

Halifax, 5 June 2020

President of ALCOPAZ
Latin-American Association of Peace
Operations Training Centres (ALCOPAZ)

Dear General Marcelo M. MONTANER,

We thank you for the upcoming opportunity to address the Latin-American Association of Peace Operations Training Centres (ALCOPAZ) and its members.

Through ALCOPAZ's leadership, Latin America is undergoing major transformation with respect to its involvement in peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) had set a precedent as the first mission in the region almost entirely composed of Latin American forces. Following the closure of MINUSTAH in 2017, Latin American Member States pivoted peacekeeping contributions to United Nations missions on the African continent.

In this context, the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative (Dallaire Initiative) has a deep understanding of the fragile contexts that threaten the protection of children and their increased vulnerabilities to extreme violence and economic insecurity. Such challenges perpetuate cycles of inequality and violence that can continue for generations. In order to prevent the recruitment and use of children in violence – be it for trafficking, sexual violence, criminal networks, radicalization, or armed forces, groups or gangs – peacekeeping forces must be prepared to recognize the interconnected links between these violations and global trends that may drive the increased use of children.

The Dallaire Initiative is the only organization in the world that specializes in a security sector approach to the prevention of the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. Our contribution to ALCOPAZ will leverage the numerous training missions, lessons, relationships, and knowledge that have already been established in Canada, the United Kingdom, South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia (through the African Union) and especially, the African Centre of Excellence on Children, Peace and Security in Rwanda.

With this in mind, and given the Dallaire Initiative's ongoing involvement with the IAPTC, I humbly submit for consideration by the ALCOPAZ membership our request to join ALCOPAZ as an Observer. We look forward to further collaborations with ALCOPAZ and its members.

Cordially yours,



Dr. Shelly Whitman, Executive Director
The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

cc: Colonel (ret'd) Roberto Gil de Vargas
Advisor, ALCOPAZ