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STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. NEVILLE GERTZE,
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
BEFORE THE SIXTH COMMITTEE UNDER AGENDA ITEM 78
“CRIMINAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS AT MISSION”**

**NEW YORK
06 OCTOBER 2017**

My. Chairman,

1. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Algeria on behalf of the African Group.
2. At the outset, I wish to reiterate Namibia's commitment to contribute to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in terms of both personnel and financially. We acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the United Nations personnel in the field.
3. May I also reiterate the importance Namibia attaches to the question of criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Let me underline the fact that there are negative consequences that criminal acts, which are committed by some officials and experts on mission, have to the image, credibility and integrity of the Organization, as well as on its relationship with local communities, in host countries.
5. It is of great concern that at many peacekeeping missions there are always cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations officials and experts. Equally, we are deeply concerned about cases involving other crimes such as corruption, fraud and even theft. Words also fail us to fully express our outrage at the fact that women and children who are the biggest constituency in this world, are targets of crime and violence perpetrated by officers wearing blue helmets, the same people whom we sent to protect people on the ground.
6. Namibia strongly supports the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations with regard to criminal conduct, in particular such serious crimes as sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations officials and experts on mission. In this regard, we welcome the steps taken by the Secretary-General in addressing the allegations of sexual exploitation

and abuse brought against to the attention of the Organization. We also welcome the establishment of the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse. It is our hope that this Office would as well focus on all other crimes.

7. While we are cognizant of the importance of the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials and experts on mission, we stress the need to respect international and national legislation of the host State. This will not only ensure that there is no impunity for the crimes, but will also guarantee justice for victims. The special status enjoyed by United Nations officials and experts on mission should not protect them from accountability.

Mr. Chairman

8. The primary responsibility for bringing perpetrators to justice rests with Member States. However it is the responsibility of both the United Nations and Member States to ensure that United Nations officials and experts are held accountable for the crimes they may commit while on mission.
9. Namibia has arrangements in place to ensure that officers who are sent for UN Missions have no criminal records. Prior to deployment Ministry of Defence and the Namibian Police ensure that all personnel are properly vetted for any prior cases of misconduct,
10. The Namibian Government also makes sure that among the officers deployed, there are those with legal background. This is to ensure that crimes are investigated on the ground. However, all the cases that are investigated on the ground are sent home for review. This is done in line with the Defence Act of 2002 and the Police Act of 1990.
11. We encourage Member States to cooperate with each other in criminal investigations and extradition proceedings in respect of crimes committed by United Nations officials and experts on mission. We urge all Member States to take measures to close existing jurisdictional gaps

and encourage them to implement relevant General Assembly resolutions to address this issue.

Mr. Chairman

12. We are all aware that criminal misconduct causes great harm to victims. In this connection, we wish to emphasize the need to ensure the protection of victims and witnesses. Therefore, we welcome the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by the United Nations Staff and Related Personnel as adopted by resolution 62/214. It is our hope that the Strategy will help to protect the victims and that it would offer social and legal support as well as medical assistance, among others.
13. In conclusion I wish to extend our thanks to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of United Nations for having dispatched a Selection, Assessment and Assistance Team (SAAT) to Namibia during early August 2016, to prepare the Police Officers for deployment to the UN missions.

I thank you for your attention