

STATEMENT BY MR. S. SUDHAKAR REDDY, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 161: FINANCING OF
THE AFRICAN UNION-UNITED NATIONS HYBRID OPERATION IN DARFUR AT
THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 19, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Controller for introducing the Secretary-General's proposed budget for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We convey our appreciation to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for his introduction of the Advisory Committee's relevant report. My delegation associated itself with the Statement made on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), established by UN Security Council resolution 1769, reflects the collective will of the international community, including the African Union and the Government of Sudan, as an essential element in the way forward for achieving durable peace and security. India supports the scheduled deployment of a fully resourced UNAMID, which would have the necessary wherewithal to effectively execute its challenging mandate. Deployment of a Mission of this magnitude and complexity without the requisite means would not only be counterproductive but be doomed to failure. For that reason, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposed budget for UNAMID, as it provides the correct administrative and budgetary framework for setting up the Operation.

Mr. Chairman,

The unique and complex structure of the UNAMID is based on close cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the African Union. We commend this process and pledge our support to it. We call for expedited recruitment of the required civilian staff that can be deployed in the field as and when required, based on the security situation.

Mr. Chairman,

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's letter contained in document A/62/379 informing Member States of a number of extraordinary measures, mostly relating to deployment of personnel and procurement, that he exceptionally authorized to enable the Secretariat to respond to the demands placed on it in implementing UNSC resolution 1769 within the prescribed timeframe. While acknowledging that similar measures on a smaller scale might have been taken in the past for other Missions, we concur with the ACABQ that given the experience gained and lessons learnt over the years in UN peacekeeping operations, the Secretariat by now should understand the importance of advance planning in order to avoid recourse to these exceptional measures. The recurrent application of exceptional measures undermines the budgetary and administrative discipline required for good governance and compounds the risk of failure of internal controls.

In this regard, we are concerned by the non-competitive "single source" contract amounting to 250 million dollars awarded to a vendor under the pretext of exigency even though the probability of a Mission in Darfur had been under discussion in the Secretariat for some time. While not digressing from the important topic under discussion here today, we would be taking up a number of unanswered questions on this issue under the agenda of procurement reforms. We reiterate our strong opposition to such waiver of UN procurement financial regulations and rules, except under extraordinary circumstances, which does not seem to be the case for the contract in question. WE echo the ACABQ in stressing the importance of ensuring effective international competition from all qualified vendors on a wide geographical basis for provision of goods and services in the future, not just for UNAMID but for all UN procurement. Needless to say, the process should also be open, fair, transparent and rule-based.

Mr. Chairman,

While strongly advocating provision of full resources for UNAMID, we support the ACABQ's comment that given the presence of two peacekeeping Missions in the same country, it is imperative to maximize synergies and exploit all efficiencies through joint and collaborative efforts between UNMIS and the UNAMID. The bottom-line is that the proposed structure for UNAMID and the existing one for UNMIS, and their capacities to efficiently and effectively execute their respective mandates, should not be compromised while pursuing the laudable objectives of maximizing synergies and exploiting efficiencies.

Mr. Chairman,

Given the larger than usual management challenges and risks associated with the UNAMID, because of prevailing circumstances and the high level of procurement and infrastructure required, the ACABQ has advised the Secretary-General to be vigilant about prudent risk management. As member States, we too would also be closely following the evolution of this important Mission.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we call on all parties involved in the conflict in Darfur to exercise restraint and urge them to participate in the Darfur peace talks. Violence is no solution to any dispute. We also call upon the international community to provide financial and material support for the deployment of UNAMID and the alleviation of the humanitarian situation in Darfur. We look forward to fruitful deliberations on the proposed UNAMID budget in the informal discussions.

Thank you.

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