

United States Statement

Each year the Sixth Committee delegations come together to reaffirm our commitment to making the world safer from terrorism. We remember the innocents who have lost their lives in horrific acts of carnage—the men and women murdered on their way to work in Mumbai in July, and the others who have died in similar senseless acts of violence in London, Amman, Beslan, Moscow, Madrid, Bali, New York, Washington, and other places too numerous to mention. There continue to be a few who argue that such horrific acts can be justified on the basis of a political cause or movement. But the international community has repeatedly rejected that premise, stating squarely that no cause can justify terrorism.. And our job is to ensure that terrorists are isolated from support, brought to justice, and denied the opportunity to strike again. And we must do this in conformity with international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law.

As a cornerstone of the international community, the United Nations must play a critical role in our joint efforts to end the scourge of terrorism. Very recently, the UN General Assembly took the positive step of adopting, by consensus, a UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy. This strategy affirms once again the principle that there can be no justification for terrorism. We hope it will furnish a platform for concrete and practical improvements in the UN's programs relating to counterterrorism.

The United States is particularly eager to see more cooperation and coordination amongst the UN bodies that work on terrorism issues in order to avoid inefficiency and duplication of work. More should be done to integrate the disparate programs, and they should be results-focused and calibrated to maximize their impact. Because countering terrorism, state building, and development are mutually dependent and mutually supporting, we strongly believe that counterterrorism should be addressed across the UN system, including the specialized agencies, in a coherent and coordinated way. Enhanced UN counterterrorism capacity will have far-reaching benefits. It will reduce the likelihood of conflict and social unrest, and contribute to increased foreign investment, good governance and long-term development. .

And we are eager to see an enhanced emphasis on ensuring States comply with international counterterrorism obligations, which we see as critical to our common purpose of making the world more peaceful, safe, and secure. There must be standards of accountability against which the compliance efforts of each State can be measured with a view to ensure the implementation of these obligations. States that have the will but not the means to comply must be given assistance. We are thus eager to work with our UN partners on capacity building to help the willing stand against terrorism. Those States that have not the will but the means must be called to account for themselves.

The Security Council has already assumed an important role in marshaling international efforts against terrorism. Security Council Resolution 1267 and its successor resolutions have created a sanctions regime that usefully targets associates of Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban, and Al Qaeda wherever they might be. The truly global

reach of this program (which in recent months has resulted in the designation of groups and individuals in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa) is of critical importance given the global reach of the Al Qaeda threat. To expand the reach of the program even further, the 1267 Sanctions Committee has recently improved its listing request procedures in a manner that should give Member States enhanced opportunities to participate in the sanctions process. But while we applaud improvements to the 1267 listing system, we also note the critical importance of ensuring that the sanctions are being properly implemented. With the input of the 1267 Committee's Monitoring Team on this subject, we look forward to working with our colleagues on the Committee on strategies for pursuing this fundamental objective.

To further improve the effectiveness of the 1267 Committee, we have been working with partners on the Committee to address concerns that have been raised with respect to the fairness and transparency of the process. In particular, work is underway to revise the Committee's de-listing guidelines to ensure that de-listing petitions are given serious and appropriate consideration. We are hopeful that the outcome of this work will serve to strengthen this important tool in the world's counter-terrorism arsenal.

The UN's Counterterrorism Committee, organized under Security Council resolution 1373, also does critical work in the service of counterterrorism. We welcome as a positive step the adoption of a directory of best practices relevant to the implementation of resolution 1373, which we hope States will rely on for guidance. This directory refers to standards established by international technical organizations, and we particularly commend the fact that it refers to the Financial Action Task Force's Forty Recommendations on Money Laundering and Nine Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing. We are pleased that the Committee and its Executive Directorate are continuing their State visits and their important capacity-building work, and will support efforts to follow up on this work—since the success of these efforts can best be confirmed by verifying that States are carrying out CTED's recommendations and receiving the technical assistance they need to do so. CTC and CTED should take those steps that are necessary to make their work more relevant and accessible to both the donor and recipient communities.

We also welcome the Counterterrorism Committee's recent report to the Council on implementation of resolution 1624. It is apparent that there will be significant challenges facing the Committee in attempts to develop "best practices" in this area--and we encourage it to continue to take appropriately into account the two core elements that are reflected in the resolution. The first element is of course the international community's appreciation that it is important for States to take appropriate measures in accordance with the resolution to address incitement to terrorism. And the second element is an appreciation that these measures are implemented across diverse constitutional systems, including systems that afford strong protections for free expression. We appreciate the Committee's careful, deliberate, and respectful approach to these complex and important issues.

I would be remiss if I did not raise one additional effort that has been a work in progress for too long now. This, of course, is the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Last year, in the World Summit Outcome Document, the heads of state and government underscored the need to work diligently toward the conclusion of this agreement, but this year we find ourselves still facing nearly the same outstanding issues, including whether the instrument applies to “national liberation movements” and the extent to which state military activities are excluded from the covered offenses. These are issues that we have previously addressed on the way to adopting other modern counterterrorism conventions, and it is therefore disappointing that we have not been able to address them successfully in this context. The Ad Hoc Committee is fortunate to have an extremely able and dedicated Chairman and we appreciate Ambassador Pererra’s willingness to continue to consult with delegations in order to conclude negotiations.

We remain eager to reach agreement on the Comprehensive Convention, but it must be on terms that are in keeping with the existing international legal instruments that have been negotiated under the auspices of the UN and its subsidiary bodies. The adoption of a Comprehensive Convention that fills gaps in the international legal framework relating to acts of terrorism would be a very positive step. Indeed, it might be appropriate to consider convening a high level event of the sort that has been discussed from time to time to mark the occasion. But we must also be clear that a convention that undermines the principles that we have spent decades working together to develop would be worse than no convention at all.

Thank you Mr. Chairman [insert formalities and close].