Statement on behalf of
the European Union and its Member States

by

H.E. Mr. Inigo Lambertini
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to the United Nations in New York

on the submission of the resolution "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel"

to the Plenary session of the 69th UN General Assembly

Agenda item 69
"Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance"

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –
Mr President, Excellencies,

I have the honour to present, on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, the draft resolution of the 69th UN General Assembly on the "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

In 2013, the number of deliberate attacks against humanitarians – whether part of the UN system, or personnel of NGOs or the ICRC, and whether international or national personnel – was the highest ever recorded. There were at least 251 such attacks, resulting in 155 killed, 171 injured and 134 abducted. It is profoundly shocking that people should be targeted while trying to save other people's lives. Such deliberate attacks against humanitarians, but also against medical personnel, and of course against United Nations personnel, are a crime under International Humanitarian Law, and the perpetrators of such attacks must be punished. We are pleased that this year's resolution acknowledges the full scale of the problem and has strengthened language condemning such attacks and speaking out against impunity.

This resolution also concerns the protection of United Nations personnel more generally. 28 UN system personnel lost their lives in significant security incidents in 2013, and this number is even higher when considering all categories of personnel, or personnel of partner organisations. In addition to condemning such attacks, this resolution also provides important guidance of the General Assembly to the Secretary General, and more specifically to the UN Security Management System and the UN Department for Safety and Security now headed by USG Peter Drennan. Among other elements, the resolution commends the paradigm shift of the UN over these last years from "when to leave" to "how to stay", and the fact that the United Nations are today staying and delivering their most critical programmes in much more dangerous environments than some years ago. The resolution further strengthens a key pillar of this approach, which is a consistent assessment of acceptable risk by the system through the application of the framework of programme criticality, an important tool of the UN system allowing to determine acceptable risk. The resolution further acknowledges that close cooperation with host governments, who have the primary responsibility for the safety and security of humanitarians and UN and associated personnel, as well as increased acceptance by all parties and the local population, are integral parts of risk management strategies. Last but not least, through this resolution we commend and encourage the continued improvements and professionalization of the UN approach to risk management.

The European Union and its Member States firmly believe that it is our duty to acknowledge the commitment of humanitarians and of United Nations and associated personnel, to support their work, and to do everything in our power to further enhance their safety and security. The draft
resolution we are proposing for adoption today demonstrates that this concern is shared by all
delegations, with the strong text of this year’s resolution unanimously agreed in the course of
informal consultations. I wish to warmly thank the many delegations who took part in these
consultations for their constructive engagement, and also the many delegations who are co-
sponsoring this resolution with us, several of whom do so for the first time this year. We look
forward to the adoption of this important resolution by consensus once again.

Thank you.