

Statement by Varuni Muthukumarana, First Secretary,  
Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations

Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly 70<sup>th</sup> Session

**Agenda item 108: Measures to eliminate international terrorism**

**12-13 October 2015**

Mr. Chairman,

Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair of the Sixth Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Iran on behalf of the NAM.

The scourge of terrorism continues to besiege humanity and remains one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. Sri Lanka condemns, unequivocally, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of where, by whom and for what purpose they are committed.

Terrorism has claimed innocent human lives and caused untold suffering over the years. State borders continue to collapse as terrorist groups seize new territory, as recently seen in the Middle East. ISIL continues to erase human history through the deliberate destruction of irreplaceable cultural heritage sites, most recently in the ancient city of Palmyra which it captured in May of this year. More generally, the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters continues to be an area of grave concern. With tens of thousands of such fighters hailing from over 100 States, there can be no doubt that a more robust global response is required.

Sri Lanka reaffirms its commitment to the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which continues to consolidate the activities of Member States and presents a common strategic and operational framework to fight terrorism and protect the right to life. Sri Lanka is accordingly a party to 13 counter-terrorism Conventions, and to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. We remain an active participant in global efforts to counter the illegal movement of funds for terrorist purposes, and will continue to support the work of the General Assembly and the Security Council in coordinating counter-terrorism efforts and establishing legal norms.

International networks with linkages to organized crime are a critical lifeline for every terrorist group. These networks enable terrorists to propagate their ideologies, raise funds and acquire arms. They are funded by profits siphoned from human and arms trafficking, money laundering and cyber-crimes. We encourage all States to pool their resources and share intelligence so as to counter this problem in the manner it deserves.

Sri Lanka notes with appreciation the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism established by the General Assembly to strengthen the international legal framework against terrorism. The considerable efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee are reflected in the three counter-terrorism Conventions it has negotiated and concluded since its establishment, namely, the Conventions on Terrorist Bombings, Terrorist Financing and Nuclear Terrorism.

Despite broad support for the Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), a positive conclusion to negotiations has eluded us for over a decade. Sri Lanka wishes to stress the importance of finalizing these negotiations as a vital step to fill gaps and to complement the existing sectoral Conventions. We believe that the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, a significant milestone for our organization, presents an ideal and decisive opportunity for Member States to demonstrate the political will necessary to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion. To that end, Sri Lanka urges Member States to resolve the outstanding differences without undue delay. It is imperative that we send a clear message on the resolve of the international community to combat this phenomenon, for the sake of all victims of terrorism.

Sri Lanka believes that human development, and in particular the empowerment of women and youth, is of critical importance in the fight against terrorism. The eradication of poverty, in concert with increased social and economic opportunities, is essential to counter human frustration and the threat of radicalization. Equally, terrorism should not be associated with any ethnicity or religion. Tolerance and understanding between ethnic and religious groups must continue to be cultivated and nurtured if we are ever to rid ourselves of the terrorist menace.

It is vital to ensure that any and all measures taken to combat terrorism are in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law, and in particular international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law. We must remain vigilant in our self-discipline, lest we brush shoulders with the very evil we seek to eradicate.

To that end, Sri Lanka remains mindful of its obligation to recognize, safeguard and promote human rights and respect for the rule of law and good governance. Our new

vision for the country, built upon a foundation of sustainable development and reconciliation, lies firmly in consonance with this objective. Moreover, we intend to implement a new programme and plan of action in Sri Lanka to further advance human rights, peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

As a country which comprehensively eradicated terrorism from its soil following a violent and tragic era that spanned almost three decades, Sri Lanka places great importance on international cooperation in the effort to combat terrorism. We look forward to a more constructive dialogue with all countries and will continue to advocate tirelessly against the scourge of terrorism.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.