

**General Assembly**

Fifty-eighth session

**Official Records**

Distr.: General

1 March 2004

English

Original: Russian

---

**Special Political and Decolonization Committee  
(Fourth Committee)****Summary record of the 9th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 16 October 2003, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Loedel . . . . . (Uruguay)  
*later:* Ms. Ognjanovac (Vice-Chairman) . . . . . (Croatia)  
*later:* Mr. Loedel (Chairman) . . . . . (Uruguay)

**Contents**

Agenda item 85: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

Agenda item 19: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*)

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

03-56483 (E)

A stylized logo for the United Nations Official Records, featuring the words "OFFICIAL RECORDS" in a bold, italicized font.

*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

**Agenda item 85: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects** (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Snowden** (Australia) emphasized the vital importance of peacekeeping operations. In that connection, he welcomed the detailed briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, who, while acknowledging the challenges that lay ahead, had noted the very real improvements in peacekeeping. The Under-Secretary-General had also spoken of the encouraging results of efforts in the priority areas. As he had indicated, maintaining the rule of law had been placed at the centre of peacekeeping because it often determined the long-term success or failure of peacekeeping operations.

2. Although progress had been made, much remained to be done. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) needed continuously to improve its activities, the success of which depended, among other things, on partnership between many players, whose efforts must be seen as complementary, rather than mutually exclusive. The International Force, East Timor, was an example of the useful division of labour that could exist between multinational forces and blue helmets. While the various actors often had different functions, there was an underlying unity of effort. In that connection, there was a need for a broader definition of the concept of peacekeeper, since countries that did not participate actively in blue helmet operations sometimes made significant contributions to peacekeeping. It might therefore be more useful to speak not of a "commitment gap" but of how best to coordinate and combine the capacities of different countries.

3. In the case of Australia, there was certainly no commitment gap: it remained one of the top 10 contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, there were still serious capability gaps that needed to be addressed, both through better management and greater commitment (particularly with respect to the rapid deployment of civilian experts and experts in law and order) and through new ways of thinking (especially concerning the acquisition and use of field intelligence to protect United Nations personnel, peacekeepers and civilian populations in highly complex and volatile situations). He expressed

the hope that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations could make progress in that area in the coming year and assured the members of the Committee that Australia would continue actively to assist the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee in improving peacekeeping operations.

4. **Mr. Maitland** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, thanked the Under-Secretary-General and his staff for managing the activities of DPKO and of the many field missions and for the briefing on the most important events in that area of the Organization's work. He paid tribute to the many United Nations personnel working in very challenging and dangerous conditions and expressed outrage at the terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, which had taken the lives of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and his colleagues, and at the killing of two military observers participating in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

5. He reiterated the general position of the Non-Aligned Movement concerning United Nations peacekeeping. When any new United Nations peacekeeping operation was established or an existing mandate was extended, paramount importance should be given not only to the consent of the parties but also to the non-use of force except in self-defence, impartiality and the need for clearly defined mandates and secure financing, which were essential to a mission's success. Although the Non-Aligned Movement continued to regard United Nations peacekeeping as an important instrument for maintaining international peace and security, it could not be a substitute for a permanent solution or for addressing the underlying causes of conflicts. Past experience had shown that it was most useful as a temporary measure.

6. With regard to the concept of robust peacekeeping and the role of ad hoc multinational coalitions, the Non-Aligned Movement fully endorsed the Secretary-General's view that the credibility of United Nations forces in the field was enhanced when capable forces were deployed by all Member States. Developing countries could not continue to handle solely with their own forces a task that should be carried out by the entire membership of the Organization. In that connection, he would be interested to know what measures the Secretariat had taken to ensure participation by developed countries in

peacekeeping operations. He underscored the importance of long-term engagement by the international community and the United Nations in countries emerging from conflict and the primary role of the Security Council in mandating operations conducted by multinational "coalitions of the willing".

7. The Non-Aligned Movement endorsed the priorities identified by the Under-Secretary-General, including the need for a clearer definition of the concept of robust peacekeeping. Concerning the enhancement of rapid deployment capacity, it called for greater flexibility, since many troop-contributing countries could not commit and deploy forces until the Security Council had adopted a resolution mandating the operation concerned. The Non-Aligned Movement looked forward to discussing with the Secretariat the possibility of using a certain portion of the strategic deployment stocks to assist troop-contributing countries facing difficulties with self-sustainment. It noted with satisfaction the Secretariat's goal of expediting reimbursement to troop-contributing countries. It commended the activities undertaken by DPKO in support of efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacity, and it was ready to examine with the Department the resources that could be allocated for activities in that area.

8. In order for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes to succeed, adequate and predictable funding was required at all stages, as well as close coordination among all the actors involved. In that connection, the Non-Aligned Movement supported the Secretary-General's view that peace-friendly structural adjustment programmes could make a decisive contribution to ensuring a smooth transition to lasting peace.

9. Recent events in Baghdad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo had reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the security and safety of United Nations personnel and peacekeepers, and the Non-Aligned Movement welcomed the steps that were to be taken to that end. The Non-Aligned Movement had been represented in virtually all United Nations peacekeeping operations, and in recent years it had contributed the majority of the troops for peacekeeping operations, especially those conducted in dangerous conditions. He paid tribute to the memory of the peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the service of the United Nations.

10. **Mr. de Rivero** (Peru), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group, said that, several years earlier, the countries of the Rio Group had decided to become active participants in United Nations peacekeeping operations because they considered them the most effective means of resolving crises. In practice, however, the Group's participation in such operations was restricted by various problems, which, *inter alia*, made it difficult to provide the necessary personnel for rapid deployment. That situation had prompted the countries of the Rio Group to submit specific proposals to the Special Committee and directly to DPKO. Given that the United Nations was attempting to secure more active participation by States in peacekeeping operations, as demonstrated by its efforts in the context of the Standby Arrangement System, it was vital to identify clearly precisely which factors were limiting States' contributions to such operations.

11. For example, in January 2003, the Rio Group had emphasized the need even before a mission's mandate was approved, to conduct preliminary consultations with countries that might provide troops. He noted with satisfaction that that had been taken into account when the new United Nations mission in Liberia had been established.

12. The Rio Group also supported the initiative on rapid reimbursement put forward at the conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone, which shared common features with a similar proposal that the Group had submitted to the Special Committee in 2002.

13. The aim of the Secretariat's decisions was to expand direct and indirect participation by States in peacekeeping operations. The delay in the issuance of the report requested by the Special Committee on the difficulties affecting rapid deployment, including the financial aspects, was therefore perplexing. He recalled that the Special Committee had decided to establish an ad hoc working group with the participation of all interested Member States to assist the Secretariat with the preparation of the report.

14. The Rio Group welcomed the preparation of the handbook on United Nations multidimensional peacekeeping operations, which should play an important role in training officials for future operations. DPKO was also to be commended for its tireless efforts to train staff. The Group noted with satisfaction the incorporation of a gender perspective in

peacekeeping operations and the establishment of the post of gender adviser in DPKO.

15. He emphasized the need to strengthen measures for the safety of United Nations personnel. Such measures were crucial to staff morale and should be one of the Organization's political priorities. Lastly, he paid tribute to all those who had given their lives in the service of peace.

16. **Mr. Spatafora** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and, in addition, the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, said that the United Nations was increasingly being called on to deploy complex, multidimensional peacekeeping operations that required close cooperation between United Nations departments and organs, as well as with other actors. Some DPKO operations were conducted without a United Nations military component and carried out their mandates alongside or in the wake of regional or multinational forces. The European Union urged DPKO to develop close working relationships with the organizations authorizing such forces.

17. Over the past year, there had been significant progress in cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the functions of the United Nations International Police Task Force had been transferred to the European Union Police Mission, while the European Union military operation Artemis had been rapidly deployed in Bunia. The legal system in Bunia was being restored through the joint efforts of the European Union, the United Nations and the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Union was also studying ways of helping to establish, in cooperation with the United Nations, an integrated police unit in Kinshasa. At the request of the United Nations, the European Union member States and the European Commission had provided assistance with the rapid deployment of a contingent of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia.

18. Another example of cooperation was that between African regional or subregional organizations, particularly the African Union and ECOWAS, and the

United Nations. The European Union attached great importance to enhancing African peacekeeping capacity and was providing significant financial support to African peace and security mechanisms at the regional and subregional levels.

19. The European Union invited DPKO to study the lessons learned from United Nations cooperation with regional organizations in crisis management operations. The United Nations should ensure a comprehensive approach to the establishment of the rule of law in mission areas, and rule of law elements should be included in mission mandates. In that connection, the Union called for the planning of peacekeeping operations to be coordinated with the civilian police, judicial and corrections components. It welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to submit a report on the rule of law and was ready to assist him in that endeavour.

20. The European Union reiterated its support for the principle of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). It looked forward to receiving information on the activities of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit and its plans for the future.

21. The European Union again recommended the expansion of the information capacity of DPKO and the conduct of additional research and analysis. It also encouraged more systematic information sharing between United Nations departments and organs.

22. Rapid deployment, mission support, materiel readiness and pre-deployment training required the establishment of appropriate management mechanisms, policies and procedures. That was particularly necessary when the responsibilities of regional or multinational forces were transferred to the United Nations (as had been the case with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)) or vice versa. In order to ensure that peacekeeping contingents were deployed in a timely manner and were properly equipped and trained, the Secretariat should review the policy on and mechanisms for civilian and military pre-deployment training and ensure the rational use of strategic deployment stocks. It should submit a report on those issues to the Special Committee at its forthcoming session.

23. The European Union attached particular importance to the issue of civilian police and civilian personnel since police contingents were deployed in almost half of the active United Nations peacekeeping

missions, while civilian personnel were present in all of them. In order to ensure that such personnel were properly prepared and received appropriate pre-deployment training, an international conference on training was being organized in cooperation with the European Commission and would take place on 21 and 22 October 2003. The European Union looked forward to the Secretariat's report on privileges and immunities for civilian police and corrections personnel, as envisaged in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/57/767).

24. The European Union attached great importance to the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel serving in peacekeeping operations. In that connection, it called for the strengthening of the authority of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the enhancement of cooperation between the Office and DPKO.

25. Today, it was increasingly important to look at the whole continuum, from conflict prevention through crisis management, including peacekeeping, to peace-building. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) played an important role in that regard. There was a need for an integrated approach to DDR, that took account of such factors as security sector reform and the rule of law. DPKO should enhance collaboration with other international actors who actively supported additional components of the peace-building strategy.

26. The European Union was actively supporting peacekeeping operations from the Balkans to Africa. More than 40,000 men and women from European Union countries were currently deployed throughout the world in peacekeeping operations led or authorized by the United Nations. The European Union was determined to develop and strengthen further cooperation in the field of peacekeeping with the United Nations and its Member States. The recently signed joint declaration on cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in civilian and military crisis management was intended as a further tool for achieving the goals of the United Nations.

27. **Mr. Berry** (Canada) said that although the deployment of UNMIL was still in its early stages, it provided clear evidence of how far the Organization had come in conducting peacekeeping operations in close cooperation with troop-contributing countries. The progress made by peacekeeping forces following the expansion of the mandate of the United Nations

Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) further illustrated the validity of a robust approach towards United Nations peacekeeping. The substantial progress achieved in Sierra Leone and the successful peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia offered a real opportunity for stabilizing the situation in West Africa. Those developments signalled the impact of the reform process not only on the United Nations but also on the wider realm of international peace and security.

28. Canada welcomed the principles and guidelines for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and looked forward to the publication of the handbook on United Nations multidimensional peacekeeping operations, as well as the policy paper on disciplinary issues. It was also very pleased by the approval of a gender adviser position within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Canada welcomed the work being done on HIV/AIDS, and encouraged the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Department to enhance their collaboration in that area. There was also a need for Member States to offer voluntary confidential counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS to all peacekeepers.

29. Significant progress had been made regarding training. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should clarify its age limitation policy for military observers in a climate where age discrimination was against the national law of many Member States.

30. The difficult challenges facing the Organization, particularly in Iraq, reinforced the need for the United Nations to undertake proper threat and risk assessments, since a knowledge of the type of situation to which people were being committed was essential for ensuring the safety of all United Nations and associated personnel.

31. A welcome development in recent times was the desire expressed by African nations and institutions to do their part to prevent and manage conflict on the continent and build peaceful societies. At the same time, the international community should help African nations and institutions to build their capacities and realize their goals in that respect. The joint plan to enhance African capabilities to undertake peace support operations recognized the need to find ways to establish partnerships between African institutions and the United Nations, both in capacity-building and in the strategic management of current missions.

32. Those missions were costly, but they had been launched outside the burden-sharing arrangements. A key challenge for Canada and a number of other western countries was the lack of mechanisms to provide financial support for such missions, which were not considered official development assistance. Canada was actively supporting the efforts of the United Nations to build the capacity of African institutions to prevent and manage conflict on that continent. It had contributed US\$ 6.5 million to the United Nations Development Programme fund to directly support the peace and security directorate of the African Union and had committed US\$ 15 million to support a peace and security initiative in West Africa.

33. His delegation did not see a contradiction in supporting the role of regional organizations in peace support operations as well as that of the United Nations. Events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had highlighted the role that coalitions could play, with a United Nations mandate, in stabilizing a situation before a robust United Nations peacekeeping presence was deployed. The Canadian contingent was currently the largest contingent in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and those Canadians serving there were no less peacekeepers than their colleagues serving in United Nations-led missions elsewhere.

34. There was a Canadian contingent in the United Nations Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). His delegation invited countries with the capability to deploy their forces rapidly to consider participating in the Brigade in order to provide the United Nations with standby forces. SHIRBRIG was also helping other regions develop standby forces. In that effort, there was a need for wider support from the international community.

35. **Mr. Hassan** (Jordan), after paying tribute to the memory of all the peacekeepers who had perished over the past 12 months, said that Jordan agreed with the Under-Secretary-General on the importance of the issue of rule of law, and requested the Secretariat to consider the possibility of holding a meeting in order to keep Member States informed, in real time, of developments in that area.

36. On the question of rapid deployment, his delegation was interested in knowing what the trigger for deployment would be and who would control the decision-making process. With regard to disciplinary

issues, his delegation hoped that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would make available to all Member States the results of the review of existing policies and procedures mentioned in the report of the Under-Secretary-General.

37. Turning to the issue of safety and security, his delegation proposed that the Secretariat should study the feasibility of providing aerial reconnaissance capability to military observers in dangerous operations.

38. On the fundamental question raised by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), his delegation wished to make a number of points. The strength of the traditional peacekeeper lay in his inherent weakness, namely his neutrality and "civilian" status. While recognizing that in certain circumstances operations must be properly equipped, Jordan still believed that the United Nations should demonstrate flexibility and not adopt any rigid doctrines.

39. In conclusion, his delegation reiterated that all Member States must pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

40. **Mr. Mackay** (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members represented in New York, said that in the light of the emerging challenges to peacekeeping and peace support, it was important to evaluate the progress of the reform process initiated by the Brahimi report.

41. The Pacific Islands Forum countries welcomed the focus over the past year on assessing lessons learnt and implementing best practices from peacekeeping experiences and enhancing rapid deployment capacity. It was also essential to improve coordination between United Nations agencies. Peacekeeping needed to be seen as one part of a comprehensive strategy in a post-conflict situation.

42. With regard to the role of regional arrangements in promoting peace and security, he said that the countries of the Pacific region had risen to the challenge of maintaining peace and security, specifically in Bougainville and, most recently, in the Solomon Islands. The Charter of the United Nations encouraged countries to develop regional cooperation in order to maintain regional peace and security. In that spirit, following a formal request from the Government of the Solomon Islands, and with the unanimous agreement of the Pacific Islands Forum, acting under

the Biketawa Declaration, a regional assistance mission to the Solomon Islands had been deployed in July 2003 in which Australia, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu were taking part. The States of the Pacific ocean region were also engaged in a number of other initiatives, particularly in the area of enhancing regional police training and sharing military training expertise. That experience could be put to use on a broader scale.

43. All Member States must fully support initiatives that would improve the safety and security of the staff of the United Nations, and in that regard the Committee must support the work of the Sixth Committee on the question of the scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and work to ensure that United Nations staff and other associated staff were always adequately protected. It was also necessary to improve information and analytical capabilities.

44. A valuable role could be played by coalitions of the willing. In Timor-Leste, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia, such coalitions had helped stabilize conflict situations ahead of the deployment of blue berets. The reliance of the international community on such coalitions underlined the need to improve the capacity of the United Nations for rapid deployment of both personnel and materiel.

45. The Pacific Islands Forum countries fully supported the Under-Secretary-General's idea that establishing the rule of law required more than just a focus on policing. It required that all components of the criminal justice chain — the police, the judiciary, the defence, prosecutors and corrections institutions — be included and adequately funded. Further positive rule of law initiatives should be carried out, especially in Liberia.

46. It must also be ensured that the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building was seamless, since precipitate withdrawal or hasty downsizing of a mission could jeopardize the achievements of a successful peacekeeping mission. It was to be hoped that a well-managed and graduated transition would occur in Timor-Leste.

47. **Mr. Yahya** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. He welcomed the comprehensive

report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/57/711), which contained detailed information on the status of peacekeeping activities and outlined the measures planned to enhance such activities and achieve more rapid deployment of peacekeeping operations. Although peacekeeping operations had played and continued to play an important role in maintaining international peace and security, there was a need to find long-term solutions for long-standing problems. Peacekeeping operations should be deployed on a temporary basis. The United Nations and, in particular, the Security Council should focus as a priority on developing conflict prevention strategies. In that connection, he noted the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and the development of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the area of conflict prevention.

48. He welcomed the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in all areas of peacekeeping and, in particular, the statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations that the Organization was prepared to provide the African Union and subregional organizations with all forms of assistance in relation to training, transportation and logistics, especially taking into account the increase in the number of conflicts in African countries.

49. Troop-contributing countries and DPKO should ensure that peacekeeping operations carried out the tasks entrusted to them with respect to the maintenance of the rule of law and that peacekeepers in turn complied with established standards of conduct, particularly in regions with displaced civilian populations. Every possible effort should be made to stop sexual exploitation by personnel serving in peacekeeping operations.

50. Training was of particular importance for ensuring the success of peacekeeping operations, especially for personnel from countries that lacked experience of participating in peacekeeping. In that connection, he requested DPKO to do its utmost to assist such countries.

51. The re-establishment of peace in the post-conflict period was a particular challenge. There was thus a need to develop appropriate and adequately funded

disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

52. One of the most important tasks of peacekeeping operations was demining. At its March 2003 session, the Special Committee had expressed deep appreciation for the work of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. At the same time, every effort should be made to ensure the safety of peacekeepers; that was also the responsibility of all the sides.

53. Lastly, he paid tribute to the personnel participating in peacekeeping operations and, in particular, those who had given their lives on 19 August 2003 in Baghdad, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sergio Vieira de Mello.

54. **Mr. Rastam** (Malaysia) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and noted with satisfaction that DPKO had achieved significant progress in the strengthening of standby arrangements for military and civilian police personnel, the efficient management of peacekeeping operations and the rational use of the strategic deployment stocks at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy.

55. His delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. However, he wished to underline that peacekeeping operations must be conducted in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, particularly humanitarian law.

56. Malaysia was participating in seven United Nations peacekeeping operations and, in view of the increased demand for civilian police personnel, had contributed to that component, deploying 125 officers from the Royal Malaysian Police to the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) to form the international police unit in support of the Timor-Leste Police Force. That was the first time that a self-sustained Royal Malaysian Police contingent had been made available to the United Nations. Malaysian police officers were also serving in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and MONUC. In that connection, he said that appointments to senior posts, both in field missions and at Headquarters, should be

based on such criteria as operational capability, credibility and the size of the police contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

57. His delegation welcomed the preparation by the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit of the draft handbook on United Nations multidimensional peacekeeping operations. However, the general guidelines and procedures contained in the handbook should be reviewed at regular intervals, since it was essential to analyse multidimensional operations not only at the operational and tactical but also at the strategic level.

58. The procurement of strategic deployment stocks, as recommended by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, had increased the capacity of DPKO in terms of materiel readiness to meet the needs of multidimensional operations such as UNMIL.

59. Concerning procurement, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had stated that priority should be given, when procuring goods and services for peacekeeping operations, to local and regional markets where that was more efficient and cost-effective.

60. His delegation fully acknowledged the paramount importance of training for peacekeepers. The active support provided to national peacekeeping centres by the Training and Evaluation Service further strengthened Malaysia's commitment to that activity. With the support of DPKO, the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Centre in Port Dickson had been successfully conducting regional United Nations logistics courses since 2001. The Centre planned to register with the Training and Evaluation service to conduct such courses annually for the countries of the region.

61. *Ms. Ognjanovac (Croatia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

62. **Mr. Biyira** (Ghana) said that, in the light of its vast experience of participation in peacekeeping operations, Ghana welcomed the emphasis placed by the United Nations Secretariat on recruiting the highest quality staff to fill key vacancies at the senior level and on ensuring that the process was transparent. Greater efforts were also needed to redress the imbalance in the composition of staff in senior-level field posts. Developed countries tended to occupy a disproportionate share of those posts, which did not reflect the level of their participation in peacekeeping



operations. He urged the Secretariat to take a more rational and holistic approach to recruitment procedures.

63. Noting with concern the violations and acts of omission committed by United Nations peacekeepers, he said that there should be a single, transparent code of conduct for all peacekeepers, whether they were military, civilian police or civilian personnel, even though different disciplinary procedures might be applied to different categories of personnel.

64. His delegation welcomed the sections of the Secretary-General's report concerning the focus on enhancing regional peacekeeping capacities, particularly in Africa. It also noted with satisfaction that, in his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General had added a crucial task to the six priority areas in peacekeeping, namely, that of overcoming the gap between the developed and developing countries with respect to the number of troops they contributed to peacekeeping missions. The percentage of troops contributed by European Union countries (2 per cent) and others (3 per cent) to peacekeeping contingents in Africa was clearly insufficient. In that connection, he called on the developed countries to contribute not only materiel but also human resources to peacekeeping operations in Africa.

65. His delegation attached great importance to the training of personnel for peacekeeping missions. He therefore noted with satisfaction the regional seminar on logistics organized by DPKO in March 2003 in Freetown and expressed the hope that the practice would continue.

66. In order to return peace to Liberia, which should help to normalize the situation in neighbouring countries, it was essential when allocating funds for peacekeeping operations to make provision for the effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of thousands of displaced youths. Those youths should be given the opportunity to receive training and undertake constructive employment, rather than engage in banditry and senseless violence.

67. *Mr. Loedel (Uruguay) resumed the chair.*

68. **Ms. Baaziz** (Algeria) thanked the Under-Secretary-General for the action he had taken and for his detailed report on peacekeeping. Her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

69. The principles of peacekeeping were constantly evolving. The effectiveness of peacekeeping for the Organization as a whole had been demonstrated since the very first peacekeeping mission. The changes it had undergone in the past twenty years had helped to restore stability in situations of conflict but had also challenged the Organization and its Member States, which had been forced to adapt to a rise in the complexity and number of missions. The success of missions depended on considerations such as the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence. Also vital to all such operations were a succinct and realistic peacekeeping mandate and sufficient financing.

70. Successful peacekeeping depended on consultations, which must continue to be held in accordance with Security Council resolution 1353 (2001). Tripartite cooperation must also be strengthened in order to take account of the interests and experience of troop-contributing countries and to enable them to take part in vitally important decisions. In that connection, regular information meetings must be held whenever a mandate was renewed. Her delegation advocated the broadening of consultations based on that mechanism and urged that such consultations should include all troop-contributing countries.

71. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations was important to peacekeeping activities. Greater attention must be devoted to conflict in Africa, where the international community faced serious peacekeeping issues. The establishment of a Peace and Security Council by the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) showed how African countries were becoming involved in peace-building in Africa. That should lead to fruitful cooperation with the Organization on such matters and help to prevent and resolve conflicts. Her delegation reiterated its support for the peacekeeping efforts of the Organization and its readiness to cooperate with the international community in order to achieve lasting regional and world peace and security.

72. **Mr. Gatilov** (Russian Federation) said that the past year had seen further progress in the implementation of the decisions of the Millennium Summit regarding the effective prevention and resolution of regional conflicts. Active steps had been taken to refine the basic principles of peacekeeping and to expand the potential of the organizations of the United Nations system in that field.

73. His delegation supported the efforts of the Secretariat to improve the level of vocational training. To that end the basic principles and criteria for the peacekeeping activities of the Organization, set out in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/57/767) adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session must be taken as sacrosanct.

74. During the general policy debate at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, had said that the Russian Federation was prepared to increase its involvement in peacekeeping operations conducted under the auspices of the United Nations and its involvement in coalition operations endorsed by the Security Council. It stood ready to engage in constructive cooperation to refine mechanisms for peacekeeping and post-conflict resolution in which the peacekeeping component combined effectively with the social, economic and humanitarian structures of the United Nations system.

75. A vital precondition for the success of peace-building was for countries which had suffered conflict to undergo full social and economic rehabilitation. The Russian Federation agreed that the peacekeeping cycle must be a seamless part of the efforts of the Organization in the trouble spots of the world, with a rational and appropriate division of labour among the various competent bodies and agencies of the United Nations system.

76. One of the most important goals of the Organization was still to refine peacekeeping mechanisms. In that connection, it was particularly important to develop a new type of partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations. There were already positive precedents.

77. The United Nations had built up a rich and varied experience of peacekeeping operations, backed by force. Each crisis situation was unique and required an appropriate range of methods. Whatever method was chosen, care must be taken not to allow the Security Council to be bypassed, especially in situations where a question arose concerning the use of force on behalf of the international community. Military measures were a last resort, and they must be agreed upon and be rational and sufficient.

78. The Russian Federation supported the action of the Organization to uphold the rule of law as a basis for

complex conflict resolution. Questions relating to justice and the rule of law in peacekeeping and post-conflict resolution could not be divorced from ensuring the primacy of the law in international relations. The Russian Federation could not accept the idea of humanitarian intervention which bypassed the Charter of the United Nations.

79. If the mandate of a peacekeeping operation was to be fulfilled, it must have an appropriate structure and be staffed with highly qualified personnel whose security was reliably protected. Careful planning of peacekeeping operations must be backed by the deployment capacity of the Organization. The Russian Federation had been one of the many countries to respond in a timely manner to calls for rapid deployment capacity to be expanded. Evidence of that was the fact that it had signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations on the Russian contribution to the Stand-by Arrangements System.

80. Despite the positive developments, the continuing lack of troops and equipment for peacekeeping operations was a cause for concern because the current scale of the problem in the trouble spots around the world demanded — ever more urgently — joint efforts by the Member States at every level to support the peacekeeping capacity of the Organization. The Russian Federation fully recognized its responsibilities within the peacekeeping efforts of the international community and would continue to make a practical contribution towards improving the results and effectiveness of the peacekeeping activities of the Organization.

81. **Mr. Strømme** (Norway) said that there had been ample proof in 2003 that the United Nations must continue to be the global peacekeeper. Liberia was a case in point. Over the past few years, the Organization had made considerable progress in peacekeeping. The foundations of a new approach had been laid. Notable results had been achieved in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, the capabilities of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had been reinforced and the Stand-by Arrangements System had been strengthened. As for the improvements still to be made, the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/57/767) provided a useful catalogue of priorities.

82. The brutal attacks on the United Nations mission in Baghdad had been a serious reminder of the need to ensure the safety and security of all United Nations personnel and of the need for absolute clarity about the

role of the Organization as a neutral provider of peace and security. The Organization's neutrality must not be exploited by groups which were trying to create chaos, as had happened in Iraq and Afghanistan.

83. There was still a need for a strengthened partnership between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries. Those countries were the backbone of any peacekeeping operation. His delegation believed that the reinforcement of such cooperation was one element of strengthening collective action that should be considered by the High-Level Panel announced by the Secretary-General at the opening of the general debate.

84. The situation in West Africa illustrated the challenges facing present-day peacekeeping: the need for a rapid response to deal with crises and keep the peace, and the need for a comprehensive approach to rebuilding countries in volatile regions. The situation in one country could not be seen in isolation from regional developments. Developments in Liberia had demonstrated the need for cooperation and coordination between different organizations in the interests of peace and stability. The efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had been crucial to stabilizing the situation and preparing the ground for a United Nations mission. His delegation commended the West African troop-contributing countries for their willingness to assume peacekeeping duties. Another example of cooperation between organizations had occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with Artemis, the European Union operation led by France.

85. The role of ECOWAS in West Africa was in line with the declared need to strengthen regional peacekeeping capacity. Norway welcomed the initiatives that had been taken in recent years to reinforce Africa's peacekeeping capacity, and it was continuing its "Training for Peace" programme in southern Africa.

86. Peacekeeping was part of a wider peace-building process. For that reason, Norway had contributed substantial humanitarian assistance and was currently deploying police officers to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Norwegian military officers were already in Monrovia, helping to establish the UNMIL force headquarters and supporting the mission's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration section.

87. Norway strongly supported the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to improve

pre-deployment training and to increase inter-operability and cooperation between the field units of troop-contributing countries. The adoption of the United Nations Stand-by High-Readiness Brigade concept by other groups of nations would help considerably to strengthen the rapid-deployment capacity of the Organization.

88. Unity of command was an indispensable principle for any military operation. In United Nations operations, the key responsibilities at the operational level were divided between a force commander and a chief administrative officer. His delegation believed that that could constitute a problem and it urged the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to consider it and to make appropriate recommendations.

89. He welcomed the publication in 2003 of the guidelines for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which were the result of a joint endeavour by Canada, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

90. Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations for rapid deployment would need more active support from Member States for the United Nations Stand-by Arrangements System. Flexible models of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations, regional organizations and arrangements and ad hoc coalitions were also needed. Experience in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia had shown how useful the combined efforts of different parties could be. Recent experience in Africa, most notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had highlighted the need for robust mandates. Troops must be able actively to protect not only themselves, but also civilians. All peacekeepers must abide by the same code of conduct, based on the principle of zero tolerance. In conclusion, he said that Norway attached great importance to gender mainstreaming in all United Nations peacekeeping operations.

91. **Mr. Assaf** (Lebanon) said that peacekeeping was one of the responsibilities of the United Nations under its Charter and peacekeeping operations were one way to fulfil that task. The conduct of such operations must comply with a series of common principles. Most importantly, peacekeeping operations were temporary and represented a pragmatic alternative to continuing violence. For conflict to be halted and settled peacefully and comprehensively, its root causes must be addressed.

92. Because peacekeeping operations were undertaken on behalf of the international community,

their security must be safeguarded. In that connection, the collection of intelligence must be improved so that potential threats could be more accurately assessed and those involved in peacekeeping operations could be better protected. In that connection, he referred to the ratification by Lebanon of the Convention for the safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

93. Currently, 70 per cent of the personnel involved in peacekeeping operations were from developing countries. The range of personnel must be expanded. Other Member States which paid contributions in kind should not be reluctant to supply troop contingents.

94. The purposes and principles of the Charter must be upheld during peacekeeping operations. That was especially important for operations undertaken on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter, where the principles of the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in self-defence, must be respected.

95. Peacekeeping mandates must be well defined, those taking part in operations must be suitably trained, and sufficient financing must be provided. It was regrettable that the countries of the world were prepared to devote over US\$ 750 billion to military expenditure while the peacekeeping budget had a constant and growing deficit.

96. The activities of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), established in 1948, remained relevant. However, its existence had not prevented the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which had been followed by the establishment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Of the participants in that Force, 246 had been killed and Lebanon believed that they had given their lives defending its territory. For the sake of achieving the aims of UNIFIL, namely the achievement of peace and security in the region, Lebanon urged that the strength of the Force should not be reduced.

97. **Mr. Kabtani** (Tunisia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It welcomed the unfailing efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to resolve complex situations that required the adoption of urgent measures. However, the activities of various participants in peacekeeping operations should be better coordinated. Moreover, a precise definition of the objectives of such operations

would help to increase the effectiveness of United Nations activities on the ground, strengthen its authority and enhance its chances for success.

98. His delegation attached particular significance to strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. In view of the increased number of conflicts in Africa, the international community must support the peacekeeping efforts of African countries. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the interest shown by the Group of Eight in strengthening the peacekeeping capacities of African States.

99. He also welcomed the significant progress that had been made in the strengthening of the Stand-by Arrangements System. Tunisia participated in that system and regularly provided the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the necessary information.

100. His delegation believed that specialists from countries that took an active part in peacekeeping operations should be properly represented in high-level positions both in the field and at Headquarters.

101. Tunisia firmly upheld the principles and purposes of the United Nations and, since it strongly believed that peacekeeping activities were one of the Organization's most important instruments for the maintenance of international peace and security, during the current year it had doubled the number of its troops in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), was taking part in several other missions and intended to continue to pursue that policy.

102. **Ms. Martina** (Ukraine) said that Member States had for the first time observed the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers for the first time in May 2003, to mark the fifty-fifth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping activities. On that day, the international community paid a tribute to those who had served and continued to serve the cause of peace and their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage, and honoured those who had lost their lives in the cause of peace. She expressed her gratitude to the Secretariat, especially the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for having arranged a number of events both at Headquarters in New York and at peacekeeping missions. In Ukraine, 29 May was celebrated as a day in honour of peacekeepers. The events surrounding it provided a good opportunity for the exchange of experience and for discussions on how to utilize the lessons learned.

103. Ukraine had always supported United Nations peacekeeping activities, which it considered to be one of the main instruments for the maintenance of international peace and security. Over the past years Ukraine had been among the major troop-contributing countries to peacekeeping operations and the largest troop-contributing country in Europe.

104. Her delegation was pleased with the pace of peacekeeping reform after the publication of the Brahimi report. The 2003 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had been another step in the reform process. Her delegation was looking forward to the progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Special Committee's recommendations.

105. The activities of the United Nations in the area of the maintenance of peace and security should be a continuous process — from conflict prevention to peacekeeping and peace-building. In recent years, the international community had recognized the need to strengthen the first element in that cycle, conflict prevention, which should be the central guiding principle of future United Nations peacekeeping activities. She hoped that discussions on the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict and subsequent actions by the Security Council and the General Assembly in that area would help to establish an international system capable of the timely and effective prevention of armed conflicts.

106. Among the many instruments that might be used in that regard was preventive deployment in areas of potential conflict, in other words, peacekeeping operations with a preventive mandate. The Secretariat, in particular the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, should study and draw on the experience of previous preventive deployments so that such operations might be effectively and rapidly planned and conducted.

107. Her delegation remained convinced that the central element of any peacekeeping operation must be to ensure an adequate level of security and safety for its personnel. In that connection, it called on States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. With respect to further work towards strengthening United Nations peacekeeping capacities, her delegation would continue to pay particular attention to the strengthening of the rapid deployment capability of the United Nations; the

enhancement of the Secretariat's capacity for the collection and dissemination of information and for strategic analyses; the establishment of effective mechanisms for cooperation between the troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat; the development of standardized peacekeeping training materials and the provision by the Secretariat of the relevant support for national training centres; and an increased focus on the civilian police component of peacekeeping operations and strategies to provide for the rule of law.

**Agenda item 19: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*) (A/C.4/58/L.6)**

*Question of Western Sahara*

108. **The Chairman** suggested that draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.4 should be replaced by the compromise text of draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.6, and that the Committee should consider only the English text at the current meeting, waiving the 24-hour requirement set forth in rule 120 of the rules of procedure.

109. *It was so decided.*

110. **Mr. Suazo** (Honduras) welcomed the consensus achieved on the draft resolution. Although it was not opposed in the present case to waiving the rules of procedure, which stipulated that texts of draft resolutions must be distributed in the six official languages 24 hours prior to the adoption of any decision, his delegation hoped that that would not set a precedent and that the rules of procedure would be observed in the future.

111. **The Chairman** said that commas should be inserted around the words "concerning the peace plan" in the English text of the seventh preambular paragraph.

112. *Draft resolution A/C.4/58/L.6, as orally amended, was adopted without a vote.*

113. **Mr. Spatafora** (Italy), speaking in explanation of his position on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Iceland and Norway, welcomed the fact that once again the resolution on Western Sahara had been submitted as a proposal of the Chairman of the Fourth Committee and that it had been adopted without

a vote. The European Union continued to follow the question of Western Sahara closely and supported a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara envisaged in Security Council resolution 1495 (2003). In that resolution, the Security Council strongly supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, and also supported the peace plan for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara as an optimum political solution based on agreement between the two parties. It also called upon the parties to work with the United Nations and with each other towards the acceptance and implementation of the peace plan. The European Union encouraged the parties to work in that sense.

114. The humanitarian aspects of the conflict in Western Sahara remained a source of great concern to the European Union. The detention of prisoners of war must be dealt with immediately. Welcoming the Frente POLISARIO's release of 243 Moroccan prisoners of war in September 2003, he called on the Frente POLISARIO to release without further delay all the remaining prisoners of war. The European Union also called on both parties to continue to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross to resolve the problem of the fate of those unaccounted for, and to collaborate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the implementation of confidence-building measures. Finally, he emphasized the important role that the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was playing in the peace process.

115. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) thanked the representative of Algeria for his efforts and noted with satisfaction that the joint efforts had resulted in a balanced text that gave hope for a peaceful resolution to the regional dispute over Moroccan Sahara, a dispute that had been going on for many years. Morocco had already expressed its most serious reservations to the peace plan presented by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General in document S/2003/565.

116. At the same time, Morocco stood ready to begin the process of negotiations with Algeria to obtain a definitive and realistic settlement to the regional dispute and thereby promote the development of the entire Maghreb region while maintaining respect for the territorial integrity of all the Maghreb States.

117. He also pointed out that the Security Council had urged the Frente POLISARIO to release all the remaining prisoners of war held in Tindouf.

118. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) noted with satisfaction that the Committee was once again able to adopt its traditional resolution on Western Sahara, thereby confirming the justness and legitimacy of the cause of the heroic Saharan people, who had been striving for almost 40 years to attain their right to self-determination. In that regard, he thanked the delegation of Morocco. He was particularly pleased that the resolution had been adopted by consensus.

119. He also welcomed the fact that the General Assembly had approved the Security Council decision to support the peace plan on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, which provided for a free and unbiased referendum under United Nations auspices. Meanwhile, the Settlement Plan agreed upon and recognized by both parties to the conflict and confirmed by the Security Council and the General Assembly would remain as urgent as ever. That plan, which was yet another victory for the people of Western Sahara and the Special Committee, which was steadfastly working towards the attainment of its main objective, promoted the complete elimination of colonialism. The rule of law would inevitably prevail over force, and the just cause of the people of Western Sahara would triumph.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*