

STATEMENT BY MR. Y. K. SINHA, COUNSELLOR ON COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (AGENDA ITEM: 89) SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE (FOURTH COMMITTEE) ON NOVEMBER 21, 2001

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express our gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Jean Marie Guehenno for his lucid and concise presentation, as a precursor to our consideration of the "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects".

2. We had hoped that consideration of this agenda item in this Committee would be based on an interactive discussion rather than on formal statements. In view of the fact that only two sessions of this Committee were originally scheduled for such an important agenda item, a formal debate would not really suffice, specially since the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations met in June-July this year. Its report is still being considered by the relevant Committee of the General Assembly. We recall the consideration of this agenda item in this Committee during the 55th UNGA when sufficient time had been allocated for a formal debate as also a particularly useful interactive session with the Under-Secretary-General and members of his department. We are grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, for permitting a brief but useful interaction yesterday with Mr. Guehenno and his colleagues in DPKO and hope that we can continue these discussions this afternoon.

3. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Jordan on behalf of NAM. In view of time constraints, we will confine ourselves to a few important issues. We have had occasion to speak at length and comprehensively on various aspects of peacekeeping, both in the Special Committee and in this Committee in the past. The previous session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was a particularly fruitful and result-oriented one. We are grateful to the Chairman of the Special Committee, Ambassador Mbanefo, and other members of the Bureau, in particular the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Michel Duval, for the manner in which they conducted the work of the Special Committee. We would also like to thank the Secretary General for his detailed report, based on a comprehensive review of the Secretariat's capacity to support peacekeeping operations. This formed the basis of discussions in the Special Committee. We are particularly pleased that the Special Committee was able to devote considerable time and energy in its consideration of the Secretary General's report. We are confident that the necessary resources will be given to the Secretariat to effectively plan and manage UN peacekeeping operations. India has played an important role in ensuring that these resources are made available but only after a thorough and comprehensive review of UN peacekeeping. However, we would like to once again warn that the endemic problems which plague UN peacekeeping cannot be resolved through the mere infusion of additional resources.

4. An issue of crucial importance is strengthening the triangular partnership between the Security Council, Troop Contributing Countries and the Secretariat. If lessons of past failures have to be incorporated to prevent their recurrence, then it is imperative that a

genuine and meaningful partnership is realised. Mere strengthening of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit in DPKO will not suffice if crucial lessons of the past are ignored.

5. The Working Group of the Security Council on Peacekeeping Operations, set up in February this year, has been struggling for some time now with proposals made by TCCs. We would like to commend the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Curtis Ward of Jamaica, for attempting to focus discussions on these proposals. Ironically, a handful of members of the Council, entrusted with primary and permanent responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, continue to block and frustrate the will of the majority. In this connection, we would like to pay tribute to the sagacity and flexibility of France in supporting the proposals for a new mechanism of consultations with TCCs. While most of those countries entrusted with the responsibility for maintenance of peace and security do not contribute troops for UN peacekeeping operations, we would expect that they would at least support a culture of consultations with troop contributors which contributes meaningfully to the decision-making process that impacts directly on the lives of their troops serving the United Nations. We appeal to these countries to shed their myopic vision and contribute meaningfully to strengthening cooperation with TCCs, thereby strengthening UN peacekeeping as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, this is an anomaly that must be seriously and meaningfully addressed lest the disenchantment of troop contributors leaves the Council with little else but the holding of mostly pointless thematic debates.

6. We would like to compliment Assistant Secretary General Michael Sheehan and his team for an excellent presentation last month on the need for strategic deployment stocks (SDS) at the UN Logistics Base in Brindisi and other measures to enhance the Organisation's rapid and effective deployment capacities in order to achieve the goal of deploying UN peacekeeping operations within 30 to 90 days. The Special Committee had endorsed the concept of a strategic reserve and the Secretariat has now undertaken a detailed dialogue with member states on this issue. The Secretariat's proposals deserve serious consideration and the relevant organs of the General Assembly should expeditiously do so. The support of the general membership, particularly the major financial contributors, is essential.

7. In his statement before this Committee yesterday, Under-Secretary-General Guehenno outlined five strategic goals to underpin DPKO's current reform efforts. We share these goals and look forward to working with him and other members of his department in realising the same.

8. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in its report has made a number of recommendations and proposals which will have a far reaching impact on the conduct of peacekeeping operations. We urge the relevant bodies of the General Assembly examining the report to give due consideration to these.

Mr. Chairman,

9. India has an unmatched record in UN peacekeeping, having participated in 35 out of 54 peacekeeping operations over the past five decades, including in some of the most difficult missions in Africa. More than 58,000 Indian military and civilian police personnel have donned blue helmets in various UN peacekeeping operations in all continents of the

globe. Over 100 of them have laid down their lives in the service of the UN. When we speak on peacekeeping therefore, it is not from the perspective of an armchair theorist but from a wealth of accumulated experience. UN peacekeeping is an instrument that we have helped to forge; we want to see it serve, and serve better, the collective purposes for which it was created, not undermined by a lack of funds, subverted by false doctrines, wasted on narrow ends, or diverted to serve other agendas.