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STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
BY

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE GAMBIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS

BEFORE THE SIXTH COMMITTEE
73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNDER AGENDA ITEM 111
“MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM”

NEW YORK, 3RD OCTOBER 2018

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your election to steer the affairs of this noble Committee. I assure you of the African group's unwavering cooperation and support throughout the work of the Sixth Committee.

The African Group associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The African Group like others would like to express gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on measures to eliminate international terrorism contained in document A/73/125.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no justification for terrorism, which is why African States strongly and unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as well as all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever, by whomever, against whomever it is committed, including State terrorism. Moreover, we reaffirm that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

Hence, the African Group perceive any act of terrorism as a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. The African Group recognizes states non-derogable obligation as it relates to respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in accordance with the UN Charter. The African Group welcomes the outcome of the 6th Review of the Strategy which tackled, amongst others, issues relating to the return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and the exacerbation of extremist narratives.

We commend the secretary-General for his initiative to convene the first-ever United Nations High-Level Conference of Head of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held on 28th-29th June 2018, which yielded positive outcome and we encourage the biannual continuity of this initiative alongside the adoption of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy Review (GCTS), after prior consultation with Member States.

The African Group values the sincere engagement of the Secretary-General for a successful review of the UN counter terrorism architecture and welcomes the establishment of the Office for counter terrorism. The African Group would like to reiterate its support to the newly established Office for Counter Terrorism under the Direction of Mr. Vladimir Ivanovich Voronkov and looks forward to working with the Office and the United Nations Center to deliver necessary capacity building to African States upon their request.

The African Group appreciates the work done so far by the ad hoc committee in drafting a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We reiterate the importance of the conclusion of a comprehensive convention for combating international terrorism and the continued effort to that end. We further call upon all states to cooperate in resolving the outstanding issues.

The comprehensive convention on international terrorism should, in no way deny people their right to self-determination. The African Group stands ready to work actively with other delegations to achieve consensus regarding the draft comprehensive Convention on international terrorism. In view of this, the African Group supports the proposal to convene a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate an international response to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and we believe that the proposal should be given serious consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group reiterates its willingness to work actively with other delegations to continuously refine the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and is looking forward to the full implementation of the Strategy, and urges the United Nations and the donor countries to provide the necessary assistance to Member States to make them capable of implementing their obligations in this regard.

It would be recalled that, Africa has long recognized the need to embark on concrete measures to counter the phenomenon of terrorism, in the days of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and we continue to remain committed to date under the succeeding prevailing body of African Union, which without hiccup adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in 1999 and entered into force in 2002. At the year, this effort was complimented by a followed-up Plan of Action Inter-governmental High-Level Meeting in September.

The continued effort and commitment of African States through the then OAU, now AU, has redoubled by establishing the African Center for Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) in Algiers and the presence of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to guide, promote, sensitize, prevent, protect and Strengthen the capacity of member states, through the provision of operational and technical advice and support, as well as the delivery of trainings and other forms of capacity building, to address issues relating to terrorism and implement their obligations under the global and continental regime.

All these efforts demonstrate the unflinching international and regional commitment by African Member States to address terrorism, with a view to end the scourge of terrorism in Africa and by extension, the World at large.

Mr. Chairman,

While expressing concern about the increase in incidences of kidnapping and hostage-taking, aimed at raising funds or gaining political concessions, the African Group considers that the financing of terrorism is a matter of grave concern for the international community and equally concerned that the payment of ransoms to terrorist groups constitutes one of the main sources of financing terrorism. In this regard, the African Group urges Member States to cooperate in addressing the issue of the payment of ransoms claimed by terrorist groups.

Moreover, the African Group calls upon Member States to prevent refugee status from being abused by the perpetrators, organizers or facilitators of terrorist acts, and also calls upon Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure, before granting asylum, that the asylum seeker has not planned, facilitated or participated in the commission of terrorist acts. Furthermore, the African Group calls upon Member States to collaborate in the pursuit of developing and implementing effective counter-narrative strategies, and the Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives.

Apart from implementing concrete measures, it is our view that more attention in the fight against terrorism needs to be paid to the further strengthening of inter-state cooperation. States should expand the range of assistance available in the apprehension of terrorists and in the investigation and prevention of terrorist acts. It is in this connection that, the African Group welcomes the initiatives to encourage cooperation between the UN and regional organizations in the fight against terrorism.

We appreciate the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) elaborated by the African Center for study and Research on Terrorism and the United States' Africa Center for Strategic Studies. We also welcome the Madrid Declaration and Plan of Action on combating terrorism in West and Central Africa as well as the establishment and operationalization in Djibouti the (IGAD) center of excellence in preventing and countering violent extremism. All these initiatives are important ways of strengthening the capacity of African countries to adopt coordinated approaches on countering terror.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, measures aimed at ensuring the more effective implementation of counter-terrorism conventions and related UN resolutions, as well as capacity-building in developing countries are vital for a well-functioning universal international law approach to combating terrorism. Africa always endeavors to live up to its international obligations in the fight against terror and in the implementation of related UN resolutions. However, many of African States are constrained by inadequate resources and weak capacity and therefore appeal to the international community for the necessary assistance required to enable them to fulfill their obligations and commitments.

I thank you for your attention.