

Sri Lanka Statement
by
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Mr. Chairperson

Let me begin on behalf of my delegation by warmly congratulating you and the Bureau on your election. Be assured Mr. Chairperson, of Sri Lanka's full support as you begin the work of the Sixth Committee. Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of NAM.

Mr. Chairperson

At the outset, Sri Lanka extends its most sincere condolences to the victims and their families of all terror attacks that continue unabated, in a world where violence is becoming increasingly the new normal.

As a country that suffered under the yoke of terrorism for thirty long years, we condemn unequivocally and in the strongest possible terms, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. All acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, and wherever, whenever and by whosoever committed. All such attacks are an attack on *all of us*, and it is indeed time for *all of us* to show solidarity and unity of purpose in combating this scourge.

We welcome the creation of the Office of Counter Terrorism to strengthen the capability of the United Nations system, and to assist Member States in implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a balanced way. We congratulate **Ambassador Vladimir Ivanovich Voronkov** on his appointment as Under Secretary General of the OCT and we are confident that his Office will strengthen the 'all of United Nations Approach' the 38 entities of the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force has taken to its coordination and coherence mandate.

Sri Lanka will make every endeavor to cooperate with the OCT in its key functions and welcomes the focus on capacity-building assistance to Member States. In this regard Sri Lanka is fortunate to have hosted three Regional Workshop for Judges, Prosecutors and Police Officers of South Asian Member States on Effectively Countering Terrorism, in 2009, 2016 and 2017 organized by Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate.

Though we have made progress in the implementation of the Counter Terrorism Strategy since 2006, we have encountered many challenges as a result of the changing face of terrorism and violent extremism, not least of all due to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, financing of terrorism, rapid advancement of technology, porous borders and large movements of humanity due to violence.

International networks with linkages to organized crime are a critical lifeline for violent extremists and terrorists groups. It is therefore imperative for all member states to pool their resources and share intelligence to counter this issue.

We must also give due consideration to the fourth pillar of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, of ensuring human rights and the rule of law is observed in these global efforts to counter terrorism. At the same time, terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, cannot, must not and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

In many parts of the world, violent extremism targets vulnerable and marginalized communities, children, minorities, women and girls. It is therefore imperative, that we proactively include and engage those entities of the United Nations System that deal with Children, Minorities, Women and Girls.

While we must make every effort to prevent refugee and asylum status from being abused for purposes of perpetrating terror, let us not close our borders or our hearts too tightly, that we fail to protect the poor, weak, vulnerable, and marginalized among us. We must at all times in this collective fight against terror, continue to fulfill our obligations under the UN charter, international law, international human rights law, and humanitarian law.

Mr. Chairperson

I now turn to the matter of the Convention on International Terrorism that this Committee has been dealing with for over a decade. In this regard we congratulate the Coordinator of the working Group for Terrorism Mr. Angel Horna for the intersessional efforts he has taken to informally consult member states on a way forward and to maintain the momentum.

We recognize that the building blocks for a normative framework in enhancing international cooperation in these areas, are contained in the efforts undertaken by the General Assembly; in particular, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism which has already resulted in three new generation sectoral conventions on the suppression of terrorism being adopted, namely, the Terrorism

Bombings Convention, The Terrorist Financing Convention and the Nuclear Terrorism Convention.

However, despite the support of most member states, and having been mandated by the General assembly to come up with a comprehensive legal framework, to fill possible gaps in the existing sectorial Conventions on terrorism, it is regrettable that there we have not been able to muster the necessary political will to break the current impasse surrounding the draft comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. (CCIT)

It is pertinent at this time to recall also, that the conclusion of the CCIT was a mandate given to us by our leaders at the World Summit in 2005 and was one of the key components of the 2006 Plan of Action to combat Terrorism.

Surely, is it not time, during this seventy second session of the General Assembly, that we, as member states, seize the opportunity to finally demonstrate the political will necessary and take decisive action to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion? In this spirit, we urges Member States to resolve the outstanding differences without 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 and for the future of our world as we know it. Given the threats we face today, there is no time more urgent than now to make this happen.

Mr. Chairperson,

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 and act tirelessly against the scourge of terrorism.

Thank you