

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

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**STATEMENT BY EGYPT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
ON "CRIMINAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF UNITED NATIONS OFFICIALS
AND EXPERTS ON MISSION"
ITEM 76 – 12 OCTOBER 2012**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group to state our position on the agenda item entitled "Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission".

This question is of great importance to the African continent where a high number of UN officials and experts is currently deployed.

While commanding the exceptional contributions and the great sacrifices of peacekeepers and all UN officials and experts on mission, we also note with great concern the instances of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by a few among them at their duty station.

When abuse occurs, it seriously undermines the UN image, its integrity and credibility. Most importantly, it causes grave harm to the victims and great distress to their families. That is why the African Group is of the view that UN officials and experts on mission should be held accountable, swiftly and firmly, whenever they commit criminal acts. Africa is strongly committed to the fight against impunity. The African Group, therefore, believes that it is of paramount importance to ensure that criminal acts should never go unpunished and that their perpetrators should never be exempt from the consequences of their acts. Jurisdictional gaps that exist should be eliminated as they could lead to more criminality and suffering.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group thanks the Secretary General for his report on this agenda item which provides information on the implementation of the resolution we have adopted during the previous session. In this regard we welcome efforts undertaken by many Member States to establish their jurisdiction, particularly

over crimes of serious nature, committed by their nationals while serving as UN officials or experts on mission.

We also note that many member States have indicated their readiness to afford assistance in criminal investigations and criminal extradition proceedings mainly on the basis of applicable multilateral and bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties. The African Group believes in the merits of cooperation among states through information sharing, exchange of experience and legal assistance to help strengthen national capacity in judicial institutions, as this is the basis of international law.

We also commend the preventive measures undertaken by the Secretary General, and thank The Conduct and Discipline Unit for having provided a more adapted pre-deployment training material. We encourage Troop-contributing countries to further highlight the issues of sexual abuse and other criminal acts during the mandatory pre-deployment trainings.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we believe that the previous resolutions adopted under this item provide important agreed upon policy and remedial measures. If fully implemented, such measures will be of concrete utility to address the issue of criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission.

The zero tolerance policy with regards to sexual abuse and other criminal acts, and the fight against impunity remain our guiding principles on this issue. The perpetrators of such crimes prescribed by law, regardless of their status, should be duly prosecuted.

The obstacles that exist in holding UN personnel and experts on mission accountable for crimes committed during UN operations have to be overcome. The question for us is to find the best way to ensure this, in accordance with the principles of rule of law, due process and in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

It is our hope that our deliberations on this item during the current session in the framework of a working group of the Sixth Committee will further advance these principles as to eradicate this scourge.

I thank you.