



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY LIM LIANG JIM,
DELEGATE TO THE 61ST SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON AGENDA ITEM 100,
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM,
SIXTH COMMITTEE,
12 OCTOBER 2006**

Mr Chairman,

1 Allow me first to express my congratulations on your appointment to the Chairmanship of the 6th Committee. Let me also state that the Singapore delegation associates itself with the statement made by Vietnam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr Chairman,

2 Five years ago on September 11, the twin towers of the World Trade Center in this city were reduced to rubble by terrorists. This was not the first terrorist incident. But it was unique for its audacity, visibility, and sheer scale. The Twin Towers have become something of a symbol in our common fight against terrorism.

3 Despite our best effort, the threat of terrorism continues to lurk. In August, a plot by a UK-based homegrown terror cell to blow up ten airliners was almost as significant as 9/11 in influencing the way we travel. Last week, the media carried reports of a possible terrorist attack against the UN Office in Geneva. In the same week, a foiled suicide strike by militants in Srinagar left twelve persons dead. It is clear that terrorists are planning for the long term. 9/11; Bali; Istanbul; Riyadh; Jakarta; Madrid; London; Sharm El-Sheikh; and Amman were not isolated incidents. They are part of a broader campaign by terrorists against all of us. The *modus operandi* of the perpetrators also points to sophisticated planning by a transnational network of cells, groups and individuals spread out around the world.

4 Global terrorism poses a new security challenge that we all have to confront. Terrorists do not respect national, geographic, religious or ethnic boundaries. Their attacks do not discriminate between races or religions. However, they try to test the strength of our social fabrics by fomenting distrust and disrupting the racial and religious harmony that exists.

5 The recent launch of the UN Global Counter-terrorism Strategy underscored the world's commitment to fight terrorism. One of the key elements in its Plan of Action highlighted the need to "*promote dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilizations, cultures, peoples and religions, and to promote mutual respect for and prevent the defamation of religions, religious values, beliefs and cultures*". Indeed, we will fall into the terrorists' trap if we associate terrorism with particular religions, nationalities, civilisations or ethnic groups. Instead, we need to build on the various initiatives, like the Alliance of Civilisations and the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, to bring civilisations together.

6 The UN has long displayed its commitment to countering terrorism. The General Assembly has focused on terrorism as an international problem since 1972. However, terrorist organisations have become increasingly sophisticated. They have embraced technology to network, publicise their activities and recruit and brainwash the gullible and dispirited. It is not unreasonable to also assume that they would embrace more sophisticated and destructive weaponry if ever within their reach. The idea of terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction is absolutely chilling. We must all move quickly and decisively in this new millennium to match the ever-evolving capabilities of the terrorists and to keep them from attaining these means.

7 In Singapore, we have tried to implement measures to increase security. Since the unveiling of plots by *Jemaah Islamiyah* to target us we have strengthened measures covering vital areas like land transport, maritime and aviation security, border security, critical infrastructure protection and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosive (CBRE) defence. Singapore has studied the threat of bioterrorism seriously. Our experience with SARS in 2003 taught us valuable lessons that can be applied to deal with a bioterrorist attack. For example, ties between agencies involved in security, safety, health, and the local scientific community were strengthened. Confidence-building measures like temperature screening and public education can also help dispel rumours in the face of an unknown threat. Ring-fencing measures like home quarantine ensured that our communities were able to carry out normal life. In tandem, we have continued to focus on raising public awareness and on strengthening societal harmony among our various ethnic groups.

But we also recognise that no matter how effective our national measures, no single country is able to counter the threat of terrorism on its own. Hence, we work closely with partners in Southeast Asia and beyond on intelligence exchange and counter-terrorism.

Mr Chairman,

8 The adoption of the Global Counter-terrorism Strategy is a good first step. As a next step, we would like to repeat the call by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to *"honour the victims of terrorism everywhere by taking swift action to implement all aspects of the strategy"*. The fact that we could all agree on the Strategy will hopefully provide impetus for negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). We hope that the constructive spirit that delegations showed in concluding the Strategy will spill over to the CCIT negotiations.

9 Terrorism threatens the very principles on which the United Nations was founded - humanity's unity and peaceful co-existence. We must not allow the terrorists to divide and destroy us. The terrorists have waged war against us. But we will prevail. Our efforts here today are part of this process. In the words of a past President of our General Assembly, Madame Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, "The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war".

Thank you.