

STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Item 108 – Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Sixth Committee, 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly

13 October 2015

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Before anything else, my delegation congratulates you and the Bureau for your important appointment to lead the work of our Committee. We have every confidence in your wisdom and leadership, and you can count on our support and friendship.

Terrorism remains one of the gravest threats to international peace and security. The Philippines reiterates in the strongest terms its condemnation and rejection of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as well as acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever, by whomever, against whomsoever committed.

We subscribe to the statements of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or (ASEAN) delivered, respectively, by the Islamic Republic of Iran and by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. With other intergovernmental and regional organizations, NAM and ASEAN promote the genuine cooperation that is essential to defeating terrorism.

We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report.

Mr Chairman, no single country can defeat terrorism. Like many, the Philippines continues to face its threats. That is why we need to stay vigilant. We need to keep enhancing our cooperation at all levels. That is the *raison d'être* of our Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 49/60 in 1995, the exchange of relevant information among Member States, international and regional organizations has been crucial in our cooperation. The collective work of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate have all contributed to the exchange of best practices and capacity building, especially among our security and law enforcement agencies.

Even before supporting Security Council resolution 2178 last year on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, the Philippines had long supported global efforts countering violent extremism (CVE). We continue to develop our capacity to detect and prevent homegrown violent extremism. This includes our grassroots-based Target Hardening Program to help raise the security awareness of local communities, as well as train them in monitoring and preventing terrorist attacks against vital installations and critical infrastructures, economic key points, and places of convergence. This also includes our de-radicalization programs, in partnership with local religious leaders and religious schools.

For the Philippines and for many others, interfaith, interreligious and intercultural dialogue has been a cornerstone in the war against terrorism. It is anchored on respect for human dignity and greater understanding and tolerance among peoples. It rejects extremism. We must further strengthen and build upon this dialogue and the Culture of Peace, and sustain the continuing engagement of all stakeholders, including civil society, religious NGOs, women, the youth, the academe, and the media. We have a consensus in favor of a “whole of society” approach that includes all stakeholders in counterterrorism efforts.

What is new on our part, is that we are currently working on a “National CVE Consultation Process” that will draw wide stakeholder support, especially from women and youth. We are also now creating an Inter-Agency Working Group on Persons of Interest/Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Conflict Areas. As a proactive step, we held last August an inter-agency seminar on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, meant to come up with parameters to identify or classify a Person of Interest and/or Foreign Terrorist Fighter, and streamline the respective mechanisms of different government agencies in monitoring a suspected traveler/person who has the potential to become a Foreign Terrorist Fighter.

Last year, after a lot of international, regional and national preparatory work, the Chemical-Biological-Radiological-Nuclear (CBRN) Center of Excellence Regional Headquarters was established in Manila. The Anti-Terrorism Council Program Management Center is acting as the Secretariat. In this regard, the Philippines hosted also last August an ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Workshop on “Raising Awareness and Promoting ARF Cooperation in CBRN Risk Management”.

The foregoing developments have also been supported by the Philippines’ chairmanship of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Counterterrorism Working Group.

The Philippines has consistently updated its laws against money laundering and terrorist financing. Our Anti-Money Laundering Council has been winning judicial writs of execution against bank deposits and real estate assets linked to terrorist groups.

Mr Chairman, after 18 long years and two working drafts from the Ad Hoc Committee created by General Assembly resolution 51/210 (1996), we are still debating a draft convention on international terrorism. We need to demonstrate political resolve to conclude negotiations. We reiterate our support towards finalizing the process on a draft comprehensive convention.

The Philippines cannot conclude without condemning in the strongest possible terms the inhumane and dastardly terrorist attack on innocent civilians in Ankara, Turkey last Saturday, 10 October, who were gathering in support of peace. We share the grief and sorrow of the Turkish nation. The Philippines affirms its commitment to peace and adherence to the rule of law and, together with the international community, stands by Turkey in its fight against terrorism.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.