

**Speech delivered by Mr. Ron Ton at the 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of DIB-School  
Tbilisi, 28 June 2017**

Your Excellency, Defence Minister Levan Izoria, Excellencie(s),  
ladies and gentlemen,

Dear DIBS team,

As Director of Clingendael Academy, it is a great honour to stand here in front of you at the celebration of 1 year of Georgia Defence Institution-building School (DIBS);

At the same time it is also the celebration of close to 1 year of cooperation between the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' and the DIB School.

*Broader picture*

Just as much as anybody else, we can be taken away by our profession. For over 25 years, I am preoccupied with the question: how to make the best educational product for our target audience.

I have witnessed the development in approaches to training in the Netherlands, the EU, NATO and elsewhere in the world. I can tell you: it is constant challenge to stay ahead of the curve, ahead of what is demanded and required by our participants.

To achieve that: it is important not to lose sight of the broader context. We are standing here because we share the common objective of Georgia, the Georgian security sector, to become fully part of the trans-Atlantic security and defence community.

Training and education – education for professionals, applied training and experiential learning – are key instruments to

achieving this. And hence, you can imagine the importance and relevance of an institute like the Defence Institution Building School.

### *International Security*

We are living in interesting, unpredictable and dynamic times. We experience the resurgence of new and old powers that challenge traditional ways of 'doing diplomatic business'. Many different kinds of security dominate our political agendas: state security, human security, military security, societal security, environmental security and so and so forth.

The key lesson: security and defence is no longer within the remit of the Armed Forces alone.

At the same time, the flow of information - and misinformation - is sometimes overwhelming whereas the public demands immediate and right answers from the Government. Here in Georgia you experienced one of the first public appearances of cyber warfare. And you have felt the extent to which we all were prepared for that.

The key lesson: we will be surprised by unfolding events no matter how much we know.

### *Empowering and equipping*

Without judging what is good and bad about this situation, and what ought to be done, our business – that of Clingendael Academy as well as DIB School – is to equip the policy- and decision-makers with sufficient knowledge. Knowledge to deal with that uncertainty in order to be resilient, adaptive and strategic.

But knowledge is not sufficient. Even more important is our ability to equip the right people with the right skill-sets and effective networks to operate effectively in this dynamic environment.

When we look at our audience: political decision-makers, policy advisers, diplomats, military commanders, police chiefs, public debaters, Parliamentarians, NGO staff - what information do they need, what strategies are most effective for them, which instruments can they leverage?

The answers to these questions tell you the niche that the DIB school is fulfilling in the Georgian training and education field. Any sustainable transformation effort requires a senior-level establishment of people from many different security organisations and beyond who can and may “think, influence and decide” in order to shape Georgia’s future.

Whereas the necessary foundational vocational training is provided by the Academies of the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and others; the DIB School then brings current and future leaders of the different sector together, as a network, and develops their skills in critical analysis, innovative thinking and international skills.

### *Support to DIBS*

The effort I describe reminds me of many years of delivering training and helping fellow institutions to stand on their own. Together we crafted a 4-year support package, that is financially supported by the Government of the Netherlands and the NATO Defence Capacity-Building Trust Fund.

With the generous support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs we have been able to already conduct: workshops in strategic planning, training needs analysis and curriculum design have been concluded. After summer, we will continue by running some particular courses in: international security, defence policy analysis, international crisis management and strategic planning.

Thanks to the contributions of Germany, Luxemburg and Montenegro to the NATO Trust Fund, we can continue in the next years, by investing in training of trainers, development of specific course packages, e.g. in regional security studies, crisis management, security sector governance, mediation and negotiation skills, conflict analysis.

*Conclusion: future*

To conclude. I believe we have all reasons to be positive about the future of Georgia's NATO integration as well as the key role the DIB School can play in this transformative process.

DIB School's main resources are there, namely the intellectual capacity of its small but dedicated staff. Tea Nikolashvili has proven to be able to steer the School through its first year of turbulence. Now the team should be ready to make the DIBS into a great turn-key training establishment.

I would like to thank the MoD and other stakeholders in the DIB school for their motivated support and warm welcome provided to us. In particular I would like to mention Ambassador Mr. Shota Gvineria for his everlasting involvement to turn the establishment of the DIBS into a success.

Finally, I would like to thank the NATO team here in Tbilisi, especially our men *on the ground*: Andreas Glodde and Vladimir Tarasovic for their cooperation and support.

Thank you very much for your attention, and I am looking forward to the next anniversary!