

**INTERVENTION OF THE RIO GROUP
ITEM 99: MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the twenty two Member States of the Rio Group comprising Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and my own country, Mexico.

Mr. Chairman,

Terrorism constitutes a serious threat at the national and international levels. At the national level, terrorism causes wide destruction and suffering, but it also spreads fear, anger and antagonism within local communities, tearing apart the very social cloth that keeps members of a society together. At the international sphere, terrorism poses a real threat to global security and stability, including by jeopardizing the relations among peoples. Due to its malignant effect terrorism, under any circumstance, must be unequivocally condemned and their perpetrators brought to justice. Prevention is at the core of the issue and the best way to deal with the problem in the long term.

Terrorism operates transnationally in such a manner that no country has the means to combat it alone. It is a matter for the international community to deal with through cooperation and coordination among States. Based on those assumptions, the Rio Group would like to reiterate its strong support for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006 and reaffirmed last September in the occasion of the first review of the implementation of the Strategy.

The Rio Group would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/62/898), dated 7 July 2008, on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy, which contains valuable information on the work done by the various organs of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism. We would like to recognize the important work carried out by regional and sub regional organizations in the implementation of the Strategy and call them for strength their cooperation in order to succeed in the fight against terrorism.

We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/63/173), dated 25 July 2008, which contains information about measures taken at the national and international levels, describes recent developments related to General Assembly resolution 51/210 and presents additional relevant information on the fight against terrorism.

Based on its four pillars, the Strategy deals with the issue of terrorism on a holistic approach. It addresses the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and measures to prevent and combat terrorism, as well as measures devoted to building State's capacity and the role of the United Nations to achieve those goals. The Strategy also highlights the need for Member States to respect the rule of law while countering terrorism, particularly the human rights and fundamental freedoms. Those are principles of the utmost importance to the Rio Group.

The Rio Group is of the view that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force should be institutionalised within the Secretariat so that Member States have the opportunity to interact with it in the General Assembly on a regular basis and provide it with policy guidance.

Mr. Chairman,

The Rio Group attaches equal importance to the prevention and repression of terrorism. As regards prevention, it is essential to determine and eliminate the factors that may breed terrorist acts, including political, ethnic, racial and religious intolerance, as well as the social and economic divide among nations. With regard to repression and elimination of terrorism, including its financing, all States should seek further judicial cooperation and exchange of information among their financial and police intelligence bodies with a view to preventing acts of terrorist groups and their association with other criminal organizations.

The Rio Group wants to reiterate that the measures to eliminate international terrorism must always be conducted in accordance to the rule of law, with strict observance of international law, its principles, norms and standards. Only procedures adopted in accordance with the UN Charter and other relevant treaties, in particular those related to human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law, can be successful and gather broad support from the international community.

The cooperation for the extradition of perpetrators of terrorist acts and the mutual judicial assistance must also be framed in accordance with the relevant international law and national legislation. Actions taken outside this international legal framework are unjustifiable.

Mr. Chairman,

The Rio Group encourages all Member States should make their best efforts to try to conclude a comprehensive convention that strengthens the international legal framework on counter-terrorism. A convention of this nature against terrorism is required in order to complement the legal framework already in force, allowing us to have a special instrument on the matter, providing concrete responses to this challenge faced by humanity.

The results of the twelfth session of Ad Hoc Committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 (A/63/37) suggest we still need to work in a cooperatively manner to reach consensus on the issue.

While we express our appreciation to the coordinator of the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism, Mrs. Maria Telalian, for her tireless efforts to bring States together, we believe the time has come again to embrace negotiations in an open format in the context of the Ad Hoc Working Group or the Sixth Committee to achieve a comprehensive convention on terrorism. We believe that putting together spirit of compromise and political will, substantial results can be attained shortly in order to convene a high-level conference on terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite all our efforts to combat terrorism, we continue to witness frequent acts of terrorism around the globe. This is a clear signal that we should keep our determination and strengthen our ability to fight this evil practice. Cooperation and coordination among countries seems to be the most appropriate and efficient way to move forward. And the place to achieve that goal is here, at the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.