

DRAFT STATEMENT FOR THE ACTION FOR PEACEKEEPING HIGH-LEVEL MEETING TO SHARE GOOD PRACTICES IN PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

1. Nigeria is pleased to participate in the Action for Peacekeeping high-level meeting to share good practices in preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. I want to start by commending the Secretary General, Mr António Guterres for his Action for Peacekeeping Initiative which has made peacekeeping more effective and responsive to today's conflicts. I would also like to commend Member States who have entered into the Secretary-General's Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and those that have contributed funding to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Excellencies,

2. The Permanent Mission of Nigeria wishes to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Nigeria to fulfilling its obligations in support of the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary General against sexual exploitation and abuse by taking appropriate steps to prevent misconduct and hold accountable any of its personnel indicted for such misconduct. Since the launch of the Secretary General's initiative to combat this scourge, the Government of Nigeria has taken several measures to strengthen the zero-tolerance policy as follows:

a. **Robust Vetting of Personnel Generated for Peacekeeping Operations.** The Government of Nigeria has established a peacekeeping misconduct database to enhance vetting of personnel prior to deployment for peacekeeping operations.

b. **Contribution to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.** The Government demonstrated its commitment to the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary General against sexual exploitation and abuse by donating generously to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. This gesture, along with those of other donor countries, has helped in providing legal, medical and psychological support to victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

c. **Improvement of Pre-deployment and In-mission Training Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.** The Government of Nigeria has reviewed and improved training on sexual exploitation and abuse in all military

training institutions, particularly at the Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Centre. It is pertinent to note that in Year 2020, enrolment of students of the Centre on the National Training Centre E-Learning Platform (NTCELP) of the Peace Operations Training Institute (POTI) increased by more than 400 percent.

d. **Increase in Female Peacekeepers.** The Government of Nigeria has increased the number of female peacekeepers deployed as military observers, staff officers and liaison officers from less than 16 percent in 2018 to 21 percent currently, exceeding the Year 2021 UN set target of 18 percent. The female peacekeepers have become key-enablers in upholding the United Nation's standards of conduct in missions where they are deployed.

e. **Prompt Investigation of Cases.** In the last 2 years, the Government of Nigeria has ensured prompt disposal of reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. For instance, the case against a Nigerian military staff officer in MINUSMA in 2020 was investigated, concluded and closed within a year. Furthermore, a substantial number of cases have been closed from Year 2018 to date.

f. **Collection of DNA Samples in Cases Involving Paternity Claims.** The Government of Nigeria has adapted the policy of using DNA samples to ascertain paternity in cases involving such claims. To this end, the Nigerian Government recently obtained DNA samples from 11 personnel with paternity claims. We are awaiting response from the Conduct and Discipline Unit for DNA samples of alleged victims for cross-matching. The Government of Nigeria will also work assiduously with the United Nations Secretariat to ensure the closure of these cases as soon as possible.

g. **Regular Operational Visits to Missions to Address Personnel on the United Nations Standards of Conduct.** In the last 2 years, several visits have been undertaken to MINUSMA to address troops on the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary General against sexual exploitation and abuse. Virtual briefings were also organized when travel was suspended due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Excellencies,

3. Peacekeeping is a collective endeavor that demands collaboration and partnership between the United Nations and its many partners, particularly Troop

and Police Contributing Countries. To this end, Nigeria is pleased to renew its commitment to contributing to United Nations peacekeeping operations in support of the Security Council's arduous task of maintaining international peace and security. This commitment has been demonstrated by Nigeria's continued deployment of personnel and material resources to United Nations peacekeeping in the last six decades. It is noteworthy of mention that the country has produced 4 Heads of State who served as blue helmets. Their experiences have further served the cause of the United Nations while in office. More recently, Nigeria has pledged several additional units to the United Nations Peacekeeping Capabilities Readiness System and is working diligently to ensure their timely deployment.

Excellencies,

4. Let me conclude by paying tribute to all those who have paid the supreme sacrifice while serving as blue helmets around the world. We offer our deepest condolences to their families, friends and governments. The Government of Nigeria remains committed to supporting the United Nations in all initiatives aimed at ensuring proper conduct of peacekeepers, reducing fatalities in peacekeeping operations and bringing lasting peace to the world. Thank you.