Remarks by Ambassador Mohammad Aamir Khan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN in the General Assembly under agenda Item 121 on the 8th Review of the UN Global counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) (22 July 2023)

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Mr. President,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

We would like to thank the co-facilitators of the 8th review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS), the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, H.E. Ambassador Tarek Ladeb and the Permanent Representative of Canada, H.E. Ambassador Bob Rae for leading this extremely important process.

Mr. President,

Pakistan has been at the forefront of the international fight against terrorism and has rendered innumerable sacrifices of more than 80,000 lives.

For more than a decade, Pakistan has suffered the most due to terrorism, and continues to face terrorist groups that are funded and financed by our adversaries. Spoilers in our neighbourhood continue to target us, including through support for attacks planned and orchestrated by the TTP, Daesh as well as Baloch militant groups. Pakistan possesses the capability and will to utilize all means required to defeat this externally sponsored terrorism.

Mr. President,

Pakistan welcomes the adoption of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) contained in document A/77/L.78 by consensus despite difference and divergences.

We express the hope that the adoption of this resolution will help in further strengthening international cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestation as well as towards the implementation of all four Pillars of the GCTS in a balanced manner.
Mr. President,

Our first and foremost responsibility is to address the root causes of terrorism, and it is imperative for the international community, in particular, the UN Security Council, to address situations of prolonged unresolved conflicts, foreign occupation, and denial of the right to self-determination.

There is a continued campaign to portray struggles for self-determination and national liberation as terrorism, in order to justify the oppression of peoples under foreign occupation. It is essential to respect Pillar 4 of the GCTS and to clearly define terrorism and distinguish it from legitimate struggles for national liberation and self-determination.

We, welcome the reaffirmation of our commitment to take measures to resolve prolonged conflicts, end foreign occupation, as well as confront oppression in order to address conditions conducive to the spread of international terrorism.

Mr. President,

One of most important role of the GCTS review is to keep the Strategy relevant and contemporary in the light of new and emerging threats to reflect and to take into account the evolving trends of international terrorism.

Today, one of the most concerning emerging trends in global terrorism is in the form of terrorist attacks on the basis of racism, xenophobia, intolerance, Islamophobia or other forms of intolerance, by violent nationalist, supremacist, far right, and other such groups and ideologies.

Regrettably, the 8th review has failed to reflect various important proposals initiated by the OIC that aimed to address these threats in light of recent developments. Pakistan, along with OIC, made various proposals, including the condemnation of the acts by racist, fascist, and extremist right-wing elements to incite violence and terrorism.
against Muslims through the deliberate desecration of mosques and the burning of the Holy Quran. In the spirit of achieving consensus, the OIC Group, including Pakistan demonstrated utmost flexibility and compromise to address some of the key concerns of member states, but without any success. Unfortunately, and to the detriment of all of us present today, these concerns did not find way in the text of the resolution.

We also emphasized the adverse impact of such acts of hatred, which promote Islamophobia, anti-minority sentiments, and anti-immigrant narratives. However, these proposals, initiated by the largest negotiating bloc were completely rejected. This rejection not only disappoints us but also raises some very serious questions about the cherry-picking approach in finalizing the text.

It is crucial to emphasize that our failure to condemn such acts of incitement and hatred sends a clear message that terrorism against Muslims will be tolerated. This exclusion will not be without its costs as it will serve as a propaganda tool for those who do not wish to see peace and harmony among communities around the world.

Pakistan is also deeply disappointed that the 8th review of the GCTS failed to recognize the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, which was established through a consensus General Assembly resolution. Denying inclusion of this reference - another OIC proposal - while accommodating individual member states to reflect events the content of which was neither agreed upon by all member states nor supported, is a classic example of this discriminatory and biased approach.

This signifies the perpetuation of a perception that stigmatizes Muslims. Pakistan firmly rejects this stigmatization and will continue its efforts to challenge this flawed perspective.

We hope that the report of the Secretary General will take a comprehensive overview of such new and emerging threats.
Mr. President,

Pakistan has been and will continue to call for necessary changes in the global counter terrorism architecture and the UN Security Council sanctions regime to end stigmatization of followers of certain religion as well as to broaden the scope of such measures against new and emerging threats, including on the basis of racism, xenophobia, intolerance, Islamophobia or other forms of intolerance.

At the same time, the Security Council’s sanctions regimes are often blunt instruments and contribute little to containing, much less reversing, and the terrorist threat. These should be reviewed and made more equitable, fair and transparent.

We must also address the new tools of terrorism, especially in the cyber domain– crypto-currencies, on-line terrorist recruitment and incitement to violence and disinformation – which we have just heard here as well are a few to mention.

We are of the firm view that the General Assembly should establish a member state led Committee, which can oversee the balanced implementation of all 4 pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is also important for transparency, fairness and to reflect a diverse set of views across the globe.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to address this esteemed gathering. Pakistan remains committed to combating terrorism at the international level and calls upon all member states to join hands in eradicating this menace. Together, through collective efforts and a comprehensive approach, we can create a safer and more secure world.

Thank you, Mr. President.