



PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT

by

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Mr. President,

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving the floor to the Philippines.

The Philippines welcomes this opportunity to speak before the General Assembly on the review of the progress of implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and congratulates and commends Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala for his wisdom and dedication and his able staff for facilitating the discussions which finally produced the outcome document in the form of a draft resolution. Undoubtedly, it was an important decision for Member States to adopt this resolution by consensus following the model of consensual adoption of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Philippines has consistently maintained that the United Nations must remain at the forefront in combating international terrorism. The United Nations agencies must now decisively facilitate international cooperation and coordination efforts in this regard based on the four-pillar foundations of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, namely, (1) measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; (2) measures to prevent and combat terrorism; (3) measures to build State capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and strengthen the role of the UN system in this regard; and (4) measures to ensure the respect for human rights for all, the Rule of Law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.

These tasks must create a seamless web of activities aimed at addressing international terrorism and maintaining the Rule of Law. Needless to stress, the tasks are formidable and demand courage and political will.

Even as we continue to cooperate and coordinate our efforts in the international arena in this regard, we must also maintain the requisite attention and vigilance within our borders to address the elements and conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; and to hold terrorism in check before it spreads its wickedness, violence, iniquity and immorality, and imposes a reign of fear, destruction and death.

In implementing the UN global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Philippines has been guided by the four pillars and has implemented each of them using three main tools: **first**, a comprehensive political, social and economic package for peace and security; **second**, a comprehensive legal package that brings terrorists to justice, plugs the loopholes in the legal system and ensures the protection of human rights and, **third**, a broad alliance for technical support, cooperation and preparedness.

The Philippines is convinced that terrorism takes root in conditions of poverty, injustice and the depravity of human dignity which aggravate marginalization. Poverty spawns terrorism, and the areas where extreme poverty exist serve as fertile grounds for terrorist leaders, financiers and agents to spread their terrorist agenda. Political and socio-economic marginalization, rooted in intolerance and misunderstanding, have long been recognized as obstacles to development efforts and can lead to extremism and terrorism.

From the Philippines' experience, economic development, social justice, human rights protection and political and judicial reforms are powerful instruments against extremism and terrorism.

Aware of these, the Constitution of the Philippines explicitly declares as a policy the promotion of a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living and an improved quality of life for all (Sec. 9, Article II), and enshrines a separate Article (Article XIII) on Social Justice and Human Rights, which directs the Congress to give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the rights of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good.

There are now some laws which the Philippine Congress had enacted to implement these constitutional mandates.

In the Philippines, judicial reforms that include measures to address marginalization such as providing effective and efficient access to justice by the poor are in place. I respectfully submit, as I had done many times before when I was Chief Justice of the Philippines, that when each State makes its courts accessible to all, we would considerably address the problem of marginalization and strip all would-be terrorists of the vestiges of moral entitlement or legitimacy.

Our peace negotiations in conflict-ridden areas in Southern Philippines are reinforced by counter-terror and conflict-management tools that aim to separate insurgents from terrorists. We are all aware that terrorists feed on the insurgents, fueling extremism to disastrous levels. By separating them the Philippines addressed the political grievances and issues of marginalization without giving into the terrorists.

In another current front, the Philippine government and civil society have worked together to address these problems through interfaith and intercultural dialogue and understanding.

And more concretely, to address frontally terrorism, the Congress of the Philippines in July of last year, enacted the Human Security Act (HAS) of 2007. This Act defines and penalizes two crimes: (1) terrorism and (2) conspiracy to commit terrorism. The Act declares it to be the policy of the Philippines to protect life, liberty and property from acts of terrorism, to condemn terrorism as inimical and dangerous to the national security of the country and to the welfare of the people, and to make terrorism a crime against the Filipino people, against humanity and against the law of nations.

The Act also ensures that even as the State has the right to extirpate terrorism, it shall, nevertheless, continue to uphold the basic rights and fundamental liberties of the

people. It proclaims that “respect for human rights shall be absolute and protected at all times.” To carry out this policy, the Act includes thirty sections that penalize violations of the Act which are not, *per se*, the crimes of terrorism and of conspiracy to commit terrorism. These penalties are intended to deter violations of the Act by the police or law enforcement agencies of the government or their agents, judicial authorities and government personnel and even bank officials in order to uphold the protection of the rights and liberties of the people. It also recognizes the basic premise that to effectively combat terrorism, the option must not be confined to the use of guns. Thus, it calls for a comprehensive approach against terrorism that includes political, economic, social, legal and even diplomatic means.

The Philippines has also undertaken a continuing program of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of capacity building and technical training and preparedness in combating terrorism. It has long standing commitments on training on law enforcement, customs clearance and border control with her ASEAN neighbors, Japan, South Korea, and in the wider Asia Pacific region with Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States and with the governments of the European Union.

The Philippines has spearheaded the creation of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation’s Anti-Terrorism Task Force in a move to secure the Asia Pacific Region from terrorist acts. Closer to home, the Philippines has joined forces with the other ASEAN member states in adopting a Convention on Terrorism which calls for greater cooperation among the ASEAN member States in combating all acts of terror. These counter-terrorism efforts in the bilateral and multilateral levels aim at securing the Philippines maritime borders, trade, aviation, remittances and cross-border financial transactions.

Mr. President,

The Philippines is thus honored to share with the General Assembly information on these measures it has so far undertaken to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.