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Sixth Committee

“Criminal Accountability of UN officials and experts on mission”

Statement by Wieteke Theeuwen

**Legal Adviser of the Permanent Mission the Kingdom of the Netherlands to
the United Nations**

NEW YORK, 6 October 2022

Madam/Mr. Chair,

We align ourselves with the statement given by the European Union on behalf of the EU and its Member States. In addition, the Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to make the following observations.

Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his reports on the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission and for his commitment to tackling impunity.

Then, I would like to highlight and appreciate the good work done by United Nations officials and experts on mission; in particular, the significant, impactful and brave work done by UN Peacekeepers. When on mission, representing the United Nations, it is of utmost importance that the credibility, impartiality, and integrity of the United Nations is held high. When UN Peacekeepers serve under the United Nations they are united by a commitment to maintain or restore world peace and security. They share a common purpose to protect the most vulnerable.

This cannot be realized without the zero-tolerance policy for misconduct for crimes committed by officials and experts on mission.

Madam/Mr. Chair,

I would like to especially highlight the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. In

addition, I would like to highlight the importance of creating a safe environment for more women to take part in missions and how this in its turn contributes to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

First, prevention of and zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse is important considering UN Peacekeepers are on mission to protect the most vulnerable. However, sadly, sexual exploitation and abuse of those who UN Peacekeepers are meant to protect continues to take place. Therefore, addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, by focusing on both prevention and response, requires our continued attention.

Second, UN Peacekeepers serve the cause of peace and security, making sacrifices to contribute to a common goal and this is not without risk. As a result, it is particularly unacceptable that a UN Peacekeeper would be the victim of misconduct by fellow Peacekeepers. We know having more female Peacekeepers is an important factor towards the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation. Yet, female Peacekeepers are at risk of discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse themselves. Therefore, addressing discrimination against women, sexual harassment and abuse in UN Peacekeeping missions, by focusing on both prevention and response, also requires our continued attention.

Criminal accountability, investigation and prosecution by the State of nationality, is important for those people UN Peacekeepers are meant to protect, for UN Peacekeepers

themselves and for the overall credibility, impartiality, and integrity of the United Nations. It goes without saying that this applies to all UN officials and experts on mission

The Kingdom of the Netherlands itself has a zero-tolerance for inaction policy, we expect that everything is done to prevent and adequately address sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The Kingdom of the Netherlands further fully supports the UN's zero-tolerance policy for misconduct for crimes committed by UN officials and experts on mission.

Thank you, Madam/Mr. Chair