

STATEMENT

BY

BETELIHEM TAYE, THIRD SECRETARY

**ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
ETHIOPIA**

AT

**THE 78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 76**

**“CRIMINAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF UNITED NATIONS OFFICIALS
AND EXPERTS ON MISSION”**

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Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission contained in document A/78/248 and A/78/275.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Africa Group and the Non-Aligned Movement and I will make the following remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ethiopia strongly condemns any act of abuse of immunity and commission of crimes by UN officials. Such conduct undermines the UN Charter that provides that UN Personnel shall fulfill the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.

Ethiopia, being one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions and a seat to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) as well as several other regional organizations and UN agencies, it bears a dual responsibility to ensure the criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission. On the one hand, we host a great number of UN personnel that enjoy immunity from the jurisdiction of our law enforcement organs. On the other, we send out personnel with a similar immunity to other host countries.

Ethiopia upholds strict adherence to the policy of "zero tolerance" for misconduct, when it comes to its own nationals. We are dedicated to preventing impunity as Ethiopia's criminal law has a universal jurisdiction over Ethiopian nationals in spite of location.

We however face different challenges in our effort to ensure accountability of officials with immunity. In this regard, we would like to point out that it is critical for all states to assume and actually exercise jurisdiction over crimes committed by their nationals that enjoy diplomatic immunity given to UN staff. We also

would like to emphasize the crucial role of the UN in providing evidence and information on crimes committed and monitoring the actions taken by countries of nationality to ensure accountability.

Mr. Chairperson,

Rule of law on diplomatic privilege and immunity is necessary to maintain the credibility of the United Nations. This requires strict adherence to the laws of host countries by the UN officials and personnel.

In this light, we have taken note of the Secretary-General's report on the measures undertaken by some specialized agencies and related organizations in ensuring the criminal accountability of their officials and staff members. Moreover, we have also taken note of the measures taken to strengthen coherence and coordination of policies and procedures between the UN and specialized agencies.

While recognizing these measures, my delegation would like to flag the urgent need for the UN to strengthen its preventive and redress mechanisms against, favoritism, misappropriation of resources, use of functions for political objectives, open violation of the duty to maintain neutrality and impartiality, undue political declarations, unethical use and misuse of conventional and social media, interference in the internal affairs of states, sexual exploitation and abuse and other forms of transgressions.

To address these concerning situations, we believe it is essential for the United Nations to strengthen its internal systems for investigating and holding its personnel accountable. Furthermore, the UN needs to strengthen its protection for whistleblowers and witnesses against retaliation and intimidation. These mechanisms are necessary if the UN is to build its body of staff with the requisite integrity and competence as provided under the UN Charter.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and host countries of UN agencies, in order to ensure that UN

officials who violate laws of the host countries are held accountable for their infringement. Ethiopia will continue to make the necessary effort towards prevention of impunity in this regard.

I thank you