



**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION**

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER  
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT's Address at  
Flag Raising Ceremony**

**Key Leader Seminar Gender Perspective in Military  
Operations**

**NORFOLK, 8 Sep 2016**

**As delivered**

**Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER**



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Your Excellency Mrs. Bangura, UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict,

Ambassador Schuurman, NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security,

Air Marshal, Admirals, Generals, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Distinguished guests, and members of the Hampton Roads local community – and I would like to welcome also Mr Jeff Maisey, the new Chairman of the Norfolk-NATO Festival,

The honour to our NATO Nations' Flags on the tunes of the NATO Hymn, symbolises our enduring commitment to international peace and security.

Our thoughts go to all those who gave their lives to preserve our freedom and to all the men and women of our Alliance who are part of the forces engaged in the various current operational theatres.

They form the spearhead of our operational capacity and they deserve our special recognition!

Our Human Capital was at the very core of a 2 days conference held in Norfolk, and we are honoured by the presence of our distinguished guests that have participated in the Key Leader Seminar on Gender Perspective in Military Operations.

We are gathered here with an enlarged community of people from various horizons, tied by common values and certain that the integration of the

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Gender Perspective in our operations is essential to the success of our operational effectiveness.

From the various discussions it appeared very clearly that there's a large consensus recognizing that the integration of the Gender Perspective is a vital factor for ensuring the operational effect of our missions. It is in fact mission critical!

This includes all our missions, in accordance with our 3 core tasks: Crisis Management, Cooperative Security, and Collective Defence !

Therefore we wanted this Key Leader Seminar to be ambitious: to share knowledge, challenges, best practices and opportunities; and to build the team that will continue the work.

The integration of the Gender Perspective in operations is not optional, it is fundamental and must become the new "norm". It is key to the credibility and resilience of our organization.

This implies a strong implication of the leadership and a new mind set to leverage the opportunities and to overcome the obstacles in the implementation of this domain.

We must also continue to use the feedback and lessons learned from the operations to challenge our exercise program to better integrate this perspective in the education and training of our people and forces.

We have to institutionalize the integration of the Gender Perspective in all areas of transformation. As part of the Human Capital it will be a driving factor for innovation.



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ACT will continue to support initiatives such as the Gender Key Leader Seminar, to prepare our Leadership and to develop a higher level of coordination with partner nations, international organizations, academia and other key-actors.

I hope this meeting could significantly contribute to our continuous commitment towards full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (thirteen twenty-five) on Women, Peace and Security.

I would like to thank again all participants of the Gender Key Leader Seminar for your presence and your engagement in this important event here in Norfolk! We must continue this effort, it is a crucial milestone for our operational capacity and our transformational work.

Together we have contributed to an important step in the shaping of a modern Alliance. It is our mission to lead by example. It will help us to better fulfill our mandate and to find more sustainable, lasting solutions to meet today's and tomorrow's security challenges.

Thank you for your attention.