



NEPAL

Statement by H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations at 79th Session of the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly under Agenda Item No. 76: Criminal Accountability of the United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission

(New York, 14 October 2024)

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, we welcome the Secretary-General's comprehensive reports under this agenda which provide an overview of the practices and policies implemented by individual states and UN entities in their efforts to address criminal accountability.

Nepal aligns its statement with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement.

Mr. Chair,

As the sole inter-governmental organization recognized for its universal, impartial, and reliable nature, the United Nations has gained the trust of people worldwide.

UN officials and experts, who represent the organization, are entrusted with upholding the organization's reputation, credibility, and integrity in all their endeavors.

Both individuals and states place their trust in them.

Any failure to maintain the standards of professionalism and conduct risks tarnishing the image of the United Nations, eroding the trust and confidence of host states, their citizens and the global community at large.

Therefore, addressing the criminal accountability of UN officials and experts, whether in the field or at the headquarters, is of utmost importance.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal commends the Secretary-General's continued efforts, and the strategic measures implemented to operationalize his zero-tolerance policy on criminal

misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, corruption, fraud, and financial embezzlement by United Nations officials and experts in the field.

International cooperation is vital for capacity building and bridging jurisdictional gaps. We are happy to note that necessary efforts are underway to eliminate jurisdictional gaps and enhance international cooperation to ensure accountability.

It is crucial to ensure that credible allegations are thoroughly investigated, wrongdoers are held accountable, and victims receive justice.

Meanwhile, we emphasize the importance of supporting and protecting victims of misconduct.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with the United Nations and fellow member states to ensure that justice is served in all cases of criminal misconduct by UN experts and staff on mission.

We believe that by holding individuals accountable for their actions, we not only preserve the credibility of the United Nations but also honor the principles upon which this organization was founded- principles of justice, equality, and the protection of human rights.

Mr. Chair,

Nepal has a long history of participating in UN Peacekeeping operations. With around 6100 Nepali peacekeepers on the ground, Nepal proudly stands today as the largest troops contributing country to the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We deeply value and recognize the immense contributions and sacrifices made by the peacekeepers in their vital role of maintaining international peace and security. Nepal remains fully committed to the highest standard of conduct, self-discipline and integrity of its personnel deployed in the mission.

Nepali peacekeeping troops undergo personnel pre-deployment as well as in-mission training courses which include matters of ethical conduct, discipline, integrity, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, we ensure that they are held accountable if found to have committed sexual and criminal misconduct.

Nepal strictly maintains zero-tolerance policy in the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse with a view to maintain a zero-case scenario. We are increasing the number of women peacekeepers.

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

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

There are stringent legal provisions in place including financial sanctions and imprisonment to our nationals who are found to have committed criminal act abroad or in any office of the foreign diplomatic mission or international or intergovernmental organization.

Nepal's Army Act has also incorporated extraterritorial criminal jurisdiction which holds its troops accountable of doing criminal misconduct beyond our territory.

We hold the view that each allegation should be handled individually. It is crucial to avoid condemning an entire peacekeeping mission or state for the criminal acts of a single official.

The state of nationality of the accused UN personnel or experts should take primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting any criminal conduct, as well as for holding the perpetrator accountable.

Mr. Chair.

Cooperation, collaboration and communication between and among the states and the United Nations remain the most effective methods to address the issue of criminal accountability.

We urge for four-way cooperation among the Secretariat, the UN Mission, host state, and the sending state to hold the preparators accountable.

We value the technical assistance provided to Member States in enhancing their domestic criminal laws and national capabilities to investigate and prosecute serious crimes.

In conclusion, **Mr. Chair**, Nepal reaffirms its unwavering commitment to initiatives by the UN aimed at combating criminal deeds perpetrated by UN officials and mission experts.

I thank you.