

High-Level Meeting with Member States
On Strengthening the Conduct of Peacekeeping Personnel
Session 1: Prevention of SEA: Role of Training in Strengthening Conduct of
Peacekeepers
[28 June 2021; 1000 hrs]

Remarks by Ambassador T. S. Tirumurti
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Mr. Chair,

Let me thank the UN Secretary General for organizing this event on such an important issue, and for his insightful remarks. I also thank Ms. Catherine Pollard, USG for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, USG for Peace Operations, and other briefers for their interventions.

2. The United Nations peacekeeping over the years has been a journey of partnerships of member states and the United Nations to uphold international peace and security as well as of commitment, heroism, and sacrifice of the blue helmets to realize these partnerships, through people centric approach. India has been a pioneer in UN Peacekeeping going back six decades. India has also been consistently amongst the top five troop contributors for UN peace operations since 1998 – this fact alone being a testimony to India’s sense of international commitment as a member state with “reliable” & “trained” peacekeepers.

3. A clean image of the UN Peacekeeper is the cornerstone for the success of United Nations peace operations. India pays great attention to the conduct of the peacekeepers. We have adopted a ‘zero tolerance’ policy for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) related serious misconducts and aim to strengthen mechanisms to ensure prevention and mitigation of these issues.

4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined the Circle of Leadership (CoL) on the prevention of and response to SEA in United Nations operations in 2017. India signed the Secretary General’s initiative of voluntary compact on preventing and addressing SEA issues. India has been supporting UN’s “Pipeline to Peacekeeping Command Program” (PCP) which aims to develop the capacity of future commanders and managers to lead by example and raise awareness of UN standards of conduct among their personnel. India has made a voluntary contribution of over half a million dollars to the program in the last 3 years.

5. Prevention lies at the core of India’s efforts to combat SEA and serious misconduct issues, and screening, training, and awareness are the prime components of this approach. India’s Center for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK), which provides training to peacekeepers from India as well as partner countries for last 20 years, had introduced “peacekeeping conduct and discipline” related

training modules some 10 years back. India is the only country among top 20 TCCs, which does not figure in the list of SEA related cases on the UN website. I must complement CUNPK, and United Nations' DMSPC whose SEA e-learning module has been of immense help in pre-deployment training of the peacekeepers in India. We appreciate DMSPC's efforts towards raising awareness on conduct related issues and capacity building.

6. Over the years, India has invested heavily in pre-deployment training. This effort is continuous in nature. I would like to highlight some of the best practices that have been institutionalized by India:

Firstly, identification of suitable peacekeepers for UN deployment. It is important to ensure that the peacekeepers identified for UN missions have an excellent track record of being disciplined & motivated soldiers & police personnel in their respective organizations. UN peacekeeping is showcased among our personnel as a chance to learn and contribute to India's commitment to international peace & security.

Secondly, thematic modules have been included in the training programs of the personnel –

- a. Reminding the trainees of zero tolerance policy of the government towards SEA misconducts,
- b. Re-iterating that UN mission deployment is not a ticket for misconduct and the repercussions will be severe,
- c. Highlighting that perpetrator will be held accountable,
- d. Underscoring that peacekeeper is responsible for the nation's image,
- e. Recalling the emotional fall out of one's misdeeds on himself, his/her family, and the organization which he or she represents,

Thirdly, case studies and scenario-based exercises on various misdemeanors by UN personnel in mission areas in different settings have been incorporated into the training of peacekeepers.

Fourthly, it is equally important to benefit from the experience of peacekeepers who in the past have served in various UN Mission's and were Focal Points for Gender, or worked as National Investigating Officers and logistic experts. Such peacekeepers have been invited to deliver talks on their experiences in UN missions and identify misconduct in any form - financial, administrative or the SEA.

Fifthly, India has put in place necessary systems to ensure accountability at every level during the UN deployment of the peacekeepers. The mechanism of continuous feedbacks, counseling, mentoring, promoting organizational culture and involvement of senior leadership have been institutionalized.

Sixthly, India has been actively participating in international forums on peacekeeping, which have proven useful to cross pollinate ideas on conduct and discipline. In 2019, during the International Association for Peacekeeping Training Centre Conference held at Peru, India's CUNPK was asked to provide its "approaches to overcome challenges to conduct & discipline". In February 2020, India hosted an international event on contemporary dilemmas & challenges to UN Peacekeeping and International Humanitarian Law.

7. To conclude, I would like to re-iterate India's continued commitment towards 'Zero Tolerance' policy for SEA related serious misconduct, and its continued support to partnering with countries and the UN to strengthen the conduct of the peacekeepers.
