

STATEMENT BY DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 31
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING
OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS, AT THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE
63rd SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 28,
2008



Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the opportunity to participate in discussions under Agenda Item 31: Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in all their aspects. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement. India attaches considerable importance to this session of the Fourth Committee.

We will also take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Under Secretary General DPKO Alan Le Roy, Under Secretary General DFS Susan Malcorra, and Military Adviser Lt General Obiakor to their first Fourth Committee participation and comprehensive briefing in the interactive session. We would like to compliment their teams for the dedication and hard work.

As one of the oldest and regular Troop Contributing Countries, we look forward to participating in the Special Session of General Assembly to commemorate the 60th anniversary of United Nations Peacekeeping on 11 November 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

We note from the Under-Secretary General's statement that there are 140,000 men and women in the field from 119 member states in 18 peacekeeping operations. These numbers are set to increase further in the near future. This unprecedented surge has given rise to enormous challenges in peacekeeping - 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 had welcomed 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. The realignment of DPKO by creating two Departments - Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS) - has been undertaken. However, there is still a need to establish clear command structures, coherence in policy and strategy, effective coordination and integration, as well as ensure preservation of unity of command from Headquarters to the field. We look forward to the midterm review of the restructuring in 2009 and hope that appropriate corrections would be made from lessons learnt, in order to make UN peacekeeping well integrated, effective and professional.

Mr. Chairman,

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 number of deaths of peacekeepers in 2008 is a reminder of the importance of fully addressing safety and security concerns. We would urge the UN Secretariat to give utmost priority to enhancing safety and security of UN Personnel in the field. In this context, the UN must enhance its capacity for information gathering,

assessment and sharing it with field units along with concrete recommendations for preventive action.

Mr. Chairman,

India has consistently called for energizing the mechanism of triangular consultations between Troop Contributing Countries, the Security Council and the UN Secretariat. Consultations 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. It is imperative to implement in letter and spirit the provisions contained in Security Council Resolution 1353 and note of Security Council President of 14 January 2002. The experience and expertise of Troop Contributing Countries would help in developing effective mandates for Peacekeeping Missions.

Mr. Chairman,

India supports the efforts to enhance peacekeeping capacity in African countries. We share close and historic ties with Africa and are one of the oldest, largest and most consistent contributor to UN Peacekeeping missions in Africa, having participated in almost every major operation since the inception of peacekeeping. We are currently involved in bilateral capacity building in many African countries. Cooperation with regional organizations should be in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. At the same time, 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 regionalizing it.

As regards conduct and discipline of troops, we regard sexual exploitation and abuse as 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. On its part, India is committed to prompt and thorough investigation of any act of misconduct and if, proven, strict and exemplary action would be taken as per the law. We have on all occasions offered full cooperation to the United Nations and would urge the implementation of the revised Model MOU adopted by the General Assembly, at the earliest.

Mr. Chairman,

There is an urgent need to give importance to evolving professional training programmes for peacekeepers in consultation with Member States. In this task the experience of major Troop Contributors with considerable background in peacekeeping operations needs to be utilized by Integrated Training Service (ITS). Institutions of excellence in this field, in these countries can be associated in this process by the ITS.

India supports a holistic and coherent United Nations approach to Security Sector Reform and calls for improved coordination of efforts between all partners. There is need to avoid any duplication of effort and have clear field mechanisms in implementation of security sector reform. Such reform should be a nationally owned process.

The role of Civilian Police in peacekeeping has grown substantially in size, complexity and importance. The incorporation of Police Division in the Office of the Rule of Law and Security institutions and inclusion of Police Adviser as a Permanent Member of the Senior Management Team underscores this aspect. As the Division expands further, we would like to emphasise the need for adequate transparency in ensuring representation of qualified candidates from Troop Contributing Countries in senior leadership positions.

A number of countries have expressed concern on the issue of outstanding reimbursements that the United Nations owes to Troop Contributing Countries. In this context, we would urge the Secretary-General to 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 owe dues to other peacekeeping missions. This 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 stands solidly committed to assist the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security. We have a proud history of UN peacekeeping for last 60 years, dating back to its inception. We have contributed more than 100,000 troops, and participated in more than 40 missions. India has also provided eminent Force Commanders for UN Missions. We salute the 128 Indian peacekeepers, as well as those 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 were honoured to have provided the first full Female Formed Police Unit for peacekeeping work. This unit has been assisting the UN Mission in Liberia for the last two years and has been successful 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, India is fully committed to the purposes and principles of the UN and we 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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