

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative Open Meeting of the Security Council on Counter-Terrorism (4th March 2004).

Mr. President,

I also wish to thank Ambassador Arias for his statement and for presenting the tenth 90 day work programme of the Committee. The Committee has made important progress in the last quarter under Ambassador Arias' leadership. We are confident that it will maintain the momentum in implementing its work programme.

2. Over the last 25 years, Pakistan has been a principal victim of terrorism. After 9/11, Pakistan has been in the forefront of the global campaign against terrorism. Despite terrorist attacks against innocent people in our cities, including against the President of Pakistan, my Government is steadfastly committed to achieving success in the war against terrorism. We believe that, with determination, cooperation and wisdom, this war can be fought and won. Even as we speak, Pakistani forces are engaged in operations to wipe out whatever remains of Taliban and Al-Qaida elements. It is for the first time in Pakistan's history that our armed forces have been deployed and that too in such a large number – 70,000 – in the tribal areas of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan to interdict and hunt down Al-Qaida and Taliban elements. Pakistan has developed an effective intelligence network and a quick reaction force for this purpose. We have captured over 500 Al-Qaida and Taliban operatives in this campaign. Needless to say, Pakistan has paid a high human and economic cost in pursuing this anti-terrorism campaign.

3. The Committee on Counter-Terrorism was set up after 9/11 when the Security Council determined that international terrorism, as a phenomenon, constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The CTC was designed as a unique body and directed to address an amorphous and undefined phenomenon and a threat whose specific manifestations are not always clear or anticipated. Since its establishment the CTC has accomplished valuable goals, among other things, ensuring general adherence of member states to international counter-terrorism conventions; energizing states to adopt important legislation; ensuring timely reporting of national and international efforts to combat terrorism.

Mr. President,

4. The CTC's accomplishments have been due, in no small measure, to the energy and commitment of its two chairpersons – firstly, Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock of the UK and currently Ambassador Inocencio Arias of Spain. The Committee's wide ranging responsibilities and especially the need to ensure the timely implementation and reporting of the means adopted by member states to combat terrorism have no doubt imposed a heavy burden on the Chairman and the chair delegation as well as the small Secretariat, support staff assisting the CTC. Pakistan therefore supports the efforts of the CTC Chairman to revitalize the work of the Committee as reflected in the report on revitalization of CTC.

5. In our view the revitalization of the CTC should focus on substance rather than form. It is important to assess and encourage concrete actions by states against terrorism rather than focus on evaluation of reports and documents. The CTC should also be enabled to promote a comprehensive approach to combat terrorism addressing the current and mutating nature of the terrorist threat, the vigorous and greater emphasis on intelligence and information sharing, intelligence analysis, early warning and appropriate law enforcement, administrative and political actions against terrorist threats including strengthened policing, effective border controls, prevention of terrorist financing, building states' capacity, and combating extremism. The CTC also needs to address the root causes of terrorism: economic and political injustice, foreign occupation, poverty and extremism.

6. The Chairman's report has been the subject of extensive discussions at the experts-level in the CTC. We believe there is need to carefully consider the approach outlined in the report and in the draft resolution circulated by the Chair. We should create institutional or Secretariat structures which conform to the provisions of the Charter and respect the prerogatives and responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

7. It can be argued that the CTC needs the assistance of an operational body for discharging certain specific tasks within a limited period of time, such as the monitoring of the implementation of its mandate by member states. Therefore, we would be prepared to consider the creation of a supplementary and special group to assist the Committee in this task. It should be created for a limited period of time and it should not set a precedent for other structures in the future. We are, therefore, heartened by the remarks made by the Chairman of the Committee that the proposed structure will be of a special nature and will not set a precedent for the future. These assurances should be appropriately reflected in the draft resolution which is to be adopted.

Mr. President,

8. In this context, we also welcome the views conveyed by the Secretariat in a letter to the Chairman of the CTC yesterday. We trust that further consultations on the proposed draft resolution will involve close interaction with the Secretariat and its views will be taken into account and bring its provision into line with the requirements of the Charter. Similarly, we hope that the views expressed by the non-members of the Security Council in this debate will also be taken into account before finalizing the draft resolution. Through such a transparent and interactive process, we look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution on the CTC's revitalization by consensus.

Thank you, Mr. President.