High-Level Meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Convened by the Secretary-General

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Sauli Niinistö President of the Republic of Finland

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(check against delivery)

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for organizing this important event.

I welcome the Secretary-

Finland supports the Secretary-General's strategy to prevent and end sexual exploitation and abuse and has joined the voluntary Compact on SEA.

The issue is not an easy one.

We all agree that it is outrageous that anyone serving under the UN flag

The aim is to both combat and to prevent SEA, and to ensure that allegations are duly investigated and needed assistance is provided for the victims.

Sexual exploitation and abuse is criminalized in our national legislation and taken into account in the internal regulation of the Finnish Defence Forces. Finnish Defence Forces have developed its own Code of Conduct to implement the principle of zero tolerance with regard to SEA as well as gender-based violence in general.

All peacekeepers receive pre-deployment training on the issues, and are committed to implementing the highest standards and UN code of conduct.

Training and education is key in preventing sexual exploitation.

The Finnish Defence Forces International Centre FINCENT was the first training center in the world to receive UN certification for an operational level United Nations Protection of Civilians Course.

Questions related to SEA are a crucial part of the course content.

I also want to stress the importance of mainstreaming Women, Peace and Security, as well as other gender perspectives into peacekeeping and operational work.

Making sure that we include women in all peace and security work is part of preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Prevention of SEA is integrated in our National Action Plan to implement the resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. To conclude, I am proud to be part of the Circle of Leadership with other leaders of the world