

Security Council Open Debate on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations
Friday, 6th August 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by Ambassador Cabactulan, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations

On behalf of the Philippine delegation, I warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation during your term as President of this body. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Security Council for this opportunity to address it on this important issue. The Philippine delegation also conveys its appreciation for the briefing by the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alain Le Roy, and commends the men and **women** in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations both here at United Nations Headquarters and in the various field missions overseas.

I also wish to acknowledge the contributions made by the force commanders: Lieutenant General Sikander Afzal of Pakistan for the United Nations Mission in Liberia; Major General Luiz Guilherme Paul Cruz of Brazil for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti; Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Major General Moses Bisang Obi of Nigeria for the United Nations Mission in the Sudan; Major General Robert Mood of Norway for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization; and our very own Major General Natalio Ecarma III for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. Their initiatives and efforts have certainly made a difference in their respective missions and operations.

At the risk of sounding nostalgic, if not mellow, in the face of the very serious issue before us, allow me to recall that it has been 47 years since the Philippines first engaged in and contributed to the maintenance of international peace with the deployment of a 40-member air force squadron to the Congo. Since that time, the Philippines has endeavoured to fulfil its international commitment to contribute to the preservation of peace and security in the world. Despite our limited resources, the Philippines strives to find ways to help shoulder the peacekeeping burden by addressing the need of the United Nations for troops and police officers for existing and emerging missions.

I am pleased to share with Council members and all other delegations present that, at present, there are about 1,057 Filipino military and police personnel serving with peacekeepers from other Member States in nine mission areas around the world. Just last year, the Philippines expanded its participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations with the deployment of a 336-man infantry battalion to the Golan Heights. The Philippines has also been given the honour of leading United Nations operations in the Golan, with, as I have already mentioned, the appointment by the Secretary-General of Major General Ecarma as Head of Mission and Force Commander.

I also wish to inform the Council that the Philippines is now in the process of strengthening its own peacekeeping mechanisms to allow it to respond more effectively to United Nations requests for troop contributions. We are now working on a new road map that takes into account recent developments in the field of peacekeeping and which, we hope, will lead to the expansion of our participation in United Nations operations in the near future, wherever they may be.

The Philippines has been closely monitoring developments in how we help keep the peace in conflict areas abroad. We remain satisfied with the achievements made by the United Nations thus far and would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the courageous and dedicated men and **women** serving under the blue and white flag of our United Nations.

The Philippines is especially aware of the sacrifices that our peacekeepers make — especially those who are deployed in harsh and hostile areas — and salutes all those who have given their lives in the cause of peace. For the past several years, we have seen how the United Nations has struggled to meet the increase in the demand for peacekeepers worldwide. As an active troop-contributing country, the Philippines is aware of the deep operational demands of peacekeeping and how these demands continue to grow and evolve. Certainly, the extension and, in some cases, the

expansion of mandates are among the manifestations that we can see. We continue to note that often this surge or increase in the demand has not always been matched with the capabilities and resources required to meet our peacekeeping commitments. However, the Philippines acknowledges the continued efforts made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) to fully address these increased demands, despite other challenges and difficulties.

With regard to the protection of civilians in conflict areas, especially **women** and children, it is well known that the Philippines supports the three-tiered framework proposed by DPKO and DFS in conceptualizing the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations in protecting civilians. To reiterate, these are providing protection through the political process, providing protection from physical violence and establishing a protective environment. The Philippines agrees that the elements of this framework must be implemented simultaneously in order to achieve concrete results in the most efficient, expeditious and proper manner.

With regard to peacebuilding, our position is also well known. The Philippines believes that United Nations peacekeepers should not be considered longterm peace builders, as peacebuilding is a national challenge that entails national ownership and responsibility. We have said before that only national actors can address in a sustainable manner the needs and goals of their respective societies. Hence, national ownership of the process is the ultimate goal and must be emphasized to both our peacekeepers and the national actors and stakeholders. The handover of tasks and responsibilities from peacekeepers to national partners in the post-conflict period must be given priority in the early stages of the peacebuilding process. However, the Philippines acknowledges that in an immediate post-conflict scenario, United Nations peacekeepers are more often than not tasked to carry out initial peacebuilding responsibilities such as providing basic security, delivering peace dividends, shoring up and building confidence in the political process and strengthening core national capacity — all intended to lay the foundation for sustainable development.

In closing, allow me to reiterate our full cooperation with the Security Council as well as our continuing commitment to help keep the peace and security and to prevent the escalation of conflict in various regions across the globe.