

17 February 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the 2015 Session of the Special Committee on
Peacekeeping Operations (C34)**

**Ambassador Joy Ogwu, Chair of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations,
Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

I am pleased to address the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations today. I wish to congratulate the Chair and members of the bureau upon your election. It is my expectation that during this session, the Committee will conduct its work with a rejuvenated and renewed commitment toward ensuring the improvement of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

This year is an important milestone as it marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Through its work, the Committee has developed unique expertise that has contributed to formulating policies to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to conduct peacekeeping operations.

This session is taking place at a critical time for United Nations peacekeeping. I welcome the ongoing review of peace operations undertaken by the High Level Independent Panel. As you know, together with the President of the Security Council, I launched a review of the Peacebuilding Architecture. I call upon Member States to actively contribute to the review.

It is vital that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations is at the forefront of these reform efforts, and will, as appropriate, have an important role to play in taking forward the outcomes of these review processes. It is indeed crucial to integrate peacebuilding efforts in peacekeeping, so that peacekeeping operations are accompanied by economic recovery and capacity building efforts to avoid a relapse into conflict.

Excellencies,

The world has undergone profound change since the establishment of this Committee. During that time, United Nations peacekeeping has not only grown in size, but also in relevance.

Today, peacekeeping operations are being conducted in changing, and often increasingly complex mandates and environments. New challenges are constantly emerging which require peacekeeping

missions around the world to demonstrate a greater degree of flexibility and resilience in the face of this daunting landscape.

I am glad to note that in recent times some missions have shifted from traditional peacekeeping roles, such as monitoring peace agreements and stabilizing situations on the ground, to multi-dimensional tasks, including those with robust mandates such as Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) of MONUSCO.

This transformation was possible due to a renewed commitment by Member States and stakeholders to ensure that this Committee continues to provide policy direction to United Nations peacekeeping efforts. It included a shift toward a broader understanding of the important linkages between peace, security, and development. It is now widely understood that peace and security are indispensable for the achievement of sustainable development.

Indeed, peacekeeping operations often take place in regions where people are confronted with widespread poverty and hunger, and where fragile health care and education systems are precariously close to collapse. In this regard, the important work of peacekeeping operations helps to lay a solid foundation for future development efforts. This will be especially important in the context of the implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda in conflict and post –conflict countries.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Despite the commendable efforts made thus far, peacekeeping missions continue to face great challenges, including, but not limited to; the safety and security of personnel, the protection of civilians, effective field support, as well as the need for enhanced regional cooperation and national capabilities and ownership.

The safety and security of peacekeeping personnel – both civilian and uniformed – must remain a top priority. We must continue to enhance safety policies and procedures to ensure that peacekeepers are better-protected from new and emerging threats.

It is essential that today's peacekeeping operations can effectively maintain peace and security, and also facilitate political processes, the protection of civilians, assist in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), efforts, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law. This will require sustained support from the United Nations system, as well as enhanced cooperation and full participation of host countries, Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), Police Contributing Countries (PCCs), and regional organizations in policy formulation and decision making.

Excellencies,

The United Nations should further strengthen cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the African Union, on issues of peacekeeping. Given their unique comparative advantage, regional and sub-regional organizations are growing in importance and stature, particularly with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in rapid deployment situations.

To further our discussions on this topic, I will convene a High-level Thematic Debate on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations on May 4, 2015.

Distinguished Delegates,

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to and honour the brave men and women who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping operations around the world, often in very difficult conditions. I pay particular tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I wish you a very productive session and thank you for your kind attention.