Mr. President,
Let me begin by congratulating you for organizing this thematic debate in the General Assembly. Your decision to convene a debate on peacekeeping addresses a long-standing gap. It is a strong political signal about the importance that all Member States attach to this activity. It also signals their intent to engage constructively and substantively. It would pertinent, in this regard, to note that the Security Council has, during the past year, organized at least four debates under four different Presidencies on peacekeeping and on related thematic issues.

We have heard with interest the remarks of their Excellencies the Ministers and those of the Secretary General and Mr Brahimi.

Mr President,
Coming from a country that has contributed more than 100,000 peacekeepers to virtually every peacekeeping operation in the past six decades, we believe that the subject of this special session, that of “Building Partnerships and Securing Capabilities” captures the essence of the challenge that peacekeeping now faces. It signifies, among other things, that much has changed since 1956, the year in which the first major peacekeeping operation was launched.

To being with, the formula of 1945 is obsolete. Global capacities, be they economic, military or in other areas, are distributed in a significantly different pattern. The talk of partnership and capabilities reflects the changes that have occurred and the need for these changes to be accommodated in the global division of labour in the maintenance of international peace and security.
Mr President,
Under the current formula, those member states that are not represented in the Security Council, are supposed to get their say in peacekeeping through the Fourth and Fifth Committees. Troop Contributing Countries, in addition, are statutorily consulted through the triangular meetings convened by the Security Council.

The productive deliberations of the last C-34 notwithstanding, my delegation is pained to point out that attempts are often made to by-pass the C-34 on substantive matters. Recent efforts to fundamentally alter the peacekeeping support structure without entering into a substantive engagement with the C-34 and TCCs are a case in point.

My delegation acknowledges that improvements have been made in the timing of triangular meetings. We have suggested a number of simple changes to make these meetings more useful and relevant. Predictability in terms of timing and circulation of agendas are two of these measures. The system of consultations must also be extended to cover all stages of the mission cycle.

Peacekeeping, in our assessment, will remain the major UN activity for the next few years. It will need more partners, not less; more capabilities, not less. The tendency in some quarters, in the name of expediency, to avoid intergovernmental discussions is counter-productive. There is no shortage of capacities in today’s world. The challenge that the United Nations faces is in its efforts to harness these capacities. My delegation submits that greater involvement of member states, not lesser, is the best way of obtaining these capacities for the common benefit of all.

Mr President,
Two-thirds of UN peacekeeping resources are presently devoted to operations that are at least five years old. The international community must find the capabilities that are required to ensure that the gains that have been painfully accrued by peacekeepers in these mature operations are not squandered while facing the challenges of an altered operating environment.

My delegation would like to stress that Peacebuilding is a far more complicated endeavour than peacekeeping. The number of stakeholders is higher. The requirement for resources is also higher. It requires much greater coordination and joint activity with national authorities than is currently the norm. National needs, not priorities driven by external and donor interests, should be the yardstick used to approach peacebuilding.

DPKO, which is currently a military-driven organization, will have to transform itself in the face of these challenges. It will need more policemen and more rule of law and development administration personnel in future. Member states will need to focus on the division of responsibilities between DPKO and UN Country Teams in order to prevent duplication and waste.
80% of peacekeeping resources are devoted to areas with a legacy of colonialism. Peacebuilding must take into account the experience and insights of countries that have undergone successful post-colonial national building exercises. Failure to do so would lead to sub-optimal results.

Mr President,
A debate on peacekeeping must address the normative and legislative aspects. Indian troops have been at the forefront in protecting civilians in the ground. India has also engaged constructively in the legislative debate on human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Charter, with good reason, distinguishes between the actions of the Council under Chapters VI and VII. We, as members of the General Assembly, have the responsibility of being vigilant against back-door methods to obliterate the Council’s responsibility to attempt peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mr President,
India strongly favours a greater female presence in peacekeeping. The effectiveness of a female Indian Formed Police Unit in Liberia is testimony to the power of an example in empowering the weak and the vulnerable.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our position that we are in favour of a policy of zero tolerance in respect of disciplinary and conduct issues.

Mr President,
In ending I salute Indian peacekeepers, as well as those from other countries, who have made the supreme sacrifice and laid down their lives while serving in UN Missions, most recently in Haiti.

Thank You.