



Statement on behalf of the Member States of the European Union

By

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– AS DELIVERED –

Mr Chairman,

I usually speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union and the aligning countries, but for the first part of my statement, I have the feeling I speak on behalf of everyone in this room.

This May session of the 5th Committee would have been the last one our UK colleague Alan Shaw would have attended, as his current term of duty would be coming to an end this summer. We were already fretting, in our team, how we would manage without his wisdom, experience, know-how and wit – in short, preparing for life in the 5C without him. To have to talk today of life in general without Alan is quite simply heartbreaking.

It is heartbreaking for me personally as Alan was the last person I saw around midnight on Christmas Eve and the first one outside my family I spoke to on Christmas Day, as I was trying, together with G77, EU and likeminded colleagues and the Office of the SG to bring the negotiating process back on track. His support and his good advice were invaluable. It is heartbreaking for the EU and the like-minded group, of which he was such a distinguished member. It was an honor and a privilege to have worked all those long hours with him. But if I interpret the mood in this Committee correctly, his untimely and tragic passing is heartbreaking to everyone, without exceptions. The deep sadness and the grief that permeate this room are a sign that we all feel like we lost one of our own and very best – a great colleague and an outstanding individual.

Alan embodied what the UN stands for and in wishing that his soul may rest in peace, maybe we can keep his memory alive by attempting to approach our job in the same way as he did: staunchly defending the position of his government or his group – but also always engaging in constructive discussions rather than just trying to impose his views; offering sound arguments; listening to the viewpoints of others; and leaving no stone unturned for a good compromise. Alan unites us today in our collective anguish and sorrow; but he can also continue to unite us tomorrow if we follow his work ethic, his good example and his lead.

I will now proceed to speak on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland⁺ and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The peacekeeping activities of the United Nations have evolved immensely over the last fifteen years and remain an important priority for the Member States of the European Union. We attach great importance to peacekeeping as a core task of the Organisation and will continue to do what is necessary to ensure that UN peacekeeping is effective and serves the need of maintaining peace and security.

We would like to take this opportunity to commend the hard work and commitment of all UN personnel involved in the difficult task of peacekeeping. We also pay tribute to all those who have paid the ultimate price in the pursuit of peace. It is with their sacrifice in mind that we are reminded of the practical significance of our deliberations.

The Member States of the European Union make an important contribution to peace and security. We actively support and participate in UN mandated peacekeeping operations and other relevant activities throughout the world, and contribute with troops, civilian police and other personnel. As the largest collective financial contributors, with shares amounting in total to 36.8 per cent of the peacekeeping budget, we continue to have a strong interest in making UN peacekeeping even more efficient and effective. We will therefore closely examine the budgets of all the peacekeeping missions, as well as the support functions, with a view to providing them with adequate financing to carry out their mandates.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

⁺ Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.

Mr Chairman,

The Secretary-General's proposed budgets for peacekeeping missions for the financial period 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015 currently total \$7.4 billion according to the reports before us but this offers only a very partial view. In fact, we anticipate that the overall budget could exceed \$8 billion, which would constitute a historic peak. These developments, in combination with the budgetary constraints in our countries, imply that strict budgetary discipline remains necessary to ensure that resources are used effectively, efficiently and in an accountable and transparent manner. It also implies that we need to think creatively to deal in the most efficient way with this budgetary challenge.

Mr Chairman,

The agenda ahead of us contains many important items. We welcome the agreement reached by the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment in January and look forward to consideration of its recommendations.

We are also looking forward to discussing the issue of the progress in the implementation of GA resolution 67/261 on rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing countries in light of the recent survey, involving a sample of 10 troop and police contributing countries. We look forward to a constructive outcome that preserves the Senior Advisory Group balance and consolidates the partnership for peace.

The Member States of the European Union continue to support the implementation of the Global Field Support Strategy, and welcome the close involvement of the membership and relevant United Nations bodies in this process. As the strategy enters its final phase of implementation, it will be important to ensure its benefits are realised in terms of improved delivery of services on a global and regional basis in the field and in the achievement of economies of scale, savings and strengthened accountability. Effective alignment with UN system-wide business processes such as UMOJA, Inspira and IPSAS is also important. Ultimately, looking beyond the GFSS to the future, capturing and applying the results of the strategy will be the key to strengthened field support in the long-term.

It continues to be a high priority of the Member States of the European Union that sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel is both prevented and addressed. Although the general downward trend is encouraging, the number of allegations that are still being received, and which showed an increase in 2013, remain a matter of concern. The continued implementation of the UN Secretary General's zero tolerance policy is of paramount importance and we welcome the efforts undertaken by the Organisation in this regard. We look forward to deliberations on this important issue, as well as on other cross-cutting matters.

With regard to the closed peacekeeping missions, we continue to urge the Secretary-General to return to Member States all cash surpluses from the closed missions. In addition, as stated before, we note with concern that a satisfactory and sustainable solution to the problem of closed missions with cash deficits is still long overdue and necessitates our urgent attention. In this respect, we call on all Member States to pay their assessed contributions.

Mr Chairman,

As expressed in the previous sessions, we remain concerned about the late submission of documents. We agree with the Chair of the ACABQ, as stated in his letter to USG Takasu and the Chair of the Fifth Committee of 26 March last, that this issue needs a structural and holistic response based on a broader assessment of the calendar of meetings and the timing of documentation coming before both the Fifth and the Advisory Committees.

These and other relevant issues require a thorough discussion in this session. Please rest assured that we - as always - will engage constructively with all stakeholders in our discussions.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.