

High-Level Event
Improving peacekeeping performance: A year since UNSCR 2436

INDIA STATEMENT
by
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ECOSOC Chamber

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Madam Chairperson,

The presence of so many representatives here is testimony that Peacekeeping is a unique innovation of Multilateralism, for, it brings a variety of stakeholders to collectively respond to threats to international peace and security.

2. India appreciates the initiative by the US Mission to address the translation of political directives for enhancing peacekeeping performance into technical outputs. We are, therefore, happy to join Portugal, Senegal, Uruguay and Vietnam as co-hosts, along with the US, in today's high-level event.

3. India believes that even while broad participation in peacekeeping is important to enhance global solidarity, there can be no substitute for professional competence of those engaged in all aspects of this global enterprise.

4. I will focus on the way forward to achieving better performance by addressing practices of force generation.

5. Force generation in UN peacekeeping is based on three major policy documents or guidelines:

- i. Operational Readiness Assurance and Performance Improvement (Policy);

ii. Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS)- Guidelines;

iii. The Rapid Deployment Level of the PCRS – Guidelines.

6. These have evolved over a period of time. Hence, if we have to meet growing challenges, we also need to acknowledge existing gaps in order to address them and generate the right force needed for peacekeeping.

7. Let me highlight three specific points:

- First, the ‘Performance Improvement Cycle’, as explained in the ‘Operational Readiness Assurance Policy’, is a shared multi-stakeholder exercise. It has four stages – Shaping; Preparation; Delivery; and Learning. All of these aim to help us to continuously improve the standards of peacekeeping. Yet, the quarterly ‘Uniformed Capability Requirement’ paper of August 2019 mentions that the Force Commanders acknowledged to the Office for the Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership and Special Investigations that not all contingents are operationally ready when deployed.

The absence of minimum operational standards as a benchmark that all contingents meet when deployed is a collective requirement that warrants collective action. We need to seriously look at the ‘Learning’ cycle to finding practical ways to achieve this.

- Second, the guidelines require that the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) should be the sole mechanism for the selection of a military or police unit for deployment.

The four distinct levels (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Rapid Deployment Level (RDL)) are meant to indicate a natural progression of readiness for deployment. A diversity in terms of deployment needs is understandable, and some variations are inevitable. However, choices and selections need to be made from within the same spectrum of options. Those not part of the PCRS are best avoided. Similarly, preference of units from Level 1 of the PCRS for deployment, when units at Level 3 and RDL are available, undermines due diligence of the states involved in updating their contributions to higher levels.

In selection, units without caveats should have precedence over units pledged with caveats, as these will not tie down the hands of Force Commander in operational decisions. In short, we need to have a 'selection policy' that is a natural extension of the PCRS to ensure that the most ready, capable, well-equipped and willing contingents are selected for deployment.

- Third, instances of under-performance need to be assessed. Such assessment needs to examine whether there were units available at higher levels in PCRS that were overlooked during selection; whether caveats have impacted performance; whether poor performance is due to lack of resources, including equipment; or whether the mandate, including guidelines, were not clear, resulting in unsatisfactory implementation. Honest assessment and feedback is essential to have an effective accountability system. Assessing performance without determining accountability will leave us open to repeating errors.

8. Finally, may I highlight some practical examples of our own efforts to support improving performance prior to deployment in UN peacekeeping.

- India supports Member State to Member State partnership initiatives, as they reflect practical ways to share UN peacekeeping experience and prepare together for partnership in UN peacekeeping. We have successfully co-deployed troops from Kazakhstan as part of our battalion in UNIFIL (Lebanon). To ensure smooth induction process, the Kazakh troops undertook extensive pre-deployment training with their Indian counterparts on various aspects of UN peacekeeping.
- India, in partnership with the United States, co-hosts the UN Peacekeeping Course for African Partners (UNPCAP), with special focus on capacity building in peacekeeping. India and the US have also deployed a joint Mobile Training Team (MTT) to Zambia for conducting training in peacekeeping.
- Following from this, we feel that Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) and Training of Trainers (TOTs) by pooling instructors from Member States is a useful initiative. We are undertaking such efforts also for partners from ASEAN and Central Asia.

Madam Chair,

9. Working in partnerships is key to successful peacekeeping. We are happy to contribute to such partnerships as this event and hope it will make a contribution in strengthening the culture of performance in peacekeeping, as part of our collective efforts under the Action for Peacekeeping Initiative that we are all committed to.
