

Joint Statement on Behalf of A3+1

Niger, South Africa and Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Delivered by

H.E. Jerry Matjila

Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations

Open VTC on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

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Mr President,

This statement is delivered on behalf of Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa (the A3+1). We thank you for scheduling this annual meeting on progress to reform peacekeeping and thereby address existing gaps and respond to peace and security challenges.

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his insightful briefing.

Since the formation of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), in May 1948, the first UN peacekeeping mission to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours, more than 1 million men and women have served under the UN flag in more than 70 UN peacekeeping operations. More than 100,000 military, police and civilian personnel from 125 countries currently serve in 14 peacekeeping operations.

Mr President,

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa, pay tribute to the 3 932 men and women who lost their lives since 1948 in the pursuit of global peace and security.

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa further extend our gratitude to those brave men and women whose commitment and dedication have saved scores of lives and continues to do so during most unprecedented times. We owe them a great deal of gratitude for their efforts.

Mr President,

As peacekeeping evolves there is a need to identify critical capabilities that are in short supply so as to address some of the challenges in UN peacekeeping missions. As such, we welcome the

continuing discussions on improving UN peacekeeping to be more effective and adaptable to the changing nature of security threats in line with resolution 2378.

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa take this opportunity to commend the UN for the measures taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations. The pandemic has underscored the importance of the safety and security of peacekeepers, who work in challenging environments in addition to dealing with asymmetric threats.

In this regard Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa call for stronger support to peacekeepers in order to mitigate attacks, through appropriate training and capacity building, as well as through the use of modern and smart technology. It is also imperative that the UN form part of pre-deployment training, in order to improve the level of training of troops.

Mr President,

In the last two decades there has been a surge of peacekeeping missions across Africa, with a trend in multidimensional integrated stabilisation missions. In April 2017, the Secretary General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission signed a joint UN-AU Framework for enhanced partnership in peace and security. This was the first agreement of its kind signed at the level of the Secretary General. This builds on the increasing close cooperation since the two organisations signed the 10-year capacity building program for the African Union (AU) in 2006.

UN support is organised around a number of thematic areas with the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA) leading the cooperation in the area of peace and security. DPPA in collaboration with the AU also continues to work in areas of conflict prevention, mediation, electoral assistance and assistance to AU policy organs.

Through hybrid missions such as UNAMID in Darfur and AU missions such as AMISOM in Somalia, AU troops play a significant role in maintaining peace and security on the Continent.

The AU has also played a significant role in peace-making in volatile situations on the Continent and frequently paid the ultimate price for their efforts. This speaks to a high-level of complementarity where AU troops do the heavy lifting and make the ultimate sacrifice in situations where UN peacekeeping operations lack the necessary mandates.

However, we tend to see instances where there is a push by partners to scale down or amend the role of AU peacekeepers and efforts to phase out their involvement.

Mr President,

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa would like to reiterate the key role played by AU peacekeepers and note that without their involvement, some conflicts on the African continent will become inextricably more difficult to resolve and potentially more lives could be lost. Gains painstakingly made over a number of years, in some cases at great sacrifice, could be lost by not being guided by the situation on the ground and responding proportionally to developments that point to the need to maintain the involvement of African peacekeepers.

Mr President,

2019 and 2020 have certainly been years for amplifying peacekeeping issues, as evidenced by the adoption of resolutions on safety and security of peacekeepers (2518) and women in peacekeeping (2538) and the key linkages with the women peace and security agenda as reflected in resolution 2493 that was adopted in October last year.

It is of paramount importance that resolution 2538 contributes to increasing the participation and representation of women at all levels in peacekeeping operations. Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa, therefore, urge Member States to implement resolution 2538, which builds on the aspiration of resolution 2242, calling for the doubling of the number of women in military and police contingents in UN peacekeeping by 2020.

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa declare our unwavering support for the effective implementation of mandates by peacekeepers and peacekeeping operations. In the same vein, we acknowledge that the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates depends largely on well-defined, realistic, and achievable mandates, political will, leadership, adequate resources, policy, planning and operational guidelines as well as training and equipment.

Mr President,

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa commend the initiatives taken to improve performance in peacekeeping operations including the rolling out of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System (CPAS) and the further development of an Integrated Performance Policy Framework. However, we reiterate the view that *a one-size-fits all* approach should be avoided in implementing performance assessment frameworks and mechanisms, including CPAS. It is therefore essential to ensure that each part of a peacekeeping mission has a unique set of indicators for performance.

In the context of improving mission performance, it is important to recall the need to generate and strengthen community engagement, which can only be achieved through effective and ongoing communication with the local populations, whose cause peacekeeping serves.

Mr President,

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa welcome the mobilisation of all peacekeeping partners including troop and police contributing countries, host countries, the Secretariat, and members of the Security Council as well as regional organisations around the "Action for Peace" A4P initiative. The A4P initiative, launched by the Secretary-General in 2018, brings collective action and responsibility to the forefront of our efforts to maintain international peace and security, as well as strengthening multilateralism which is of paramount importance in the promotion, resolution and management of crises and the protection of people in vulnerable crisis regions.

It is our view that all procedures related to caveats must be clearly defined to avoid a situation whereby caveats are perceived as negatively impacting peacekeeping performance.

Mr President,

As already mentioned, Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa wish to emphasise the importance of partnerships between the UN and regional organisations, sub-regional organisations and other relevant international organisations. There is an urgent need for the UN to finance AU-led peace support operations authorised by the Security Council consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations as recognised in many resolutions of the Security Council, in particular, resolution 2378.

Last but certainly not least, we condemn sexual exploitation and abuse by all UN personnel. We remain committed to eradicating this scourge and reaffirm our support to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. It is vital that T/PCCs be consulted immediately when allegations of misconduct are reported, to ensure that proper measures are taken without delay.

In conclusion Mr President,

Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa urge all Member States to work in unison to ensure that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), the primary entity in the UN for making peacekeeping policy, continues to discharge its mandate and provides support to the Council's work, and underscore the need to harmonise the decisions that are taken in the C34 and the Security Council on peacekeeping policy issues.

I thank you.