

4 September 2008

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Debate on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism
Strategy [118]**

Mister Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this meeting of the General Assembly to mark the first review of the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Strategy, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly two years ago, is a testament to the determination of Member States to strengthen the international front to counter terrorism and to increase the role of the United Nations in that regard.

The continued terrorist attacks serve as a stark reminder that terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Acts of terrorism are direct attacks against the values on which the United Nations is founded. They deny the virtues of humanity, dignity and mutual respect for others.

Terrorism knows no borders and affects us all. There can be no justification for this senseless and indiscriminate use of violence and it is our duty to counter it in a unified and resolute manner. Only then we shall honour the memory the victims of such heinous acts and show solidarity to their beloved ones.

Excellencies,

As you know, I have made the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as one of the priorities of the sixty-second session of General Assembly.

Throughout the session we have been engaged in finding ways how to best improve our efforts to carry out the commitments in the Strategy. Last December we had an informal mid-term stocktaking of the various measures undertaken by the United Nations as well as Member States. It was the first time since the adoption of the Strategy when Member States brought their actions to the attention of the General Assembly. The meeting sent a clear message that Member States want to take the lead on the implementation with action-oriented partnerships.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his continued leadership and express my gratitude for his comprehensive report on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy. This report has served as an important and useful contribution to our deliberations before today's meeting.

I have sought to make sure that there are appropriate avenues of dialogue between the General Assembly and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force in order to keep the membership informed of the developments the United Nations system has embarked on. I commend the Chair of the Task Force, Assistant Secretary-General Robert Orr for his efforts in fulfilling this important function and I thank him for the continued cooperation during the session.

During this session our focus has also been on the various related challenges that have a place in the Global Strategy. Fostering dialogue among cultures and religions, advancing the Millennium Development Goals, promoting the notion of human security are means through which we can address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

Last May I appointed the Permanent Representative of Guatemala, Ambassador Gert Rosenthal as a Facilitator to consult with Member States on the outcome of this meeting. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Rosenthal for his skilful stewardship of the negotiations of the draft resolution and to all the delegations for their constructive and focused participation.

The resolution to be adopted sets out a strong condemnation of terrorism and reaffirmation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It stresses the need for international cooperation against this international threat. It underlines the need for sustained efforts by Member States, who bear the primary responsibility to carry out the necessary measures, as well as by the United Nations and other appropriate international, regional and subregional organizations.

There is a clear need to work closely with regional and subregional organizations that have the special knowledge about the vulnerabilities and priorities of their regions. The United Nations should work with States to bolster those regional bodies that do not yet have sufficient counter-terrorism capacity.

The draft resolution also underlines the important part the civil society plays on how to enhance the efforts to implement the Strategy. The civil society is indeed a valuable partner for governments in ensuring the sustainability of their efforts on the ground.

The draft resolution calls upon the relevant United Nations entities to continue to facilitate the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and reminds that all measures to prevent and combat terrorism must be undertaken in compliance with international law, in particular human rights and refugee law as well as international humanitarian law.

The draft also reminds us of the pivotal role the General Assembly has played in adopting international legal instruments to counter terrorism. All Member States should strive to become parties to those instruments. In this regard, I am pleased to note that from the time of the adoption of the Strategy, International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism has entered into force.

These instruments now need to be complemented with a comprehensive convention on international terrorism to send a clear message to those who seek to undermine our human security and freedom. I have been encouraged by some of the progress made in the Ad Hoc committee during this session, but we need a true political will to resolve the outstanding issues.

The draft resolution also urges the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements to carry out the institutionalization of the Task Force in accordance with the Strategy. I commend the Governments that have provided resources to the Task Force but it is still essential to ensure a stable and sustainable central support. I am confident that the Secretary-General will continue to address this issue in a resolute manner, as requested by the Member States.

One of the vital issues during this session has been the interaction between the Assembly and the Task Force. I have made efforts to approach this matter in a pragmatic manner, through informal briefings by the Task Force to the General Assembly and circulation of information. The draft resolution provides that the General Assembly will interact with the Task Force on a regular basis in order to receive briefings and reports, assess the work and offer policy guidance. I am confident that the dialogue between the General Assembly and the UN system will continue to improve during the coming sessions.

It is also my pleasure to note that the General Assembly will in two years, at its sixty-fourth session, examine the implementation of the Strategy as well as consider updating it to respond to changes. Indeed, this is an ongoing effort, we must keep finding means of cooperation and we can use the Strategy as a reference point to embark on those common efforts.

Excellencies,

I am convinced that this General Assembly meeting will serve as an opportunity to bring forward our national experiences and share best practices in countering terrorism in an integrated manner. Through exchange of these experiences we can identify priorities and areas where each of us can work together and add value. By finding gaps and identifying where further assistance is needed we can build closer cooperation between Member States and the United Nations system.

The General Assembly took the responsibility two years ago to strengthen this Organization's response to terrorism by giving us a platform to further our common efforts. By implementing the Global Strategy we will strengthen the United Nations and reassert the role of the General Assembly by making it capable to deliver not only on our ideals and expectations but also concrete results.

Throughout this session I have emphasized on the need for a new kind of internationalism that caters to a new kind of global society - based on principled pragmatism and shared responsibility: a new way of thinking about our shared fate in a way that reflects the complexities of contemporary human and economic relations, with the well-being of the individual and communities at its centre.

We need a more active and coherent United Nations system and stronger engagement from all members of the General Assembly. The legitimacy and relevance of this Assembly depends above all on its ability to translate its decisions and commitments into practical actions.

Let us all demonstrate that the Strategy has brought us closer together to counter this scourge. Only with a strong resolve we can achieve a safer world for all.
Thank you.