



Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations  
New York

**GUATEMALA: EXPLANATION OF VOTE AFTER THE VOTE  
(28 March 2013)**

Mr. President,

Guatemala voted in favor of resolution 2098 (2013) just adopted. We did so, in part, due to our unwavering commitment to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which Guatemalan troops have participated since March of 2005. We were also moved to do so due to our respect and admiration for the diplomatic work undertaken by the Secretary-General, as well as the leadership of the International Conference of the Great Lakes, the African Union, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), all of which gave rise to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC.

However, we want to go on record with some of our concerns, which caused us to waver in joining the consensus, and which we continue to harbor in relation to the resolution just adopted. These are three.

In the first place, we still have serious difficulties with getting the United Nations involved in peace enforcement activities, since these may compromise the neutrality and impartiality which we find so essential to the Organization's peacekeeping. As a matter of principle, when domestic armed factions challenge the host-country state, we believe that the UN Mission should offer its good offices, mediate, and even take a pro-active stance in resolving disputes. But its presence should be perceived by all parties as that of an honest broker, and not a potential party to the conflict.

In this particular instance, we understood the reasons and the logic behind the Secretary-General's proposal to deploy a dedicated Intervention Brigade to be established within MONUSCO. At the same time, we would have preferred that said Brigade, mandated with offensive capabilities, be conceived as a self-standing unit with specific responsibilities, clearly distinguishable from the mandates of the other Brigades of MONUSCO, entrusted with the more conventional duties of robust peacekeeping operations, including the protection of civilians. Our concern is that all of MONUSCO could indirectly be converted into a peace enforcement mission, which raises many conceptual, operational and legal considerations which we feel have not been sufficiently explored in the course of the negotiations of this text. We are confident that we will have the opportunity to undertake this more profound analysis in the future with all concerned actors, including, of course, the troop-contributing countries.

This takes me to our second concern, which is more of a procedural nature. This resolution is highly complex, and we felt that not enough time was allotted to consider all its different angles properly. While a sense of urgency is understandable, given the evolution of events on the ground, we feel that Council members should have been given some more time to ventilate and resolve their concerns.

The third concern is related to the broad public trust that peacekeeping has enjoyed up to now among Guatemalan public opinion; a circumstance which we highly value. In that context, it is relevant to recall that it has been a little over seven years since our country lost eight MONUSCO peacekeepers in Garamba National Park in the DRC, in the carrying out of their mandate. One could have expected an outcry from the Guatemalan people, questioning why our soldiers had to sacrifice their lives in a far-away, virtually unknown country to most of our citizens. But this did not happen. Our public understood that peacekeeping is a noble endeavor wherever it takes place, and that by contributing to peace in the DRC Guatemala was making a contribution to humanity. However, we are not so sure that our public would be quite as understanding if more of our peacekeepers made the ultimate sacrifice in battling against insurgents in a distant land, trying to fulfill a role that clearly corresponds to the national army of that country. That is why we insist on the differentiation, to the highest degree possible, between the mandate of the dedicated Intervention Brigade and the activities that are proper to a robust peacekeeping mission of the United Nations.

In closing, I wish to thank our colleagues of the Security Council in having taken our concerns sufficiently on board so as to enable us to vote in favor of the resolution adopted today.

Thank you.