*http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gal3433.doc.htm*

October 8, 2012

**Legal Committee Urges Conclusion of Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism**

**Delegates Urge Clear Definition**

**To Distinguish Terrorist Acts from Right of Self-determination**

As the Sixth Committee (Legal) began consideration of measures to eliminate international terrorism, delegates, while condemning the association of terrorism with any specific religious, cultural or ethnic grouping, called for increased international cooperation to — once and for all — define terrorism and conclude a convention on the topic.

Egypt’s representative, speaking for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, expressed serious concern about religious hatred — specifically the denigration of Islam and its association with terrorism.  He emphasized that there was no religious doctrine supportive of terrorism and that it was crucial for the international community to cooperate and apply a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that addressed terrorism’s root causes.  However, terrorism needed to be distinguished from the right to self-determination.

An exacerbation of political, social and interethnic conflicts attempted to use religion to justify terrorism and extremism, stated Kazakhstan’s delegate, speaking for the Collective Security Treaty Organization.  Therefore, international organizations and religious leaders needed to support dialogue on those matters.  Because open intercultural and interreligious dialogue would foster peace and security, her country would be open to facilitating a meeting for religious leaders.

Echoing the call for a clear definition of terrorism and an early conclusion, Bangladesh’s representative also stressed that for the Global Strategy to succeed, the root causes of terrorism needed to be addressed.  In his country, education, women’s empowerment and the propagation of secular and moderate cultural values were at the centre of a national counter-radicalization strategy.

“It cannot be business as usual,” said the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, speaking for the Caribbean Community.  Like other delegates, he urged for acceleration in the protracted discussions on the draft comprehensive convention and for the finalizing of a legal definition of the term.  The situation in the African Sahel should compel Member States to ensure terrorists were “deprived of a beach-head” in the Sahel and other regions, he stated.

According to Liechtenstein’s delegate, the Sixth Committee, in the “increasingly crowded field of counter-terrorism”, could add greatest value by finalizing the draft comprehensive convention, the text of which would not get any better.

Also encouraging conclusion of the draft comprehensive convention was the representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo, who described the situation in his country where hundreds of thousands of men and women had been robbed of peace by the 23 March Movement (M23) and children had been forced to kill their brothers and sisters.  Such acts deserved the strongest condemnation, as well as the imposition of sanctions.

The Committee’s debate was being held against the backdrop of the harsh reality of terrorism, stated the delegate of Afghanistan.  His country had been struggling against terrorism for more than two decades — a struggle that extended back to the “dark era” of the Taliban regime.  More needed to be done to protect present and future generations and transform political commitment into reality.

In the debate today, speaking on behalf of regional groups were Canada (also for New Zealand and Australia); Chile for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States; Viet Nam for the Association of South-East Asian Nations; Iran for the Non-Aligned Movement; and Kyrgyzstan for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Speaking in their national capacities were the representatives of Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Senegal, United Arab Emirates, Philippines, Belarus, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, United States, Cambodia, Russian Federation, El Salvador, Kuwait, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Morocco, Tunisia, Malaysia, Norway, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Yemen, Congo, Serbia, Nicaragua and Libya.

Also speaking was a representative of the Delegation of the European Union.

The delegates of Syria and Kuwait spoke in right of reply.

The Committee will meet again tomorrow, Tuesday, 9 October, at 10 a.m., to conclude its consideration of measures to eliminate terrorism.

Background

The Sixth Committee (Legal) began its current session with consideration of measures to eliminate terrorism, for which it had before it two reports of the Secretary-General and two letters from the Permanent Representative of Syria.

The first report, on measures to eliminate international terrorism (documents [A/67/162](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/162) and [A/67/162/Add.1](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/162/Add.1)), contains information on measures taken at the national and international levels, based on submissions from Governments and international organizations.  Also within the report are lists of international legal instruments and descriptions of workshops and training courses on combating crimes connected with international terrorism.

The report also includes information from the following Member States:  Austria; Belgium; Cuba; Cyprus; El Salvador; Finland; Hungary; Kuwait; Lebanon; Oman; Qatar; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; and Switzerland.  An addendum to the report includes information received from Kuwait and Turkey.

The following organizations from the United Nations system submitted relevant information:  the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); International Maritime Organization (IMO); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Information was received from other organizations, including:  the African Union; Commonwealth of Independent States; Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf; and International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

Concerning the status of international legal instruments for the prevention and suppression of international terrorism, the report finds that, currently, there are 40 instruments, 18 universal (14 instruments and four recent amendments) and 22 regional, pertaining to the subject.  Their status is available at the Sixth Committee website.

Among the universal instruments are the 1963 Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, the 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism; as well as the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Regional instruments include the 1999 Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism, the 2001 Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, the 2002 Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, and the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism.

The second report, on technical assistance for implementing the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism (document [A/67/158](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/158)), focuses on progress made by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in particular its Terrorism Prevention Branch, in delivering technical assistance to counter terrorism during the period from 1 January 2011 to 30 April this year.  It identifies the challenges to adequately respond to Member States’ evolving needs when addressing the criminal justice aspects of countering terrorism, and it emphasizes the necessity for enhanced governmental support to meet those challenges.

The report notes that since January 2003, 168 countries had received support for the ratification and implementation of the international legal instruments against terrorism, and for the strengthening of the capacity of national criminal justice systems to effectively implement the provisions of those instruments.  In addition, UNODC had provided national-level technical assistance to 38 countries and had held 29 thematically-focused regional and subregional workshops, reaching an additional 68 countries.

The report goes on to say that UNODC had also developed in-depth counter-terrorism programmes for a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Morocco, Nigeria, Philippines, Viet Nam and Yemen.  Other country-specific programmes were currently under development.  At the regional level, UNODC had developed, in partnership with countries in the region, a subprogramme on counter-terrorism for the period 2011-2013, entitled “East and South-East Asia partnership on criminal justice responses to terrorism”.

Also before the Committee were two letters from the Permanent Representative of Syria.  The first letter (document [A/67/374–S/2012/706](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/374)), dated 14 September and addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, provides preliminary estimates of alleged damage to private property caused by armed groups and compensation paid to citizens as of 15 June.  The second letter (document [A/67/376–S/2012/709](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/376)), dated 16 September and addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, reports the alleged destruction of public and private property in several cities in Syria by terrorist groups.

Organizational Matters

The Committee first completed the process of electing its officers that had begun on 4 September this year (see Press Release [GA/L/3431](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/gal3431.doc.htm)).  Already elected were Yuriy Sergeyev (Ukraine) as Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons, Martin Huth (Germany), Gonzalo Bonifaz (Peru) and Ismail Chekkori (Morocco).  Election of the new Rapporteur would take place at a later date.

The Committee next took note of the 20 agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly on 21 September (see Press Release [GA/11192](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/ga11192.doc.htm)).  Three working groups were also established.   The first working group would consider the Committee’s work with regard to criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission.  Consultations among delegations would be ongoing in deciding who would assume the Chairmanship of that working group.  Working groups were also established to consider the Committee’s work on measures to eliminate terrorism, with Rohan Perera (Sri Lanka) as Chairperson; and the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction, with Eduardo Ulibarri (Costa Rica) as Chairperson.

Statements

GILES ANDREW NORMAN (Canada), speaking also for New Zealand and Australia, pointed out that eleven years after the tragedy of 11 September 2001, the threat of terrorism continued to persist and to evolve throughout the world.  Recalling the recent conclusion of the General Assembly’s third biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy for which Canada served as coordinator, he said that, despite divergent points of view, the international community was in agreement that an effective response to terrorism needed to be global in scope.

Turning to the Secretary-General’s report on the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, he urged the international community to support victims of terrorism in every way possible.  He also urged that Member States become parties to existing counter-terrorism instruments.  However, a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which would bind together the existing framework into a single system and deny safe haven to terrorists, still eluded the international community.

He went on to say that Canada, New Zealand and Australia continued to engage in regional counter-terrorism cooperation and capacity-building with States that opposed terrorism, but lacked the immediate means to resist it.  Further, through involvement with the Financial Action Taskforce and its regional bodies, Canada, New Zealand and Australia worked to deny terrorists access to necessary resources.

In reprising its role as coordinator of the resolution on measures to eliminate international terrorism, he said his country looked forward to working with other Member States to “relegate the scourge of international terrorism to the dustbin of history”.

ROLAND TRICOT, First Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union, stressed that terrorist acts were unjustifiable and criminal, and should be prevented, prosecuted and punished.  Fighting international terrorism should continue to be a United Nations priority, guided by fundamental democratic values, human rights, well-functioning institutions, good governance, and in compliance with the rule of law.  The European Union itself tackled terrorism by pursuing a civilian law enforcement approach that reflected those principles.  More emphasis, however, should be placed on preventing terrorism by addressing conditions conducive to its spread.

Speaking in support of the Secretary-General’s recommendations contained in the report on the matter, he called the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy a “touchstone” for the European Union and its Member States.  He encouraged full implementation of that strategy, including all Security Council and General Assembly counter-terrorism resolutions.  Sanctions measures, an important tool in fighting terrorism internationally, should be applied promptly and effectively.  Particularly welcome were the Security Council’s efforts to reinforce fair and clear procedures in the framework of the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

Turning to cooperation between the European Union and United Nations, he expressed support for the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, as well as the establishment of a United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.  He specifically commended the relevant work of UNODC and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, encouraging efforts to reinforce and maximize internal coordination.

Stating that the European Union was committed to preventing financial system abuse by criminals and terrorists, he welcomed the adoption of revised international standards on the matter, as well as international measures that ensured solidarity, assistance and compensation for victims of criminal acts.  Concluding, he urged Member States to ratify and implement all United Nations counter-terrorism conventions and protocols.

OCTAVIO ERRÁZURIZ (Chile), speaking for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, expressed concern that terrorism continued to be a serious threat to individual Member States, as well as the international community.  Condemning all acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, he reaffirmed the Group’s commitment to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Noting the need for overall coordination and transparency to avoid duplication in counter-terrorism efforts, he called for greater cooperation among United Nations entities and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.  Further, he rejected the unilateral elaboration of blacklists that accused States of allegedly supporting and sponsoring terrorism, saying that it was inconsistent with international law.  The measures to combat terrorism, he stressed, must always be conducted in strict observance of international law.

He then turned to the outstanding issues which had hindered the completion of an international convention to counter terrorism, stating “it is time for all delegations to show flexibility”.  He urged Member States to continue to seek the best possible text while being mindful it might not be the best option for any particular delegation or group of delegations.

IBRAHIM SALEM (Egypt), speaking for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said that terrorism, regardless of its motivation, objective, form or manifestation, could not be justified.  Further, there was no religious doctrine supportive of terrorism or that could be portrayed as such.  In today’s world, bridges must be built among all cultures and people.  Likewise, the international community needed to cooperate to fight terrorism, applying a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that addressed terrorism’s root causes.  However, when applying counter-terrorism measures, a distinction must be made between the definition of terrorism and the right of peoples to self-determination.  More so, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was a living document that should be updated regularly and be implemented in a balanced manner.

He went on to say that payment of ransom to terrorist groups was one of the main sources of terrorist financing and should be banned.  While expressing support for reaching consensus on a draft comprehensive convention on terrorism, he reiterated the need to distinguish between terrorism and the right of people to self-determination.  In that regard, a high-level conference should be held to form a joint international response to terrorism in all its forms, and to establish a definition of terrorism.

Continuing, he said he was seriously concerned with intolerance, discrimination, profiling, negative stereotyping, and, specifically, religious hatred and denigration of Islam, associated with terrorism.  Recalling a video made recently that had defamed Muslims, he said that publicizing that video was a heinous act that had violated various General Assembly resolutions.  Although freedom of expression should be exercised, it could only be done so with responsibility and in accordance with international human rights laws and instruments.  Expression that incited hatred and violence should be condemned, and a dialogue that encouraged international understanding, peace and harmony should be conducted.

LE HOAI TRUNG ( Viet Nam), speaking for the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), condemned all forms and manifestations of terrorism.  One of the most serious threats to the international community, terrorism, for any reason, was unjustified and its perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Although ASEAN had taken a cohesive and united approach in the regional and international levels, he pointed out that more needed to be done to combat terrorism.  However, counter-terrorism measures must always conform to the principles of international law, the rule of law, and the sovereignty of States.

Recalling various efforts undertaken by ASEAN, he highlighted the entry into force of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism, noting that it had strengthened the group’s regional capacity and the region’s strategic role in combating terrorism.  He added that Member States had also adopted domestic legislation to implement the Convention.

TALAIBEK KYDYROV (Kyrgyzstan), speaking for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, condemned all forms and manifestations of terrorism, regardless of motivation, wherever and whenever it occurred and by whomsoever committed such acts.  Because terrorists operated on a global scale, the danger from those acts could only be counteracted by strengthening collective international cooperation mechanisms through a worldwide multilateral endeavour that complied with international law.  Thus, the role of the United Nations as a unique structure capable of consolidating international efforts needed to be strengthened and the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as relevant resolutions and conventions, fully implemented.  Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States would continue to enhance their interaction with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Security Council and its counter-terrorism committees.

Gravely concerned with the expansion of terrorist ideology, he pointed out that numerous ethnicities with different religious beliefs and cultural traditions lived in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s territory.  Condemning terrorism must become an “intrinsic” dialogue between religions and civilizations.  He underscored the importance of developing anti-terrorism partnerships between states, civil society, and mass media.  As part of that effort, the twelfth Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization had adopted the Program of Fighting Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2013–2015, which aimed to strengthen joint efforts to fight terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and organized crime.

Continuing, he said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization also strove to improve operation of its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure, which coordinated relevant work among member States.  Strengthening regional security was a priority in Central Asia, where terrorist and narcotic threats emanating from Afghanistan were destabilizing to the region.  A dangerous nexus between terrorism and organized crime, particularly drug-related crime, existed and should be broken.  Calling for a conclusion on a draft comprehensive convention on terrorism, he noted that many Shanghai Cooperation Organization agreements had made an important contribution to the development of that legal framework.

MOHAMMAD KHAZAEE ( Iran), speaking for the Non-Aligned Movement, called terrorist acts a “flagrant violation of international law”.  Those acts endangered the territorial integrity and stability of States as well as national, regional and international security.  Such destabilization caused economic and social development to have adverse consequences, and destroyed States’ physical and economic infrastructure.  Continuing, he described the brutalization of people under colonial, alien and foreign occupation as “the gravest form of terrorism”.  The use of State power to suppress those exercising their right to self-determination should continue to be condemned.

Conscious of the need to take speedy and effective measures to eliminate terrorism, he urged all States to fulfil their obligations under international law, including prosecuting or extraditing perpetrators; preventing the financing, instigation and organization of terrorism; and refraining from allowing the use of their territories for terrorist acts or supplying arms and weapons that could be used for such acts.  He also condemned the use of counter-terrorism measures as a pretext for political aims, as well as the application of refugee status or any other legal status to prevent the extradition of a perpetrator.

He said all States should consider ratifying the 13 relevant international instruments and implement the regional and bilateral instruments to which they were party.  Calling upon the Security Council sanction committees to further streamline their listing and delisting procedures, he said that the international community should hold an International Summit Conference on formulating a joint response to terrorism and identifying its root causes.  Likewise, the draft comprehensive convention on terrorism should be finalized and the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and activities of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force fully implemented.  In conclusion, he called upon States to address and condemn hostage-taking and the demand for ransoms by terrorist groups.

EDEN CHARLES ( Trinidad and Tobago), speaking for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), called for Member States’ renewed vigour to eliminate international terrorism.  “It cannot be business as usual,” he said, noting that the international context in which this debate was being held differed in some troubling respects from what it was a year ago.  Calling to mind the African Sahel in particular, he said the situation there should add a fresh note of urgency to the current debate and compel Member States to ensure that terrorists were “deprived of a beach-head” in the Sahel and other regions.

Terrorism, he went on to say, was an albatross that significantly obstructed the social, economic, political and psychological fabric of the entire global community.  He urged that all appropriate measures designed to eliminate it at the national and international levels be pursued, and he called for acceleration in the protracted discussions on the draft comprehensive convention.  In that respect, a universally accepted legal definition of terrorism was crucial towards ending impunity for the perpetrators of such heinous crimes and critical in improving the international community’s response to those crimes.

Continuing, he said that a greater level of coordination among international bodies was needed, as efforts to eradicate terrorism remained inadequate.  Welcoming additional assistance in implementing the Global Strategy, he said developing countries, such as those in CARICOM, viewed such support as an integral part of their efforts to implement the strategy and participate meaningfully in the global fight against terrorism.  In spite of resource constraints, CARICOM Member States had made strides to implement national legislation and other measures aimed at combating terrorism.

ABDULEAHMAN AL-AHMED ( Saudi Arabia) said terrorism was no longer a local struggle confined to one specific country, but a concern that required the collective action of the international community.  Noting his country’s readiness to participate in all counter-terrorism efforts, he called on Member States to agree on a legal definition of terrorism that had “no double standard”.  Terrorism knew no religion and belonged to no ethnic group, he stressed.  Troubled by attempts to link Islam with terrorism, Saudi Arabia could not accept counter-terrorism as a fight against innocent Muslims or against Islam.

Continuing, he said that it was also necessary to distinguish between terrorism and the killing of innocent people on one hand, and aggression and the right to fight against occupation on the other hand.  He denounced the “official state terrorism” carried out by Israel against the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle against occupation for the right to self-determination, and urged the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, calling it the cause of instability in that region.

Saudi Arabia, he stated, had played an active role in global counter-terrorism efforts, including the establishment of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in Jeddah, to which it had donated $10 million.  Noting that counter-terrorism required cooperation, international coordination and the exchange of expertise, he asked Member States to benefit from the Centre, calling it a model of collective work to preserve international peace and security.

BARBARA GONZENBACH (Switzerland), confirming her country’s commitment to rule of law and human rights in the context of combating terrorism, said that the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy had underlined the importance of greater cooperation among United Nations entities for stronger coherence.  Switzerland supported appointing a Global Counter Terrorism Coordinator who would enhance the efficiency and coherence of United Nations counter-terrorism work internally, and, externally, would give the United Nations a face and voice on the matter, increase its visibility and underpin the perception of the Organization as a unified and strong counter-terrorism actor.

Lastly, she said, finalization of a comprehensive convention on terrorism would underscore the General Assembly as an organ whose legitimacy was universally recognized and one which had unique authority in setting standards, including those in the area of combating terrorism.

FATOU ISIDORA MARA NIANG ( Senegal) expressed hopes that the lack of consistency in a United Nations strategy to combat terrorism would soon be overcome.  She welcomed the Secretary-General’s proposal to appoint a United Nations Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism Measures, noting that such function would make it possible to rationalize the Organization’s actions against terrorism and provide a higher profile to the cause.

Terrorism continued to be rampant and continued to take innocent lives, she said.  Calling to mind the situation in the Sahel, she pointed out that “our combat is far from being over”.  In order to effectively combat terrorism, action on the national, regional and global levels was essential.  Enhanced dialogue was also critical to promote greater understanding among cultures, eradicate misunderstandings and stereotypes, and foster a culture of tolerance.

Condemning any attempt to associate terrorism with any culture, race, religion, or ethnic group, she called for a greater degree of accession to international instruments in order to further strengthen the counter-terrorism legal framework.  She also urged Member States to withhold no effort in resolving all outstanding questions related to the draft comprehensive convention.

STEFAN BARRIGA (Liechtenstein) said his country, in its fight against terrorism, had ratified all 13 universal counter-terrorism treaties, submitted seven reports to the Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee and continued to support the work of other relevant Council committees.  In addition, Liechtenstein, as a member of the Group of Like-Minded Countries, continued to promote the effectiveness and legitimacy of terrorism-related sanctions regimes.  In that regard, he called upon the Council to further enhance fair and clear procedures and to apply them, as appropriate, to other sanctions regimes.

The Sixth Committee, he went on to say, should consider its role in the “increasingly crowded field of counter-terrorism”, noting that it could add the greatest value by finalizing negotiations on the draft comprehensive convention.  The question was mainly that of political will and timing, and not one of further drafting and negotiating.  Stressing that the draft text would not get any better and that any attempts to insert major substantive changes would only take the Committee further away from its common denominator, he urged Member States to “finally seal the deal”.

Concluding, he also asked that the Committee consider the current agenda item on a biennial basis, alternating with the General Assembly’s plenary consideration of counter-terrorism.  Moving the biennial strategy review from summer to fall would allow it to benefit from the presence of experts who attended the work of the Sixth Committee.

ABDALLA ALJASMI (United Arab Emirates) said that in spite of intensified efforts deployed by the international community to defeat and combat terrorism, more and more serious and dangerous forms of terrorism and organized crime continued to have a disastrous impact on international peace and security.  In the last decade, the events of 11 September 2001 and different terrorist acts in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East, as well as in the Palestinian territories and other occupied territories, the Arab territories and Syria, proved that such acts were not related to nationality, religion, dogma or culture.

He stated that the United Nations should, in addition to the Global Strategy, continue to implement counter-terrorism measures based on international law.  He urged individual States to refrain from inciting hatred against any religious and cultural systems, calling special attention to provocative acts that had been taken against Islam.  All States should also exhibit flexibility in reaching an international agreement on the comprehensive convention.  In this regard, an international conference should be held to define terrorism and to distinguish it from the right of people to self-determination.  Further, technical assistance should be given to countries to combat terrorism, and international plans should strengthen assistance to victims of terrorism.

He went on to say that on a national level his country was pursuing a policy and measures to fight terrorism and terrorist financing, as well as activities to address its causes, including poverty reduction, education and dialogue.  National legislation had been passed on money laundering and prosecuting transnational crimes, small arms and weapons.  The United Arab Emirates was committed to regional, subregional and national coordination that ensured air, sea and land corridors not be used to carry materials into the hands of terrorists.  Additionally, his country had joined a number of international and regional conventions and had, among other accomplishments, created the International Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism.

LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN (Philippines) said that in June of this year, the Philippine Congress had enacted legislation to strengthen anti-money laundering laws and to prevent and suppress terrorist financing.   Further, through the promulgation of its Anti-Money Laundering Council’s rules and regulations, banks and financial institutions were now required to report transactions involving funds with possible links to terrorism, allowing the Council to freeze bank accounts without the need for a court order or a notification to the depositor for up to 20 days.

Continuing, he said that, through the exchange of information and best practices, his country’s Anti-Terrorism Council Program Management Centre, together with UNODC, the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the United Nations Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, had created highly-focused counter-terrorism training programs.  Those programs emphasized joint training for law enforcement, security and prosecution authorities.  In March of this year, the Philippines had also hosted a workshop convening domestic and foreign experts to develop training materials, create selection criteria for national trainers and establish guideposts to assess the quality and impact of counter-terrorism training.

YURY NIKOLAICHIK (Belarus), highlighting his country’s recent focus on efforts to combat nuclear terrorism, called for international cooperation to combat terrorism in the General Assembly, Security Council and other international bodies.  Belarus itself had taken significant action to combat terrorism regionally and internationally.

He went on to say that strengthening legal frameworks would be impossible without a strong system of technical counter-terrorism assistance to States.  Such a system should facilitate the prompt exchange of information and the prevention of terrorist financing, among other things, and allow for the provision of timely assistance when requested by States.  Echoing the call by other speakers for a prompt conclusion to the draft comprehensive convention on terrorism, he urged delegations to be flexible in their deliberations.

Concluding, he underscored the need for the international community to have a quick reaction to new challenges and threats, one where prevention efforts were pooled and information shared on issues such as transport security, chemical and biological weapons, and the use of internet sites for terrorist purposes, among others.

THIPHASONE SENGSOURINHA (Lao People’s Democratic Republic), associating himself with the statement made by Viet Nam on behalf of ASEAN, and the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said his country’s commitment in combating terrorism was reflected in a number of national measures and legislation as well as Government decrees on counter-terrorism.

The penal law was under review to incorporate international counter-terrorism conventions into the domestic legal framework, the decree on Anti-Money Laundering had been adopted and border crossing measures had also been established.  In addition, he said various workshops and meetings on counter-terrorism had been organized across the country to disseminate information on counter-terrorism conventions.  Furthermore, a draft decree on combating terrorism financing was now under consideration, he said, adding that his country was also a party to 13 counter-terrorism conventions.

At the regional level, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, together with ASEAN member countries, had adopted a wide range of declarations and programmes in fighting against terrorism, and was now in the process of ratifying the ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Convention.  He said his country also continued to work with the Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering, as a member of that bloc.

MWANGE TSHIBANGU (Democratic Republic of Congo) condemned terrorism in all its forms, regardless of the nature the criminal acts, the grounds on which they were committed, and the perpetrators who had committed them.  In his country, hundreds of thousands of men and women had been robbed of peace by those in the 23 March Movement (M23).  Those armed terrorists were being provided with military support from other countries.  His country’s children had been forced to use firearms to kill their own brothers and sisters.  Such acts deserved the strongest condemnation, as well as the imposition of sanctions.

He recalled that the Secretary-General had sketched out a panorama of State action to be taken nationally and internationally in combating terrorism, along with information about the scourge.  Various workshops had also been launched to deal with the matter.  Such efforts should be coordinated and conducted in compliance with human rights laws.  The promotion of the rule of law and the idea of peace coming by the law opposed terrorist acts.  State and international tribunals should bring perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice.  He also urged other States and organizations to provide assistance so that justice would be served.

He commended the African Union’s condemnation of paying ransoms to terrorist groups, and the Southern African Development Community’s effort to setup an early monitoring centre and establish a comprehensive law on terrorism.  In conclusion, he called for counter-terrorism measures to be carried out in a concerted way and encouraged delegations to conclude a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

CHERYL SABAN ( United States) said counter-terrorism achievements in the past ten years were noteworthy, as evidenced by the dramatic increase in the number of States who had become party to important counter-terrorism conventions.  For example, over the past ten years, 170 States had become party to the Terrorist Financing Convention.  The international community had also come together to conclude six new counterterrorism instruments, including a new convention on nuclear terrorism.  Instruments which covered new and emerging threats to civil aviation, maritime navigation and the protection of nuclear material had been updated.

While the accomplishments of the international community in developing a robust legal counterterrorism regime were significant, she pointed out that much work remained to be done.  Noting that the 18 universal counterterrorism instruments were only effective if they were widely ratified and implemented, she expressed support in the efforts to promote ratification of those instruments, as well as efforts to promote their implementation.

In regards to six international instruments that had been concluded over the past decade, she said that on a national level, the United States was advancing its own efforts towards ratification.  Her country had also been working closely with its Congress to pass legislation that would allow the ratification of the Nuclear Terrorism Convention, the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the 2005 Protocols to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation.  She called on other States not yet party to those conventions to do the same.

KOSAL SEA (Cambodia) said his country was committed to fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and was cooperating with all ASEAN countries and United Nations Member States and agencies in that effort.  Noting Cambodia’s leadership as ASEAN chair, he recalled the group’s adoption of the “Global Movement of the Moderates” in April this year to “drown out the voices of extremism by elevating the voices of moderation”.

He went on to say that Cambodia ratified the ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism last year and had, to date, also ratified all important United Nations conventions and protocols on counter-terrorism.  As well, his country had enacted a multitude of important laws and regulations, such as the Criminal Code, Criminal Procedural Code, Law on Anti-Terrorism, and the Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing.

Continuing, he said that on the basis of that legislation, regional and international treaties, tireless efforts by the Cambodian National Police and other law enforcement agencies, and international cooperation with relevant entities, his country had achieved remarkable success in preventing and suppressing terrorism and transnational crimes.  Cambodia was also in the process of implementing and promoting the “Safe Village, Safe Commune Policy” aimed at ensuring the security and safety of villages and communes throughout the country.  Concluding, he said that his country hoped to share best practices for the successful prevention and suppression of international terrorism.

BYRGANYM AITIMOVA (Kazakhstan), speaking for the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, said the Organisation’s Member States undertook activities based on tolerance, respect for religions and cooperation.  Changes in the geopolitical situation and new threats and challenges had demonstrated that today’s world had not become more stable, and that security continued to be of utmost importance.  States had recognized the need to draft and adopt collective measures to overcome those obstacles.

She said she was of the view that open intercultural and interreligious dialogue would foster peace and security.  An exacerbation of political, social and interethnic conflicts attempted to use religion to justify terrorism and extremism.  Therefore, international organizations and religious leaders needed to support dialogue on those matters.  Her country would continue to work to improve mechanisms of cooperation between political leaders, international organizations, the religious community and civil society.  Concluding, she said that Kazakhstan would be open to holding a meeting for leaders of global and traditional religions.

IGOR PANIN ( Russian Federation) pointed out that terrorism continued to challenge peace and security.  Thus, no country was safe.  Almost every day, his country was deeply concerned to learn of new terrorist attacks killing innocents around the world.  This situation could only be tackled with the cooperation of the entire international community and under the auspices of the United Nations.  Terrorist groups had been scaled up, particularly in the Sahel of North Africa, and were recruiting new extremists.  He stressed that their attempts to draw on revolutionary processes should be repelled in all areas of the world, and that terrorist acts should not be tolerated, independent of where they were perpetrated.

He went on to say that the United Nations must systematically prevent terrorism, including countering the preaching of ideologies of terrorism and violence.  The Russian Federation was establishing a State public-private partnership to combat terrorism.  Within the United Nations system, he hoped that a new dynamism would grow from the activities for the Counter-Terrorism Task Force and the Centre on Counter-Terrorism.  During the third review of the Global Strategy, discussions had underscored the need to strengthen a collective approach to combating terrorism under the Organisation’s leadership.  Regional organizations had played a substantial role in that regard, including regional anti-terrorist trainings and the contributions of experts.

He urged the United Nations to strengthen its legal basis for counter-terrorism, including an increase in membership of countries to universal anti-terrorist agreements.  A breakthrough, he said in conclusion, would be an agreement on a global convention on international terrorism, the adoption of which would allow for significant strengthening of the legal basis for global counter-terrorism cooperation.

CARLA TERESA ARIAS OROZCO (El Salvador), condemning all terrorism acts, said measures adopted, be they preventative or punitive, must always observe the rule of law, international law and human rights.

Recalling the thirty-fifth plenary meeting of the Caribbean Financial Action Force, which was held in her country this May, she said the meeting not only tackled the issue of terrorism financing, but also provided the opportunity to exchange experiences and strategies.  Especially focused on were the technical aspects of counter-terrorism, such as information exchange in real time, that supported and strengthened investigations and international and regional cooperation.

Noting that many challenges remained in the fight against terrorism, she urged the reactivation of the Ad Hoc Committee and called on Member States to finish the work towards the completion of the draft convention on counter-terrorism.

MOHAMMED A. S. AL-ATEEQI (Kuwait) stressed the need to respect all religions, maintain friendly relations among States and peoples, and spread the culture of tolerance and moderation, especially in light of recent events that had incited hatred and racism.  He said his country, “keen on opposing terrorism”, had ratified the majority of international agreements and instruments, and had concluded numerous regional agreements.  Underscoring the importance of the draft comprehensive convention to combat terrorism, he urged Member States to unify efforts in finalizing that agreement.  He said the convention should contain a clear and comprehensive definition of terrorism and state terrorism, which must not be confused with the right of peoples to lawful resistance, to repel aggression and to self-determination.

Continuing, while noting support for the implementation of the Security Council’s resolutions relating to terrorism, he urged its Sanctions Committee to work transparently and without selectivity or arbitrariness in its listing of names of individuals and entities.  Further, he pointed out that the honesty and transparency in the work of the Kuwaiti charitable associations was evidenced by achieving the top position in Forbes Magazine’s list of the most transparent charitable associations in the Arab world.

He went on to say that Kuwait also supported the settlement of conflict by peaceful means.  Troubled by ongoing conflict, daily killings of civilians, and targeting of cities and infrastructure as witnessed in the Syrian crisis, he urged the international community to assume its responsibilities and ensure that perpetrators of those crimes were not granted impunity.

RAZA BASHIR TARAR ( Pakistan) said his country was on the frontline of the global campaign against terrorism.  No country had suffered as much as his at the hands of “this monster”.  Pakistan’s success in combating terrorism had exacted a heavy toll:  7,000 Pakistani soldiers and policemen and over 37,000 innocent civilians had paid the “ultimate sacrifice”.  His country had deployed 150,100 troops along its border with Afghanistan, and 1,707 border posts had been set up to interdict Al-Qaida and Taliban members.  Committed to intensify international cooperation in combating terrorism, his country was also party to 11 universal and two regional counter-terrorism instruments and had enacted several national instruments.

Calling the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy a “compromise but consensus framework” document, he said that the Strategy had broadened the scope of the counter-terrorism campaign to encompass root causes and conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and had, as well, included a larger endeavour to eliminate extremism, promote harmony and address the unjust defamation of certain religions and communities.  The unfair and bigoted portrayal of Islam and Islamic beliefs and the acts of incitement and hate speech against the faith of nearly 2 billion Muslims exacerbated the divergence in perceptions between the Islamic and Western worlds.  An honest dialogue between different civilizations had become imperative.

He went on to say that, in order to continue addressing international counter-terrorism efforts, the response of the international community needed to be comprehensive, long-term and multi-pronged.  Expressing support for reform in procedures of Security Council committees, he stressed that much more needed to be done to satisfy the legal community on the issue of due process and effective remedy in the implementation of sanctions regimes.  It was unfortunate that not many groups had endorsed the proposal for the draft convention on terrorism as presented in 2007, with deadlock in negotiations highlighting the divergence of positions of various groups.  Postponing the spring meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Committee was indicative of real challenges in the negotiations of the draft convention.  His country, he said in conclusion, was open to any proposal which did not compromise or constrain the legitimate struggle of people for their right to self-determination and against foreign occupation.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI ( India) said that terrorists today were not only globalized, but were waging an asymmetric warfare against the international community.  No cause or grievance could justify terrorism, which was deserving of “zero tolerance”.  The scope of legal instruments and enforcement efforts to destroy safe havens for terrorists should be expanded and should take into account the changing nature of the threat.

He noted the seminal role the United Nations played in combating terrorism, building the capacity of Member States and fostering international and regional cooperation.  Calling for an effective and balanced implementation of the Global Strategy and the Implementation Task Force, he expressed hope that the new Counter Terrorism Centre would promote greater international and regional cooperation in fighting terrorism.  Further, the time had come to adopt a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

India had faced the scourge of terrorism for over two-and-a-half decades, he pointed out, and South Asia had been wracked by the activities of the biggest terrorist actors.  His country had been working with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation, and was party to the 13 international conventions and protocols.  India had also concluded over 40 bilateral treaties on extradition and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, was a member of the Financial Action Task Force and had created national agencies and systems to support counter-terrorism efforts.  He emphasized that the fight against terrorism had to be unrelenting and across all fronts.  The international community could not afford selective approaches.

JAKKRIT SRIVALI (Thailand) said the United Nations could help strengthen the international legal regime against terrorism by formulating model legislation related to terrorism offenses, as it did with the model legislation on money laundering and financing of terrorism.  Reaffirming his country’s commitment to the fight against terrorism, he noted that currently it was party to more than half of the international legal instruments and was firmly committed to becoming party to all the remaining ones.

Continuing, he said that Thailand was now in the process of ratifying the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation.  Recognizing the importance of preventive strategies, his country was also in the process of thoroughly reviewing and updating its legislation, particularly on anti-money-laundering and on preventing the financing of terrorism.  The draft legislation on both issues was currently under consideration by its Parliament.

Despite the great number of existing counter-terrorism instruments, he stressed the need for a comprehensive convention on international terrorism to fill gaps in existing treaties and to enhance international efforts in bringing perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice.  He asked all Member States to focus on major developments that would redefine terrorism in the years ahead, namely the usage of weapons of mass destruction, continued emergence of home-grown terrorism and self-radicalization, the spread of violent extremist beliefs and ideas among the youth and the growing threat of cyber-terrorism.

MOHAMMED LOULICHKI ( Morocco), stressing that terrorism knew no boundaries, urged the international community to commit to combating a culture of extremism and violence from wherever the source might be.  Given the increasing number of abductions and hostage-taking towards making a profit and guaranteeing political compromise, it was evident that terrorism today had access to information.

He went on to say that Morocco had contributed to international efforts in counter-terrorism and sought to resolve economic, social and cultural matters that had fuelled an ideology of extremism and terrorism.  On a national level, his country had also sought to foster a tolerant Islam, while increasing the opportunity for its civilians to participate in domestic life.

Expressing concern with the situation in the Sahel and Mali, he urged the United Nations to take swift action to support efforts made in that region; in particular, those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

NOUR ZARROUK BOUMIZA (Tunisia) said our geopolitical context was characterized by terrorist groups that threatened global peace and stability.  In the African Sahel, serious and multifaceted challenges were exacerbated by illicit drugs and weapons trafficking and the appearance of new terrorist groups.  Those groups, which threatened international peace and security, could only be dismantled through a global, holistic and concerted approach that attacked the causes of instability.

She said her country had always demonstrated a strong commitment to combating terrorism, nationally, regionally and internationally, and had adopted a national strategy to attack the causes of the scourge.  That strategy went hand in hand with a number of international legal instruments, which had become a part of Tunisian laws.  Tunisia had engaged in deep-reaching reforms to ensure all counter-terrorism provisions were aligned with human rights and had acceded to most international conventions and laws on terrorism.  Tunisia had, for example, worked to uphold its obligations under the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.  As terrorism knew no race, religion or nationality, it was multifaceted in its spread.  Terrorists had made increased use of information and communications technology and went hand in hand with cybercrime.  Any strategy must account for that new reality.

Noting that unilateral security efforts were limited in their scope, she called for more rallying of international efforts aligned with the four pillars of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.  An international summit should be held to demonstrate the United Nations commitment to combating terrorism and the capacity of States should be built to fight against money laundering, weapons proliferation and the use of new information and communications technology by terrorists.

HUSSEIN HANIFF ( Malaysia) noted that the decision to convene the Ad Hoc Committee on measures to eliminate terrorism in 2013 had allowed all delegations to reflect on ways in which to move forward on a comprehensive convention on terrorism, such as exploring new approaches that would help to bridge differences in Member States’ views.  Terrorism must be discerned from the legitimate struggles of people under foreign occupation seeking liberation and self-determination.  A high-level conference was needed to address challenges to global counter-terrorism efforts and to resolve outstanding issues through a draft convention, he said.  However, such a conference should not be linked with the conclusion of a convention, as that would delay efforts to consolidate and exchange views on measures to effectively eliminate terrorism.

He said his country had ratified 9 of the 13 relevant international conventions and was amending national laws to enable accession to the remaining instruments.  The Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism, established by Malaysia in 2002, had conducted 96 training courses, workshops and forums, attended by more than 3,000 local and foreign participants, he said, adding that the Centre had expanded collaboration with international organizations, and Malaysia had signed the relevant bilateral treaties.  Regarding the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, he said greater emphasis was needed on pillar one, concerning conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and pillar four, concerning measures to ensure respect for human rights.  In the past, the “majority of moderates”, of which Malaysia was one, had been appalled by the despicable acts of extremists and terrorists, but it had also remained relatively silent, he recalled, calling in that context for a global movement of moderates and issuing “a clarion call for rational, peace-loving people of all races, cultures and beliefs to make their voices louder and to reclaim centre stage”.

ANNIKEN ENERSEN ( Norway) said terrorism would not be overcome without respect for human rights and the rule of law, adding that those principles must be the starting point for all efforts against terrorism.  Democracy, freedom of speech and other fundamental freedoms were crucial for preventing the emergence of terrorism.  Stressing that such prevention required a comprehensive and long-term approach, she urged the international community to make use of a broad range of measures, including political, economic, legal, and, if necessary, military means.

She went on to say that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force had functioned well, but its role in capacity-building and international coordination needed to be strengthened.  Norway worked closely with the Task Force, supporting it both politically and financially.  Further, her country had also supported the counter-terrorism activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime by building Member States’ legal systems’ capacity, and promoting the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Noting that Norway would ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism this year, she concluded by expressing hope that States would show the necessary flexibility and political will to bring the comprehensive convention against terrorism to a conclusion.  In this regard, she welcomed the decision to reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee in 2013.

KOUSSAY AL-DAHHAK ( Syria) described terrorist acts as having no justification; they were criminal acts of aggression against the life and property of innocent people.  Syria was amongst the first States to have suffered the ravages of terrorism, and, since 1986, had called on all nations to analyze the phenomenon.  It was important for the international community to work together to eradicate terrorism, applying an approach free of political selectivity and double standards.  Terrorism needed a legal definition based on consensus and without any link between acts of terrorism and the right to self-determination.

Recalling recent events in his country, he said armed terrorist groups had exploited legal requests for reform coming from Syrian citizens.  Such groups were carrying out terrorist acts against multiple targets, including individuals and security officials, leading to a heavy loss of life and material damage, particularly to the country’s infrastructure.  Syrians had lost homes, hospitals and religious heritage sites.  Foreign Al-Qaida agents were active in Syria and extremists were infiltrating “en masse” and “carrying out jihad, destruction and chaos”.  The Al Nusra Front had claimed responsibility for explosions, including the most recent suicide bombings in Aleppo, which had been detonated at a time when many students were going to school and people going to work.

Turning to international efforts to combat terrorism, he called for the provisions of the Global Strategy to be observed.  Although some States said they were committed to that strategy, they were in fact sheltering and arming terrorist groups.  The General Assembly must take action, shoulder responsibility and put an end to those acts.  Terrorism could not be “a foreign policy means” in any country.  International cooperation and the honest commitment of all States were the only ways in which terrorism could effectively be countered.  International efforts could not be successful however when double standards were applied and did not consider most dangerous acts, specifically those committed by Israel.

He said that Syria had ratified 10 of the 13 anti-terrorism conventions and was studying the possibility of acceding to the remaining three.  His country had also undertaken extensive efforts to counter money laundering and the funding of terrorism.  The international community should cooperate further to combat terrorism and enhance the exchange of relevant information, and dismantle the network of supply and arming of terrorist groups.

ERTUĞRUL APAKAN ( Turkey) said terrorism continued to be one of the most serious threats to the peace, stability and security of States.  Numerous social, economic and political factors existed, which engendered conditions that terrorist groups exploited for recruitment and support.  Preventing terrorism was only possible if a number of activities were addressed, from international cooperation to local action.  To avoid contradictions, the international community must adopt a uniform approach for identifying, defining, condemning, isolating and bringing before justice those responsible. .

Continuing, he called for full ratification of the 13 major conventions, conclusion of a comprehensive counter-terrorism treaty, a focus on money laundering and terrorist financing, and full implementation of the principle of extradition or prosecution.  He called for every Member State to give the same clear message to terrorists:  “There is no safe haven or immunity from criminal justice.”

In his view, the United Nations had been the “lynchpin” of counter-terrorism efforts, and the General Assembly had established a sound legal framework.  Efforts should be made to further prevent the indiscriminate targeting of different religious groups and cultures.  The Alliance of Civilizations, launched by Turkey and Spain, aimed to facilitate harmony and dialogue by emphasizing the value of different cultures and religions.  In closing, he called for closer cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as between the United Nations and Member States.

OLEKSANDR PAVLICHENKO (Ukraine) said that his country was continuing its counter-terrorism efforts through the improvement of its national laws, regulations and policies.  Ukraine’s main anti-money laundering arm had signed approximately 40 bilateral cooperation arrangements with its partners in other countries to counter money laundering and terrorism financing.  Last year, his country had also adopted a national strategy through 2015 that aimed at developing a system to prevent and counteract laundering of crime proceeds and terrorism financing.

He went on to say that as a party to approximately 20 multilateral conventions and protocols in the field of counter-terrorism, his country was also actively involved in counter–terrorism efforts on the international and regional levels.  However, although much had been accomplished, there was much remaining to be done.  Noting that the 2007 proposals on the comprehensive convention might be a good basis for consensus among all delegations, he called on all Member States to intensify their efforts in finalizing negotiations on the convention in the near future.

Mr. AL-HAJ (Yemen), stating no link could be established between terrorism and any religion, culture or nationality, said that a comprehensive convention needed to arrive at a clear definition of terrorism to distinguish it from self-determination.  Yemen had ratified a majority of the international counter-terrorism instruments and had adopted several local measures in that regard.  His country, for example, was working to make people more aware of the dangers of extremism and terrorism — something that was the responsibility of both Governments and civil society.  There had also been comprehensive media coverage on the dangers of terrorist acts to civil society in Yemen and internationally.

Continuing, he said that a national law had been passed against money laundering to finance terrorism, and bilateral agreements had been entered into with brother States, which encouraged the development of skills needed to combat terrorism.  There was also a bill before Parliament that dealt with the constitutional aspects of combating terrorism in accordance with human rights laws.  Yemen was also working to promote tolerance through conscious-raising activities, placing principle emphasis on combating Al-Qaeda, and despite fragile international support, Yemen had achieved its goals in its fight against that terrorist group.  Concluding, he called on international partners to support rehabilitation programs and to lend support to development projects in the poorest regions, which he referred to as “a fertile breeding ground for terrorists”.

ERNEST TCHILOEMBA TCHITEMBO (Congo) said many years’ discussions on international terrorism had focused on main points that conveyed a general trend towards consensus.  They included, among others, the identification of political, economic and social causes of terrorism, the need for global action, enhanced international cooperation under the leadership of the United Nations, and the clear preference for the draft convention of 2007 which *inter alia* reasserted the legal principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Continuing, he said that the international community must now put an end to further discussion and agree on a date for holding a conference to adopt a United Nations convention on counter-terrorism.  The international community’s decision could not be based on a text from one regional group, he said, and he urged Member States to exercise flexibility in order to establish a common position on core points, which in previous sessions had produced a general consensus.

KATARINA LALIĆ SMAJEVIĆ (Serbia) said that when it came to fighting terrorism, the guidelines contained in the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy were of paramount importance, particularly in efforts to strengthen international cooperation.  Serbia condemned terrorism in all forms and was party to most of the relevant international conventions.  It was doing its utmost to implement fully the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and had joined the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the European Union.  She said Serbia was strengthening its national capacities and legislation, and was training local stakeholders to implement standards that would contribute to national counter-terrorism plans.

The Government was also in the final phase of preparing a joint project with the European Union and UNODC aimed at strengthening the national legal regime against terrorism, she continued.  National efforts thus far had focused on enhancing bilateral, subregional, regional and international cooperation around counter-terrorism.  Expressing support for the finalization of a draft comprehensive convention on terrorism, she said the provisions of the draft convention had, over the years, been thoroughly discussed and clarified.  Concepts already agreed within the United Nations should not be rewritten, and existing norms of international law should not be reinterpreted, she stressed.  Rather, the draft convention should be read in conjunction with the relevant provisions of international law.

ABULKALAM ABDUL MOMEN (Bangladesh), emphasizing that the Organization’s efforts on counter-terrorism should be transparent, commended the gradual institutionalization of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the briefing of Member States at regular intervals by the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.  Further, the establishment of the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism through Saudi Arabia’s initiative would promote international cooperation.

Turning to his country’s efforts to implement the four pillars of the Global Strategy, he noted that not only was Bangladesh a party to all 14 universal anti-terrorism instruments, but on a national level was implementing a counter-radicalization strategy through education, women’s empowerment and the propagation of secular and moderate cultural values, among others.  As well, his Government this year had updated and made more stringent the Money Laundering Prevention Act, and had partnered with the Task Force on a regional workshop on implementing the Global Strategy in South Asia.

Calling for an early conclusion of the draft comprehensive convention, he said that the definition of terrorism should be crafted in such a way that no terrorist activities, whether sponsored by a State or a non-State actor, be spared.  However, there must be a clear distinction between terrorism and the legitimate struggle against foreign occupation and the right to self-determination.  For the Global Strategy to succeed, the root causes of terrorism needed to be addressed as well.  Concluding he called upon Member States to unite against terrorism and “save innocent lives”.

DORIS TIJERINO (Nicaragua) underscored her firmest condemnation of terrorism, including State terrorism, of which Nicaragua had been a victim, and emphasized that terrorism could not be linked with any religion, nationality, cultural or ethnic group.  Expressing deep concern that wars were being carried out with the justification of combating terrorism, she recalled the hundreds of terrorist attacks that had occurred this year, acts that seemed to be increasing in frequency and complexity despite attempts to combat them.

Continuing, she said that Nicaragua rejected the double standard used by those countries who said they condemned terrorism, but harboured terrorists and supported terrorists abroad to act against third states.  Thus, a definition that could be used to ascertain who was a terrorist must be elicited and should include State terrorism.  She urged that Member States act to ensure the welfare and security of others, and fight against State terrorism so that no other countries would suffer the way hers had.

ZAHIR TANIN ( Afghanistan) said that the Committee’s debate was being held against the backdrop of the harsh reality of terrorism, which threatened mankind as a whole, and which had yet to be eliminated.  It was the international community’s responsibility to protect present and future generations and more needed to be done in order to transform political commitment into reality and to enhance international cooperation.

Turning to the situation in his country, he said Afghanistan was a clear example of a State struggling vehemently to combat terrorism.  That struggle had lasted for more than two decades, extending back to the “dark era” of the Taliban regime where citizens had been denied basic human rights and freedoms.  Afghanistan had come a long way in transforming its society for better through the promotion of democracy and human rights, but the Afghan people had yet to realize their number one demand:  the chance to live in peace and security.

Continuing, he said that terrorism in Afghanistan, which was being funded externally, continued to plague the country with no end in sight.  With attacks carried out on people from all walks of life, his country had lost thousands.  Each and every day security forces worked to prevent another terrorist attack, yet the severity of challenges they faced was such that Afghanistan’s enemies could continue to wage attacks and compromise stability.

He said Afghanistan had undertaken a range of efforts to implement the relevant 13 protocols and conventions.  However, the international community must clearly focus on the four pillars of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.  The work of the counter-terrorism committees was at the core of the international architecture against terrorism.  Joining previous speakers, he called for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on terrorism and the convening of a high-level conference on the matter.

FATHALLA A. A. ALJADEY ( Libya) said that despite attempts to combat terrorism and eradicate its root causes for many years, it persisted today in exacerbated forms and had multiple causes.  He urged the international community to examine carefully its successes, failures and stumbling blocks so that it could realign its counter-terrorism strategy, while also calling on all Member States to enhance their efforts to reach a general consensus on a draft comprehensive counter-terrorism convention.

Having recently emerged from dictatorship, Libya was seeking peace, security and prosperity, but had instead become a factor of instability in the region and the world, he said.  The country faced various issues, such as cross-border crime, trafficking in drugs and weapons as well as illegal migration.  Libya was now working to bolster laws on impunity, and hoped to continue working in that direction after its legislative elections.  Finally, he condemned the killing of United States diplomats in Libya, stressing that those actions did not represent the convictions or religious and moral beliefs of its people.  The perpetrators of those crimes would be brought to justice and face the appropriate punishment.

Right of Reply

Exercising his right of reply, Syria’s delegate said that he had not given details in his previous statement about other States’ activities that had supported terrorist acts in his country.  The delegate from the United Arab Emirates, however, had “raised a matter that went beyond framework of brotherly relations”, referring to how Syria had dealt with Israeli terrorism.  That reference had been erroneous.  Continuing, he reminded the delegate of the United Arab Emirates that when Syria had provided support and assistance to brother countries, Israel had perpetrated terrorist attacks.  When the United Arab Emirates had endeavoured to grant the Taliban the status of a Member, Syria had opposed representation of this group in the international community and in this Organization.  Syria’s position was one of veracity and principle in combating terrorism.

Turning to the delegate of Kuwait’s statement, he said he would have preferred that the delegate address the activities of the Kuwaiti Government, with regard to supporting activities in Syria, particularly acts of Salafist extremist groups, some of which were represented in Kuwaiti Parliament.  The campaign organized under the slogan of jihad constituted interference in his country’s affairs.

Also exercising his right of the reply, Kuwait’s representative said that his country, in light of the content of international reports and those of the Human Rights Council, had made clear its human rights record.  Kuwait had implemented United Nations principles regarding non-interference in the internal affairs of third States and had lent no support to the internal affairs of one State versus another.