



PHILIPPINES

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STATEMENT

by

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On

Agenda Item 105
Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism

before the

Sixth Committee
67th Session of the
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08-09 October 2012

STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Item 105 – SG Report on Measures to eliminate international terrorism

08 and 09 October 2012

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the outset, the Philippines reiterates its congratulations and confidence in your election as our Chairman for the 67th session.

Through you, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report.

Terrorism remains one of the gravest threats to international peace and security.

Since the adoption by the General Assembly of Resolution 49/60 in 1995, the exchange of relevant information among Member States and international organizations has been a cornerstone in our fight against terrorism. This has led, in turn, to the exchange of best practices, as well as capacity building.

To counter terrorism, we need to continuously enhance this exchange of information and of best practices, especially among our security and law enforcement agencies. This was emphasized by President Viktor Yanukovich of Ukraine in his statement at the General Debate opening the 67th session.

My delegation cannot proceed without aligning its full support for the statement delivered by Vietnam on behalf of ASEAN. Long before 9-11, and culminating last year with the entry into force of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism, ASEAN Member Countries – many of which have been victimized by terrorism over the years – have been addressing the scourge of terrorism at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels.

As Vietnam underlined, ASEAN Member Countries are in sync with the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the United Nations. With the historic adoption in 2006 of that Strategy and its Plan of Action, the international community moved from platitudes to platform in the fight against terrorism. At the third biennial review last June, we renewed our commitment to that Strategy.

The Philippines on 04 April 2012 submitted to the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force a report on the implementation of the Strategy and Plan of Action. While we fully understand that a summary of that report was not included in document A/66/762 dated 04 April 2012 on the implementation of the Strategy, we

believe that such summary should have been included in the present document A/67/162 dated 19 July 2012.

Accordingly, I shall try to be very brief in updating the Committee of our counterterrorism efforts since we discussed this matter last year.

Mr. Chairman, one of the most important counter-terrorism measures for the Philippines, then as now, is intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Respect for human dignity lies at the core of greater understanding and tolerance between and among peoples. In this vein, we condemned in the strongest terms both the attack against the US Consulate in Benghazi, Libya resulting in the death of Ambassador Chris Stevens and his three colleagues, as well as the offensive video defaming the Prophet Muhammad and Islam, a religion of peace. This tragic event underscores the need to further strengthen our resolve on interfaith dialogue and the Culture of Peace, and to sustain the continuing engagement of all stakeholders, including civil society, religious NGOs, women, the youth, the academe, and the media.

The Philippines also affirms the UN's role in strengthening the international legal architecture by promoting the rule of law, respect for human rights, and effective criminal justice systems. Together, they constitute the fundamental basis of our fight against terrorism.

In 2007, the Philippine Congress enacted Republic Act No. 9372, otherwise known as the Human Security Act, our landmark law against terrorism. Within this framework, and in cooperation with its international partners including the Financial Action Task Force, the Philippines underscores its commitment to global efforts making it very difficult to finance terrorism through money laundering.

Before, bank accounts could only be frozen with a court order. But in keeping with our commitment to good governance, the Philippine Congress enacted in June 2012 Republic Act No. 10167 or "An Act to Further Strengthen the Anti-Money Laundering Law" and Republic Act No. 10168 or the "The Terrorist Financing Prevention and Suppression Act". With the promulgation last August by the Anti-Money Laundering Council of the Philippines of their respective implementing rules and regulations, banks and financial institutions are now required to report transactions involving funds with possible links to terrorists. They empower the Council to freeze bank accounts without a court order or the need to notify the depositor, for up to twenty (20) days.

Upon determination of probable cause by court, the Council may then examine the frozen bank accounts, and request extension of the freeze order for up to six months. Failure to comply with the Council's freeze order is a criminal offense. Once the investigation starts, the concerned banks and financial institutions shall promptly give the Council full access to deposits under probe.

Mr. Chairman, the exercise of this power to make the terrorist a pariah and remove him from the means to commit terrorism, may appear draconian. But while we are providing more legal tools for law enforcement and judicial authorities to fight terrorism, respect and protection for civil liberties and human rights are assured.

The Philippines thanks the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, for the exchange of information and best practices, as well as their long-standing support for the workshops and training courses conducted by the Anti-Terrorism Council Program Management Center of the Philippines. Together, they continue to create highly focused training programs to combat terrorism. They are evidence-based and intelligence-led, and emphasize joint training for law enforcement, security and prosecution authorities.

Last March, Manila hosted an experts workshop on *Designing Training for Collaborative Investigation and Prosecution of Terrorism-Related Cases*. This implements the Philippines' Counter-Terrorism Training Initiative on Capacity Building. At this workshop, Philippine and international experts elaborated upon substantive content for the development of training materials. They also agreed on selection criteria to develop a pool of national trainers and on guideposts to assess the quality and impact of training for priority themes. These themes include intelligence gathering and analysis, investigation, and prosecution, particularly communicating with investigators and evaluating evidence.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, terrorists must never have the ability to wield the destructive force of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. The 64-point Action Plan adopted by the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference enhances international cooperation toward this aim. We must build on what we achieved at this Review Conference, working for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. And working even harder to ensure that nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction never fall into the hands of terrorists.

We all know first-hand that fighting the evil of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is very complex and difficult. Many of our countries have fallen victim to it. But rather than submit to fear and paralysis, all the more we have become undaunted and determined. The fight against terrorism should only unite us, and not sow even more conflict that will divide us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.