

Strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries
16 January 2001

Mr Neewoor

We commend Singapore for its initiative to hold this open debate today on the important subject of strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries (TCCs). Mr. Minister, we deeply appreciate your presence in the Council and the fact that you are presiding over the discussions on this important subject.

Allow me also to thank all of the delegations that have addressed kind words of felicitations to us following our recent election to the Security Council to serve a two-year term as a non-permanent member. I would like to assure all delegations that Mauritius is determined to contribute effectively to the work of the Council and to bring its perspective to the deliberations, keeping in mind the common concerns and aspirations of the general membership of the United Nations.

We also thank the outgoing members of the Council, namely Argentina, Canada, Malaysia, Namibia and the Netherlands, for their contribution to the work of the Council during their tenure.

I wish to take this opportunity to first of all express the appreciation of my delegation to all of the troop-contributing countries for making their troops available so that the United Nations can fulfil its fundamental task of maintaining peace and security throughout the world. We are conscious of the great sacrifice the TCCs make in deploying their men and women in conflict situations in unfamiliar territories on behalf of the United Nations. We believe that there can be no doubt whatsoever that TCCs, which risk the lives of their personnel, must be fully involved in the decision-making process at every stage of a mandate that concerns them.

During the morning session, we listened to statements by a number of important TCCs, which not only expressed their concerns about the numerous problems peacekeeping operations entail, but also made many valuable suggestions to improve the situation.

The traumatic experience of the United Nations in failing to prevent genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and to protect the inhabitants of Srebrenica ultimately triggered the setting up of the independent high-level Panel to undertake a thorough review of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Today we have the Brahimi report, which is an important road map that will enable our Organization to achieve better results from more effective peacekeeping operations in the coming years.

It goes without saying that greater cooperation between TCCs, the Secretariat and the Security Council should yield better results for our peacekeeping operations. The success and increased efficiency of any peacekeeping operation can be ensured through effective coordination and management involving all concerned parties. The Brahimi report has clearly recommended greater cooperation between the Security Council and the TCCs. The Security Council affirmed in resolution 1318 (2000) its determination, at the level of heads of State and Government, to adopt clearly defined, credible, achievable and appropriate mandates. Through resolution 1327 (2000), the Security Council confirmed its commitment to holding private meetings with TCCs at various stages of the establishment and implementation of peacekeeping operations.

The holding of these private meetings is undoubtedly marked progress towards greater cooperation between the Council and the TCCs. However, we Security Council members need to address seriously the calls and concerns we heard from TCCs earlier in this meeting, particularly with regard to the legitimate request regarding the institutionalization of Security Council and TCC cooperation.

We fully subscribe to the view that the Security Council should consult with TCCs during the formulation of mandates. Today the majority of troops come from developing countries because developed countries are more and more reluctant to risk their military personnel abroad. We in the Security Council cannot afford to see a dwindling of troops from developing countries as well in the years ahead, especially when everyone knows that more and more peacekeeping operations are being undertaken by the United Nations. The concerns of TCCs should be taken very seriously.

My delegation wishes to join with other delegations which have, over the years and today also, advocated the institutionalization of consultations between TCCs and the Security Council through the establishment of an ad hoc subsidiary organ of the Council, as provided for in Article 29 of the Charter. This matter should be fully discussed within the Council at an early date.

TCCs have an important role to play since their military contingents are called upon to discharge responsibilities professionally, in accordance with the mission's mandate. Although the Security Council is largely responsible for designing peacekeeping operations, the implementation of the mandate of operations rests mainly with the troops deployed on the ground. In the Security Council, we should ensure that TCCs are thoroughly consulted whenever a change in the mandate of an operation is contemplated. This can best be achieved within the ambit of the proposed subsidiary organ. It is true that if TCCs are not consulted in the evolution of a mandate, it will be difficult for the TCCs to have a clear assessment of possible developments on the ground.

The success of any project lies largely in the degree of genuine cooperation and consultation between the project designers and the executants of the project. We believe it is essential to involve TCCs in consultations at the earliest stage possible. During these early consultations, potential TCCs should be provided with the information that would enable them to decide on their eventual participation on the ground.

The Secretariat needs to thoroughly and continually brief TCCs on all aspects, including the situation on the ground, risk assessment of the operation and the security threats involved. At an early stage of consultation, it is also very useful to take on board inputs from the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. These steps would create a better understanding between the Secretariat and TCCs. Only if there is enhanced confidence between all stakeholders will the TCCs be able to convince their national legislatures and public to commit troops.

Peace operations should be well manned and well equipped in order to minimize risks and failures. In this regard, the Secretariat has the prime responsibility of identifying the best trained and most experienced troops for a ground operation. While the Secretariat) should carefully assess the overall preparedness of potential troops prior to deployment, TCCs should also understand that one of the ways to ensure the success of an operation is through the commitment of welltrained contingents, with appropriate equipment and supplies needed to sustain their personnel on the ground. The TCCs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should work closely within a framework of military cooperation to ensure that the troops deployed have the optimum capacity to discharge their duties efficiently. Here we agree with the suggestion of India that the Military Staff Committee should be revived.

In conclusion, today's open debate has given us deep insight into the need for greater cooperation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the TCCs. My delegation has no doubt that the Security Council must seriously address the issues raised by the TCCs and take appropriate measures to accommodate the concerns expressed in this open debate.