

**Endorsement of the Kigali Principles
Ceremony held in NY on 11 May 2016
Speaking points of Belgium's Ambassador to the UN**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Like others today, I am proud to pledge – on behalf of the Government of Belgium – that my country will undertake all necessary actions with the view to implement the Kigali Principles for the protection of civilians.

The HIPPO report [High level Independent Panel on Peace Operations] has reminded us that protecting civilians is a task that lies at the heart of UN peacekeeping. We must ensure that the HIPPO recommendations are not just words in a new UN report. Our determination, and the action of our troops in the field, must make a difference for the millions of lives at stake.

This is why the Kigali Principles are so important. I disagree with those who present them as “only” a repetition of previous rules and commitments. Experience has shown indeed – sometimes through terrible tragedies – that commitments on paper, even binding ones, are not sufficient.

Solid and effective protection of civilians, in all UN peacekeeping operations and beyond, requires efforts in two directions:

- First, by establishing the necessary protocols and arrangements in NY, in the field and in our capitals: training, capabilities, chain of command, etc;
- Second, by continuing to build and strengthen the political consensus on the core elements of the concept.

This is why the Kigali Principles are so relevant, and today's ceremony is so timely.

Therefore, I wish to congratulate again the Dutch and Rwandan Governments for their initiative, and for the leadership they demonstrate on this very important question. I can assure you that Belgium will be at your sides to continue making progress in the years to come.

Thank you.