

Statement by Ambassador Bhagwant S Bishnoi, Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations at the meeting of TCC/PCCs regarding UN Secretary General's Zero Tolerance on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, 17 September, 2015.

Mr. Secretary General,

At the outset, I thank you for organizing this meeting to discuss policy on sexual exploitation and abuse relating to peace keeping operations. As the biggest cumulative contributor to UN peace keeping, India welcomes this timely and relevant discussion.

Peacekeeping operations are central to the work of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. As of now, there are more than 125,000 men and women serving under the blue flag, working to prevent conflict, protect civilians and sustain peace processes. Peacekeepers are, in fact, essential for the UN's efforts to improve the lives of people around the world.

That being said, there can be nothing but zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. The aberrations that have taken place are abhorrent and repugnant. This is particularly so given the confidence that has been reposed in blue helmets and in this organization.

Sexual exploitation and abuse is not something which is limited to peacekeepers. We need to have in place measures which cover all UN personnel, particularly those in field operations.

We in India have a policy of zero tolerance. Every allegation is investigated and the strictest punishment is meted to the guilty in keeping with the due process of law. In our approach, there is no hesitation or reluctance. It would be immoral if there was.

We will continue to support the Secretary General in his effort to implement the UN's zero tolerance policy. We look forward to working with other member states in the C34 and other relevant inter governmental bodies that need to give consideration to this matter. I would like to assure the Secretary General's of the full cooperation of my delegation.