

Statement by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, Permanent Representative at the debate on the report of the Secretary General titled “The report of the United Nations Peace Operations : Implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations” at the UN General Assembly on October 12, 2015

**Mr. President,**

I thank you for organizing this plenary session on the report of the Secretary General No. A/70/357 titled “The report of the United Nations Peace Operations: Implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO)”. It is significant that you have chosen to organize one of the first debates under your presidency on the important topic of UN peace operations.

2. We align our statement with that of the Non Aligned Movement presented by the distinguished representative of Morocco. My delegation’s views on this topic are based on our experience in both peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations of the United Nations. India is the largest cumulative troop contributor to UN peace operations, with over 185,000 troops having served in 48 of the 69 missions mandated so far. The report of the HIPPO, which was appointed by the Secretary General in October 2014, therefore, carries great importance for us. We have expressed our satisfaction with the HIPPO report earlier, and warmly welcome the presence of President Ramos Horta and Vice Chair Ameerah Haq here today.

**Mr. President,**

3. The most important issue is the big picture, which is the elephant in the room. This is the way in which the mandates for peace operations are formulated by the UN Security Council. We are dismayed at the opaque manner in which the Security Council continues mandate peace operations, without any accountability or transparency. The human costs of this failing are evident in both the rising number of casualties among UN peacekeepers, as well as an alarming growth in the number of civilians, now reaching 60 million according to the Secretary General, whose lives are being disrupted by the conflicts that an ineffective Security Council is powerless to resolve. With your declared advocacy of human rights, Mr President, we believe that you must take the lead to prioritize agreement on an early reform of the Security Council during this 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly in order to bring hope to these millions of ordinary men, women and children.

4. The Secretary General has proposed three pillars for conducting UN peace operations with a “renewed focus on prevention and mediation; stronger regional-global partnerships; and new ways of planning and conducting United Nations peace operations to make them faster, more responsive and more accountable to the needs of countries and people in conflict”. Of these, primacy must be given to the pacific settlement of disputes as the core objective of UN peace operations, as set out in the UN Charter. This will enable every peace operation to have a clear implementation timeframe.

**Mr. President,**

5. The UNSG has recommended that sustained dialogue between the Council, the Secretariat and contributors is essential for shared understanding of appropriate responses and their implications for the mandate and conduct of a peace operation. He has further stated that this dialogue should begin before the establishment of the mission. We strongly support this.

6. The SG's report and the Panel rightly recognize that "a United Nations peace operation is not designed or equipped to impose political solutions through sustained use of force", and that UN peace operations are not the appropriate tool for military counter-terrorism operations. We endorse this recommendation, as UN peacekeepers are not deployable for targeted offensive action against armed militias, non-state actors and terrorists. We should not abandon the cardinal principles of UN peacekeeping which have withstood the test of time. These are consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. We urge a review of the current allocation of resources within UN peace operations, to support political efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of conflicts. This would considerably mitigate the growing resource constraint faced by UN peace operations.

7. The Secretary General has reaffirmed his commitment to inform and brief the Security Council of situations of escalating risk for civilians or serious shortfalls in the capability of missions to fulfil protection mandates. This is a welcome step. As troop contributing countries, we look forward to participating in such briefings in an interactive manner. UN peacekeepers are not only the UN's boots on the ground, but also the UN's eyes and ears, and the Security Council can only benefit from the ground level assessments which troop contributing countries can provide in direct interaction between member states. Such interaction will contribute to a more effective implementation of the mandate for protection of civilians (POC). This is why we call for Article 44 of the Charter to be implemented in letter and spirit.

**Mr. President,**

8. The UNSG has reported that sexual exploitation and abuse by a small minority of UN personnel continue to shame our Organization. Such abuse scars the lives of men, women and children. We take such cases with utmost seriousness. The United Nations must apply one standard, that of zero tolerance, while dealing with all cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in all its field operations, whether these be peacekeeping, peacebuilding or others.

**Mr. President,**

9. During the recently concluded Leaders' Summit held on 28 September, 2015 in New York, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India announced an increase of 10% of our troop contribution to existing or new operations, an additional 3 police units with higher representation of female peacekeepers, a commitment to provide critical enablers, deployment of technical personnel in UN Mission, and additional training for peacekeepers at our facilities in India and in the field. These commitments show that India is willing to walk the talk when it comes to supporting UN peace operations.

Thank you, Mr President.

