

Security Council Open Debate on International Peacekeeping Operations
26th of August, 2011, Security Council Chamber

Statement by H.E. Mr. Messone, Representative of Gabon to the United Nations

Mr. Messone (Gabon) (spoke in French): Gabon echoes the condemnations of the attack in Abuja, Nigeria. We extend our condolences to the families of the victims and to the United Nations family as a whole. We support the Secretary-General in this matter and express our solidarity with Nigeria.

I concur, Mr. President, with previous speakers in welcoming both your initiative in organizing this debate and the fact that it comes from your country, India, which is currently one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations. That stands as yet further proof of your country's commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security. I also welcome the presence of the Secretary-General here today, and thank him for important contribution to our deliberations.

Peacekeeping operations lie at the heart of the United Nations actions in peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction. The emergence of other challenges to peace, such as violence against civilians, has made peacekeeping operations increasingly important. New demands require missions to be allocated resources commensurate with their challenges and expectations.

I shall address the question of peacekeeping operation mandates and relationships among the various stakeholders in their success, especially the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. In recent years, the United Nations has considerably improved the planning and conduct of missions. That evolution is largely due to greater United Nations awareness of the need to define mandates that are clear, credible and achievable and that will lead to successful missions.

My delegation welcomes the increasingly multidisciplinary approaches to mission mandates, as emphasized by the Secretary-General in his 2008 report. Those include the protection of civilians, strengthening the rule of law, mechanisms to prevent the resurgence of conflicts, support for electoral processes, and peacebuilding and reconstruction programmes, such as in the cases of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, to mention only a few.

All of those many dimensions were a response to the need for the Council to provide missions with mandates that are based on clear goals and measurable results, and that are provided with sufficient resources to fulfil all their tasks. Still, certain shortfalls and gaps remain that the Council must address. Missions such as MONUSCO, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are still lacking in logistical and human resources, whether it be aerial, financial or material resources. That point was made clear at the Council's meeting last month with Force Commanders on the ground (see S/PV.6592). My delegation encourages the international community to allocate to missions material and financial resources that are consistent with realities and actions on the ground.

As others have noted, we continue to believe that a good mandate must take into account the causes of conflict, and that its implementation should be founded on rigorous planning of the different phases and sequences of the process, and on the identification of criteria for ending a mission at the right time. That would keep the United Nations from slipping into an occupying role and from wasting resources that would be better spent elsewhere.

Regarding relations among the various actors in peacekeeping operations, my delegation welcomes the fact that the Council has enhanced its dialogue with its partners in peacekeeping operations over the years. We welcome, for example, the Council's regular consultations with the troop-contributing countries, including non-members. The same is true of the ongoing consultations of the President of the Council with the President of the General Assembly and States that are not members of the Council on matters that affect international peace and security.

To increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, it is important to continue and strengthen consultations between the Council and the troop contributing countries. Such regular exchanges allow the

Council to better understand the situation on the ground and to make better decisions. In that vein, we welcomed the Council meeting on 27 July with the Force Commanders. The briefings we heard that day clearly reflected the daily reality of peacekeeping operations as a whole and the difficulties they encounter on the ground. In this context, we also support the recommendation contained in the draft presidential statement that we are to adopt today, whereby the Council requests the Secretariat to provide troop- and police-contributing countries all necessary information and documentation by the 15th of each month.

Because the maintenance of international peace and security is at the heart of the political, strategic and ideological system of the United Nations, it is important to continue to work with regional and sub-regional organizations, especially regarding the root causes of conflicts and strategies to settle conflicts. Gabon would like once again to urge the United Nations to continue to support the African Union, especially by building its capacity and supporting its peacekeeping missions on the ground. In the case of the mission deployed in Somalia, the current weakening of Al-Shabaab should encourage us to strengthen the capacities of AMISOM in order to gain ground and significantly reduce the threat of that armed group.

While welcoming the significant progress achieved in the area of peacekeeping, Gabon feels that an additional effort should be made with regard to conflict prevention. We have stated this and reiterate it today. A culture of prevention would save enormous resources that could then be channelled towards economic and social development. Thus prevention must become our priority in the maintenance of peace and security.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to express my delegation's support for the draft presidential statement prepared by your delegation.