

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations on the adoption of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism by the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

We welcome the adoption of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism today by the General Assembly by consensus. We wish to thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Rohan Perera and the Coordinator, Mr. Albert Hoffman, for their efforts in ensuring the consensus adoption of this Convention. We express our facilitations to the Russian Federation for the conclusion of their important initiative.

Mr. President,

2. Pakistan's commitment to the campaign against terrorism is clear, present, tangible and visible. We fully support the strengthening of the international legal regime to counter all forms of terrorism. The adoption of this Convention will contribute to this objective.

3. Terrorism utilizing nuclear weapons or nuclear materials is obviously an unacceptable threat -- the ultimate nightmare scenario. This Convention clearly de-legitimizes the possession of fissionable nuclear material by individuals and non-State actors if their intention is to cause damage or injury or carry out terrorist acts.

Mr. President,

4. A number of concerns had been raised on some provisions of the draft convention. Pakistan shared some of these concerns. We were especially concerned that article 4(2) of the Convention could be interpreted to imply that it was permissible for State(s) in certain cases to attack or subvert the nuclear facilities or installations of another State. Therefore, we wished to include in the preamble of the Convention a reference to article 15 of the second protocol to the Geneva Conventions relating to protection of works and installations containing dangerous forces. We also suggested the addition of a new paragraph to clarify that "Nothing in this convention shall justify undertaking, encouraging or participating in, directly or indirectly, any action aimed at causing the destruction of, or damage to, any nuclear installation or facility."

5. However, in response to assurances from the principal sponsors of the Convention that these concerns were clearly covered in the Convention, or in existing international law, and in order to facilitate adoption of this Convention by consensus and advance the campaign against terrorism, Pakistan decided not to press its proposals.

6. I would like to underline, on this occasion, that the provisions of the Convention adopted today must be interpreted and applied in a manner that is fully compatible with the requirements of international law applicable in armed conflict, particularly the principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

7. Secondly, a distinction must be maintained between counter-terrorism and non-proliferation. Discrimination and selectivity against States in non-proliferation should not be advanced under the cover of counter-terrorism.

8. Thirdly, it is our concern that terrorists are more likely to acquire biological and chemical weapons rather than nuclear weapons which are difficult even for States to develop. We need to address these concerns also, especially through the adoption and implementation of effective verification schemes to ensure compliance with the comprehensive ban against chemical weapons and biological weapons.

9. Fourthly, for sustained success against terrorism, we need to adopt a comprehensive strategy – one which effectively addresses the root causes of terrorism such as foreign occupation, denial of self-determination, and political and socio-economic injustices.

10. Finally, any agreement on a definition of terrorism must not prejudice the legitimate rights of peoples to struggle against foreign occupation and for self-determination and national liberation; nor exclude State terrorism. A consensus on a definition of terrorism is essential for the finalization of the International Convention on Terrorism. Pakistan supports the need for convening a high-level Conference, under U.N. auspices, to formulate a joint organized response of the international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.