



STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, AT  
THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON  
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY ON FEBRUARY 27, 2006

Mr Chairman,

We congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your re-election. We thank Under Secretary General Guehenno for the traditional statement this morning that highlights the priorities in peacekeeping for the coming year.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered this morning by the distinguished representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement and, therefore, we shall confine our observations to dimensions that need to be highlighted or additional points that need to be made.

The report of the Secretary-General (Doc A/60/640) addresses some important issues that have arisen consequent to the current surge in peacekeeping. We note the increase of the total number of uniformed personnel in the field currently to approximately 70,100 and civilian personnel to 15,000. The challenges that face us in peacekeeping today are not only because new missions have been set up or old ones expanded but also because of the manner in which they were set up; what they are asked to do and, not the least, the tools they are provided with.

Article 24 of the Charter, which defines the functions and powers of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, begins by stating that these are conferred on it "in order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations". But when the Council is not prompt or is ineffective, it ceases to discharge its primary responsibility. The degraded operational effectiveness of UNMEE is one such example.

Mr. Chairman, peacekeeping was visualised as a tool jointly invented and honed by the Council and the General Assembly, not an attribute of power given to the Council by the Charter. Therefore, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations must seriously discuss whether the Security Council should continue to have a monopoly in the setting up and running of peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Emergency Force during the 1956 Suez Crisis was established by the GA. Some UNSC members had opposed the legality of the Uniting for Peace Resolution and the establishment of this Force. These and the expenses incurred on UNEF and ONUC were referred by the GA to the International Court of Justice which declared that the responsibility conferred by Article 24 (1) is "primary" and not "exclusive". The ICJ added that the "exclusivity" is solely reserved for coercive action under Chapter VII and the GA was competent "to organise peacekeeping operations, at the request or with the consent of the States concerned" under Article 11 (2).

There is also a much more practical reason for the General Assembly to take matters in hand. The Security Council determines the nature and size of peacekeeping mandates and also extends the duration of such missions from year to year. The General Assembly determines the financing and management of such missions. Permanent Members of the Security Council are required to pay more for such missions by virtue of their "special responsibility" for maintaining peace and security. But we have a situation where Permanent Members of the Security Council do not pay their assessments to particular peacekeeping missions for years on end thereby creating problems in their financing and management. Surely such 'special responsibility' also entails responsibility for financing of the mandates that they determine. Since Security Council members have been unwilling to finance some of the very mandates that they approve, it is perhaps necessary for the General Assembly, by virtue of its responsibility to manage those missions, to take up those mandates and to examine them closely. Otherwise, it will not be possible to continue some of those peacekeeping mandates.

Again, the Secretary-General will be presenting proposals for consolidation of peacekeeping accounts to the Fifth Committee. This presents an opportunity for Member States to address the issue of selective financing of peacekeeping missions that is sometimes resorted to. Member States should be entitled to cash surpluses from missions only if they do not have dues to other missions. Such consolidation will also help the Secretary-General to better manage the

finances of peacekeeping missions. It will address the chronic cash deficits faced by some missions and ensure predictable troop cost and contingent owned equipment reimbursements to Member States.

We welcome the Secretary-General listing the important issue of enhancement of safety and security of uniformed and civilian personnel, as one of the five objectives of his agenda in this year's report. The safety and security of UN peacekeepers is an area of critical concern for troop contributors who place the lives of their soldiers at risk, in pursuance of the UN ideal. The 122 deaths of peacekeepers in 2005, including that of an Indian peacekeeper Naib Subedar Ram Kripal Singh, while doing his duty with the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is a reminder of the worsening situation regarding the safety and security of peacekeepers in the field. It is, therefore, important that we address this challenge.

The UN needs to place emphasis on enhancing its capacity for information gathering and assessment and sharing it with field units along with concrete recommendations for preventive action. The progress made through the establishment of Joint Operation Centres and Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JOC/JMAC) has yet to filter down to the Missions. We would once again underline the importance of sharing of information with troop contributing countries and field commanders. The information should not be lost in the jungle of the 'cohesive integrated Headquarters'.

India has been a leading proponent of energising the mechanism of triangular consultations between Troop Contributing Countries, the Security Council and the United Nations Secretariat. In this context, we do note the holding of Private Meetings under Resolution 1353 format and increase in the frequency of briefings for TCCs. However, they still continue to be held on the eve of renewal of Mission mandates, giving little scope for serious or meaningful discussions. We would re-emphasise that TCCs need to be involved early and fully in all aspects and stages of mission planning. Their views must find their way into mission mandates. It must be borne in mind that those who have the final say in the Security Council resolutions rarely participate in their implementation; it is not their troops who have to translate the Council's words into action, or bear the brunt of criticism if things go wrong, because the mandate is unrealistic or the means authorised inadequate.

It took 47 years to begin to recognise the spirit of Article 44 when the "first meeting of TCCs" took place in May 1993 and it was

only in May 1994 that the UNSC recognised the “need for enhanced consultations” with TCCs. If the situation continues to be unsatisfactory, countries may have no recourse but to operationalize the unused Article 43 to redress the breach of Article 44. In any case, Article 43 was designed as a limitation on the use of force under Article 42.

We welcome the Secretary-General’s efforts to further deepen the relationship between the United Nations and African Union. The World Summit in September 2005 had supported the development and implementation of a ten year plan of capacity building with the African Union. India supports these efforts. We share close and historic ties with our African brothers and sisters and are ourselves involved in bilateral capacity building efforts in many of their countries. Notwithstanding this important capacity building exercise, the UN cannot absolve itself of “its responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security”, as the report of the Special Committee (A/59/19) states. The real challenge for the UN is to strengthen peacekeeping without regionalising it.

We note the emphasis of the Secretary-General on reforming the United Nations Stand-by System (UNSAS) as a central element in increasing the UN’s capability to rapidly deploy military and police personnel. The 2005 World Summit, recognising the importance of adequate reserve capacity, noted the need for enhanced rapidly deployable capacities for peace operations facing serious challenges. The Secretary General has offered three options. We have already outlined our views on regional arrangements. As for “inter mission cooperation arrangements”, limited logistical support could be considered in certain specific circumstances but we have reservations over blanket sharing of assets and personnel of one mission in a region with those of another. This is contrary to UN practices and provisions. We look forward to a constructive exchange on these options during the Committee session.

As regards the sensitive and delicate issue of conduct and discipline, we are convinced that sexual exploitation and abuse are totally unacceptable forms of behaviour. We fully support the establishment and implementation of a policy of zero tolerance and note the work done by DPKO in the past year on raising the awareness of those with managerial and command responsibilities; establishing standards of conduct, training and investigation. Careful preparatory training in terms of a multi-cultural, pluralistic and tolerant outlook is

as important as subsequent swift punitive action, once culpability is established.

In the context of focussing on issues of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations by the General Assembly, we support the NAM Chairman in resisting the effort by the Security Council to encroach on an issue that clearly falls within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and its Subsidiary bodies. We would urge the C-34 to continue taking the lead on issues relating to sexual exploitation and abuse. Incidentally, the Secretary General must continue his efforts to "increase procurement opportunities for developing countries and countries with economies in transition", as envisaged in Fifth Committee Reports and Resolutions.

Mr Chairman, the establishment of an Integrated Training Service (ITS) is a welcome step. In this regard, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations must utilise and benefit from the considerable field expertise of the Troop Contributing Countries.

The role of Civilian Police in peacekeeping has grown substantially. We have noted that the UN Secretary-General has proposed the creation of a Standing Police Capacity, an initiative that was proposed at the World Summit in September 2005. We appreciate the efforts being made by the Police Adviser and DPKO to get it operational. In this context, we look forward to engaging in constructing discussions during this session to carry this concept forward. We would like to emphasise that due attention should be paid to coordination between the police and military components of the UN Peacekeeping Missions in the field.

Mr Chairman,

India stands committed to assist the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We have a proud history of UN peacekeeping dating back to its inception in the 1950s. We have contributed nearly 80,000 troops, and participated in more than 40 missions. India has also provided and continues to provide eminent Force Commanders for UN Missions. We salute the 110 personnel of the Indian Army, as well as peacekeepers from other countries, who have made the supreme sacrifice by laying down their lives for the cause of world peace, while serving in UN Missions. This is the "friendship bound with the bandage of the arm that drips, knit with the webbing of the rifle-thong".

Mr Chairman, in response to the Secretary-General's call for increased representation of female personnel in field missions, we are contributing lady military and police officers to a number of UN Missions. We have recently pledged to send a full Female Formed Police Unit to UN Mission in Liberia (UNIMIL). This also reflects India's commitment to assist the UN in reaching out to the most vulnerable sections, i.e. women and children, in conflict and post-conflict societies.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, I would like to assure you and other Bureau members of my delegation's full cooperation and support in the work that lies ahead.

Thank you.

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