



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. GLENTIS THOMAS, PERMANENT MISSION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 140: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS - REIMBURSEMENT TO MEMBER STATES FOR CONTINGENT-OWNED EQUIPMENT, IN THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE SECOND PART OF THE RESUMED SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 5 June 2008)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group welcomes the introduction of the Working Group on Contingent-Owned Equipment. We would like to thank Mr. James Mutiso, Director of the Field Budget and Finance Division in the Department of Field Support, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General, and Ms. Susan McLurg, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the report of the Advisory Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by expressing our full commitment to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Our Group gives high value to the United Nations' role in maintaining peace and security. Today, the 17 Peacekeeping Operations managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations comprise over 75,000 military and civilian personnel, compared to 55,000 last year. This represents a net increase of over 35% percent.

While in our own way we all contribute to peacekeeping, let me emphasize that 80% of the troops in the field are from developing countries.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the recommendations approved by the Working Group on reimbursement rates for major equipment, self-sustainment, medical support services and the procedures for carrying out future reimbursement rate reviews. However, we would like to reiterate that the recommendations still fall short of our expectations taking into account the continued inflation and inherent sustained price increase that have entailed an unmatched cost burden for our countries.

Mr. Chairman,

We endorse the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. However, we would like to make comments on some of the recommendations that are of great importance to our Group.

Let me start by stressing the fact that by delaying the reimbursements of the costs of troop and contingent-owned equipment to troop contributing countries, will adversely impact on the ability of current and potential troop-contributing countries to effectively participate in the United Nations peacekeeping operations, and in this context, we urge all Member States to pay their assessed contributions to peacekeeping operations in full, on time, and without conditions.

We would also like to stress that the reimbursement rate of US\$2.76 per person agreed to by the sub-working group, is only an interim rate until a proper review of the decision on welfare is

undertaken in the next COE working group. The Group is aware that in certain missions the actual cost is higher than US\$ 2.76 per person, taking into account the actual amounts that our Governments pay to provide this service to our troops. We look forward to the results of such review in order to approve the right reimbursement for this subcategory.

The Group welcomes and support the new initiative recommended by the working group to provide internet access for troops and police deployed in peacekeeping operations as a new self-sustained subcategory that may contribute to the overall welfare of the troops. The Group endorses the recommendation that recreational leave allowance should be increase from 7 to 15 days. Since this issue falls under the umbrella of troop costs, we look forward to reviewing the number of days for which the recreational leave allowance should be paid to members of the military contingents and formed police units.

We also endorse a revision of the decision sheet to include the potential for hostile action as an additional element in calculating mission factors as well as the recommendations of standards for welfare.

Mr. Chairman,

Regrettably in 2004, the sub-working group could not reach consensus on a methodology for the review of troop costs reimbursement. In 2005, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report addressing all elements pertinent to troop cost reimbursement methodology. In this context, the Secretary-General presented the report A/60/725. The Group notes that the outstanding report from the ACABQ, and will be asking questions in this regard in the informal consultation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China is confident that, as in the past, this issue will receive deserving consideration. We look forward to working productively in the Committee on this important item in order to reach a consensus.

I thank you.