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United States Mission to the United Nations

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**Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of
diplomatic and consular missions and representatives**

Agenda Item 81

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The rules protecting the sanctity of ambassadors, other diplomats and consular officials enable them to carry out their vital functions. These rules are among the oldest established and most fundamental obligations of international law. Respect for these rules is a basic prerequisite for the normal conduct of relations among States.

In recent years, and in recent months, diplomatic premises, and diplomats and consular officials, have come under attack. Diplomats and embassy staff have been targeted. American missions in several countries, including Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Pakistan and Sudan, have been attacked. Tragically, on September 11 of this year, four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens, were killed during a terrorist attack on our diplomatic mission in Benghazi. In addition, the diplomatic premises of many other Member States have been breached, and diplomatic property has been damaged or destroyed. Facilities and staff of the United Nations have also been frequently targeted.

In 2010, the General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning acts of violence against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. Last year, the General Assembly came together to deplore the plot to assassinate the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United States. This year, we must all strengthen our resolve to condemn and combat all acts of violence against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives, as well as against missions and representatives of international organizations.

Individually, as host States, we must redouble our efforts to fulfill our obligations to protect diplomats and consular officials and to prevent attacks against them and against diplomatic and consular premises. We should recall, in particular that the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations provides that the premises of the mission shall be inviolable and that the host State is under a special duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity. Collectively, we must cooperate closely to develop and implement practical measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. In addition, the General Assembly should reaffirm Member States' fundamental obligations to protect diplomats and consular officials.

The United States, as Host Country to the United Nations, places particular importance on the protection of diplomats. We take our obligations as Host Country seriously, and all nations should take their obligations to protect diplomats and consular officials seriously as well.

Mr. Chairman, all of us in this room have a personal stake in diplomatic protection. But the world also has a vital stake in the protection of diplomats, because diplomacy is the foundation of international relations. There are forces in this world which seek to destroy the ability of diplomats to perform their crucial functions, prevent diplomatic discourse, and undermine peaceful relations among States. We all must stand united against them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.