Every October, the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC) conducts a conference to facilitate the collaboration and exchange of information between the various actors of the peacekeeping community. The delegates to the annual meeting include representatives from peacekeeping training centres from around the world, as well as other organisations and programmes involved in peace operations. Discussions focus on matters of training and education, and the location of the conference rotates annually among the following regions: Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This year’s conference was held in New Delhi, India, and was hosted by the United Service Institution of India, Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (USI-CUNPK).

The four-day conference consisted of a series of presentations that included such topics as strategic issues, UN training, and regional perspectives, each of which was followed by a brief panel discussion to address audience questions. In addition to the presentations, functional and topical group discussions were also conducted, and their deliberations were presented to all participants at the end of the conference. The presentations and points of discussion reflected this year’s theme of “Training for Peace: Cooperation and Coordination.”

The opening session of the conference consisted of introductory remarks from several speakers. Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar, director of the United Service Institution of India, welcomed the almost 120 participants to the proceedings and expressed his pleasure in hosting representatives of peacekeeping institutions from around the world. He encouraged the delegates to lend the necessary support and renew their
commitment to strengthen the United Nations, particularly emphasising his optimism for the increased involvement of countries from Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America in peace operations.

Gen. Nambiar's welcoming remarks were followed by an opening address by Mr. Shyam Saran, Foreign Secretary of the Government of India, who spoke specifically on India's involvement in the peacekeeping community and its role in IAPTC as the new host of its Secretariat. As one of the longest serving and largest troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping, India well understands the importance of sharing experiences, streamlining training curricula, and educating all members of the peacekeeping community as a means of keeping up with the growing complexity of operations. Through a forum such as IAPTC, the methods and techniques for fulfilling these needs can be discussed. Mr. Saran focused on the necessity of IAPTC to encourage the development of integrated and standardised training methods and modules, while at the same time catering to specific, regional characteristics. Mr. Saran ended his remarks by voicing India's support of the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission in the United Nations, which would assist states in their post-conflict transition to peace.

Maj. Gen. J.K. Attipoe, President of IAPTC, reflected on the outcome of the previous year's annual conference, "Training for Peace Operations: Are We Meeting the Need?" While the proceedings identified the need for integrated training and cooperation between the military, civilian, and police sectors, Maj. Gen. Attipoe remarked that these needs have not yet been effectively met, and he called for a greater effort from regional centres and institutions to coordinate peacekeeping training and education.

The coordination efforts of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) were presented by Lt. Gen. R.K. Mehta of DPKO and Military Adviser to the Secretary-General. Gen. Mehta spoke of the challenges faced by the department, particularly the task of coordinating the UN's efforts with those of the Member States, regional organisations, and humanitarian agencies. In response to these challenges, DPKO is currently restructuring. Effective as of 1 November 2005, the Integrated Training Service would combine the existing DPKO military, police, and civilian training services. The general spoke in greater detail on this subject further on in the proceedings.

Following Gen. Mehta's remarks, the keynote address was delivered by Ambassador Kamlesh Sharma of India, who stressed the need to not only conduct successful peace operations but also promote sustainable development in the target country. As the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), he was able to indicate that most shortcomings of peacekeeping missions are a result of poor cooperation with local authorities, ineffective team management, and a lack of proper planning. While military contingents can effectively coordinate themselves, the police contingent