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Statement by H.E. Amrit Bahadur Rai, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations at the 77th Session of the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly on agenda item 74: *Criminal Accountability of the United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission*

New York, 6 October 2022

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports under this agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal attaches great importance to the work of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, human rights, development and rule of law. United Nations officials and experts on mission play a crucial role in advancing the goals of the United Nations.

They are deployed with a mandate for maintaining and sustaining peace, advancing rule of law, delivering humanitarian assistance, and supporting sustainable development among others.

UN officials and experts must carry the organization's reputation, credibility and integrity with them. Their failure to maintain professionalism, conduct and integrity will tarnish the image of the organization. The trust and confidence of host states and their citizens will be eroded.

A protector must not be a perpetrator. Therefore, it is critical to hold accountable those who commit criminal acts while serving under the United Nations.

Mr. Chair,

The Secretary-General's report (A/77/225) has presented a high number of referrals. Sadly, not many Member States have provided information on the status of the investigation and prosecution.

We the member states should act responsively as the primary responsibility rests with the country of the alleged perpetrator to investigate allegations of criminal conduct and hold perpetrators accountable.

We must implement a zero-tolerance policy for misconduct and the commission of crimes by UN officials and experts on mission.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal commends the efforts and strategic measures adopted so far by the Secretary-General to operationalize his zero-tolerance policy on criminal allegations, including sexual exploitation and abuse, corruption, fraud and financial embezzlement of the United Nations officials and experts in the mission.

We also appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General to improve and harmonize relevant policies and procedures on criminal accountability in the entire United Nations system.

We support the work of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations' response to sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, we appreciate the establishment of the conduct and discipline focal point at the Secretariat.

Immunity under international law should not be a safety net for perpetrators. The criminal should not go unpunished under any pretext.

Nepal stands committed to the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on criminal accountability of the UN officials and experts on mission and all relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Mr. Chair,

As one of the largest contributors of the troops and police in the UN peacekeeping missions, Nepal remains fully committed to the highest standard of conduct, self-discipline and integrity of its personnel deployed in the mission.

We provide our personnel pre-deployment as well as in-mission training courses including the matters of ethical conduct, discipline, integrity, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, we will make accountable if they commit sexual and criminal misconduct in the mission.

Nepal fully adhere to the zero-tolerance policy in the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and our goal is to maintain a zero-case scenario.

We are increasing the number of women peacekeepers with a belief that it would help reduce the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in the mission.

Nepal welcomes the UN Security Council Resolution 2272 and fully adhere to the voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse.

We have a National Plan of Action for effective implementation of the UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security.

There are legal provisions for fines and imprisonment to the Nepali culprits of criminal misdeeds committed abroad or in any office of the foreign diplomatic mission or international or intergovernmental organization.

Mr. Chair,

Timely and transparent investigation and prosecution of the crime are crucial to ensure justice for the victims, redress their wounds and initiate early rehabilitation. Adequate measures must be adopted to ensure the protection of victims, witnesses, and whistleblowers.

International cooperation is essential for capacity building and to close the jurisdictional gap. We appreciate the technical assistance offered to Member States in developing domestic criminal laws and national capacities to investigate and prosecute serious crimes, including in the context of mutual legal assistance and extradition.

Quadrangular cooperation and coordination mechanisms among the Secretariat, the UN Mission, host state, and the sending state would be effective to ensure criminal accountability.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, Nepal stands ready to join hands with all stakeholders to ensure criminal accountability of the United Nations officials and experts on mission and to maintain reliability, integrity, and credibility of the UN system to protect and deliver people in need.

Thank you.