

Seventy-eighth session
Sixth Committee
Agenda item 109

Measures to eliminate international terrorism
Oral report of the Chair of the Working Group
Chair: Mr. Rohan Perera (Sri Lanka)

Mr. Chair,

My oral statement is available to delegations. For purposes of the present delivery, I will omit certain parts to make it even shorter.

“I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/113 of 7 December 2022, the Sixth Committee, at its first meeting, on 2 October 2023, decided to establish a working group to finalize the process on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and to discuss the item included in its agenda by General Assembly resolution 54/110 concerning the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

2. At the same meeting, the Sixth Committee elected me as Chair of the Working Group. Pursuant to paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 51/210 and consistent with past practice, the Working Group was open to all States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

[3. In accordance with established practice, the Working Group decided that members of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee, to the extent of their availability, would continue to act as Friends of the Chair during the meetings of the Working Group.]

4. The Working Group had before it for discussion, the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on its sixteenth session (A/68/37), [which contains as Annex I the preamble and articles 1, 2, and 4 to 27 of the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism (hereinafter the “draft comprehensive convention”), prepared by the Bureau, incorporating the various provisions contained in A/C.6/65/L.10;] and written proposals relating to the outstanding issues surrounding the draft comprehensive convention[, contained in the report as Annex II].

5. The Working Group also had before it, relevant letters from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations [the letter from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, dated 1 September 2005 (A/60/329), and the letter dated 30 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Chair of the Sixth Committee (A/C.6/60/2).] [The Chair also drew to the attention of

the Working Group last year's oral report by the Chair of the Working Group, contained in document A/C.6/77/SR.35.]

II. Proceedings of the Working Group

6. The Working Group held two meetings, on 17 October and 3 November. The Working Group adopted its programme of work and held its discussions in the framework of informal consultations. The informal consultations on the outstanding issues relating to the draft convention were led by Mr. Michael Kanu (Sierra Leone), while those concerning the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations were chaired by me. The informal consultations were held on 17 October and 3 November.

III. Informal summary

8. The present informal summary is for reference purposes only and is not an official record of the proceedings.

[9. Consistent with previous practice, and in accordance with resolution 77/113, the informal consultations were devoted to discussing the outstanding issues on the draft comprehensive convention and the proposal made by Egypt concerning the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The informal consultations were held against the backdrop of the plenary debate on the item "measures to eliminate international terrorism" at the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th plenary meetings of the Sixth Committee, held on 2, 3, and 4 October 2023, during which delegations in most part reiterated positions on the draft comprehensive convention, generally expressing support for its conclusion, and on the convening of the high-level conference.]

10. During informal consultations on the draft comprehensive convention, held on 17 October, Mr. Michael Kanu (Sierra Leone) gave an overview of the work undertaken over the years in the context of the Working Group and the Ad Hoc Committee established pursuant to resolution 51/210. He provided some background and an update on the status of the negotiations regarding the outstanding issues surrounding the draft comprehensive convention. It was recalled that the work has proceeded on the general understanding that further consideration would be given to all written amendments and proposals that are on the table, together with all other written and oral proposals, in future discussions, including on outstanding issues. Particular attention was also drawn to the 2013 Bureau proposal (A/68/37), as well as an informal non-paper of the former coordinator, Mr. Angel Horna, on a possible way to overcome differences on the outstanding issues relating to the draft comprehensive convention and comments were invited on the latter, bearing in mind recent efforts to consider other pathways towards reaching agreement on the text.

11. In the brief discussion that ensued, some delegations expressed their continued interest in the efforts of the Working Group towards reaching agreement on the outstanding issues, while the point was made on the need to first have some understanding of the underlying legal principles underpinning the definition of

terrorism, before the Working Group could consider any textual proposals. Attention was also drawn to the importance of preserving the existing global counter-terrorism framework.

12. At the informal consultations held on 3 November, the Working Group also considered the question of convening a high-level conference [under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate a joint organized response of the international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.] The continued relevance of this proposal was reiterated by the sponsor delegation of Egypt, together with its proponents. While some delegations reiterated their support for convening a high-level conference, others indicated that holding a high-level conference would be premature without first achieving consensus on the outstanding issues.

13. As Chair of the Working Group, I am most grateful to delegations for their continued interest, cooperation and assistance on a matter that is complex in many dimensions. I encourage delegations to continue working together with the Coordinator of the outstanding issues relating to the draft comprehensive convention, Mr. Michael Kanu, intersessionally.

14. I recommend that the Committee take note of the present oral report.”

Mr. Chair,

15. Let me conclude on a personal note. This year will be my last to chair the Working Group. I have chaired the Ad Hoc Committee and the Working Groups of the Sixth Committee on this item for more than 20 years and have seen three important counter-terrorism conventions adopted. We have all been moved by a common desire to strengthen the international legal framework to combat international terrorism. I always had and still hold hope in my heart even as I leave that the international community will overcome the existing differences and reach agreement on a draft comprehensive convention. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the delegations for their work at this and previous sessions. And I wish success to all of you, as well as to the future Chair of this Working Group, with this challenging but important endeavour. The lasting friendships established over the years are memories I shall forever cherish.

Thank you and thank you all very much.