



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL BRIEFING ON
UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**

NEW YORK, 10 MARCH 2016

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary General for his briefing on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations system, including measures being undertaken to strengthen the Organization's response as outlined in his report to the General Assembly (A/70/729).

2. Mr. Secretary General, your presence today demonstrates your clear commitment to address this challenge, which threatens to cast a long, dark shadow on the Organisation's reputation. We welcome many of the measures you outlined to confront SEA to ensure, as you mentioned, that the UN becomes the beacon of hope for the most vulnerable.

3. We also take note of the findings and recommendations on the issue of SEA contained in various reviews and reports, most recently the report of the High Level External Independent Review Panel on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by International Peacekeeping Forces in the CAR. We were particularly concerned over the findings of fragmentation of responsibility within the UN system and view the troubling lack of coordination as a major gap that needs to be addressed.

4. In this regard, we welcome the appointment of Ms. Jane Holl Lute as Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse and look forward to continued updates on the recommendation and implementations.

Mr. President,

5. We believe that tackling SEA cannot be done in isolation – it requires the collective and concerted commitment and political will of all members of the United Nations and the international community. We support the intention to address the SEA issue in a broader and more systematic manner across the UN system. In this connection we note the Security Council draft resolution initiated by the US delegation and will work constructively on this.

6. Malaysia also reaffirms the central role of the C34 which has been mandated by the wider membership to deliberate on all issues relating to UN peace operations. It is important that our parallel efforts are complementary towards our shared aim to eliminate SEA, seek accountability and alleviate the harm caused to vulnerable people.

Mr. President,

7. Accountability for perpetrators of SEA cannot be achieved under a shroud of secrecy. Therefore we are supportive of the Secretary General's measures to increase transparency in the accountability process. However, we reiterate that Member States, particularly troop-and-police contributing countries, have the primary responsibility to hold their personnel accountable for SEA. In order to do so, information and credible evidence regarding allegations of SEA must be channelled by the UN in a timely manner to Member States for subsequent action.

8. Malaysia believes that improving investigation procedures for SEA allegations increases the accountability process. Therefore we are supportive of such initiatives, including the establishment of immediate response teams at peacekeeping missions to gather and preserve evidence and the adoption of a six-month timeline for the completion of investigations.

9. We reaffirm that Malaysia enforces a strict zero tolerance policy on SEA for our peacekeeping troops. All Malaysian peacekeepers undergo compulsory pre-deployment training where specific modules and briefings are conducted to raise awareness on acts that constitute SEA and the consequences of committing such acts. We also have national laws in place to ensure the prosecution and punishment of Malaysian peacekeeping personnel for serious misconduct, including SEA.

10. We hope that the strong measures announced by the Secretary General to strengthen accountability for SEA, including imposing sanctions against those who commit acts of misconduct and those who fail to take action against them, will create a deterrent effect and galvanize prevention efforts at the highest level.

11. We also note the decision of the Secretary General to repatriate contingents where there is a demonstrated pattern of abuse or non-response to allegations of misconduct, which we view as a measure of last resort. At the same time, we call for the Secretary General to issue clear criteria and guidelines in making such a decision and to engage constructively with troop-and-police-contributing countries on this issue.

Mr. President,

12. We must not forget that our discussion today was triggered by heinous acts against children by international peacekeepers, both UN and non-UN, in the CAR. The series of SEA cases involving children and the failure to provide timely follow-up assistance to the victims underscore the continued need to raise awareness on and mainstream child protection in peacekeeping operations.

13. We urge for mission leadership to instill a culture of child protection in peacekeeping missions and stress the important role that child protection advisers can play in preventing and responding to allegations of SEA against children.

14. The monitoring and reporting mechanisms established under the Security Council's children and armed conflict framework should be utilized to collect and analyse information on SEA allegations involving child victims in order to ensure that necessary follow-up assistance can be provided.

15. Knowledge is the best defence, and the provision of training for peacekeeping personnel cannot be overstated as a means of prevention. Therefore we also advocate for mandatory pre-deployment training on child protection, in addition to training on SEA prevention, for all UN peacekeepers and support the Secretary General's initiative for troop-and-police contributing countries to issue certificates of compliance.

Mr. President,

16. There is a tendency to discuss SEA in the abstract, in terms of numbers and percentages that keep us detached from the reality of SEA cases. In comprehensively addressing the issue, let us remember that there are real people – mothers, daughters, fathers, and sons - who suffer the anguish and harm of SEA. The international community must ensure that they receive the necessary attention, including medical and psychosocial assistance and they must be our priority in pursuing accountability.

17. I wish to conclude Mr. President, by reaffirming my delegation's readiness to work closely with Council members and other partners and stakeholders especially the troop-and-police contributing countries as well as the Secretariat to address our common aims.

18. The pledge taken by all UN peacekeepers – titled We Are UN Peacekeepers – recognizes the blue helmets as the embodiment of the aspirations of all the people of the world for peace. Expectations of the international community and local populations that they are sent to protect are extremely high.

19. This is the reason why cases of SEA and the subsequent failures to take action by the international community are very painful to confront. However, only when we are honest with our shortcomings can we genuinely work to overcome them. Only then can we live up to the lofty ideals we seek to uphold.

Thank you.