

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, on “Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism” in the Sixth Committee

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to congratulate you on assuming the Chairmanship of the Sixth Committee during the Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly. We are confident that under your able leadership the Committee would be able to make progress in its work.

2. I also wish to extend the profound condolences of the Government and people of Pakistan to the victims of terrorism around the world, particularly those affected by the recent terrorist incidents in Bali.

3. International terrorism constitutes one of the most pervasive threats we confront today. It threatens to destabilize all modern societies. **It emanates from virtually all societies. Claims of immunity from this phenomenon mask the truth.** The need for all States to work together, in a coordinated and cooperative manner, to address this menace comprehensively in all its forms and manifestations, was never as acute as today.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Pakistan has been a major target of terrorism. **For decades, we faced State sponsored terrorism designed to destabilize our country. Such mischief has not ended.** Since 9/11, we have been in the forefront of the international war against terrorism. Recently, we have launched large-scale operations in the tribal regions along the border with Afghanistan against terrorists and other criminals. As a result of our efforts, a number of terrorists have been captured or arrested including 700 Al-Qaeda operatives. Besides police and military action, Pakistan is closely cooperating, including through intelligence sharing, to curb terrorist financing.

5. We have strengthened our domestic legal and administrative framework and signed or ratified 11 out of 13 UN Conventions and Protocols against terrorism. Domestically, Pakistan has banned extremist organizations, detained extremists, outlawed hate material and the misuse of religious institutions, including madrassas.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The 2005 Summit has unequivocally condemned terrorism “in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomsoever, wherever and for whatever purposes...” It sought the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorism. It agreed to consider convening a high-level UN Conference to formulate an international response to terrorism. It recognized the UN’s “important role” in combating terrorism. And, it stressed “the need to make efforts to reach agreement on and conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism” during the General Assembly’s 60th session.

7. This Committee has successfully promoted the consensus adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Terrorism early this year. We wish to congratulate the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Rohan Perera for his efforts. Pakistan will continue to work with other delegations to achieve a similar consensus on the comprehensive convention. We believe that the agreement on terrorism reached at the Summit can facilitate the emergence of consensus on the draft comprehensive convention.

8. We support the OIC's position that negotiations on the draft convention should be conducted on the basis of reports of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Working Group of the Sixth Committee.

9. In finalizing the comprehensive convention, we need to focus on the areas of difference which have so far prevented consensus on the convention. This arises from the exception sought to be made in Article 18, Sub-para 2 and 3 i.e. to exclude armed forces from the purview of the convention. In our view, such a blanket exclusion is untenable. It is obviously inconsistent with the agreement at the Summit which, I repeat, condemned terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomsoever, whenever, and for whatever purposes...". Thus, if terrorist acts outlined in the draft convention are carried out by "armed forces", for example while suppressing the struggle of a people for self-determination, or during the course of foreign occupation, or in instances of genocide – such as in Srebrenica and Rwanda – their actions cannot be ipso facto excluded from the scope of this convention. It is not sufficient to say that their activities are governed by other provisions of international law. So are the activities of irregular groups or guerilla movements. Both are covered by the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols.

10. The best solution therefore could be one, to insert in the convention the provisions of para-81 of the Summit's Outcome Document; and two, to delete sub-paras (2) & (3) of the draft comprehensive convention. If there is insistence on retaining these sub-paras, we shall have to find ways to appropriately qualify and limit the exclusion of armed forces from the scope of the convention e.g. by defining the conditions under which such an exclusion is possible and by affirming that the provisions of the convention do not in any way compromise or constrain the legitimate right of peoples to struggle for their right to self-determination and against foreign occupation. We could also achieve the same objective by including in the convention a consensual legal definition of terrorism which clarifies and affirms the legitimacy of the right of peoples struggle for their right to self-determination and against foreign occupation.

Mr. Chairman,

11. During this session, the General Assembly will also make efforts to adopt a comprehensive strategy, in accordance with the Summit's decision. While we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal for such a strategy, we believe that the elements he has suggested will need to be elaborated and refined. The strategy should include, of course, the adoption of international legislation, including the draft comprehensive convention under consideration in this Committee. It should encompass the measures for international cooperation against terrorism already approved under Security Council resolution 1373 and subsequent resolutions. It should seek to build States' capacity to counter terrorism. In accordance with the Summit's decision, the strategy cannot exclude acts of terrorism perpetrated by States. The killing of innocent civilians is abhorrent whether committed by individuals, groups or States. We have witnessed in our region the large scale murder and violence by State forces against innocent civilians striving for their right to self determination. This form of terrorism has not yet ended. The campaign against terrorism should not be allowed to be used as a cover to suppress the legitimate struggles of peoples for self determination or against foreign occupation or to continue the massive violation of human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

12. The Secretary General has stated that the strategy should seek to 'dissuade disaffected groups from choosing terrorism as a tactic'. I believe we can do so only if the comprehensive strategy addresses the underlying causes of terrorism.

13. Addressing the underlying causes of terrorism in no way implies justifying terrorism. But if we are to succeed in eliminating terrorism, we shall perforce need to address and eliminate the causes and conditions which give rise to most of the current terrorist acts in many parts of the world. To assert that 'we cannot, and need not redress all the grievances that terrorists claim to be advancing' is a recipe for failure. We will have to eliminate the threat of terrorism by winning the minds and hearts of potential terrorists.

14. President Musharraf has underlined the need for adopting separate short and long-term strategies to address terrorism and extremism. This comprehensive approach is reflected in his proposal for "Enlightened Moderation". While confronting terrorism, it is essential to promote the just resolution of political disputes, including Palestine and Kashmir, and to promote socio-economic revival in developing countries, specially the Muslim world. We believe that conflict resolution, socio-economic revival, and dialogue and cooperation among religions, faiths and cultures should constitute an essential part of the comprehensive strategy against terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

15. Pakistan believes that the implementation of a comprehensive strategy will require – appropriate institutional support. Such institutional support could be provided by the establishment of an International Counter Terrorism Center, as proposed by His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia.

16. We hope that the President of the General Assembly will soon propose an open and inclusive mechanism to elaborate the comprehensive strategy.

Mr. Chairman,

17. The objective we all espouse, to make our world safe from terrorist violence, is essential and, indeed, imperative, for international peace and stability; for development and prosperity; and for the promotion and respect for human rights. Pakistan will work to realize this vital objective, here in this Committee, in other forums and in our bilateral cooperation with all peace-loving peoples and nations,

I thank you, Mr. Chairman