

Statement by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Acting Permanent Representative,
Security Council Open Debate on 'Threat to International Peace and Security :
Improving UN Capacity to assist States to counter illicit cross border trafficking and
movement.' on April 25, 2012

Thank you, Madam President.

At the outset, let me join others in thanking you for organizing this open debate on threats to international peace and security posed by illicit cross-border trafficking and movement. I would also like to thank the Secretary General for his briefing.

2. Madam President, trafficking by non-state actors in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials and the movement of terrorists and their funds challenge international peace and security. Moreover, there are situations where international peace and security is exacerbated by illicit cross-border trafficking in arms and drug trafficking. In such cases the Security Council pronouncements have invariably listed these exacerbations and sought to control them.

3. At the same time there are a number of UN bodies and agencies which have their identified and Charter-mandated areas of specialization in connection with illicit cross-border trafficking and movement. It is important that this Council respects the mandates of other organs of the United Nations and its specialized bodies.

4. Of late, there has been a concerted push to bring several global issues onto the Council's agenda under the pretext of their affecting international peace and security. This needs to be avoided. The Charter provides for clear division of responsibility between the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC and specialized bodies and we must respect this separation of functions in letter and spirit.

4. General norm-setting must necessarily belong to relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations. The Security Council should step in only where there is threat to international peace and security and in the context of specific situations as in conflict and post-conflict situations, and sanctions regimes established pursuant to resolutions 1540, 1373 and 1267/1989 under Chapter VII of the Charter.

5. The UN has played a seminal role in capacity building of member States. States do need assistance to fulfill their international commitments and strengthen their internal institutions, including on law and order and securing their borders. Such an exercise must always be demand driven and Member States led. We commend the efforts and commitment of the relevant UN agencies in developing capacities of countries in conflict and post conflict situations. Commitment to capacity building of States in different sectors requires greater financial and technological support, and we should be willing to provide the same to them.

6. However, the connected issue is how the relevant UN agencies can help interested Member States secure their borders against illicit cross - border trafficking and movement. The first fundamental principle in this regard is respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State seeking assistance; second the donors and relevant UN agencies must respect the prerogative of the concerned member-state to secure its own borders; and third, assistance in capacity-building must be provided only upon request and as mutually agreed.

7. Madam President, the challenges we are discussing today are global in nature. Their inter-linkages make them even more complex. They call for strong collaborative action involving all member States, in a manner that is legitimate and appropriate.

I thank you.

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