STATEMENT

by

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AT THE

FOURTH COMMITTEE'S COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION
OF PEACEKEEPING

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NEW YORK, 29 OCTOBER 2013
Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would first like to thank His Excellency Mr. Carlos GARCIA GONZALEZ and offer my country’s congratulations on his appointment as chair of this esteemed committee. Mr. Chairman, Rwanda has the highest confidence in the Bureau’s and your leadership as you steer the work of this committee.

2. Rwanda aligns itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Egypt on behalf of NAM, and I would like to make a few comments in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Though we regret that the C-34 was not able to conclude its work of the 67th session, Rwanda, as a committed contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, looks forward to a more productive 68th session and stresses the importance of cooperation among all partners.

4. While we recognize continuing changes in modern peacekeeping and the challenges thereof, we also appreciate the institution’s capacity for adaptability and flexibility. In our experience, this evolution and the changing nature of conflict have placed greater demands on our peacekeepers, and the increasing number of attacks against peacekeepers reminds us of our responsibility to reduce risks, strengthen preventive measures, and enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Allow me to expand on a few key issues:

- As critically highlighted yesterday by my colleague from NAM, TCCs cannot and should not be forced to shoulder the financial burden of peacekeeping operations, which impedes their ability to sustain their vital contributions. This is why Rwanda is currently one of ten TCCs participating in the survey to review the rates of reimbursement to Member States, which we hope will inform improved rates of reimbursement for TCCs.

- Mr. Chair, as we know, troop preparedness is essential to the success of a peacekeeping mission. In our experience, Rwanda has found that training must adapt with the evolution of peacekeeping, which heavily revolves around the Protection of Civilians.

  o As part of the effort to enhance Protection of Civilian practices, this April Rwanda will host and participate in a project conducted by the UN Integrated Training Services, with the aim of increasing the number of Protection of Civilian trainees and trainers in UN missions. And through the Group of Friends of Corrections, a Gender Based Violence training workshop is being organized to take place in Kigali next month for UN Corrections officers.
Through initiatives like these, my country hopes to reach a broad audience and improve the preparedness of troops deployed in the field. It is essential that well-trained peacekeepers are deployed to missions and that their training reflects mandate expectations and mission-specific needs.

- And the last point that I will make, Mr. Chairman, on how we can better fulfill our responsibility to peacekeeping, speaks to the chronic gap in force enablers. Rwanda commends the Secretariat in its efforts to engage TCCs on this issue and urges it to continue to do so, especially with regard to incentives to match the high costs incurred when certain equipment is acquired. Ensuring that troops have the necessities at the mission start up would allow for more immediate mission effectiveness or early effect.

- In an effort to meet such critical gaps, Rwanda deployed three military utility helicopters to South Sudan earlier this year and is currently in the process of deploying three more. In Mali, we are trying to close the gap in police enablers by deploying an advance formed police unit to MINUSMA by the end of November, a step which has proven essential to preparations for the arrival and operation of the peacekeeping mission.

Mr. Chairman,

5. As we move forward, my country recognizes that the use of force in peacekeeping can threaten the impartiality of a Mission's operations, mark peacekeepers as non-neutral targets, and heighten the risks to civilian populations who may be targeted for reprisal attacks.

6. While Rwanda ultimately supported the introduction of an Intervention Brigade in MONUSCO to fight negative armed forces, we caution putting peacekeepers in active combat roles, as it greatly changes their dynamic in the field and relationship with both civilians and parties to the conflict. As such, the UN has a responsibility to preserve the impartiality of international peacekeeping operations.

7. Furthermore, as we embrace the use of new technology that may have the ability to protect civilians and our personnel, we recognize the need for its implementation and use in an impartial and transparent manner. The use of Unmanned Aerial Systems and information-gathering technology also calls into question ownership of information and confidentiality concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Before I conclude, allow me to say a few words on the value of the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction and of Quick Impact Projects, both of which
were significant to Rwanda’s own reconstruction experience and our peacekeeping practices in the field:

- First, we are encouraged by the increased participation of women in peacekeeping operations around the world, but the fact remains that women constituted only 13% of military and policy personnel in UN Peacekeeping missions in 2012. We encourage member states to give specific attention to the recruitment, training, advancement, and retention of female peacekeepers as well as integrating a gender perspective into conversations and actions related to peacekeeping. Today, Rwanda is in the top four highest contributing countries of female peacekeeping troops and we will continue to demonstrate support of Security Council resolution 2122 in an effort to strengthen women’s role in all stages of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

- Additionally, Rwanda is a firm proponent of enhancing the ties between peacekeeping and peace-building, in an effort to ensure capacity building and economic recovery are nationally owned long after peacekeepers have left. Projects that are designed to be small-scale and low-cost, such as Quick Impact Projects, can improve the security of civilians as well as contribute to local development and gain the hearts and minds of local populations.

Mr. Chairman,

9. I would like to conclude by reaffirming Rwanda’s commitment to peacekeeping as a Troop Contributing Country and as a stakeholder in the future of international peace and security, as well as our commitment to the C-34 as the sole body in charge of policymaking in Peacekeeping. We look forward to a productive 68th session.

10. Finally, let me pay tribute to the men and women who put others’ wellbeing above their own every day and to those who have given their lives in sacrifice for peace and security.

11. I thank you for your kind attention.