



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
4 December 2017

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 18th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 26 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Contents

Agenda item 55: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

17-18941 (E)



Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 55: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

1. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that United Nations peacekeeping operations should comply strictly with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the basic principles of peacekeeping. Welcoming the adoption of Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#), which emphasized the primacy of political solutions to conflict, Namibia called on all Member States to support the Secretary-General's proposed reforms to the peace and security architecture in order to enable peacekeeping operations to implement their mandates fully. Moreover, a periodic review mechanism would help improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

2. The Organization should strengthen communications with troop-contributing countries and support their capacity by improving the quality and equipment of peacekeeping personnel. Peacekeeping operations and United Nations agencies should adhere closely to their mandates and focus on strengthening the host country's ability to achieve political and economic stability, in addition to treating the people of the host country with respect.

3. Sustainable peace and development were mutually reinforcing, and development was not possible in conflict situations. Namibia looked forward to closer cooperation with United Nations offices in the southern African region and internationally in order to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reduce the gap between rich and poor. United Nations offices should respect the social systems and development paths chosen by each country. Peacekeeping operations should also endeavour to meet the needs of the host countries, including by providing tailored support to assist with capacity-building in the security realm and making the host country self-reliant as early as possible.

4. His Government called on the international community to pursue policies relating to Africa in a spirit of good faith, justice and shared interests, based on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, whose alignment with the 2030 Agenda aimed to support accelerated economic development and thereby address the root causes of conflict on the continent. Substantial progress had been made in African countries' quest for peace and development; the African Union had promoted solidarity among African countries to that end. He hoped that the United Nations and the

African Union would implement the joint United Nations-African Union Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security to enhance cooperation in such areas as conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction. The proposal for financing African Union-led peace operations also deserved positive consideration. Recent cuts in peacekeeping operation budgets might reverse the gains achieved in conflict areas around the world.

5. Namibia attached great importance to the role of women in peace and security and was fully committed to the zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions. It welcomed steps taken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to prevent, pursue and rectify misconduct at missions and called on all Member States to sign the Secretary-General's Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

6. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic) said the principles set out in the Charter regarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States should be respected without discretionary decisions or politicization. It was also important to adhere to the basic principles of peacekeeping, namely, consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence. Missions should cooperate with the host country in all matters pertaining to the forces deployed.

7. Although the Syrian Arab Republic supported peacekeeping operations at all levels, they were no substitute for permanent solutions that addressed the root causes of conflict. Peacekeeping operations requiring the protection of civilians should do so without encroaching on the host country's primary responsibility in that regard. The protection of civilians should not be used as a pretext to interfere in a State's internal affairs; and it was vital to reach a common legal definition of civilian protection before establishing standards for the concept.

8. His country had always had excellent relations with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), and was committed to supporting those missions by all possible means. Moreover, the Syrian Government had recently facilitated the initial phase of redeployment of UNDOF forces into the area of separation in the Golan and would extend additional assistance during the second and third phases of that process.

9. Although their mandates had been established for a limited period, Israel's continued aggression,

occupation and refusal to abide by relevant international decisions had forced United Nations peacekeeping forces to remain in the Middle East for decades, at great financial and human cost and to the detriment of regional peace and security. There had been disturbing threats against peacekeeping personnel that challenged their ability to function and threatened their lives, including in the area of separation in the Golan, where terrorist attacks and kidnappings had led some UNDOF forces to withdraw temporarily in places. Those attacks had confirmed his Government's warnings about the support of certain countries, including Israel, for terrorist groups linked to Al-Qaida that were active in the area of disengagement. Their actions constituted both a major threat and a flagrant violation of international law and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. As UNDOF forces continued to be kidnapped and attacked by terrorist groups, the unconscionable failure by United Nations officials to heed his Government's repeated warnings had emboldened those groups, increased their freedom of movement in the area of separation and enabled them to escalate their activities with full support from Israel, the occupying Power. Such support must end in order to allow UNDOF forces to return to the positions that they had been forced to evacuate.

10. **Mr. Castro Cordoba** (Costa Rica) said that as Costa Rica had voluntarily disarmed 69 years earlier and was a firm believer in the peaceful resolution of conflict, promoting international peace and security governed its foreign policy. It was imperative that the contribution to peace provided by United Nations peacekeeping missions should be strengthened. The success of such missions lay in national ownership by the host country, regional engagement, clear mandates from the Security Council and transparent communication among all actors.

11. Increasingly aggressive rhetoric from around the world and the lack of a suitable international response were concerning. The United Nations should prioritize the prevention of conflict through economic development, reliable rule of law and a culture of peace. Peacekeeping operations must be people-centred, with clear mandates designed to support political strategies tailored to each situation, while remaining responsive to changing situations on the ground.

12. Costa Rica supported a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, since damage to the credibility of the fundamental peacekeeping pillar of the United Nations could prevent fulfilment of mandates and harm local populations' perception of peacekeepers as being impartial. Impunity was unacceptable: whistle-blowers must be protected

and perpetrators duly punished in order to deter such crimes. The participation of women in peacekeeping operations was also crucial in the transition from war to peace, social cohesion, political legitimacy, and economic recovery.

13. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico) said that while the United Nations should focus on preventing armed conflicts rather than managing them, peacekeeping missions were still a key tool for the international community; all aspects of such missions should therefore be reassessed with the objective of strengthening and adapting them to the needs of contemporary society. To build sustainable peace, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations must start looking at conflicts more broadly and adapt to the individual needs of each operation by implementing multidimensional solutions, including political, security, development and human-rights solutions, while working to strengthen relationships among all relevant parties. In addition, the effectiveness of special political missions must be increased.

14. In the two years since resuming its contributions to peacekeeping missions, Mexico had trained experienced staff and would continue to do so in order to meet United Nations objectives. It also hoped the Organization would rise to the challenge of eradicating sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel, which had seriously tarnished its image.

15. As part of the general restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar, a comprehensive reform of peacekeeping missions, including the financing and operation of special political missions, would help the Organization improve the effectiveness of its operations and thereby promote prevention, maintenance, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

16. **Ms. Martinic** (Argentina) said that her Government had pledged to increase its contribution to peacekeeping operations at the recent United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial held in London and would participate at the forthcoming Ministerial in Vancouver. Argentina had also contributed peacekeeping forces to the recently-concluded United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

17. Welcoming the reform of peacekeeping operations, she encouraged the Secretary-General to continue consulting Member States in implementing the proposals contained in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. That report had rightly focused on conflict prevention, mediation and preventive diplomacy in peacekeeping operations, which her Government had always regarded as political tools supporting viable political processes, as well as

within the broader context of the Secretary-General's emphasis on prevention and the new concept of sustainable peace. She stressed the need to rely on the Peacebuilding Commission's guidance concerning the longer-term perspective required to integrate that concept into the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

18. Her delegation also supported all efforts to implement the women, peace and security agenda and to strengthen measures to combat sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions, in line with the Organization's zero-tolerance policy. While the basic principles of peacekeeping remained vital to mission success, they did not necessarily hinder the use of force in the protection of civilians as well as in self-defence or in defence of the peacekeeping mandate. Nevertheless, the High-level Panel's report also underscored that peacekeeping operations, not conceived or equipped to impose political solutions through offensive force, were not an adequate counter-terrorism tool.

19. Argentina attached particular importance to promoting and protecting human rights, and therefore endorsed all existing recommendations on incorporating human rights into mission mandates.

20. **Mr. Aboulwafa** (Egypt) said that peacekeeping was not an alternative means of addressing the root causes of conflict, but should instead form part of a comprehensive and coherent political conflict-resolution strategy with clear exit options. Peacekeeping should be situated on a continuum of possible responses to crisis situations and conflicts; its contribution must be articulated further in the context of discussions on existing peacekeeping operations. Adherence to the basic principles of peacekeeping was crucial to preserving the credibility of the United Nations. Furthermore, while protection of civilians had evolved as a core peacekeeping task, it should not be used as a pretext for military intervention. A common understanding of the concept must be reached in order to address the legal difficulties relating to the distinction between civilians and combatants in armed conflicts.

21. Partnership with regional organizations should be expanded in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, for example by providing predictable and flexible financial resources in support of the African Union (AU) contribution to peacekeeping missions. Effective triangular cooperation among the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat was needed, particularly during the early stages of mandate formulation, while doctrine and policy guidance must be developed in consultation and

agreement with Member States, in keeping with the intergovernmental character of the Organization. The commitment to provide all equipment and capabilities required for deployment must be taken into account in identifying future troop- and police-contributing countries, in order to expand the force-generation base without compromising United Nations peacekeeping standards. A unified, non-selective approach must also be adopted to eradicating crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse by all United Nations personnel, including troops, in order clearly and coherently to guide the implementation of a true zero-tolerance policy.

22. The United Nations must adopt a robust, coherent and comprehensive approach to security challenges, deploying the tools most conducive to preventing violent conflicts and addressing their root causes. To that end, Egypt had organized a Security Council debate on the contribution of peacekeeping mandates to the overarching goal of sustaining peace, during its Presidency of the Council, in August 2017.

23. **Mr. Ahmed** (Bangladesh) said that despite the earnest efforts of all partners, some United Nations peacekeeping missions lacked the capacity to meet the demands of increasingly complex mandates. Bangladesh would contribute 13 contingents from its armed forces and police, including female police contingents.

24. The operational limitations of United Nations peacekeepers in terms of real-time intelligence gathering must be understood prior to deployment. Technology supported a wide range of tasks in peacekeeping operations beyond those performed by military and police forces, extending to information and communications units, medical support and analysis and reporting functions. His delegation fully supported the use of appropriate modern technology to increase operational capabilities. However, such means must be used prudently and realistically, not with the aim of replacing well-trained peacekeepers on the ground.

25. Robust peacekeeping did not mean using peacekeepers as combatants, a practice which undermined the credibility of peacekeeping missions. Conditions must be created to enable peacekeepers to perform their traditional role. His country's policy of friendship to all and malice to none precluded its peacekeepers from siding with any of the warring factions in a conflict.

26. While the primary responsibility for the safety and security of peacekeepers rested with host countries, the Department of Safety and Security must take the lead in implementing United Nations security policy and procedures. With peacekeepers increasingly under

threat, troop- and police-contributing countries should devote more time to preparation. Moreover, realistic and achievable mandates should be developed and all stakeholders should coordinate their efforts in order to provide a safer environment for peacekeepers.

27. Protecting civilians under imminent threat of physical violence had become a key element of modern peacekeeping mandates and required optimal coordination, particularly in complex and fluid situations. Bangladesh urged the Security Council to increase the reimbursement of peacekeepers on the basis of the rates proposed in the General Assembly survey of troop- and police-contributing countries. Appropriate logistical support to peacekeepers was also crucial for enabling them to perform their duties. As a leading police and troop contributor, his country remained committed to strengthening triangular cooperation among the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat.

28. **Mr. Okwudili** (Nigeria) said that Member States must work together to devise mechanisms and promote peace processes that would address the challenging nature of contemporary conflicts. To that end, political, social and developmental tools must be employed in a coherent and coordinated manner. Moreover, advancing political dialogue and reconciliation processes, strengthening security sectors and promoting economic recovery and social development would favour durable peace, in line with the doctrine of prevention.

29. His Government also called for measures to minimize risk to contingents and mission facilities. Host countries must do much more to ensure peacekeepers' safety. Regular consultations between missions and host authorities would build mutual confidence and trust. Mission premises and facilities required continued protection from the activities of non-State actors. The growing danger peacekeepers faced from asymmetric threats deserved urgent attention and called for adapting modern technology to information-gathering, communication, aerial surveillance and landmine and explosives detection in order to obviate existing threats without compromising the principles of the Charter.

30. Member States must commit to and take the lead in ending sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers deployed to conflict areas. As a member of the Circle of Leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, Nigeria supported the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy, the timely and transparent investigation of allegations, and the imposition of sanctions on substantiated cases.

31. Regional organizations had an advantage over United Nations in the deployment of peacekeepers, owing to their extensive knowledge of and presence in the terrain, while the Organization enjoyed the legitimacy and authority conferred upon it by the Charter. Robust and sustained collaboration between the two, centred on the doctrine of prevention, would guarantee engagement throughout the post-conflict, development and peacebuilding stages. The doctrine of sustaining peace must therefore emphasize such cooperation.

32. Strong cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union was essential because of the large number of peacekeeping missions in Africa. The Organization must fulfil its duty to maintain international peace and security and guarantee resources for African-led peacekeeping operations in a predictable and sustainable manner.

33. Nigeria called for finalizing the joint United Nations-African Union review and assessment of the various Security Council-authorized mechanisms available to finance and support African Union peace operations, whereby the Organization would fund 75 per cent of the African Union budget for authorized peacekeeping operations.

34. In its continued commitment to contributing to United Nations peacekeeping, Nigeria had recently improved its contingent-owned equipment and increased the number of women deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

35. **Ms. Sughayar** (Jordan) said that as threats and conflicts multiplied worldwide, the Secretary-General's recommendations for reform of the peace and security architecture were particularly timely; the Organization must become more responsive to early signs of conflict and of its escalation, and enhance its support for Governments to enable them to maintain security and stability.

36. While considerable gains had been made by peace operations in recent years, their performance could be further improved by taking account of the context and circumstances in which operations would be deployed, thereby enabling the formulation of clear and appropriate mandates addressing potential threats. Peacekeeping mandates must also include exit strategies in order to avoid creating a security vacuum in the host country or adversely affecting civilians. Peacekeeping operations were no substitute for training local forces and strengthening their role in order to ensure a seamless transfer based on objective, comprehensive assessments of the political and security conditions in host countries.

37. Peace operations reform should prioritize human rights and equip host Governments to develop the security sector and uphold their duty to protect civilians. To that end, her country's regional training centre was upgrading training programmes for peacekeeping personnel, including specialized training in the protection of civilians and social integration. Jordan acknowledged the important and complementary role of women in peacekeeping and was working to promote their participation, particularly in the humanitarian arena.

38. A sustainable and systematic mechanism for triangular consultation among the Secretariat, the Security Council and troop-contributing countries would render the decision-making process on peace operations more transparent and integrated, facilitating effective responses to complex cross-border conflicts and supporting implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations on improving the performance of peace operations.

39. All troop-contributing countries should implement the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation, prevent such abhorrent acts and hold their perpetrators accountable. Based on its strong commitment to the work of the United Nations in the field of conflict resolution and prevention, her Government was proud of its active role in peacekeeping.

40. **Mr. Perren** (Switzerland) said that there were three key points the Special Committee should consider regarding the Secretary-General's recommendations on restructuring the peace and security pillar.

41. First, development, peace, security, and human rights were interlinked and thus must be dealt with in parallel in order to make societies resilient and reduce violence. Accordingly, Switzerland, together with 70 other Member States, had launched the Appeal of 13 June 2016 aimed at strengthening cooperation between two fundamental United Nations pillars: peace and security, and human rights. Switzerland would continue to seek synergies for improving United Nations instruments for preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

42. Secondly, the zero-tolerance policy and other measures announced by the Secretary-General must be implemented to end sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers, for the sake of the civilian populations concerned, the host countries and the overwhelming majority of upright Blue Helmets risking their lives for peace. Fighting sexual and other forms of gender-based violence was a foreign-policy priority for Switzerland, as illustrated by its support of the partnership between the United Nations Entity for

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Geneva-based Justice Rapid Response, which provided specialized investigators in cases of accusations of sexual and gender-based violence.

43. Thirdly, the United Nations must foster local ownership by working hand in hand with regional organizations, such as the African Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, particularly in the areas of training and mobilization of civilian, police and military forces. Switzerland also supported predictable and sustainable United Nations co-financing of African peace operations.

44. **Ms. Castro Loreda** (Cuba) said that United Nations peacekeeping must conform to Charter principles, such as sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of all States, as well as to the fundamental principles guiding peacekeeping missions.

45. Increasingly complex peacekeeping operations sometimes resulted in infringements of those fundamental principles. Peacekeeping missions could not replace efforts to address the root causes of conflicts, and must be a temporary measure for establishing a security framework before implementing long-term sustainable socioeconomic development strategies. Otherwise, the vicious and costly cycle of new conflicts and new peacekeeping operations would never be broken. Interest in using such missions for peace enforcement operations and combating terrorism, extremism and international organised crime was concerning, as that would increase the risk of attacks on peacekeeping personnel and related organizations. However, as States were primarily responsible for protecting civilians, using issues related to the protection of civilians in order to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States and achieve political objectives was unacceptable.

46. While modern technology could be useful in improving reconnaissance and peacekeeping personnel safety, legitimate concerns had been raised about the use of drones in United Nations operations. The use of such technology must be considered on a case-by-case basis, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and with the consent of host countries. It was imperative to define the legal, operational, technical and financial aspects of the use of modern technology, which must complement but not replace troops on the ground. Furthermore, in view of the large number of casualties, more must be done to develop effective security arrangements to protect peacekeeping personnel.

47. **Ms. Samarasinghe** (Sri Lanka) said that specialized capabilities were needed to address the multidimensional and ever-changing challenges facing peacekeeping operations, requiring continued support from Member States and a comprehensive effects-based approach. Providing additional resources would enable peacekeeping missions to discharge their mandates. There should also be rapid deployment of uniformed contingents, together with equipment and training commensurate with the needs of the recipient country. Host countries must take ownership of the process, with an emphasis on building national institutions, strengthening national security structures and tackling restorative justice and reconciliation for the sake of peace. The root causes of instability and conflict must also be taken on board and local information and intelligence-gathering networks developed so as better to protect civilians and non-combatants.

48. It was vital, too, to include women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict operations at all levels, as their experiences of conflict — and hence their understanding of peace — differed from those of men. Women were often received differently by the local population and could therefore deliver results that men could not. More women in peacekeeping might also serve to reduce the pernicious problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. Member States should share best practices from the transformative work of female peacekeepers.

49. Since 2015, Sri Lanka had introduced a number of measures to address abuse of vulnerable populations by peacekeepers, including a stringent vetting procedure for selecting peacekeeping troops and enhanced pre-deployment training, including sensitization on sexual abuse and incorporating all recent directives of the Integrated Training Service. Sri Lanka had become a member of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law, Group of Friends for Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace and the Group of Friends for Gender Parity at the United Nations, demonstrating serious commitment to those issues; had signed the Secretary General's Voluntary Compact and had contributed to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; and the country's president had joined the Secretary General's Circle of Leadership.

50. **Mr. Arcia Vivas** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that peacekeeping operations must be used to underpin support for political solutions, in accordance with the Charter. The threat of sanctions should be applied equally to all countries which use arbitrary measures and subterfuges to obstruct missions. Since missions had been deployed in cases where there was no political process and no peace to preserve,

comprehensive analysis was required to assess whether a situation required a peacekeeping operation. Peacekeeping missions should not exceed their mandate and should not be used to combat terrorism or organized crime, which could result in peacekeeping personnel becoming embroiled in conflict. Furthermore, some operations failed to be accompanied by appropriate political action and remained active for too long, without fulfilling their mandates.

51. Smart technology contributed to the effectiveness of missions, but could also present a threat to the sovereignty of host States. Therefore, clear norms must be established to protect the confidentiality of government communications and prevent invasive tactics employed in violation of international law. For example, the use of drones in peacekeeping operations must be approved by host authorities. Venezuela was also concerned that decisions regarding the deployment of peacekeeping operations often did not take into account the opinions of contributing or host countries, which should be invited to participate in such Security Council decisions. Peacekeeping operations could not be an alternative to the central role of the host State in protecting civilians and should not be used to impose peace or overthrow governments.

52. Venezuela supported the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, for which perpetrators should be investigated and punished by their country of origin. It also encouraged a greater presence of women in peacekeeping missions.

53. **Ms. Gilmutdinova** (Russian Federation) said that in order for peacekeeping operations to remain effective amid myriad challenges, the proposed reforms should be approved. It was vital that missions should comply with core peacekeeping principles; loose interpretation of those principles based on conditions on the ground was unacceptable and would undercut the standing of the United Nations as well as leading to greater loss of life of peacekeepers. For example, there were concerns as to whether the unfortunately large number of casualties in the Congo and Mali were justified by results on the ground.

54. Russia objected to excessive use of forceful and preventive action, as well as to the engagement of peacekeeping operations in offensive or counter-terrorism measures since it could lead to peacekeepers being dragged into conflict. Peacekeeping mandates must be clear, realistic, aligned with the situation on the ground, and in accordance with United Nations goals. Furthermore, they should be tailored to eradicate the specific roots of a conflict situation rather than tackling generic challenges. It was also imperative to prepare

clear exit strategies and plans to transform concluded peacekeeping operations into other forms of UN presence or support for rebuilding and development. Moreover, greater effectiveness could be achieved by aligning mandates with the views of both host States and troop-contributing countries.

55. The Special Committee was the central platform for decisions on the whole range of peacekeeping issues. It was inadmissible for the Secretariat to ignore or arbitrarily interpret that body's recommendations in taking administrative decisions, as was the case regarding intelligence collection and analysis of information for peacekeeping.

56. Russian peacekeepers, men and women, served in ten peacekeeping missions and Russia actively participated in the provision of air services, in addition to providing training for peacekeepers of various nationalities.

57. **Mr. Wu Haitao** (China) said that peacekeeping missions contributed significantly to maintaining international peace and security, but to remain relevant, must be more responsive to changing situations and real needs on the ground. Accordingly, China welcomed the Secretary General's proposals to reform the peace and security architecture.

58. Missions must abide by the principles of peacekeeping operations and of the Charter, and must be deployed only to help the parties establish and maintain peace by creating conditions for political settlement. The sovereignty of all parties must be respected and their views taken into account. Moreover, where a change in circumstance warranted a party's request for the withdrawal of a mission, the Secretariat, guided by the Security Council, should deliver a clear exit strategy.

59. Missions must have focused, actionable mandates designed on the basis of priority needs and the abilities of troop-contributing countries, while remaining flexible to adjust operational priorities as needed and maximizing the ownership of the parties. The Organization should take the views of troop- and police-contributing countries seriously, since they were making important sacrifices, and should strengthen the triangular cooperation among those countries, the Secretariat and the Security Council. Greater importance should be given to supporting regional organizations, such as the African Union, in order to leverage their relative advantages on the ground.

60. The Secretariat should increase mission effectiveness and responsiveness to complex situations in the long term, and pay greater attention to pre-deployment training as well as tailored ongoing

training. There should be greater cooperation on sharing information with host countries so as to provide early warning of potential security threats and to coordinate medical assistance requirements in emergency situations.

61. China had always firmly supported and actively participated in peacekeeping operations. It was the largest personnel contributor among the permanent members of the Security Council and the second largest contributor to the peacekeeping budget. Over the previous two years, China had trained over 800 peacekeepers and had provided the first helicopter contingent. It had two peacekeeping police units as well as a peacekeeping force of 8,000 troops, some of whom were prepared for rapid deployment.

62. **Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom) said that 70 countries had gathered in London in 2016 to discuss improving peacekeeping, and had pledged to double the number of women serving in peacekeeping missions by 2020, with 15 per cent of staff officer and military observer roles to be held by women. To that end, the United Kingdom would co-launch a network of "Military Gender Champions" at the 2017 United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference in Vancouver. They had also pledged to solve critical capability gaps and increase the rapid deployment of troops and police when needed. In Vancouver, the Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom would discuss how "smart" models for pledging could help deliver those aims.

63. Overall, the United Kingdom aimed to strengthen peacekeeping through better planning, more pledges and stronger performance and accountability. Different parts of the United Nations should work together more closely to improve planning, and the Secretary-General's reform proposals were a step in the right direction. Regarding pledges, over eighty commitments had been secured and should be used to tailor each mission to the challenges at hand as well as to replace contingents that had underperformed or committed misconduct, with the ultimate aim of improving performance.

64. Achieving such reforms required understanding and measurement of peacekeeping mission performance. The performance data collected in accordance with Security Council resolution [2378 \(2017\)](#) was crucial in that regard and would allow the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to make improved troop-deployment decisions, better matching skills to needs on the ground, whilst coordinating capacity-building to help improve performance.

65. **Mr. Ry Tuy** (Cambodia) said that the high number of peacekeeping missions across the world required

clear mandates and due consideration of expenditure. Budgetary increases would be needed to ensure that current and future peacekeeping operations were successfully planned and managed.

66. Cambodia welcomed the new pledges that had been made to the rapid-deployment level of the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System, and hoped that further collective support would be forthcoming. Cambodia itself had sent over 3,000 troops to take part in UN peacekeeping operations and aimed to provide proper training to its men and women peacekeepers. Furthermore, women peacekeepers had proven they could perform the same roles as their male counterparts when working in difficult environments in the field.

67. Future peacekeeping operations should be carried out legitimately with the wholehearted consent and cooperation of national Governments. Cambodia fully supported the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and strongly advocated filling vacancies in peacekeeping zones with women recruits who would better understand the needs of female victims of conflict. To improve mission outcomes, the behaviour and performance of peacekeeping personnel should be periodically assessed and published.

68. **Mr. Mohamed** (Sudan), welcoming the Secretary-General's initiative to reform peace operations, said that peacekeeping operations must be established and their mandates extended in compliance with the Charter principles of the sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs, and with the basic principles of peacekeeping. The dearth of host-country representation in various United Nations bodies must be remedied.

69. Upon their authorization by the Security Council, peacekeeping mandates should contain a clearly defined time frame, subject to update based on periodic review of mission progress and the situation on the ground. Provision for addressing the root causes of a conflict must also be made at the outset. In that connection, a lack of development, one of the primary causes of armed conflict, was effectively exacerbated by the imposition of sanctions on a country.

70. The fulfilment by the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) of its mandate had paved the way for considerable stability in that region, leading the Security Council to conclude that the time had come to begin implementing an exit strategy for the mission. Following the successful implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and other recent political developments, the Security Council had

decided in its resolution [2363 \(2017\)](#) to reduce the number of UNAMID troops and police forces.

71. Over the previous two months, his Government had undertaken a campaign to collect weapons from civilians in stages, beginning with voluntary collection and raising awareness of the importance of relinquishing weapons, underscoring that failure to do so was punishable by law. Initial reports indicated that the process was going smoothly.

72. Twelve years on, the most recent view of the situation in Darfur called for a reassessment of the sanctions imposed under Security Council resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#). His Government was open to proposals on the subject by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other relevant entities.

73. **Mr. Mavros** (Cyprus) said that his delegation supported a comprehensive, modern and effective operational peace architecture encompassing prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development. Given increasing global challenges, peacekeeping missions must be able to implement their mandates effectively and efficiently, and be subject to reform where necessary. United Nations peacekeeping missions saved lives, prevented mass atrocities and conflict, and facilitated stability and sustainable peace, while representing less than 0.5 per cent of all military spending worldwide. The 15 current United Nations peacekeeping missions should not therefore be summarily subjected to calls for expediency and savings, but should rather be evaluated on a case-by-case basis according to actual needs on the ground, political context, reform consequences and the views of the host Government.

74. Cyprus had acquired valuable experience as the host country to the United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) since 1964; the current review of that operation was scheduled to be completed in November 2017. As the situation on the ground had not changed since 1974, and almost 37 per cent of the island continued to be under foreign occupation, however, the host Government still deemed the presence of UNFICYP indispensable, especially its military component. UNFICYP was also the least costly peacekeeping operation, thanks to Greek and Cypriot funding, and only accounted for 0.5 per cent of the total United Nations peacekeeping budget. The evidence-based review of UNFICYP must seek to optimally configure the mission to implement its existing mandate.

75. Although his country understood the need for more effective resource management, reducing the cost

of peacekeeping operations must not constitute an end in itself: possible savings should be only one of the parameters examined when undertaking peacekeeping reform, as the United Nations had been created to safeguard international peace and security. In that regard, the single most important objective was to halt the use of force; the lack of armed hostilities did not, however, amount to peace; it was equally important to bring about sustainable peace.

76. United Nations involvement in a conflict should be determined by that conflict's parameters and root causes, free of distraction by exogenous factors, including attempts at influence by the more powerful party in a conflict. Any review of peacekeeping operations should be guided by the situation on the ground and ensure adequate resources for fulfilling the mandated task. Objectivity and impartiality were key to ensuring the credibility of the United Nations, as well as its ability to help a country effectively address a situation on the ground. Although the problem in Cyprus persisted, his country was certain that prospects for peace would have been much worse without the involvement of the United Nations, which remained the forum through which a reunited Cyprus should be achieved.

77. **Mr. Abbas** (Lebanon) said that the previous decade's rising violence and conflict, which had led to one of the most dangerous forced-displacement crises since World War II, meant that United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions were more crucial than ever and should adapt to the wide range of new and emerging challenges.

78. Agreeing with the emphasis on the primacy of politics and the need for a renewed focus on diplomatic and peacebuilding efforts in parallel with peacekeeping operations, his delegation believed that prevention remained the foremost priority. Supporting national governments with post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, strengthening national institutions, and rebuilding their economies would help to sustain peace and stability and avoid relapses into conflict. The increasing complexity of conflicts required greater collaboration among local, national and regional actors, but also among the Special Committee, the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries, the Secretariat, other United Nations agencies and host countries.

79. The zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations should ensure the full compliance of all United Nations personnel with the Organization's code of conduct. Likewise, his delegation commended the steps taken to ensure better

representation of women in peacekeeping leadership posts. Member States should implement civilian-protection guidelines in a comprehensive and universal manner.

80. Lebanon had hosted the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) since 1948 and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) since the first Israeli invasion in 1978. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and called on the international community to compel Israel to abide by its obligations under that resolution: to withdraw from the remaining Lebanese occupied territories, to cease its daily violations of his country's sovereignty by land, air and sea, to move to a permanent ceasefire, and to end its flagrant attempts at undermining the credibility and leadership of UNIFIL.

81. Communication remained open between the leadership of both UNTSO and UNIFIL and Lebanese authorities, including the excellent relationship between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL, which channelled international assistance to bolster the capacity of the former for maintaining stability and security and combating terrorism. His Government was also committed to preserving the safety and security of all United Nations personnel in Lebanon, including UNIFIL staff who had continually been at risk since 1978 on account of Israeli shelling and airstrikes, and in particular during the shelling of UNIFIL headquarters in 1996.

82. **Ms. Haile** (Eritrea) said that United Nations peacekeeping operations must continue to modify their approach while strengthening existing mechanisms to address evolving crises. The comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations must remain an intergovernmental process managed by the Special Committee.

83. Her delegation emphasized the need to focus on conflict prevention and mediation capabilities, as recommended by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. As peacekeeping mandates for existing conflicts had been renewed yearly despite the absence of any foreseeable solutions, exit strategies should always be agreed upon at the outset and reviewed periodically. All United Nations peacekeeping missions must be consistent with the Charter and the basic principles of peacekeeping. All United Nations field mission personnel must respect their mandate and preserve the image and credibility of the Organization; her delegation supported an increase in female peacekeepers in that regard. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should provide the necessary

assistance to those countries experiencing difficulties in providing qualified and trained female peacekeepers.

84. Implementing the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel would strengthen peacekeeping operations and should be agreed upon in the relevant intergovernmental forums. Although the United Nations bore primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, there were possibilities for cooperation with regional organizations; caution should be exercised, however, when deploying troops from neighbouring countries where national interests might prevail over the objective of regional peace and security.

85. **Mr. Mialkovskyi** (Ukraine), noting that his country had recently requested the deployment of a peacekeeping operation to counter foreign aggression, said that the United Nations must reform its peacekeeping operations efficiently in light of growing security challenges and conflicts around the world. All peacekeeping operations required a sufficient level of force to be able to fulfil their mandates; his delegation therefore viewed ensuring strategic force generation as an integral part of reform efforts. The establishment of the Strategic Force Generation and Capacity Planning Cell and the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System had been a significant advance in implementing the recommendations of the High-level Panel.

86. Peacekeeping operations could not function efficiently and effectively without proper funding and sufficient capabilities, including aviation assets, advanced intelligence and other modern technologies. Member States should closely monitor the mandate implementation of all missions in order to identify those needing structural reform. Formal and informal consultations should be enhanced during the establishment or renewal of peacekeeping mandates, with a view to improving communication among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries, using the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations as the format for triangular consultations.

87. Reaffirming its support for the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers, his delegation would continue to support the initiatives of the Secretary-General on eradicating sexual violence in peacekeeping operations, including through signing appropriate voluntary compacts. The Secretariat and the Secretary General must provide the Security Council with timely, frank and substantive reports, including potential new peacekeeping activities. In particular, the Secretary-General should proactively provide strategic advice to

the Security Council in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter.

88. Peacekeeping operations required clear, coherent, achievable, sequenced and resilient mandates that ensured the safety and security of civilians, including by preventing illegal inflows of weapons and mercenaries. While peacekeeping operations provided the necessary conditions for advancing peace processes, they should not be regarded as an end in themselves in terms of conflict resolution. Their deployment must be based on political solutions or guided by peace agreements. Operations whose mandates were unrelated to the implementation of peace accords, or included functions exceeding United Nations responsibilities, could not establish lasting peace and could even cause conflict escalation. Consultations regarding peacekeeping mandates must be inclusive, involving the regional organizations already participating in conflict resolution processes, with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts.

89. **Mr. Zaayman** (South Africa) said that, as a troop-contributing country, South Africa supported the reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations, agreeing with the High-level Independent Panel report that United Nations peace operations were not designed or equipped to impose political solutions through the sustained use of force, nor were its peacekeepers suited to targeted offensive operations against armed militias, non-State actors and terrorists. His delegation emphasized the importance of prioritizing conflict prevention to avoid unnecessary spending and to protect hard-won development gains. All peace and security efforts should centre on prevention and mediation; political solutions must be the ultimate objective of peace operations, rather than being subordinate to military solutions, and peace operations must be deployed in support of political missions, not as an end in themselves. Calling for more robust protection of civilians during armed conflict and emphasizing the primacy of politics, his delegation believed that the hallmark of United Nations conflict resolution should be mediation, ceasefire monitoring and assisting the implementation of peace accords.

90. His delegation supported more realistic, flexible and tailored mandates that prioritized and sequenced tasks as necessary. To ensure successful outcomes, there should be more consultation between the members of the Security Council who drafted peacekeeping mandates and the troop-contributing countries responsible for implementing them. Regional organizations such as the African Union played a vital role in peacekeeping and could provide aid to stabilize crisis situations, allowing the United Nations to deploy under more favourable conditions. Partnerships with

such organizations would help the United Nations address the constraints it faced in implementing successful peace operations. In that regard, African Union peace operations needed sustained, predictable and flexible funding mechanisms. The Security Council should ensure sufficient funding for all peacekeeping operations and endorse the option of a joint budget for African Union peace operations.

91. To help Member States monitor progress and tackle remaining challenges, the Secretary-General should track the implementation of the High-level Independent Panel's recommendations. South Africa was committed to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation in peacekeeping operations, and had taken decisive action against those found guilty in line with its national position on gender equality and women in peace and security operations. It welcomed the Secretary-General's Voluntary Compact as a vision of joint commitment and mutual accountability.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

92. **Mr. Krama** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the accusations made by the Syrian representative earlier that morning were unsurprising, as one should not expect to hear the truth from a State that repeatedly violated its international obligations, showed an utter disdain for truth and facts, and committed war crimes against its own people, including through the use of chemical weapons. His delegation expressed hope that the Syrian Arab Republic would not seek to further undermine the redeployment of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) by propagating lies.

93. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation had made no accusations but had simply mentioned proven facts contained in various United Nations reports. The presence of UNDOF in the Golan was only necessary because Israel continued to occupy the Syrian Arab Golan, and was unrelated to the internal affairs of his country.

94. Israel had agreements with various armed terrorist groups that were active in the area of separation, such as Daesh and the Nusrah Front. The occupying Power allowed attacks to be perpetrated in the Golan, so that it could then have a pretext to attack the Syrian Arab army, thus threatening both civilians and members of the international forces. The representative of Israel could not conceal the bleak track record of his country's violations of Security Council resolutions over the course of its more than 50 years of occupation and

should refrain from speaking, lest he open the debate on the long list of Israeli violations.

95. **Mr. Krama** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was ironic that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed concern for civilians in his country, as the Syrian regime had committed countless horrific acts over the previous five years, actions that should not be tolerated by the international community.

96. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that if the representative of the worst occupation in history truly cared about the Syrian people, he should call upon his own Government to return to the 4 June 1967 line between Israel and Syria, thus allowing thousands of residents to return to their homes. The regime that he represented had destroyed over 270 towns, cities and farms in the Syrian Golan since the beginning of its occupation. The representative of Israel should call upon his regime to refrain from providing support to armed groups in the occupied Golan and from perpetrating atrocities against the inhabitants of the Golan on a daily basis.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.