

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests

It is a great pleasure for me to open this third Annual Discipline Conference on Military Contribution to Peace Support here in the New NATO Headquarters.

Peace Support is complex and challenging Discipline, but it is also a Discipline where it is natural that all the key stakeholders unite their efforts and work together. Building bridges between the organisations has also been our aim as the Department Head from the beginning. The journey from New York through Geneva seems to have paid off since we are all still here, finally at NATO's premises. So welcome, and thank you for taking the time to be here.

As the rector of the Finnish National Defence University it gives me great pleasure to have a unit like FINCENT as part of the University on a shared campus in Helsinki. As some of you might know, FINCENT received a special recognition from the Joint Force Trainer for outstanding commitment as Department Head in June this year. It's also recognition to whole Military Contribution to Peace Support Discipline community. A job well done - so far! I am sure that this type of dedication and professionalism by our personnel will continue to inspire us all.

Doing things together rather than just cooperating is a mind-set that we value at the National Defence University. Let me share one of the highlights and achievements that we have been able to accomplish during this year with FINCENT's leadership.

Delivering timely education and training is one of the challenges we all have. The question is, how can we transform best practices, research findings or new policies into education and training with minimum preparation time? From our experience this can only be achieved through multinational and multi-organizational cooperation or rather, doing it together.

As an example of the multinational and -organizational collaboration, I'd like to highlight the efforts of all the different stakeholders, organizations and academia that created the Protection of Civilians course for NATO or UN-led operations. No single entity can achieve such a deliverable in a short time alone. So thank you all for your contribution. We did it together and we can all benefit from it.

Based on this, and how we have seen the diversity and complexity of the crises environment evolve, we can easily conclude that we cannot go back to traditional silos and work on our own. We need to always keep in mind that we are working to fulfil the operational commanders` performance requirements.

We need to increase our network based working and make sure our education and training is effective, efficient and affordable - for all of us. I encourage us all to utilize the tools that NATO has provided – Global Programing and Systems Approach to Training. Not only for the military contribution to the peace support discipline, but working closely together with other disciplines that have an interface with us.

As a representative from academia, I'd like to stress that when you continue your work in creating new solutions, I hope you will find ways to activate academia with research tasks on one hand, and on the other hand can take advantage of the academic research in support of your education and training solutions.

As the last point of my opening remarks, I would like to thank all of those who contributed to the work since our second Annual Discipline Conference in Geneva last year, especially the chairs and members of the four working groups. Without your dedication we wouldn't be here.

I am truly enthusiastic to hear the results of this year's work and excited for the work beyond this conference. The results of this conference provide greater opportunities for our customers and the whole community of interest.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests allow me to wish you a very successful and productive conference. Thank you.