

Please check against delivery



BANGLADESH

STATEMENT

BY

H. E. DR. IFTEKHAR AHMED CHOWDHURY
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BANGLADESH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT

THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE
(FOURTH COMMITTEE)
THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING
OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS
(*Agenda item 32*)

NEW YORK

24 OCTOBER 2005

Could I begin by congratulating, through you Madame, the Chair and the bureau, for their skilful stewarding of work of this Committee. I am confident that under your leadership our deliberations on the question of peacekeeping will lead to fruition.

Our appreciation is also owed to Undersecretary-General Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno for his thoughtful statement.

Madame Chair, the role of UN peacekeeping in conflict zones has increased in the recent years at an unprecedented rate. It is now engaged in some 18 missions across the globe deploying over 83,000 peacekeepers. These peacekeepers are in charge of welfare of over 200 million people torn apart by scourge of war. This is a huge operation. We welcome the new troop and police contributing countries.

The nature of UN peacekeeping over the last six decades has also evolved. Its role has changed from monitoring and observing security situation to much more multidimensional responsibilities. Its mandate now often includes immediate stabilisation and protection of civilians; supporting humanitarian assistance; organising elections; assisting the development of political structures; engaging in judicial and security sector reform; and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants. All these are now deemed essential for laying the foundation of a lasting peace.

This expanded role of a peacekeeping mission has effectively blurred the distinction between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, indeed to the benefit of the host society. Whichever way we may like to define peacekeeping and peacebuilding, it is now clear that the two go hand in hand in practical terms. Both processes are complementary to each other, and neither would be successful without the other.

Experience has demonstrated that as soon as a peacekeeping mission is installed in a country and the security situation is stabilised, reconstruction and rebuilding activities of the post-conflict society starts. We believe that peacekeeping is not a solution, but a means to undertake peacebuilding activities that are essential to prevent relapsing back of a post-conflict society into chaos and violence. We also believe that peacekeeping cannot be a substitute to addressing the root causes of conflict. Sustainable peace can be achieved only through ensuring sustainable development. People will be compelled to resort to their guns if they do not find alternative means for their livelihood.

It is in this perspective that we have all along supported establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission should start working in a particular country as soon as a peacekeeping mission is in place. The precise divide when peacekeeping ends and peacebuilding begins is difficult to discern. For instance, in Sierra Leone, our troops engaged in some activities such as school, hospital and road building, which are strictly peacebuilding tasks. The fact that this elasticity of mandate was found useful shows how organically the two are related, or even linked.

Madame Chair, in order to achieve lasting peace in a post-conflict society, we must design our intervention in a way that meets the specific requirements of that particular people. We must avoid “one-size-fits-all” approach. Such a planning should require an overarching strategic vision that would include: what the main goal of the UN’s efforts would be; what the desired “end state” of the transitional process would be; and what the respective roles of the international community and the host society would be. Such a strategic vision, specific for each mission, once adopted, must be reflected in the mission planning. And finally, all the actors in a mission must act in an integrated fashion that reflects and maintains the operation’s overarching vision.

We wish to reiterate, Madame Chairperson, that peacekeeping operations should continue to strictly conform to the purposes and principles of the Charter. Basic peacekeeping principles namely consent of the parties, non-use of force except in self-defence and in the defence of a mandate authorised by the Security Council, and impartiality should be adhered to.

Bangladesh has always welcomed the complementary role played by the African Union in UN peacekeeping operations. We would support the provision of greater wherewithal to this organization by the UN to carry out their commendable work.

The safety and security of our peacekeepers is of paramount importance. We condemn all killings of peacekeepers in several missions. We appreciate DPKO’s initiative to adopt an integrated approach in this respect in collaboration with the DSS. We wish to re-emphasise the crucial importance of further improving the capacity for collection, analysis and dissemination of information in real time. We look forward to further improving the JMAC/JOC mechanisms that we hope would enhance missions’ capacity to handle their safety and security needs.

Rapid and effective deployment of peacekeepers is essential for a successful intervention in crisis situations. Strategic Deployment Stocks and pre-Mandate Commitment Authority have proved to be useful in this respect. We are also open to all ideas that would enhance deployment capacities of the UNPKOs. We have welcomed the Standing Police Capacity. We are ready to work to further develop the concept of Strategic Reserve Force. Establishment of such a reserve force should not, however, affect in anyway regular deployment in peacekeeping missions curtailing further the ability to fulfil their mandate.

It is a matter of deep regret that the ‘*acquis*’ of thousands of peacekeepers over the decades have been marred by the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by some. Bangladesh has supported and is in full compliance with the policy of zero tolerance in dealing with such issues. It is also important that this message of zero tolerance reaches each and every peacekeeper, military or civilian, deployed in a mission. This is an area we cannot afford to neglect if we are to maintain UN’s profile and image at a high level. It is essential for the peacekeepers to have the trust and confidence of the people they are assigned to protect. We welcome the DPKO’s initiative to launch an integrated training service, which among

other things, is envisaged to include training of all personnel deployed in a peacekeeping mission on matters of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Sincere and sustained consultations among the Security Council, the DPKO and the TCCs are essential for mounting and sustaining a successful peacekeeping mission. The TCCs, who are best placed to assess situation on the ground, must be involved in all stages of planning of a mission.

We believe that UN peacekeeping operations must be supported as an essential instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. Bangladesh's commitment to UN peacekeeping remains unflinching. It has contributed around 51,000 peacekeepers so far to 34 UN peacekeeping operations in 26 countries. 70 peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice by laying down lives in their line of duty to uphold UN mandate. That has not deterred us. It has rather strengthened our resolve to stay the course. Our commitment to UN peacekeeping emanates from our conviction that for development to take root, conflicts must first cease and never recur. We believe that development can only take place in a society that is free from violence. Therefore the keeping of peace and its buttressing thereafter, so that there is no slide back to anarchy, is so critical for all of us!

I thank you Madame.