society. Moreover, our peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities need to encompass all three UN pillars: peace and security, development, and human rights.

In my opinion, most of what the UN does on the local and regional level comes down to building and sustaining peace. I would like to touch upon a few of those activities in a broader context of the ongoing UN reform.

First, let me refer to the peace and security pillar.

The changing scope and nature of current conflicts pose a significant challenge to the universal commitment grounded in the UN Charter to

“save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. (end of quote)

Violent local conflicts and wars often cross national borders and spill over into regional and international levels. Internal and international security is interlinked, and, hence, effective conflict prevention activities undertaken on the international level also improve security on the national level.

Poland attaches particular importance to preventive diplomacy and the role of the United Nations in this field. We strongly support the vision and efforts of the UN Secretary General António Guterres to streamline conflict prevention and sustaining peace as UN priorities.

We also support reforms designed to strengthen the UN Secretariat's preventive capacities, as we believe that it has an important role to play in this regard as well. We are also in favor of transforming the Peacebuilding Support Office into a new Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).

While talking about prevention we should, however, bear in mind that the primary responsibility for the preventive action lies within states. In this context, I would like to underline the importance of effective national conflict prevention policies which include activities such as strengthening transparent and accountable state institutions, fighting corruption and promoting good governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peacekeeping has proven to be an effective tool for the UN to assist countries on their path from conflict to peace. In order to make peace sustainable, we should strive to use all instruments available in a coherent way.

A good example of such activities are successfully completed peacekeeping operations UNMIL in Liberia (last month) and UNOCI in Ivory Coast (last year).

Now, it is of utmost importance to use the peacebuilding tools, such as disbursement of grants and provision of capacities, for instance through the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in order to reinforce stability and prosperity of those two countries.

As to development, which is the second pillar – its overarching aim is to improve the lives and future prospects of everyone and everywhere. This year, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals enters into its third year of implementation. It creates conditions for an inclusive and sustainable development, which in turn prevents further crises and conflicts.

In the on-going discussion on the repositioning of the UN development system aimed at ensuring dignity, prosperity and peace, prevention and sustaining peace are placed at the center of international efforts. The main objective is to properly equip the UN to mitigate and end conflicts, address the impacts of climate change and ease threats to well-being of people and societies.

Poland stands firm behind these efforts, as we fully agree that sustainable and inclusive development is both a goal in its own right and the world's most productive form of building and sustaining peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now move on to the third pillar – human rights.

There is no successful peace process without the full respect for human rights. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* continues to serve governments, international organizations, civil

society and individuals as a reference point in the development and implementation of human rights treaties, domestic legislations and policies.

The Declaration, as a critical milestone in the field of human rights, is as relevant today as it was 70 years ago. The history proves that whenever universal values enshrined in *the Declaration* are violated, we run a higher risk of violence and conflict. Only equality, justice and freedom prevent violent extremism and enable sustainable peace.

Mr. President,

Undoubtedly, making a change in all those pillars requires both hard work and financial investment. With regard to the financial component, Poland has been committed to shoulder its responsibility by contributing to the Peacebuilding Fund since 2006. In 2017, we provided the Fund with 300,000 Polish zlotys and we will keep this level of our contribution also this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to draw your attention to two indispensable actors of peacebuilding processes – women and young people.

Women's meaningful participation in all aspects of peacebuilding process is critical to its effectiveness. Women are active advocates of peace – as peacekeepers, humanitarian workers and mediators. It is our task to support their engagement in conflict-affected countries and host countries of UN missions. In fact, diverse examples have shown that women's participation in peace processes has a direct impact on the sustainability of reached agreements.

Both women's empowerment and participation of youth are crucial to enhance inclusivity and equality of our societies – the cornerstones of sustainable development and lasting peace. This requires not only advancement of women's and youth rights through quality education, vocational training, skills development, access to digital technologies and services, but also productive employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Secretary General Mr. António Guterres rightly pointed out in his report "*Peacebuilding and sustaining peace*" from January this year that

"Political will to sustain peace remains invaluable". (end of quote)

Poland fully subscribes to this statement and I am here today to express the political will of my country to engage actively in the peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts of the United Nations, Secretary General himself and the international community at large.

ⁱ Please, check against delivery