



STATEMENT BY MR. AJAI MALHOTRA, AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS ON FEBRUARY 27, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches considerable importance to this session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. We are confident that you will guide it to a positive outcome and assure you of our full cooperation in doing so. We thank Under-Secretary-General Guehenno for highlighting the priorities in peacekeeping for the coming year and compliment his team for its dedication and hard work. We associate ourselves with the statement made by Morocco, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr Chairman,

The report of the Secretary-General (Doc A/61/688) outlines the enormous challenges that have arisen consequent to the unprecedented surge in peacekeeping. There has been a sustained increase in the total number of personnel to nearly 100,000, deployed in 18 peacekeeping operations around the world. These numbers are set to increase in 2007. Moreover, the issues facing peacekeeping today are not only because new missions are being established or old ones expanded, but also due to the volatile and insecure environments in which UN forces have to function, the growing complexity of the difficult tasks assigned to them, and the tools that they are provided with.

We welcome the efforts by the Secretary-General to respond to peacekeeping challenges by strengthening and rationalizing structures in the UN via building military planning, management, and operational capacities, and appreciate his briefings and interactions with Member States. The proposal for realignment of DPKO by creating two Departments - Department of Peace Operations (DPO) and Department of Field Support (DFS) - is substantive, requiring an in-depth examination by Member States in the Special Committee.

While we do not wish to pre-judge the detailed examination of the proposals by experts in this Committee, the recommendations to consolidate important aspects of peacekeeping deserve to be welcomed. Among these are the strengthening of the authority of the SRSG and the Head of Mission to be the

ultimate authority at the Mission level for all aspects of UN operations and support; the holding of the Head of Mission accountable for proper resource management in accordance with established policies and procedures; the consolidation of communication and information technologies so crucial to modern combat; the consolidation of defence procurements through transfer of resources from Department of Management to DFS; the establishment of regional procurement offices; and above all joint senior decision bodies as well as integrated operational teams. We welcome these changes and hope that they will make UN peacekeeping even more tightly-integrated, effective and professional.

Mr Chairman, unity of effort requires clear command, control and reporting structures and arrangements to be in place, beginning with the mission in the field and going right up to the Headquarters. We look forward to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations conclusively assessing the impact of proposed measures against the template of ensuring the overriding priorities of "unity of command and integrity of effort" as well as the "safety and security" of troops.

The safety and security of UN peacekeepers is of vital concern to troop contributors who place their soldiers at risk in pursuance of the UN ideal. The 89 deaths of peacekeepers in 2006, including that of an Indian peacekeeper, Corporal Mohan Singh Gurung, while doing his duty with the UN Mission in Sudan earlier this month, is a reminder of the importance of fully addressing safety and security concerns.

In this context, the UN must also enhance its capacity for information gathering and assessment and sharing it with field units along with concrete recommendations for preventive action. Reliable operational and tactical intelligence is essential for the successful conduct of military operations and in order to pre-empt potential threats to the security and safety of personnel.

UN field operations also continue to be constrained by complex bureaucratic procedures essentially conceived in a non-operational context. The fluid and unpredictable environment confronting UN Peacekeeping Operations, particularly during times of crisis, requires flexibility to adapt quickly to changing circumstances on the ground. This necessitates good logistics planning and close integration of the uniformed and administrative components of a mission. As the tasks of a Head of Mission are diverse and complex, it is important that the Force Commander be provided with operational and administrative flexibility to tackle crisis situations. In this context, the C-34 should study, and the UN should absorb, the experiences acquired by UNIFIL last summer, when almost overnight that Mission had to establish alternate re-supply lines and casualty evacuation routes while simultaneously ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Mr Chairman, we would encourage the Secretary-General to also address the issue of consolidation of peacekeeping accounts while undertaking administrative reorganization and streamlining. This would provide an opportunity to tackle 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 peacekeeping missions. Such consolidation will help the Secretary-General better manage the finances of peacekeeping missions. It will address the chronic cash deficits faced by some missions, while ensuring more predictable troop cost and contingent owned equipment reimbursements to Member States. It will also help address the concern of developing countries that contribute the overwhelming majority of peacekeeping troops, yet continue to be owed considerable sums of money.

Mr Chairman, India has supported energising the mechanism of triangular consultations between Troop Contributing Countries, the Security Council and the UN Secretariat. Most Member States participating in last week's debate on Reform of Working Methods of Security Council laid particular stress on this aspect. Private Meetings under Resolution 1353 format continue to be held on the eve of renewal of Mission mandates, leaving little scope for serious or meaningful discussions. It is important that TCCs be involved early and fully in all aspects and stages of mission planning and that their views find their way into mission mandates.

We welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to deepen ties between the UN and the 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 Africa and are involved in bilateral capacity building in many African 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". The real challenge before the UN is to strengthen peacekeeping without regionalising it.

As regards conduct and discipline of troops, we are convinced that sexual exploitation and abuse are totally unacceptable forms of behaviour. We fully support the implementation of a policy of zero tolerance and encourage raising the awareness of those with managerial and command responsibilities and the establishing of 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. We look forward to finalizing the revised Draft MOU and Draft Comprehensive Strategy of Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation.

Mr Chairman, we welcome the establishment of an Integrated Training Service (ITS) and would encourage the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to

utilise and benefit from the considerable field expertise of the Troop Contributing Countries.

As regards Security Sector Reform, we must have in place a coherent framework to clarify the various dimensions of the concept. This should take place in relevant UN inter-governmental bodies, especially the Special Committee and the Peacebuilding Commission.

The role of Civilian Police in peacekeeping has grown substantially. We have noted the establishment of initial Standing Police Capacity and look forward to engaging in constructive discussions with the Police Adviser regarding future action with regard to this Capacity and its integration into the UN Peacekeeping structure in the field. We would also like to emphasise the need for adequate transparency in ensuring representation of qualified candidates from Troop Contributing Countries in senior leadership positions.

Mr Chairman, India stands solidly committed to assist the UN 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 100,000 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 113 Indian Army personnel, as well as peacekeepers from other countries, who have made the supreme sacrifice by laying down their lives while serving in UN Missions.

India has also traditionally been contributing lady military and police officers to a number of UN Missions. In response to the Secretary-General's call for increased representation of female personnel in field missions, we feel particularly honoured to have provided the first full Female Formed Police Unit for peacekeeping work. This unit is currently assisting the UN Mission in Liberia in reaching out to the most vulnerable sections of society, i.e. women and children, in a post-conflict environment, besides performing its normal duties.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, we are fully committed to the purposes and principles of the UN and look forward to making UN peacekeeping an ever more effective and efficient tool in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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