



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

**AMBASSADOR DR. MALEEHA LODHI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

ON

**SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PLAN OF ACTION
TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

New York,
12 February 2016

General Assembly meeting on UN Secretary General's Plan of Action
to Prevent Violent Extremism
General Assembly Hall
12 February 2016

**Statement by Ambassador Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Permanent
Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations**

Mr. President,

We thank you for convening today's debate affording Member States the opportunity to express their views on the Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674 of 24 December 2016).

We welcome the initiative of the Secretary General and believe that violent extremism can best be addressed and effective responses evolved by taking into account the views of Member States.

Pakistan fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the OIC.

Mr. President,

Pakistan reiterates its principled position against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We also endorse the view expressed by the Secretary General that "Violent Extremism is an affront to the purposes and principles of the United Nations." At the same time, we are of the view that lack of respect for the fundamental principles of the UN Charter also leads to violent extremism.

There is no agreed definition of violent extremism nor is there one for terrorism. The conditions when violent extremism leads to terrorism are also open to subjective interpretation. Lack of clarity on these elements warrants analysis of the phenomenon in broader and more considered terms.

We all agree that violent extremism and terrorism cannot be associated with any country, race, religion, culture or nationality. We deplore any attempt to do so and urge the international community to ensure that this understanding is aptly reflected in their national and international actions.

Mr. President,

Pakistan has consistently called upon the international community to address the root causes of terrorism and the conditions conducive to it. We have always urged respect for human rights and the rule of law in efforts to counter terrorism so that such efforts do not prove to be counter productive. That is why we always stressed balanced implementation of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, including its Pillar I and IV.

We are gratified to note that the international community is finally acknowledging the need to go beyond security and military based counterterrorism measures and adopt a more comprehensive approach. Pakistan has long advocated this so that the underlying factors that drive terrorist violence are addressed in their entirety. So we are surprised and dismayed at the relatively little attention given to some of the most obvious international factors that have decisively influenced the emergence of violent extremism.

Mr. President,

If we are to find effective ways to prevent violent extremism, we must objectively analyze the full range of the phenomenon. Flawed and partial assessments will only lead to flawed approaches. If we are to address it comprehensively, we must fully comprehend and recognize both local and international drivers. Often it is the confluence and interplay between local and international drivers that leads to violent extremism.

Moreover, in today's globalized and inter-connected world, can we separate violent extremism's local and international contexts? Economic deprivation, political injustice, social exclusion and

marginalization of people need to be addressed not only in the local context but also in the wider international context.

Injustices done to peoples under foreign occupation, denial of the right to self-determination, long-festering and unresolved international disputes, interference in the internal affairs of States and the continued violation of the principles of the UN Charter create conditions that are exploited by violent extremists and terrorists to propagate their twisted ideologies. The international community, in particular the United Nations, already has a responsibility to address these issues. Doing so, diligently, will also address the drivers of violent extremism and the conditions conducive to terrorism.

Mr. President,

On the human rights based approach to preventing violent extremism, Pakistan regrets that a number of significant and relevant elements have either been ignored or given too little consideration.

Negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination and intolerance all need to be rectified to prevent violent extremism. Effective implementation of the Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 is important to prevent radicalization. Its violation nourishes the narrative that violent extremist use to justify their vile acts.

Xenophobia, in particular Islamophobia, is on the rise in the West. This has so far gone unchecked and unfortunately unprincipled, xenophobic politicians have sought to build their political fortunes by spreading fear and deliberate mischaracterization of people of other faiths or culture.

Mr. President,

We fully subscribe to the need to ensure respect for international law and human rights in counterterrorism measures. This is what all of us committed to do while endorsing the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

But what do we make of the foreign interventions that have rendered not just societies but countries and regions susceptible to violent extremism?

Did we realize the impact of so-called surgical counterterrorism strikes, in violation of the territorial integrity of States, which have resulted in thousands of civilian casualties and left entire communities angry and determined to redress such impunity?

Mr. President,

The fact is that the world is a much more dangerous place, 15 years after we committed to make it more peaceful and terror-free. We need to revisit the response that was used to counter terrorism and violent extremism that has yielded this outcome.

Mr. President,

With regard to the Secretary General's call for National Action Plans to prevent violent extremism, I can report that my country has already initiated a number of steps towards curbing this threat, at the national, regional and international levels.

Eight of the 20 Action Points of Pakistan's National Action Plan to counter terrorist violence pertain to preventing violent extremism. We are fully cognizant of our national challenges and are making focused efforts to undertake educational reforms, prevent misuse of the Internet and social media, promote tolerance and reform our criminal justice system.

My Government has particularly focused on the potential of youth. The Prime Minister's Youth Program is geared to providing educational scholarships, vocational training and skills development as well as loans to young entrepreneurs. We are also partnering with the United Nations in a Youth Skills Development and Engagement Program with the purpose of preventing violent extremism.

Pakistan has led a number of initiatives towards promoting inter-faith and inter-cultural harmony. Just a week ago, we organized a side event at the United Nations on Countering Xenophobia during inter-faith harmony week, inviting a number of scholars from different faiths who presented their successful initiatives on inter-faith harmony.

Mr. President,

At the international level, we remain committed to support all efforts aimed at preventing violent extremism and terrorism in a balanced manner, consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

I thank you.