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February 12, 2016 UN Headquarters, New York

**General Assembly: The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy [items 16 and 117] (a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674) and document A/70/675 (b) Draft resolution A/70/L.41**. **Part 2**

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The 85th Plenarist Meeting of the General Assembly is called to order.

The General Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 16, Culture of Peace; and agenda item 117, The United Nations’ Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We will now continue to hear statements on the report of the Secretary-General.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Cuba.

CUBA: Thank you, Mr. President. We wholeheartedly support the collective efforts of the United Nations in its struggle against terrorism. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorist Strategy is a milestone in the international struggle against this scourge and grants the General Assembly the central role in those efforts where appropriate. Any efforts in this field should be covered by the pillars of the strategy.

We take note to the Secretary-General’s initiative, contained in Document A/70/674, and his efforts in developing an Action Plan for Preventing Violent Extremism. Cuba is one of the countries that, in upholding its independence and dignity, has for decades suffered the consequences of criminal terrorist acts organized, financed, and executed from outside its territory. The death toll as a result of those acts stands at 3,478 deaths and 2,099 people injured or wounded. We reiterate our unbreakable will in the struggle against terrorism as well as our most profound repudiation and condemnation of all terrorist acts, methods, and practices, in all their forms and manifestations by whomsoever, against whomsoever, and wheresoever they are committed, regardless of their motivations, including those in which states are directly or indirectly involved.

International community should not accept that on the pretext of a supposed struggle against terrorism certain states commit acts of aggression, interfere in the internal affairs of other states, or execute or permit flagrant violations of human rights and international humanitarian law such as torture, abduction, illegal detention, forced disappearance, or extrajudicial executions. We condemn double standards and unilateral action as contrary to the United Nations Charter and to the principles and standards of international law. The violation of those legal and ethic principles fuels terrorism and is an affront to the legitimacy of our struggle against this phenomenon. Respect for international law, for human freedoms, and for self-determination of peoples, the promotion of social justice, equity, and inclusion as well as solidarity among peoples and international level for the exercise of the right to development are inalienable goals and values of the humanist culture that we support. Opulence and selfishness, injustice and intolerance, domination and unilateralism stoke terror and violence.

President, the Secretary-General’s initiative on the plan of action is consistent and fits well into the upcoming review process of the UN Counter-Terrorism Global Strategy. It’s a contribution to this process but it should not substitute the strategy itself. It’s clear that any decision on any issues of such importance could only be reached through the consensus of the General Assembly’s member states. Terrorism is an affront to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It undermines international peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development as established in the introduction of the plan of action. No country, no region, is immune from its effects; nor should this phenomenon be associated to any religion, race, or ethnicity. To eradicate it, it’s necessary to address the causes and conditions that generate it, such as poverty, inequality, underdevelopment, exclusion, injustice, military interventions, foreign occupation and interference with pretensions to domination, discrimination, inter alia, appear as a basis for fueling violent extremism.

The efforts of the international community should include tackling the root causes. Our country has worked steadfastly in developing policies geared towards preventing the establishment of conditions for resurgence of terrorism in any of its forms or manifestations. As an example, in Cuba there is full respect for all religious beliefs and religions can be practiced without any obstacle. Therefore, there’s also broad social protection, high education indicators, medical assistance, and social security. Young people play a relevant role in society and strong, effective legislation when it comes to countering terrorism.

Sir, the international community requires more dialog and understanding among cultures and civilizations. Responses must be given to the growing attacks, abductions, and the use of modern ICTs in the activities and in the promotion of terrorism. ICTs pose a challenge to the exercise of free determination of peoples because of their manipulation as weapons of regime change policies masquerading as interventionist projects that are flexibly scripted and delineated in so-called soft coup strategies. These soft coups effectively turn a blind eye to terrorist acts if they are deemed crucial to the success of the goal of toppling a country’s legitimate authorities.

I should reiterate repudiation and condemnation of the actions of a small group of powerful states who design, finance, and execute actions contrary to the purpose and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law through the Internet and through the traditional communication media, such as radio and television. These actions, that could even play out as acts of cyber war, appear most frequently in plans to subvert the constitutional order of sovereign states and the spreading of messages of intolerance, hatred, and lies against other peoples, their culture, their political system, or history.

Sir, eradicating terrorism means that all states, bar none, deliver on their international obligations, including trying or extraditing the perpetrators of such crimes. No state genuinely committed to combating terrorism can offer refuge to a terrorist. No argument can legitimize that fact. We’re to reiterate our unshakeable will and commitment to combating this scourge in all its forms and manifestations and steadfast willingness to cooperate with all member states guided by the goal of achieving a concerted response to terrorism. We reiterate the central role that should be played by the General Assembly in fully and effectively implementing the United Nations’ Global Counter-Terrorist Strategy. I thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Cuba. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Nicaragua.

NICARAGUA: Thank you, President. For the delegation of Nicaragua, this is a theme of vital importance, and we’ll give a brief summary of certain points that are crucial to us when it comes to the theme of violent extremism.

We take note of the Secretary-General’s initiative contained in Document A/70/674 and his endeavors in developing an Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism. Sir, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed in 2013 Resolution A68/127 that Nicaragua co-sponsored, and which garnered the support of the Non-Aligned Movement: the resolution A World Against Violent Extremism. This resolution was enacted in 2015 and covers the challenge that we face as an international community, given that these are threats without borders and only by pulling together can we combat them.

We reiterate the overriding need to discuss among member states the issue of violent extremism and together find solutions. Perhaps the best time would be when we meet to discuss the Global Counter-Terrorist Strategy in June.

Sir, the Nicaraguan delegation rejects and condemns all terrorist acts in all their forms and manifestations by whomsoever, against whomsoever, and wherever committed, regardless of their motivation, including those in which states are directly or indirectly involved.

For our country, it’s of vital importance to respect international law and free determination of peoples, social inclusive development that truly takes into account the right to development. Global capitalism promotes terror and violence and we must tackle its root causes, fighting for a fair society where no one feels excluded. Violent extremism is not exclusive to any region, nationality, or system of beliefs. Therefore, it’s a threat against which we must all fight.

Sir, Nicaragua reaffirms that this situation will worsen if we don’t act together to try and address the causes of such anxiety, brutality, and catastrophe.

In conclusion, in the words of our President, Comandante Daniel Saavedra, for the UN to spread sovereign peace and justice and solidarity among human beings, our organization should respond to this barbaric intervention and interruption of the tranquility and of the right to prosperity in the lives of millions of families, countries, and entire peoples.

I thank you, President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Nicaragua. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Armenia.

ARMENIA: Mr. President, at the outset I thank the President of the General Assembly and his team for convening this timely meeting and conducting business in a transparent and inclusive manner.

As terrorism and violent extremism are on the rise globally, the efforts by the international community should be redoubled in preventing and countering this scourge in an effective way. The United Nations has a considerable role to play in changing the environment conducive to intolerance, racial discrimination, xenophobia, violent extremism, and terrorism around the world.

We join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his efforts to prepare a comprehensive Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The report is under consideration in Armenia. The report evidently applies a multi-disciplinary approach and methodology in addressing the diversity of drivers of violent extremism and offering a set of preventive tools at the national, regional, and international levels. The plan of action draws a distinct linkage between conflict prevention and resolution on the one hand and preventing violent extremism on the other. In this respect, we would like to highlight the importance of regional mechanisms for conflict mediation and resolution as well as preventing terrorism and violent extremism by reducing the appeal of and support for violent extremist groups and ideologies. Such approach is duly elaborated in the document.

Further strengthening early warning and detection mechanisms and enhancing prevention toolbox at all levels are crucial to this act. We positively note the provisions referring to the establishment of early warning centers and prohibition of incitement to hatred.

Mr. President, prevention should be the primary action in halting deteriorating situations and their regression to crisis. Armenia has been continuously supporting and contributing to the elaboration of the mechanisms of prevention at national and international levels. In particular, resolutions on prevention of genocide, consistently initiated by Armenia in the Human Rights Council since 2005, attach prominence to the critical functions of early warning and early action. Early signs of a spread of violent extremism should remain a focus of a collective effort and action.

Armenia consistently supports the efforts of the special advisor of the prevention of genocide to elaborate the concept of prevention as well as practical tools for early detection of deteriorating situations. Drivers of radicalization, the pull and push factors, as identified in the report, are detectable at early phases. Continued and systematic violations of human rights, marginalization, discrimination, poor governance, and denial of opportunities are precursors of massive crimes, in which violent extremism is its conduit and instrument. The urge for a comprehensive approach to preventing radicalization, violent extremism, and atrocity crimes is compelling.

We note that such approach is duly reflected in this program of action. The present report and the program faction may serve an important contribution for a continued international effort to consolidate solid and determined fight against violent extremism. Indeed, member states should build further on the understanding of the phenomenon and implementation of individual and collective measures against it.

We note that the report recognizes the diverse nature of the phenomenon, which yet requires clear definition.

Finally, the efforts of the international community in denying fertile grounds for violent extremism should be conjoined with the evolving broader vision for change towards solid, shared responsibility for humanity.

The Secretary-General makes a strong appeal to send forth a resounding call for peace, justice, and human dignity. Armenia looks forward to further consideration of the present plan of action at the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review in June 2016 and in other relevant fora.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Armenia, and I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Iraq.

IRAQ: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, heads of delegations, at the outset my delegation would like to align itself made by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On behalf of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, my country would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his great efforts in preparing the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Violent extremism is a grave challenge that attracts the attention of member states, especially Iraq. We consider that this is a useful plan if all member states are committed to it in line with their international obligations according to the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly to combat violent extremism. Violent extremism has given rise to international terrorism, which is spreading across our societies.

Terrorists come from more than 100 member states of the United Nations, committing the most egregious forms of killing that run counter to the fundamental principles of humanity, co-existence, tolerance, and respect for diversity. This is why it is necessary to combat terrorism and to support international efforts in countering it and curbing its dangers and threats.

Mr. President, violent extremist ideologies are a direct threat to international peace and security, undermining social co-existence and cohesion as well as stability in our societies. Therefore, we should adopt an informed approach to combating these challenges—an approach based on adopting a clear strategy and explicit and declared positions. In this regard, my country would like to note that adopting educational curricula that accuse people of apostasy or infidelity and that promote erroneous takfiri fatwas through social media—these curricula lead to extremist ideological aberrations that use terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as a tool to impose its erroneous ideologies, threatening international peace and security as well as the human civilization.

It is necessary to reform educational curricula in certain countries and to adopt appropriate mechanisms to avoid the use of the Internet and of audio-visual media in promoting extremism and in recruiting terrorists.

Mr. President, countering these challenges and the threat of violent extremism require a commitment to tolerance, reconciliation, respect for cultural and religious diversity, as well as the freedom of thought and expression. Dialog between religious leaders is an important tool to strengthen peaceful co-existence among societies and respect for religious and ideological diversity as well as the common humanity. In order to decisively counter the perpetrators and drivers of violence and extremism, it is necessary to dry up the sources of terrorism according to Security Council Resolutions 2170, 2178, and 2199. It is also important to promote the concepts of good governance, the rule of law, human rights, and to create job opportunities for youth and women and to implement development programs and provide basic services. There is also a need to ensure accountability and punishment for perpetrators.

In this regard, the Iraqi government, and according to our program, is deepening the concept of citizenship. We are seeking to ensure political, economic, and legislative reform, and to build national cohesion by unifying the efforts of all components of the Iraqi society. Therefore, today we are witnessing a general national consensus on our national principles.

Mr. President, terrorist organizations such as ISIS, al-Nusra, Boko Haram, and Al-Qaida, are committing the most heinous forms of killing and destruction in the name of Islam. Islam that has nothing to do with these acts. Therefore, it is the responsibility of governments and religious leaders to combat this extremist and takfiri ideology and these misleading fatwa of jihad. The religious discourse should also combat exclusionist views and their supporters by promoting the true teachings of our venerable religion and by exposing the baselessness of the slogans of this violent extremist ideology.

In conclusion, my country would like to endorse the report of the Secretary-General, and all of United Nations approach. We welcome the elements of the draft resolution. We will work closely with the member states and with the United Nations to implement the plan of action because Iraq is one of the most-affected countries by the phenomenon of violent terrorism and by international terrorism, which is one of the tools of this violent extremism.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Iraq. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Qatar.

QATAR: Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset I would like to thank you for holding this session and thank the Secretary-General for the efforts exerted to prepare the comprehensive Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism. We welcome the adoption of the draft resolution presented by the President on the plan of the Secretary-General.

We would like to add our voice to the statement made by His Excellency, the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, on behalf of OIC this morning. Mr. President, the dangers emanating from violent extremism and its direct threats to international peace and security, and the harm it causes to sustainable development, makes it necessary that combating extremism will not be achieved without an international cooperation plan taking into consideration the raison d’être and the motives behind extremism.

The efforts derived from the spread of violent extremism show that this prospers in environments where there is a lack of the rule of law and impunity. Therefore, violent terrorism is clear in the societies where policies of exclusion, social marginalization, despotism, as well as lack of development prevail, continuation of conflicts unresolved for long time, systematic policies of killing, and persecution of peoples fuel extremism. The state of Qatar rejects all forms of extremism as well as any attempt to level an accusation of violent extremism and terrorism to a specific region, religion, or ethnicity.

Attempts by some entities to use single violent incidents and link it with no evidence to specific religions such as Islamophobia, misleading and thwart the efforts to verify the reasons behind terrorism. Offending symbols of specific religions give pretext to the extremists to recruit their supporters. Combating extreme terrorism requires taking effective roles where the efforts of politicians, religious leaders, and civil society as well as mass media will coalesce here. We support all the international and regional efforts to eliminate extremism and to support human rights, the rule of law combating terrorism and impunity supporting the rights of people to freedom, dignity, and self-determination.

In the framework of these international efforts to prepare the comprehensive Plan of Action to Prevent Terrorism Extremism, we emphasize the need for the plan to entrench the spirit of tolerance on the international, regional levels. We have been trying to stem terrorism by establishing the Doha International Center on Dialogue to corroborate and consolidate dialog among the different votaries of religions as well as the establishment of the Hamad bin Khalifa Islamic Center in Copenhagen that strengthens peaceful cooperation and coexistence among religions.

The plan of action should pay special attention to children and the youth. Disregarding this sector and not provision or the non-provision of health environment to utilize the potential of the youth will make them a pliable tool in the hands of terrorists. Qatar, in this connection, is cooperating among a number of states to highlight the matter of children and the youngsters affected by violent terrorism and crime, trying to rehabilitate and integrate them in society. In accordance with this, the Institute of Silatech in Qatar raises awareness in the Arab region and tries to create employment opportunities for children. We are trying to establish partnership between Silatech and pertinent UN organs to combat terrorism.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize our cooperation in countering violent extremism. We are committed to grapple with that challenge at the national-international levels and to interact with international endeavors to combat extremism and terrorism in all their forms.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Qatar. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Panama.

PANAMA: Thank you very much, Mr. President. At the outset, let me commend the initiative presented by the Secretary-General with the view to promoting a global Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism, a scourge which knows no borders, no religious beliefs, nor nationalities, but whose negative impact on the most diverse populations weigh on us all.

Today's debate cannot be more relevant when humanitarian crises and forced displacement, the consequence of violent extremism and terrorism, which only recently has shaken to the core countries far and wide and taken innumerable human lives. The phenomenon generates such concern because of the victims and suffering, that setting a historic precedent, the leaders of the Catholic and Orthodox church will meet in just a few hours from now, in our region, to address this threat in the name of peace and understanding.

With a vision of global responsibility and with a view to promoting peace and human rights, Panama has expressed support for the international efforts to prevent the financing of terrorism, which is seen as a threat that has put humanity in jeopardy. Therefore, we welcome the initiative of the Swiss government to hold International Conference on the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to be held on the 7th and 8th of April in Geneva.

Therefore, Panama welcome the thrust of the Secretary-General's plan of action, which recommends to states that they draw up a national Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism across their own specific priority areas. Sir, social inequalities that we seek to address with the Development Agenda for 2030 in favor of a world free of extreme poverty, but also free of fear and violence where all people can develop their potential, needs to be a reality. And, therefore, both instruments should be complementary.

Promoting peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive societies is an imperative. Inclusive development that promotes equality and above all respect for human rights, democracy, human development, gender equality, and increased participation of women and young people is a responsibility of all states. We welcome the offer of the Secretary-General to make available to the states the platform of UN agencies in order to support national actions to that end.

Sir, the Global UN Counter-Terrorist Strategy, unanimously approved by the General Assembly 10 years ago, specifically addresses the theme of prevention and provides for balanced implementation of its four pillars, highlighting the need to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law in combatting terrorism. The plan presented to us by the Secretary-General undoubtedly supports the implementation of this strategy, and my country would, therefore, wish to recognize the leadership and commitment with the roles that this organization should play in supporting states in combatting violent extremism, pinpointing the root causes that fuel it to the detriment of our societies.

Sir, Panama repudiates all acts of violence, regardless of its origin, that violates the norms of international law as the sole basis of international peace and security. We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General in implementing the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

We conclude by reiterating the call on all nations to reach a consensus to agree on specific action to counter-radicalization, violent extremism while upholding democratic values, and with a vision that contains the principles on which we can build peaceful, tolerant, inclusive societies. Thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Panama. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Bangladesh.

BANGLADESH: Mr. President, Bangladesh appreciates your efforts to have the general resolution adopted today to take forward the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Primary Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Bangladesh considers the plan of action to be a sound basis for our collective, integrated, and strategic war on preventing violent extremism.

We detect many commonalities between our national policies and actions on preventing violent extremism under the resolute guidance of our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, and the seven-point agenda for action outlined by the Secretary-General. Bangladesh maintains an unequivocal zero-tolerance approach to terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations. We believe that terrorists and violent extremists do not have any religion, creed, and caste. We remain committed to ensuring that our territory is not used for terrorist activities directed at other states, including our neighbors.

Bangladesh considers the Secretary-General's plan of action to contain a useful portfolio of analytical tools and recommendations. It allows member states to identify the key drivers of violent extremism in their respective contexts, and thus calibrate their appropriate responses at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels. The Secretary-General has developed his plan of action in relation to the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, especially its pillars one and four. For us the plan of action aims to leverage the PVE agenda to contribute in the larger context to comprehensive, multi-dimensional, and effective counter-terrorism strategies, and not to substitute them.

As we see it, PVE can be pursued in the interface between security and development, while being anchored in human rights principles. PVE does offer the international community an avenue to avoid the potential pitfalls of over or singular reliance on a military-based approach to counter-terrorism. Prevention is absolutely the buzzword of the UN's peace and security agenda at the moment. There is perhaps a growing convergence on the much needed attention to be given to preventing the underlying drivers of intolerance, violence, radicalization, and terrorism to robustly complement the organization's work on ending conflicts and defeating terrorism.

A consensus, however, would perhaps remain elusive as long as there is a perceived imbalance in identifying the real drivers and processes of radicalization and violent extremism. We see no purpose in denying some of the fundamental root causes that continue to give steady supply and sustenance to the toxic messages being peddled by certain segments of violent extremists. The present plan of action refers to the potential impacts of foreign occupation, protracted conflicts, and systematic human rights abuses, but shies away from identifying certain obvious particular cases as it has done with many others.

We can perhaps opt for partial narratives to address the malaise of radicalization and violent extremism, but that may only serve to embolden those that thrive on their own interpretation of events, no matter how misguided their logic or objectives may be. Likewise, the plan of action tends to focus on the local drivers of violent extremism, but shows rather scant understanding of the external factors that profoundly influences the local narratives. The collective grievances, ideological imports, and illicit financial flows that permeate through national borders continue to foil the vested agenda of the local actors, including violent extremists.

The role of modern technologies, particularly the Internet, merits our special attention when it comes to tackling violent extremism. It would be somewhat futile to address the spread of violent extremist's messaging online only through the binaries of security versus access and privacy. There needs to be a common space to be found for different groups of actors to converge and cooperate in the face of a shared global threat. Even if it takes time, member states should seriously consider reviewing the existing legal and normative frameworks to further facilitate mutual assistance and cooperation with active involvement, commitment, and responsiveness of the private sector.

Bangladesh stands ready to draw on and customize the Secretary-General's plan of action in line with our national circumstances and priorities. In order to address the upstream challenges of violent extremism at the grassroots, we have recently joined the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, GCERF, as a pilot beneficiary country. Our sustained investment in human development has been critical in reducing poverty, enhancing women's social mobility, creating education, and employment opportunities, especially for the youth, and strengthening human rights and the rule of law.

Bangladesh's impressive achievement in women's empowerment has been a critical factor in resisting extremist elements in our midst. In our aspiration to build a knowledge-based society, we have made it a mission to infuse a culture of peace in the minds of our children and youth.

To conclude, Mr. President, Bangladesh wishes to see that our deliberations concerning counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism be contextualized within the 2030 Development Agenda since, apart from climate change, there is perhaps no greater threat to our collective sustainable development pursuits than terrorism and violent extremism.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Bangladesh. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

VENEZUELA: Mr. President, People of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is grateful for the convening of this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to debate a theme my country sets great store by, as well as for your good offices in facilitating the draft resolution A/70/L.41 recently adopted by consensus.

Sir, the world has looked in in perplexity as the use of violence and terrorism to subjugate various societies, civilizations, religions, and creeds has acquired new manifestations although it’s a product of practices that are part of intolerance and violent extremism. Terrorism and violent extremism are today problems of a global scope that are a flagrant threat to international peace and security.

A sign of this is, inter alia, the unprecedented threats posed by the so-called Islamic state as well as other—30 other terrorist organizations around the world, not just in the North Africa or Middle East, which has prompted many individuals from over 100 countries around the world, men, women, and children have ended up joining these terrorist groups; hence the importance of the international community acting collectively and decisively to prevent combat and eliminate effectively terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including violent extremism.

This needs to be an uncompromising struggle that needs to be carried out fully, not selectively. And we need to implement fully the provisions contained in international instruments and relevant resolutions adopted both by this General Assembly as well as the Security Council, particularly those that prohibit the transfer of weapons, financing, training, and refuge granted to terrorist groups.

Sir, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has taken due note of the recommendations contained in the proposed Plan of Action of the Secretary-General to Prevent Violent Extremism that we are considering today, and particularly welcomes the fact that this initiative covers the theme—both of the themes addressed both by the global strategy—UN Global Strategy as well as under the title Culture of Peace.

We believe this preventive approach should be used by the organization more frequently in its efforts to contribute to the struggle against violent extremism since terrorism, which is a threat to international peace and security, and is—clearly runs counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

In that respect we value in particular the fact that the proposed plan of action the SG includes two aspects that are fundamental for my country, tackling the root causes of violent extremism and the need to reach political solutions to prolock [46:10] the situations of protracted conflicts.

Similarly, we share the call of the Secretary-General to draw up national action plans under a multi-dimensional approach with the participation of all institutions of the states since we recognize that there’s not—there’s no one-size-fits-all solution to these problems. Each case has its own specificities and is—must be addressed on its own merits.

Sir, experience shows that terrorist groups feed off of despair, injustice, frustration, lack of opportunities, negation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to promote their criminal agenda, and in some cases political, which is founded in hatred, intolerance, sectarianism, and violent extremism. Therefore, we believe that the international response requires consideration of the conditions that fuel its propagation around the world with a view to developing effective, innovative strategies to counteract the extremist terrorist narratives that—should—that can generate critical thinking among society to prevent radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization of both human and economic resources.

Furthermore, we believe that the long-term solution to the threats posed today by violent extremism must absolutely require political solution to conflicts in countries like Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Palestine. These protracted crises further exacerbate conflicts and serve as a breeding ground for violent extremism, for bolstering organized transactional crime; they facilitate the flow of financing and training of foreign terrorist fighters and, therefore, expanding the capacity of action for terrorist organizations.

Sir, my country believes that combating terrorism and violent extremism should take place within the framework of international cooperation, abiding by existing international and regional instruments in the field, including the purpose and principles of the UN Charter, the norms of international law, fully respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law since otherwise radicalization will only spread.

Along those lines we do—while we do very much welcome—commend the Secretary-General for his initiative that we are sure has the commendable goal of bolstering the support from the UN system to member states in addressing, inter alia, the root causes of violent extremism, my delegation has a number of observations to make regarding the course of action to address the considerations and recommendations set out in the draft plan of action.

Venezuela takes a—is of the opinion that consideration of the Plan of Action, presented today to us by the Secretary-General, to Prevent Violent Extremism should be subject to—of discussions between member states of the organization with a view to debating as part of intergovernmental negotiations the recommendations formulated therein, and agree where possible their adoption by this multilateral forum.

Sir, the presentation of this plan of action is very timely since in June this year the General Assembly will be reviewing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorist Strategy. That’s why we think that that could be a very pertinent opportunity to take into consideration the recommendations formulated by the Secretary-General and align them with the aforementioned strategy in order to avoid duplication of efforts or the adoption of any parallel initiatives. Therefore, we think that the draft plan of action contains very valuable elements that cover some of the central pillars of this strategy and that could help to complement the strategy.

Finally, we think the international community should continue working on the design and implementation, strengthening of strategies adopted on a case-by-case basis with the view of neutralizing the capacity for action of terrorist groups and the narratives that incite violent extremism. To that end, we believe that the adoption of any future international convention against terrorism would complement the array of existing international legal instruments to facilitate a definition, including of violent extremism, that would allow us to bolster consensus in this matter.

I thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Mexico.

MEXICO: Thank you very much, President. My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting and thanks the Secretary-General for his Plan of Action Preventing Violent Extremism where he presents to member states his recommendations for addressing the multiform causes that lead to violent extremism leading to terrorism, starting from national, regional, and global plans.

Mexico recognizes that this new phenomenon of violent extremism poses major challenges and we need to address it from a cross-cutting preventing angle. This means that our efforts should focus above all on ensuring better conditions for development and rebuilding the social fabric to eradicate the root causes that lead to violent extremism.

A fundamental part of this task is improving education on tolerance and respect of human rights as well as gender equality, empowerment of young people, all of which are aspects that are found at the heart of the Secretary-General’s report. Simply speaking, what we need is to create conditions that can guarantee for everyone a prosperous life and a decent future.

To achieve this goal, it’s also necessary to recognize certain premises. First, that violent extremism cannot—shouldn’t be associated to any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group. Secondly, the goal should be to bolstering development, the rule of law and the regime of human rights, without which many of the root causes of violent extremism won’t be—can’t be addressed. Next, measures to prevent extremism should be implemented without discrimination, without stereotypes. And fourthly, that tackling this phenomenon, in doing so all states are obliged to act strictly abiding by international law, especially international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law.

Therefore, the measures to combat violent extremism generate other—must prevent certain parts of the population being stigmatized or lead to radicalization that—what we’re specifically seeking to eradicate. We reiterate the responsibility of political leaders, religious leaders, and community leaders when it comes to ensuring that the message that are being conveyed promote tolerance, a respect for a culture of peace, preventing propagation of xenophobic discriminatory messages, including as part of electoral campaigns or processes.

Sir, I take the opportunity to also set out some of—some warnings with regards to certain unintended impact that my delegation believes should be taken into account and discussed as transparently as possible when it comes to this process. While the action plan proposed by the Secretary-General tackles exclusively violent extremism as a lead—leading to terrorism, the lack of a definition of these two concepts that can gain the consensus of the international community could—only expands the amount of acts that can fall within the scope of the two expressions. And this theme could be particularly troubling in the future, particularly when actions are studied or measures to confront any acts that could be considered as violent extremism.

Therefore, it’s vital to maintain a cross-cutting approach within the UN system with regards to actions to prevent violent extremism as well as give timely follow-up and consider potential implications of inserting any notion of violent extremism that hasn’t been agreed within the strategic institutional architecture for combating terrorism. It’s not just a matter of promoting innovative concepts and differentiated spheres of action; it’s a matter more of the inclusion of a preventive plan of action within the framework of a principally executive strategy. Otherwise, a new strategy against violent extremism—any would be—opening a new strategy we need to fairly carefully discuss the scope of its application.

Sir, my delegation reiterates its commitment to working actively with the rest of the UN membership in discussing this theme in order to resolve some of the questions that have been raised throughout today’s debate.

I thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Mexico. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Tunisia.

TUNISIA: Mr. President, allow me at the outset to convey to you my gratitude for the organization of this debate on the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action for the Prevention of Violent Extremism. Tunisia wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the Distinguished Representative of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the OIC, and wishes to add a few comments in our national capacity.

My country is gratified by the participation in this very important debate, which affords us an opportunity to reaffirm its support for the plan of action of the Secretary-General and to echo his pressing call for action unity faced with violent extremism with its heinous consequences, given the global threat which it poses to international peace and security.

The recent terrorist attacks in Tunis, in Nigeria, in Saudi Arabia, Burkina Faso, Turkey, Indonesia, Paris, Lebanon, and other attacks which have taken place throughout the world, which are often also committed in Syria, in Iraq and Libya with their horrible massacres of civilians, illustrates if there was any need to do so the scale of violent extremism which impacts all regions throughout the world, and the pressing need to have our actions evolve.

The Secretary-General’s plan of action to this end advocates a common and coordinated approach of member states at local, national, regional, and international levels to tackle the causes of violent extremism in their whole complexity.

We also believe that the choice of 2016 is of symbolic importance as it coincides with the 10th anniversary of the global counter-terrorist strategy of the United Nations. This strategy with its four pillars remains more relevant than ever before; however, we’re forced to note that the focus was in the past more on pillar two, and especially security measures which remain necessary but are not in themselves sufficient, while pillars one and four of the strategy, which consist in eliminating the conditions conducive to terrorism and guaranteeing respect for human rights for all as well as the rule of law within the framework of the fight against terrorism, were often neglected.

The next review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June 2016, in our view, affords us of an opportunity to benefit from the lessons learned in strengthening our action by including not only security-related measures, which of course remain crucial, but also by including measures which systematically prevent the deep-rooted causes of violent extremism.

It is also quite clear that we have to ensure that these actions are long-lasting ones, that we are patient, that we act in solidarity and that we persevere in a tenacious way to achieve their expected results. We are gratified by the fact that the General Assembly will work in keeping with today’s resolution to launch substantive discussions regarding the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to achieve consensus on the way forward to make progress on such an important priority.

In our view there is a need to seize the opportunity of these discussions to together reflect on the ways in which we can mobilize greater resources for the implementation of the proposals contained in this plan of action.

Mr. President, Tunisia was, through the backing of all of our stakeholders in our country—through the backing of all stakeholders in our country and the participation of civil society was able to transcend the difficulties of the democratic transition for the holding of free and transparent legislative elections in 2014 and the adoption of a new constitution. This approach, of course, meant that we were awarded the peace prize, Nobel Peace Prize, for 2015.

Now all of this progress, as worthy as it is, unfortunately doesn’t do away with the need to continue to fight against terrorism. Tunisia is working at a national level to respond in an effective and global way to the threat of terrorism, which is facing it given the instability of the geopolitical situation in the region. We are—we intend to continue to combat this phenomenon through the law and also by tackling the underlying consequences or causes of this global threat by preventing the radicalization of young people. Thus, my country has adopted new laws which criminalize the cases of support, incitement, complicity but also travel to conflict areas in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including Resolution 2178 dated 2014.

We have also recently developed, in close cooperation with the new UN Counter-Terrorism Directorate, a national, comprehensive, holistic, and multi-sectoral approach for fighting against terrorism and violent extremism based on four pillars. These are prevention, protection, follow-up, and response. This strategy is aimed in its prevention tier to close off any avenues for the recruitment, direct or indirect, of young people including through the use of the Internet to counter extremist doctrines and to reduce these groups’ hold on the vulnerable sections of our society.

We also advocate consolidating of educational approaches by promoting the culture of dialog, peace, and tolerance as well as the prevention of radicalization in prisons, the development of marginalized areas and the rejection of any justifications for terrorist acts.

We also suggest encouraging studies on the role of women in the fight against terrorism. Promoting good governance, the rule of law, and the universal values, which are human rights values, are also amongst the priorities in this strategy. Indeed, we are convinced that the prevention of violent extremism must progress in parallel with the promotion of human rights and the importance of preserving achievements in this field.

We’re also determined to continue to work towards the objectives, which are part of the strategy, with the involvement of society, but also the main stakeholders in terms of education, religious affairs, and the Internet because we are convinced that the fight against terrorism is a fight which all of us have to fight together.

And finally, I would like by way of conclusion, sir, to affirm the commitment of my country to lend its active contribution to the efforts of the Secretary-General to forge a new global partnership to prevent violent extremism; a partnership which would reflect our solidarity and our unity to defend our common values, which are peace, justice, and human dignity, mindful of the primary role of the United Nations’ charter and in keeping with this charter and our obligations stemming from international law.

I thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Tunisia. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Senegal.

SENEGAL: Mr. President, I should like at the outset to extend to you our heartfelt gratitude. And we’d like to do the same to President Lykketoft for having organized this public debate which affords member states an opportunity to express their positions regarding the Plan of Action of the Secretary-General for the Prevention of Violent Extremism.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Distinguished Representative of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the OIC and would like, in our national capacity, to make a few comments.

The growth of international terrorism and violent extremism has reached an unprecedented scale and remains a source of major concern for the international community. No country, no region throughout the world is safe from this threat. Even in areas which are considered to be stable or developed, mistrust, prejudice, and violent nationalism is appearing and constitutes conducive conditions for the spread of violent extremism. Thus, in the countries of our West African sub-region and the Sahel we are experiencing frequent assaults and threats posed by jihadists and terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, AQIM and ISIL which continue to sow the seeds of terror throughout our communities with attacks, kidnappings, and summary executions of unprecedented violence.

President, the level of violence and cruelty of the recent attacks throughout the world, claiming hundreds of innocent lives, reminds us of the pressing need to come up with a collective and coordinated response to this pernicious threat to peace and security. In this respect, my delegation welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to this end and expresses its support for the plan of action which has been submitted for consideration, and which focuses especially on the disastrous consequences of violent extremism for international peace and security, as well as sustainable development, the respect for human rights and the rule of law as well as humanitarian work in areas of conflict.

Mr. President, to be efficient any action in terms of fighting terrorism and violent extremism must first and foremost tackle structural as well as other elements which lie at its origin and which promote its spread. These include such things as marginalization and discrimination, poor governance, and the absence of socioeconomic prospects, the often miss—or frequent misinterpretation of religion.

Faced with what seems to be a situation where the international community finds it difficult to find appropriate solutions, there is a need to adopt a coercive, inclusive, and united approach, which is long term in nature, with a strengthening of cooperation at sub-regional, regional, and international levels. Within this framework, it is important that member states be in a position to adopt in full sovereignty national plans of action based on local realities and specificities, and better tailored to their socioeconomic and security contexts.

The settlement in prevention of conflicts dialog, the involvement of the population for the mobilization of young people, the empowerment of women, education, the strengthening of capacities and facilitating access to employment are all essential components when it comes to preventing violent extremism. Indeed, such action can prevent the radicalization of young people as well as their recruitment as foreign terrorist fighters, recruitment by extremist organizations.

Mr. President, the annual review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy which has been planned for June of this year will afford us with an excellent opportunity to carry out an in-depth exercise in consideration regarding the content of the plan of action to achieve the necessary consensus for its effective and universal implementation. To this end the Geneva Conference, which will be held on 7th and 8th of April 2016, affords us another opportunity to continue our discussions.

Mr. President, in its efforts to implement measures aimed at eliminating international terrorism and violent extremism, Senegal has adopted an approach which is based on prevention, cooperation, and rapid response. Similarly, my country is participating actively in cooperation in terms of international criminal justice against terrorism, the monitoring of land borders as well as sea and airports—sea waters and airports, as well as mutual legal assistance, as well as cooperation in terms of money laundering and financing of terrorism. We have passed two laws in 2007 which create a stronger regime targeting the perpetrators of terrorist acts.

Mr. President, national efforts to fight against terrorism and violent extremism are ones which are worthy of support. Regarding this, the United Nations must continue to provide technical assistance to states which request it while ensuring better coordination of the activity of its entities, offices, and programs involved in this struggle.

Mr. President, the fight against terrorism and religious obscurantism, which underpins it, requires the promotion of tolerance and acceptance, which is possible only through a dialog between peoples, religions, and cultures. Faced with extremists of all stripes, there is a need to develop an appropriate ideological response able to assist or to spread a real genuine message of our religions to young people, the targets of recruiters, a message of harmony between men and peoples as well as love, regardless of their religion, race, or creed.

My country, Senegal, has made the culture of tolerance and peace as well as interreligious dialog one of the founding pillars of its existence, which means that we are often referred to as a model in terms of peaceful coexistence between communities. We are also, of course, a country which is a country of a peaceful Islam, one which can serve as a bulwark against violent extremism and the rejection of the other.

By way of conclusion, sir, my delegation is gratified that the General Assembly was able through the resolution which we have just adopted to speak in a single voice, and thus to send a strong and clear message regarding our will to carry out concrete and coordinated actions to fight against violent extremism. Senegal will remain committed to this, and will participate actively and constructively in the process currently underway.

Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Senegal. We have heard the last speaker on these items for this meeting. We will hear the remaining speakers on Tuesday, 16 February 2016, at 3:00 p.m. in this hall.

The meeting is adjourned.