



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

NIGERIA'S STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR SAMSON S. ITEGBOJE
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON

**CRIMINAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICIALS AND
EXPERTS ON MISSION (AGENDA ITEM 78)**

**AT THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(SIXTH COMMITTEE)**

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,

We thank you for giving us the floor. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

2. Nigeria commends the Secretary General for his report contained in document A/72/205 on this agenda item (78). We welcome the report of the Ad Hoc Committee On The Criminal Accountability Of United Nations Officials And Experts On Mission, and we wish to take note of the section of the report that was submitted by Members States on crimes of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) committed by UN peacekeeping officials at Missions.

3. Nigeria condemns these acts and continues to advocate that UN officials found culpable of such crimes must be held accountable. We strongly believe that UN officials and experts on missions abroad are entrusted with the flag of the United Nations, which they are obliged to uphold with a sense of duty and responsibility. Nigeria is thus strongly committed to holding accountable, any of her personnel implicated in allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) in UN Missions.

4. At the risk of repetition, we wish to reiterate that the harm such acts do, to the image of the United Nations, is incalculable and therefore, compels us to act. Nigeria is therefore, pleased with the establishment of a Circle of Leaders to combat this scourge. This is a select group of Member States, especially those that have operational presence in the conflict areas, to take a lead in the streamlining and implementation of measures to tackle this serious problem. This requires each Member State, especially the Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), to re-commit themselves to the prevention of future acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by our personnel.

5. Nigeria is proud to belong to the Circle of Leaders, and continues to pledge support and cooperation with the Office of Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, headed by Jane Holl Lute. Nigeria was one of the first Member States to provide material support to the Office of the Special Coordinator through submission of Military Law Acts/Manuals, applicable to administration of justice in the Nigerian Armed Forces. Nigeria also collects and uses DNA samples, in cases involving paternity claims, to determine culpability in SEA cases.

6. Nigeria is also engaged in dedicated sensitization visits to Missions abroad with special teams that interact with, and sensitize her troops on the consequences, implications and impacts that any untoward actions could have, not just on themselves and their families, but on the society, as well as the organization and country that they represent. We encourage more medical orientation and awareness campaigns for officers on the risks of irresponsible behavior and the United Nations' zero tolerance level for such acts of indiscretion.

7. In this regard, three Nigerian teams recently secured UN Secretariat's clearance to visit UNMIL, MINUSMA and UNAMID in 2017. The efforts were very productive and will go a long way to step up the awareness among Nigerian peacekeepers as far as SEA and related cases are concerned. The Nigerian government has also stepped up

efforts with the proposed establishment of mobile courts. These courts would be mandated to act on SEA cases promptly in Missions where and when they may occur.

8. Nigeria believes in the necessity and responsibility to create and maintain a working environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse. This may entail changing the organizational culture of the Missions, increasing the participation of women in the Missions, improving personnel welfare; conducting timely investigation and prosecution of suspects; embarking on training programmes on SEA; and exclusion of personnel who have committed SEA offences in any UN Missions.

9. The Nigerian government has embarked on the provision of recreational facilities for Nigerian peacekeepers at Missions abroad, to boost their morale. The Government of Nigeria has also approved a proposal for granting regular leaves and passes for Nigerian peacekeepers to enable them visit their families and loved ones as and when due. In this regard, similar arrangement have been completed to increase the conduct of welfare flights to, and from, Missions Areas.

10. Nigeria believes that victims of SEA should not be stigmatized. They should instead be rehabilitated. To this end, the Nigerian Government has donated a contribution of one hundred thousand US Dollars (\$100,000.00) to the UN SEA Victim Compensation Fund. We urge other countries to make similar contributions to ensure that those who have been subjected to such trauma are equipped to resume their livelihoods.

11. The Country has also embarked on lecturing, pre-deployment, training and induction of officers for peacekeeping at Nigeria's Peacekeeping Centre. The aim is to inculcate peacekeepers with the required knowledge and awareness that will guide their conduct during their tour of duty. Nigeria invites contingents from other peacekeeping countries to book a place to participate in the training programmes.

12. Nigeria continues to advocate that officers should be rewarded for exemplary behavior to encourage others, while bad behavior should be punished without hesitation. We believe that the good works we do through the United Nations peacekeeping far out-numbers the bad practices committed by a few. However, one case of SEA or criminality, is just too many, and indeed enough to tarnish the good works of several countries under the banner of the United Nations. Nigeria therefore calls on all UN Member States to cooperate with the organization in the exchange of information and timely facilitation of investigations and possible prosecution, where investigations reveal that an SEA offence may have been committed.

14. I thank you.