

General Debate
on
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34)

Statement by
Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin
Permanent Representative

United Nations General Assembly

11 February 2019

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves with the Statement delivered by Morocco, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and would like to supplement it with some national perspectives.

2. I also thank the USGs and other speakers for their opening remarks.

3. India pays tribute to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping operations for their professionalism, dedication and courage. We remember those who have lost their lives in serving the cause of peace. I join in extending our condolences to the peacekeepers from Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Chad who have been the most recent in the long list of those who have paid the ultimate price in the cause of UN peacekeeping.

4. UN peacekeeping is a multi-stakeholder enterprise crafted to respond to threats to international peace and security. Over the years, many have contributed to its evolution in a multiplicity of ways and adapted it to meet changing requirements, even as we function within the paradigm of adhering to

the basic principles of UN peacekeeping – consent, impartiality and non-use of force, except in self-defence and in the defence of a mandate.

5. **To ensure that peacekeeping operations function at an optimal level**, initiatives for structural reforms; measures to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers; efforts to improve performance; and partnerships to build and increase capabilities and capacities, are all welcome steps. However, we need to ensure that there is no schism between doctrine and practice.

6. In this context, we commend the Secretary General's initiatives, including **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)**, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping within the contours of our shared understandings.

Mr. Chairman,

7. As we chart the way forward, we need to acknowledge that in peacekeeping, there is no substitute to professional competence. Therefore, the **development of an Integrated Performance Policy Framework (IPPF), that covers all stakeholders and all phases of peacekeeping operations**, needs to be a key ingredient of any holistic approach.

8. The **impact of caveats on performance is now widely acknowledged**, including in the recent report of the Board of Auditors contained in document A/73/5 (Vol.II). We can no longer ignore that the insistence by some on caveats in deployment is unfair. It leads to peacekeepers in the same peacekeeping operation being placed at different levels, being treated differently, and assessed differently.

9. Caveats, whether declared or undeclared, are against the basic principle of equality. They place an additional burden on those peacekeepers who do not have any caveats. They also have an impact on the fulfilment of missions' mandate, as they limit the Force Commander's ability to employ forces in an optimal manner. Acceptance of pledges with caveats is a practice whose time has long gone by. It is time to do away with all caveats. We need to **develop a culture of no national caveats in the service of the United Nations**.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The issue of the large number of mandate components in peacekeeping missions has been raised by us on many occasions. We appreciate efforts being made to **prioritize mandates** in some missions. Now that the practice of

prioritizing mandates has begun, there is a need to look at ways to address the availability of adequate resources to fulfil the prioritized mandate components.

11. Peacekeepers must be given adequate resources to accomplish the tasks set for them. Desiring peacekeepers to do more and more with less and less is not a recipe for success. **Under-resourced peacekeepers, unable to accomplish their mandated tasks, undermine the credibility of the UN peacekeeping.** It would be also useful if the views of troop/police contributing countries on implementing the mandates are reflected in relevant reports of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Chairman,

12. India is committed to contributing to peacekeeping capacity building activities. The Center for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi contributes to training efforts of peacekeepers worldwide, especially of African partners and women peacekeepers.

13. Sharing experience with other potential troop contributing countries through innovative partnerships is a useful exercise. India is happy to **co-deploy troops from Kazakhstan**, as part of its contingent in UNIFIL (Lebanon), since November last year. Our experience of this effort makes us encourage others to try this out as a mechanism to introduce new TCCs/PCCs in UN Peacekeeping.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The **financial situation of the United Nations peacekeeping**, particularly the non-payment/delayed payment of arrears to the troop/police contributing countries, is a cause for concern. The practice of delaying payments to TCCs/PCCs, even as contractual obligations to others are met, cannot continue unaddressed. It results in TCCs/PCCs bearing unsustainable burdens. In some cases, TCCs and PCCs are owed 100 to 200 times their cumulative annual financial contributions to the UN.

15. It is also time to resolve the issue of pending arrears of closed peacekeeping missions. Non-payment of peacekeeping dues for years, and sometimes decades after closure of peacekeeping missions, is not only bad accounting practice, but also tends to be interpreted as reflecting bad faith.

Mr. Chairman,

16. India is committed to the UN's Zero Tolerance Policy on **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)**. We are the first contributor to SG's Trust Fund set up in Support of Victims of SEA. The Prime Minister of India is a member of SG's Circle of Leadership and has endorsed the collective statement of the members of the SG's circle of leadership to reaffirm continued personal commitment on the issue. We have also signed SG's Voluntary Compact, as part of our commitment to preventing SEA.

17. As a country that deployed the first ever all-women Formed Police Unit (FPU) in Liberia, India welcomes the recently launched **UN Gender Parity Strategy**. We are committed to increasing the number of women peacekeepers and to meeting targets in this regard within the specified timelines. We hope to deploy a Female Engagement Team (FET) in MONUSCO (DR Congo) and a mixed Formed Police Unit (FPU) in UNMISS (South Sudan).

18. **Women peacekeepers need to be incentivized** to encourage their greater participation. Priority should be given to deploying from the **pending pledges related to women peacekeepers**.

Mr. Chairman,

19. India appreciates Secretary-General's close attention to improving **safety and security of UN peacekeeping personnel**. To further strengthen these efforts, we should have dedicated counter-IED resources for missions facing such threats, and there should also be concerted efforts to upgrade the security infrastructure of camps.

Mr. Chairman,

20. Peacekeepers need to be provided access to **medical facilities**, in accordance with the golden hour principle, throughout the mission area. Medical capabilities in all missions need to be reviewed to identify gaps that currently exist. The results of any such a review should be shared with all Member States.

21. It is important to ensure **transparency in selecting contingents**. The basis of selection should include training standards, equipment, and individual and collective skills that would best suit the requirements of specific mission's operational environment. It is the responsibility of those who assess to verify whether troops to be deployed have met basic minimum training standards and

this should be confirmed during the Assessment and Advisory Visits (AAVs) and Pre-Deployment visits (PDVs). The mission-specific training, if any, after troops' deployment, could focus on coordination and collective training based on specific threats of the mission.

Mr. Chairman,

22. The many pieces that make for UN peacekeeping require us to **work in unison with partners**. There is much that we can do to work collaboratively in this committee to make peacekeeping operations more effective and efficient, while observing the principles that have guided us in our collective endeavors to “keep the peace”. For our part, India will actively participate in this effort.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
