



Statement by Mosammat Shahanara Monica, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York on the agenda item no: 77 “Criminal Accountability of the United Nations Officials and Experts on Missions” at the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Sixth Committee, 14 October 2020

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

We thank the Secretary General for his analytical report, pursuant to the General Assembly Resolution 74/181. We note his recommendations, including the one to ensure that, the policies and procedures relating to the reporting, investigation, referral and follow-up of credible allegations against the UN Officials and experts on Missions remain coherent, systematic and well-coordinated throughout the entire UN system.

We also take note of the practical challenges in implementing the relevant Assembly resolutions on criminal accountability of the UN Officials and experts on mission. We call for deeper engagement by the UN with the member states, as well as within its internal networks, to minimize the existing policy and coordination gaps.

Mr. Chair

The UN officials and experts deployed in Missions bear the solemn responsibility to uphold the Charter principles, and thus, the image, credibility, and integrity of the organization itself. Any allegation of wrongdoing against these individuals should be duly investigated in a transparent manner. It is also critical that allegations are proven beyond reasonable doubts prior to subjecting the concerned official or expert to appropriate sanctions.

On this score, the Member States have the responsibility to extend due cooperation to the UN with respect to their nationals against whom such allegations are made.

Mr. Chair

Bangladesh currently is the top troops contributing country to the UN peacekeeping operations. Our peacekeepers represent the values that we promote as a nation. Bangladesh maintains a policy of 'zero tolerance' in respect of any allegation of misconduct against our peacekeepers, including allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been one of the earliest members of Secretary General's Circle of Leadership against the sexual exploitation and abuse. We also endorsed the Collective Statement issued by the Secretary General in 2018 to reaffirm the continued personal commitment of our Prime Minister in support of the efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse across the UN System.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh addresses the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse through various policy measures that include both punitive and preventive actions. We recognize that the objective of addressing sexual exploitation and abuse can be effectively served through well-designed and rigorous pre-deployment training, systematic screening and oversight, and effective investigation and prosecution systems.

Any allegation of misconduct including of sexual exploitation and abuse is addressed with utmost priority, and stern disciplinary actions are taken against the individual personnel, if proven guilty. Command channels are also made accountable for such allegations against any members of the contingent.

In terms of prevention, the pre-deployment training for our peacekeepers focuses heavily on their conducts, including awareness on possible repercussions for any kind of lapses in respect of sexual exploitation and abuse and other crimes. Our state-of-art training facilities at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training, also known as BIPSOT, has developed customized training module taking into account the unique cultural settings in different field missions.

Mr. Chair,

We reaffirm the centrality of the rights and protection of victims in addressing the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse. To support the victims, we made a voluntary contribution of an amount of 100,000 US dollars to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary General.

We take note of the annual report of the Trust Fund published in July 2020 and appreciate the work being done in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Central African Republic, to rehabilitate the victims and restore their dignity.

To conclude Mr. Chair, we reiterate Bangladesh's unwavering commitment to upholding the image, integrity and credibility of the UN as an organization. To that end, we would like to assure of our full cooperation to the United Nations to ensure implementation of relevant assembly resolutions on the criminal accountability of the UN officials and experts on Missions.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

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