The preparatory meeting that took place in Montevideo was chaired by Uruguay and the UK, working as host and co-host respectively. Taking part in the meeting were military and civilian personnel coming from 42 Member States, as well as representatives from the United Nations.

The aim of the meeting was to analyse the different ways in which to strengthen standards of performance in Peacekeeping Operations worldwide. Some dimensions of this analysis included: gathering all analysis related to training and capacity building in order to strengthen performance in the field; seeking to identify proposals to improve existing training techniques and initiatives to conduct capacity-building; considering current institutional gaps; and evaluating innovative practices to establish new partnerships and pledges for peacekeeping.

The event began with a welcoming speech given by Dr. Jorge Menéndez, Minister of Defence of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, highlighting the country’s commitment and contribution to peacekeeping with dogged determination and a keen sense of responsibility, whilst taking part in a range of peace processes pre-dating the creation of the United Nations itself. We understand the commitment to peace in its widest possible sense, including: protection and defence of human rights, the fundamental importance of freedom, security and development; the requirement to be wholly consistent with international law, whilst ensuring the centrality of human rights and dignity.
The objectives of the current peace operations, besides peacekeeping, also include: facilitating political processes, protection of civilians; assisting the disarmament demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants; encouraging a fair and transparent electoral process; protecting and promoting human rights; and ultimately helping to re-establish a country’s rule of law.

The United Nations represents a unique international partnership that brings us together, with troop and police contributing countries as well as countries contributing financial resources, all combining in a joint effort to maintain peace and to reach international security. Our strength lies in the legitimacy given by the United Nations Charter and the wide range of contributing countries that participate and provide valuable resources. Uruguay may be a faraway land, but is always close when it comes to fighting for humanitarian causes, with our goal to work towards peace, integration and democracy.

Mr. Ian Duddy, Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Uruguay, followed by welcoming the delegates and expressing how pleased he was to be co-hosting this event with Uruguay. He highlighted key tenets for peacekeeping: the protection of the vulnerable; support to humanitarian aid, and, above all, the centrality of promoting the conditions to allow all parties within a conflict to find the path to peace and a stable and enduring political dialogue. UN Peacekeeping Operations contribute to a reduction in instability and the number of victims that are a consequence of armed conflict. The United Kingdom expressed its commitment to ensure the requirement for well-motivated, well equipped, and, of course, well trained peacekeepers fully aware of the conduct and discipline standards required of them. It was also essential to provide peacekeepers with certain guarantees to ensure their own security, whilst providing them with the relevant training and capacity building skills that will ensure their protection.
He also expressed the UK’s commitment to the zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation and abuse, and gender-related violence. Regarding the latter, the United Kingdom is developing a Gender and Protection Adviser course, and is committed to increasing future participation of women in Peacekeeping Operations. The UK called for the development of partnerships that work towards effective and adequate training for peacekeepers; the adoption of best practices; the identification of collaborative working methods, all aimed at ensuring enhanced performance going forward.

Finally, the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support, Mr. Atul Khare, was very pleased to recognize that the scheduled preparatory meetings, of which this was the first, were to be held in partnerships between Global North and South Member States, a clear symbol of collaboration in peacekeeping. This process of ministerial meetings has at its core the development of partnerships for the strengthening of peacekeeping.

Developing troops and police that are adequately equipped and consistently meet the standards required by the UN is a challenge that needs far better training and capacity development; a task that cannot be overcome without lasting partnerships between East, West, North and South. For this reason, Khare was pleased to see Uruguay and the United Kingdom joined as co-hosts in this important meeting. With all delegates coming together on the Human Rights Day and the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this captured the essence of our strong collective commitment when it came to the protection and the defence of Human Rights. This also reminded us of the difficult demands of deployed missions and the challenges faced by our peacekeepers in the field. They were the ones who work tirelessly in order to protect and promote respect for the Human Rights of the most vulnerable elements of a population.
In addition, he highlighted the new initiative, led by the Secretary-General, named “Action for Peacekeeping” (A4P). In this context, a Declaration of Shared Commitments was issued (the A4P Declaration), receiving the endorsement of 151 Member States and the support from four regional organizations; A4P should be central to all of our ongoing endeavors.

Moreover, he referred to the perspectives and experiences related to triangular partnerships, which served to build capacities for our troops in key areas such as engineering and communications, and contributed to bridging important capability gaps. However, some specialized and essential capacities for peacekeeping are still in deficit, in particular enabling capabilities, rapid deployment, and women peacekeepers. Peacekeeping capacity must be increased through sustainable investment by Member States, particularly in terms of training, capacity building and partnerships to enable the overall improvement of such capabilities.

These discussions served as an opportunity to thoroughly explore existing gaps and the remaining challenges relevant to each shortfall. Furthermore, this was a useful opportunity for Member States to assess opportunities and develop concrete proposals ahead of the next New York Ministerial Conference in March 2019.

The meeting was divided in four sessions, each facilitated by a moderator. Different panelists were offered the opportunity to present following which there were questions and a rich exchange of views. All of this was aimed at identifying potential proposals in advance of the upcoming Ministerial Conference in New York.

As a result of the debate, we share the following conclusions:
Session 1: Scene-Setting Remarks

A critical analysis of the requirements necessary for the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping “A4P” Declaration: shared goals on Peacekeeping Operations; collective efforts and to drive forward Member State commitments; exploration of options for an improvement in technical and logistical support during pre-deployment preparation; an increase in appropriate resource for peacekeeping operations in an increasingly complex operating environment.

We discussed the emphasis, being driven by the Secretary General, to develop initiatives and progress pledges made by Member States and subsequently announced in previous Ministerial Conferences. This to ensure that pledges be developed into tangible commitments.

Meriting special mention was the implementation of concrete and specific action plans to underwrite the security of the deployed peacekeepers. This was emphasized by the panelist from Brazil, particularly in light of the recommendations put forward in the “Cruz Report” (Dec/2017) authored by the General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz (Brazil). The report demonstrates that, in many cases, peacekeepers are not prepared to face the challenges placed before them.

In this session, the panelists (Brazil and Indonesia) shared their experiences regarding training and capacity building; both key elements in the development of the A4P initiative. They also underlined the fundamental importance of the inclusion of women in developing an effective peace process, while recognizing the challenges in meeting targets for female participation se by the UN Secretariat.
Moreover, they referred to the importance of building triangular partnerships (T/PCCs – the Secretariat – other Member States) as well as the importance of joint deployments and SC Resolution 2436 (2018); which served to bolster the effectiveness of mandates and associated accountability mechanisms.

Session 2: **T/PCC PREPAREDNESS AND READINESS PROCESSES**

During this session, there was a discussion regarding the need for a clear framework for the training of all peacekeepers (Key Document: Preparation and Availability Framework – 2016). Central to this was consistent and monitored standards of performance. Peacekeepers should be well versed in range of skills including appropriate conduct and discipline, and rules of engagement. In order to verify this, thorough pre-deployment training was required and this should be subject to an equally rigorous and independent evaluation process.

Similarly, the session underlined the importance of the new Capability Performance Appraisal System, which ensures that a mission fulfils its strategic goals. It does this by evaluating the performance of the overall mission (the military, civilian and leadership components), thus allowing accurate analysis and a subsequent focus on any corrective measures that might be required.

Furthermore, the Light Coordination Mechanism announced by the Secretary-General in 2017, served as example of a process which would help substantially improve and maximize scarce resource. This would match training providers with those in need of training in order to service the needs of peacekeeping missions.

Finally, the concept of collaboration in capacity (co-deployment or joint deployment) and the development of new peacekeeping contributors was a consistent theme.
Session 3: BEST PRACTICES AND STRENGHTENING PARTNERSHIPS

In this session, panelists stressed the importance of partnerships for the successful execution of Peacekeeping Operations. The Triangular Partnership concept, the Light Coordination Mechanism and the overall development of capacity were indicative of how this can function well.

Member States were urged to contribute in some way to this triangular partnership programme, be it through funding, the provision of essential equipment, medical training and effective train the trainer courses.

This session also concentrated on the key issue of Women, Peace and Security. It was essential to encourage women to participate in the peace process as well as assist in measures to prevent violence against women. This would also require a continued fight against those hiding behind impunity, with the overall aim of providing the conditions for peace and security.

The “Elsie” initiative being promoted by Canada clearly highlighted the full potential role of women in peacekeeping.

Another element of this session highlighted by many delegations was the importance for French to be spoken on peacekeeping operations where French is the working language, as a way to improve the interaction with the local population.

Session 4: MUTUAL COMMITMENTS ON TRAINING AND CAPACITYBUILDING

In this session, delegates discussed the need to share commitments to conduct training (A4P Declaration) not only between Member States and the United Nations, but also with other international bodies. The development of these partnerships was both challenging but necessary.
In order to identify and mitigate training shortfalls prior to deployment, there is a requirement to develop training schedules that offer peacekeepers the best training available. This requires agility and constant adaptation.

A number of challenges were identified:

- The need for consistent standards to enable peacekeepers to be fully effective.
- To ensure that training courses adequately represent the language requirements of those conducting field operations.
- The development of a lessons identified process based on issues encountered in the field. This would require constant adaptation but was an issue identified by the Secretary General as a key feature of ongoing attempts at reforming deployed operations.
- The central importance of thorough pre-deployment evaluation.
- Stable and sustainable funding for:
  - Language training.
  - Gender mainstreaming.
  - Force protection training for both static and mobile activity.

**SUCCESS IN OUR ENDEAVOURS DEPENDS ON OUR JOINT AND INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, OUR COMMITMENT TO PEACE**