



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA  
BY MS. LOURDES PEREIRA SOTOMAYOR, FIRS SECRETARY OF THE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR TO THE UNITED  
NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 149: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY  
ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING  
OPERATIONS: CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES, AT THE SECOND RESUMED PART OF  
THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(New York, 8 May 2017)**

**Madame Chair,**

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 149, Administrative and budgetary aspects of financing United Nations peacekeeping operations, particularly on cross-cutting issues.

2. The Group would like to thank Ms. Heidi Mendoza, Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, Ms. Lisa Bутtenheim, Assistant Secretary-General for Field Support, and Ms. Jane Holl Lute, Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse, for introducing the various reports on this agenda. The Group would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, the Chair of the ACABQ, for the related reports of the Advisory Committee.

**Madame Chair,**

s

3. The Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment met in January 2017 with 76 Member States to discuss the critical issue of bridging the gap between the mandates of peacekeeping missions and the capabilities available to implement them.

4. The recommendations issued by the COE Working Group in report A/71/802 will improve conditions in a number of areas, for the benefit of the uniformed men and women serving under the United Nations flag.

5. Some important issues were left unresolved, such as that of armored personal carriers, but the Group of 77 and China recognizes that the final report of the Working Group was the result of extensive, drawn-out negotiations at the level of military advisers. We therefore welcome the consensus achieved by the COE Working Group and fully support the recommendations contained in its report.

**Madame Chair,**

6. Turning to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the Group notes that a total of 249 oversight reports were issued. The Group is pleased to note that the 528 recommendations developed enjoyed widespread acceptance by relevant departments. The Group also notes that in 2016, the Office registered an increase of 226% in the number of cases

opened during the year compared with 2015. Many cases were also closed during the year. It is noted that the higher number of investigations and contingent reports related to sexual exploitation and abuse. We take this opportunity to recognize the hard work of the OIOS, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Heidi Mendoza.

7. The Group notes that a high number of investigations remain pending, and expects that the Office will undertake to expedite conclusion of pending cases without further delay. We trust that the office will continue to closely monitor the implementation of its recommendations. The Group also notes that the Office has developed a work plan based on a comprehensive risk-based assessment, and developed in close consultation with other key stakeholders. We encourage the Office to continue its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its work, as well as its close collaboration with other agencies and departments.

**Madame Chair,**

8. On the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, the Group reaffirms its strong commitment to the United Nations' zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse. Zero-tolerance must apply equally to all, whether they are uniformed personnel or civilians, and regardless of the color of their helmet.

9. In this regard, the Group welcomes the strong resolve of the Secretary-General towards ensuring that the Organization will not remain silent or passive in the face of reported incidents, as well as towards protecting and supporting victims of SEA through adopting a victim-centered approaching addressing this problem, and putting in place effective preventive policies that address the root causes of this plague.

10. The Group also takes this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the central role of Ms Jane Holl Lute as Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations' Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and her contributions towards a more unified, system-wide approach to SEA. The Group notes her efforts to address the issue of system-wide coherence, and the work that has been done to increase engagement with Member States, identify root causes and risk factors, analyze gaps and weaknesses in current structures, and share best practices.

11. Further, the Group commends measures taken by numerous TCCs and PCCs to address different aspects of the problem of SEA and encourages the Secretariat to facilitate cooperation among these countries on best practices as well as a greater role for the UN in enhancing national capacities and learning in this regard.

12. At the broader level, the Group of 77 and China believe that we must approach the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in a collective and holistic manner. All stakeholders have a part to play, and responsibilities to assume. Only by working together can we move forward together. An effective Triangular cooperation mechanism could be an option to deal with this menace.

13. In this regard, the Group will participate actively and constructively in the Committee's deliberations on this important topic. In particular, we will be interested to learn what steps have been taken, and what steps the Secretary-General intends to take, to improve investigation

mechanisms, and ensure a culture of accountability takes root across the system, for *all* who march or work under the United Nations' flag.

14. The Group would also like to seek further information on mechanisms utilized by the Secretariat when dealing with SEA cases involving civilians and UN personnel both at the secretariat and in the field. We would like to better understand the mechanisms, or the lack thereof, of how the United Nations deals with its staff that is found guilty of sexual exploitation and abuse.

15. With respect to reporting, the Group recalls that that the General Assembly took a historic step forward last year during the second resumed session of its seventieth session to adopt new measures in the reporting of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. With these new measures, Member States demonstrated their resolve to ensuring full transparency in reporting cases of SEA, with no distinction between UN and non-UN troops. However, the Group notes that reporting on SEA regarding preventive, enforcement, and remedial actions necessary to address and prevent incidents of SEA still lacks coordination. The Group notes that clear information on the overall scope of and linkages between different reports and databases on SEA is not available. The Group therefore emphasizes the need for improved collaboration across the system, in order to provide all stakeholders with comprehensive information in a timely manner that can contribute to better coordination in the Organization's response.

16. The Group takes note of the proposal of the Secretary-General contained in document A/71/818 to establish the office of the victims' rights advocate and the Office of the Special Coordinator as well as 12 positions related thereto. We will carefully examine during informal consultations how these proposals can contribute to efforts to achieve our shared objectives of formulating a comprehensive framework to respond to the serious problem of SEA and to end impunity for those proven guilty thereof.

17. The Group of 77 and China stand ready to work constructively with all parties to ensure that we make a difference to the most vulnerable, and continue to uphold the name, reputation, credibility, and integrity of the United Nations.

**Madame Chair,**

18. In conclusion, the Group would also like to assure you of our constructive engagement on these issues in the related discussions during the informal consultations.

**I thank you, Madame Chair.**