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**General Assembly: The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy [items 16 and 117] (a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674) and document A/70/675 (b) Draft resolution A/70/L.41**. **Part 3**

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Good afternoon. The 86th Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly is called to order. The General Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 16, Culture of Peace, and agenda item 117, The United Nations’ Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We will now continue to hear statements on the report of the Secretary-General.

So I am now giving the floor to the Distinguished Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

IRAN: In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. I thank you for organizing this formal debate on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism presented by the Secretary-General.

It is our understanding, as also stated earlier in the two previous meetings, that the PoA is a significant initiative that both raises awareness and call for coordination among and action by member states against violent extremism, which is currently the most pressing threat against security, stability, as well as socio-economic achievements and social fabric of many countries around the world.

We reiterate our support to many of the ideals, elements, and proposed remedies contained in this document. As the main sponsor of the General Assembly resolution on a world against violent and violent extremism and dialog amongst civilization, we see much added value in this proposed plan of action, should it initiate and open an inclusive dialog aimed at effectively dealing with this global threat.

Such a process would signal the resolve of the international community to prevent and combat the heinous phenomenon of violent extremism. We also reiterate our firm position that violent extremism in all its forms and manifestation cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group, while recognizing the commitment of all religions to peace.

Meanwhile, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few issues in the PoA that we retain require further attention and reflection by member states.

Methodologically, while part of the PoA contain a deep and even academic approach, other parts are just reflecting on some current events and specific cases, which may become irrelevant, even in the near future. Consistency would have brought more credibility to the text.

Should the PoA be concentrated on violent extremism conducive to terrorism, it is then expected to avoid discussing unrelated issues which do not fit in the scope of the text. Each agenda needs to be considered within its own appropriate context. For instance, part of the groups mentioned in the paragraph 19 are hardly relevant to the content of the PoA. At the same time, the text is silent on a number of significant causes that have enraged millions of people and at the same time being used by terrorists as recruiting tools. Indeed, some of them are main root causes of violent extremism, and it is unfortunate that PoA has decided to overlook such drivers.

Foreign occupation, which is per se a manifestation of violent extremism, has been used to incite violence out of desperation and hopelessness. Destabilization of legitimate governments by mobilizing, arming, and founding armed groups is another driver that can create breeding ground and lead to the rise of violent extremism. Meanwhile, foreign and military interventions and regime change policies have significantly and globally fed violent extremism. They all deserve to be addressed and highlighted in the report.

It is true that the Internet and modern social media have been exploited by extremists to advance their vicious objectives. However, the PoA once again fails to recognize the unconstructive and even destructive role that mainstream media and news outlets in some countries have played in promoting sectarianism, intolerance, xenophobic attitude, and racism. Many youths, mainly from disenfranchised minority communities, are being pushed toward radicalization because of fallacious policies by some major media outlet.

In conclusion, we once again welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General while reiterating our position that for member states to own the process and its outcome they should have ample and adequate opportunity to express themselves on this critical subject.

I thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Republic of Korea.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA: Mr. President, at the outset I’d like to thank you for your initiative in convening today’s important and timely meeting.

The Republic of Korea welcomes and supports the resolution that was adopted last Friday by the General Assembly. This timely resolution will help us carry forward the positive strong momentum generated by the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. This adoption by consensus of the General Assembly, which is the UN body that can speak with a truly global voice, will send a powerful message that the international community is united in its cause and efforts to address the grave challenging of violent extremism.

The Republic of Korea once again expresses its full support for the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and appreciates the Secretary-General’s Ban Ki-Moon’s leadership in taking forward this important agenda in the United Nations. We believe that this plan of action provides crucial momentum and guidelines for the member states to develop their own national plan of action in consideration of their domestic situation.

Preventing violent extremism is one of the most depressing security challenges we face today. Yet the difficult reality is that there can be no single one-size-fits-all solution to this problem. The motivation behind radicalization varies by society and diverse factors are involved, ranging from extremist ideology, to socio-economic factors, and personal grievances. Preventing violent extremism will, therefore, require an equally diverse and multi-dimensional approach. In this regard, the Republic of Korea supports the comprehensive approach stressed by the Secretary-General’s plan of action that encompasses not only security-based counter-terrorism efforts but also various measures to address the deep underlying drivers of violent extremism.

The Republic of Korea also supports the interdisciplinary, all of society, and all of government approach that involves not only governments but also private sectors and civil society in effectively addressing violent extremism.

On a final note, Mr. President, I’d like to emphasize the importance of youth and education in preventing violent extremism, which was also stressed in the Secretary-General’s plan of action. It is well known that most of the 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters that have joined extremist groups from all over the world are youth, some of them barely 15 years old. To prevent these young people from falling prey to extremist ideology and propaganda, it is crucial to teach them from a very young age the values of peace, human dignity, tolerance, and mutual respect and understanding as emphasized in the concept of global citizenship education.

Through such education for global citizenship, we should be able to convince our young generation that it is our free and diverse societies, not hate, division, or violence preached by extremists, that offer the right path for the humanity.

The Republic of Korea will continue to make every effort to promote global citizenship as an approach for fundamental solution to violent extremism as well as an overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of the Republic of Korea. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Peru.

PERU: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I’d like to express the gratitude of the delegation of Peru for the very timely and necessary initiative of the Secretary-General to develop a plan of action to prevent violent extremism. This initiative is particularly relevant in the current context in which traditional measures against terrorism are insufficient to prevent its spread.

Consequently, today we have a unique opportunity to have a global debate on how to better use our comparative advantages to prevent violent extremism effectively.

Violent extremism is a very complex phenomenon, and the plan of action focuses in particular on violent extremism that leads to terrorism. While we do consider, as the plan mentions, that the definition of the terms violent extremists, violence, and terrorism fall within the purview of the member states, nevertheless the plan could provide more clarity of certain elements of both of these concepts that could be confused, and a clear definition could contribute to a better implementation of the plan of action at the national level.

We welcome the stress that the plan makes on the need to broaden our responses and act upstream and deal with the underlying and contextual aspects that foster violent extremism.

To sum up, prevention should be a key part of our comprehensive approach, which would help deal with conditions that could encourage people, especially young people, to join violent extremist groups.

Concretely, we believe that the recommendation aimed at reducing inequalities and strengthening the social fabric is particularly relevant. It’s important not only to avoid radicalizing individuals but also to encourage their integration into society. In this context, it’s essential to harmonize national development policies and make them consistent with Agenda 2030, in particular SDG number 1 and 16.

Now Peru has suffered the scourge of terrorism and, therefore, we have received with great interest the recommendation on developing national plans of action to prevent violent extremism. That’s paragraph 44 of the plan. Consequently, we’ve begun a process of—a multisectoral process, including setting up a Financial Intelligence unit. This is particularly important as Peru is focused on combating the financing of terrorism. We believe that it is essential that this initiative should also be considered at a regional level because we face similar challenges. In combating terrorism, our region has for example the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism of the Organization of American States, which provides technical assistance and cooperation.

Another aspect of the plan that we’d like to mention is the development and the strengthening of communication strategy and the use of social media by the governments. We need to counter the messages of hate that could lead to the radicalization of young people, who are the main victims of efforts at recruitment by violent extremist groups.

Finally, I’d like to take this opportunity to announce that Peru has today deposited the instrument of ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. Some of the provisions of this treaty, as you know, are particularly important in the combat against terrorism.

Mr. President, I would like to express the strongest condemnation by my government of terrorism, including violent extremism that leads to terrorism. Nevertheless, it’s important also to always act in compliance with international law and based on full respect for human rights when we act against any group that terrorizes civilian population as it conveys its messages of hatred, death, and intolerance. This is why Peru would like to express its support for the draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly that welcomes the plan of action and that seeks to make sure that this plan could be duly complemented—further bolstered in the upcoming biennial review of the Global Strategy of the United Nations Against Terrorism.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Peru. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Spain.

SPAIN: Thank you very much. Mr. President, Spain aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. My delegation welcomes the plan of action of the Secretary-General, establishing a global framework to prevent violent extremism. This initiative underscores the need for our actions always to be rooted in respect for human rights and the rule of law, and it clearly—it responds to the willingness expressed by member states to unite their efforts against violent extremism. This plan of action and initiatives at the national and regional level should give each other feedback and be mutually reinforcing. All member states of the United Nations should strengthen their legal framework against terrorism and violent extremism.

In this context, it is essential to create coordination bodies at the national level, which will maximize our efficiency as we fight against violent fundamentalism which leads to terrorism. In the prevention of conflicts, the international community already has initiatives available, such as the Alliance of Civilizations of the United Nations and KAICIID, based in Vienna, which promote plurality and cultural dialog and religious dialog. Also at the regional level, there are very, very many valuable initiatives. Amongst them I would refer to those in which Spain participates: the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Mediation Initiative in the Mediterranean, spearheaded by Spain and Morocco. These institutions have an important role to play in preventing violent extremism and should be recognized, and their example can serve as a model for new initiatives which double down on strengthening of dialog.

Mr. President, good governance is an essential instrument to prevent violent extremism. In developing the plan of action, we should invite all states to draw up laws and practices which will ensure the political participation of all minorities. This is a key element for social cohesion. In the efforts for the integration of communities, we must strengthen the role of local entities, because it is at this level where we can begin to build citizen participation. This is why the plan of action must, as it is developed, must reaffirm the need to give communities a direct say at the local level.

We must also ensure that there is full social awareness raising with regard to discrimination and hate crimes, give training to social agents and other relevant sectors, including, of course, the administration of justice.

Mr. President, in order to cooperate with communities, it is important that states decide to establish models for managing social diversity, including religious diversity. Once again, the local level can be an essential level for prevention. It’s important to establish mechanisms for mediation and coordination, mechanisms which will be of benefit to communities and which will make it possible for them to connect with all of society and with the state.

Also, youth should be a main objective in any strategy to prevent fundamentalism and violent extremism. The absence of opportunity and marginalization are amongst the causes which lead to outbreaks of radical behaviors. States should promote policies aimed at guaranteeing and improving education and promoting the inclusion of young people in society and in the labor market.

What is also decisive in this context is the fundamental role played by women in society and in family relations. States should reaffirm the commitment to promote policies which will guarantee gender equality. During the Spanish presidency of the Security Council in October of 2015, we approved Resolution 2242, which stressed the role of women in issues of peace and security. Spain also leads the informal working group created by this resolution to create a systemic approach which will make it possible to have greater supervision and coordination of the activities necessary for its implementation.

The development of the plan of action, as well as the upcoming review conference of the United Nations’ Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, planned for this June, should establish links with agencies, committees, and working groups dedicated specifically to the rights of women, such as UN Women, the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, or the working group on the issue of discrimination against women in legislation and in practice.

Civics education from an early age also has an essential role to play in preventing violent extremism. Educational institutions should promote mindsets which lead to a rejection of violent extremism, such as training in human rights and respect for diversity. In this regard, the presentation of testimonials of victims in education settings could be an extremely appropriate method for preventing radicalization amongst young people. We also feel that states should legislate to prevent the spreading of extremist ideas and the recruitment of terrorist fighters through new means of communication, such as the Internet and social networks.

But we must ensure that we maintain maximum respect for freedom of the press and opinion. An important part of the answer will be to develop a convincing counter narrative through these very same network—communication networks. Terrorism victims are a moral reference point, and they must be used in the fight against violent extremism. The value of their testimony on the Internet and social networks is fundamental as part of our strategies for communication. These testimonials can help us to prepare a narrative that can stress the values of humanism and pluralism and tolerance.

Firmly believing in this idea, Spain for the first time has brought forward the victims of terrorism to the Security Council, and we did this during our presidency last October in order to reaffirm the importance of the protection of their rights and also in order to show the essential role that they can play in the prevention of fundamentalism and terrorism.

Mr. President, allow me to conclude by making reference to foreign terrorist fighters, one of the greatest dangers that we face in the fight against fundamentalism and violent extremism. If we manage to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, we will have won an important battle. This is why the Madrid guiding principles are of such importance with regard to stemming the flow of these fighters, and this was approved by the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council at its special meeting held in Madrid on the 28th of July, 2015.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Spain. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Benin.

BENIN: President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for having organized this meeting, which is being held at a very timely point in time.

Benin aligns itself by the statement delivered by the representative of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, of which we are a member, and we would like to now make some additional comments in our national capacity.

Benin welcomes the adoption by consensus of the resolution on the United Nations Plan of Action for the Prevention of Violent Extremism. We very much appreciate the leadership shown by the Secretary-General of the United Nations by putting forward this ambitious plan of action, which is coherent and based on a global approach for the prevention of violent extremism.

The government of Benin affirms its full support to the principles contained in this plan of action, which has the advantage of giving a deep-seated analysis and a shared vision of the challenges as we face them, and also puts forward strong and operational recommendations to guide our action at national, regional, and international level.

Benin believes that violent extremism, just like terrorism, are first and foremost political acts, and that action to prevent them and to combat them must necessarily be part of a political framework of action. It’s clear that in order to address this grave peril of violent extremism, security measures alone and of themselves, even though they may be necessary, will never be sufficient. We must, therefore, together, continue to examine the deep-seated causes of and the factors that unfortunately lead so many young people to be seduced by radical ideology and to be abused by criminal and terrorist groupings which sow seeds of hate in their hearts and spread their poisoned discourse across the Internet and social networks.

We must stress here the need to avoid falling into the trap of prejudices and stereotypes by automatically—as some people unfortunately do—associate violent extremism and terrorism with poverty, youth, or worse still, to particular communities or religions. However, leaders at all levels must be aware that there are thresholds of tolerance to frustrations with regard to management of societies for which they are responsible.

In this regard, we must avoid situations which will lead individuals towards radicalization, which would be fertile ground for further spread of violent extremism and ideology. This is a guiding principle of national governance that African regional bodies are promoting through outstanding normative work and ongoing monitoring of national achievements, all of this measured against a consensual baseline of achievements. One example of this would be the African Peer Review Mechanism and the various protocols on which the structure of the African Union, Peace and Security system is based.

Certainly it’s not a question of establishing automatic causality between these phenomena, but it is urgent that we intensify our efforts to fight against situations of marginalization and disaster being used as an instrument for terror. We must mobilize all forces, young people, families, women, civil society, teaching establishments, religious leaders, traditional leaders, to work towards this public health goal. No one should be left aside, and we must extend our hand to everyone. It’s also important that we ensure respect for human rights and public freedoms as well as to strengthen education and to raise awareness amongst young people.

My country’s government has not only subscribed to the African Peer Review Mechanism but also, anxious as we are to take a more active role in the efforts of the international community in preventing conflicts as well as to solve outstanding conflicts spreading through Africa, my government has decided to apply an African Initiative on Education for Peace and Development. The official launching of this initiative took place at the international symposium held in Cotonou on the 28th of May, 2015. This was an inter-religious and intercultural dialog.

This initiative aims in particular to counter violent extremism in Africa by addressing the roots of evil as recommended in the preamble of UNESCO’s Charter, basing ourselves on education in peace issues. Benin would like to thank the Japanese government, who have been helping us to implement this initiative, and we must continue to support efforts everywhere undertaken by leaders of religious orders to work together towards peace and sustainable development.

Benin is particularly grateful to see that the Plan of Action for the Prevention of Violent Extremism establishes a link with the 2030 development program and clearly identifies sustainable development goals, which will have a positive effect on preventing violent extremism. In this regard, aware of the fact that prevention of violent extremism also includes promoting sustainable growth, which will benefit all members of society, the government of Benin recently adopted significant measures to help the most vulnerable parts of the population as part of our policy to not leave any citizen of our country behind. Following thus, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers on the 22nd of January this year, targeted measures that I will now list were adopted relating to the current budget:

2.5 million CFA francs to help disabled persons; 50 billion CFA in terms of microcredit for women; 1 billion to fight transhumance issues; and 20 billion CFA francs to provide tractors to farmers. And also, in an effort to reduce poverty and reduce frustration amongst young people, the government in 2016 created 130,000 jobs for the sector, particularly in the areas of agriculture, education, the digital economy in order to cover the planned expansion of the Internet in our country.

The report of the Secretary-General also stresses that it is measures taken at local, national, and regional level, which will have the most impact in the area of prevention and violent extremism. Benin will adopt appropriate measures to ensure that we have our national action plan in place to prevent violent extremism and we will base ourselves not only on the guidelines of the United Nations’ action plan and the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the United Nations, but also we will take into account in particular specific characteristics and regional dynamics.

Benin would recall that without strengthened international cooperation and technical support provided to member states, and without adequate funding for the implementation of the new United Nations Plan of Action for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, without all of that it will be difficult for us to achieve our common goals. Benin will provide an active contribution to the review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the United Nations, a meeting planned in June of this year, as well as the meeting next April on the new plan of action which is being organized jointly between the United Nations and the government of Switzerland.

Thank you for your kind attention.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I’d like to thank the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Benin for his statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Chile.

CHILE: Thank you, Mr. President. As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the unanimous approval of the United Nations Global Strategy Against Terrorism, Chile is grateful and welcomes once again the timely initiative by the Secretary-General in preparing and drawing up a plan of action for the prevention of violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

It contains elements and recommendations in priority areas that are very useful and should be incorporated in global, regional, and national strategies to combat this phenomenon. For my country, the plan of action is a very useful guide—a necessary guide—given the current context in which violent extremism has become a real threat to international peace and security.

It forces us to develop approaches that not only include the standing security measures, which are essential in combating terrorism, but also preventive measures—systemic preventive measures that focus on the underlying causes of violent extremism. Bearing this in mind, Chile trusts that the creation of open, equitable, inclusive, and pluralistic societies, based on the full respect of human rights and which create economic opportunities for all, this is the most concrete and best alternative to violent extremism.

However, we do note that at the international level, especially within the United Nations, what we lack is a convention that compiles the definitions of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Now aware of the current momentum on this topic and as we are convinced that these collective efforts should be coherent without sidestepping central aspects of this matter in order to effectively combat this phenomenon, we would like to once again express our interest in seeing negotiations in this forum in order to finally have a legal international instrument that serves as a regulatory framework in this area. This should go hand in hand with progress at the local and regional level in the legislative and judiciary areas.

Lastly, Mr. President, Chile would like to once again repeat that actions that are recommended in the report presented by the Secretary-General should be in harmony with the sustainable development goals that will shape our actions for the next 15 years, and which specifically include new goals and targets related to the prevention of violence and the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Based on this commitment, we endorse the proposed resolution submitted by the President of this General Assembly, Ambassador Lykketoft, which was unanimously adopted at the start of this debate.

Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I’d like to thank the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Chile, and I give the Distinguished Ambassador Permanent Representative of Algeria. You have the floor, sir.

ALGERIA: Thank you, Mr. President. Let me start first by paying tribute to the former Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to his family, to the family of the United Nations, and to the government of Egypt.

Mr. President, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Lykktoft, for convening this important and timely debate to consider the Secretary-General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism. A comprehensive plan of action for preventing violent extremism could provide a coherent response to the increasing threat of violent extremism all over the world. In this regard, my delegation would like to reiterate its deep appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his outstanding efforts in the field of counter-terrorism and combating violent extremism. We welcome the adoption, of course, by consensus of the GA, the resolution on the plan of action, and look forward for the next steps.

Mr. President, Algeria would like to reiterate its strong and unequivocal condemnation of all forms of terrorism regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever, and by whomsoever they are committed. Algeria reiterates, also, its determination to continue its combat against terrorism and violent extremism.

Let me say a few other comments. The struggle against violent extremism and terrorism must also include the rejection against xenophobia and Islamophobia, which are emerging as the new faces of violent extremism. Algeria strongly believes that preventing and combating terrorism and violent extremism require a high level of vigilance, mobilization, and multi-faceted cooperation at the national, regional, and international levels. Efforts aiming at preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism cannot be limited exclusively to repressive dimension but need to be deployed in upstream and downstream with a coherent political strategy based on prevention, dialog, and understanding of the attraction exerted by the terrorists.

My delegation stresses the need to agree upon an accurate definition of terrorism. Such a definition should be in the line with the United Nation Charter and the international law and should avoid any confusion between acts of terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or foreign occupation to achieve their inalienable rights to self-determination and to peace. Equally, we will continue to warn against all misconceptions and the tendentious association of terrorism with a religion, a civilization, or a geographical area.

Mr. President, I'd like to make some other comments on the recommendations that are contained in the plan. With regard to the recommendation on developing national plan of action to prevent violent extremism, I would like to affirm that preventing and combating violent extremism constitutes a priority for my country. I am pleased here to announce that this very priority was—since just last week—enshrined in the constitution that was amended for that purpose. I am equally pleased to announce that my country, Algeria, has developed a comprehensive, multidimensional plan of action on preventing violent extremism and de-radicalization.

This plan of action has been initiated on the occasion of the celebration last September of the tenth anniversary of the adoption by referendum of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation of Algeria. This initiative was approved by an overwhelming majority of the Algerian people, responding to the call of our president, President Bouteflika, and I quote him saying that "We forgive without forgetting and we look resolutely to the future and reinvent a new way of living together in an Algeria that is increasingly prosperous."

The Algerian strategy for combating violent extremism is based on two main areas. First, the maintenance of a high level of mobilization and vigilance by all security forces in the conduct of their mission to protect public order and the safety of the people and their properties. Second, the implementation of a comprehensive de-radicalization policy that combines political, economic, social, cultural, and religious measures involving all institutions and citizens mobilizing important national resources.

On the regional and international cooperation, Algeria firmly believes that as with the fight against terrorism, prevention and the fight against violent extremism and the country's efforts towards de-radicalization also require greater attention and must be the subject of sustained bilateral, regional, and international cooperation. To mention but a few examples: Algeria hosted in July 2015 the international conference on the fight against extremism and for de-radicalization. The conference offered an opportunity for my country to share with the participants, including those directly involved in the fight against extremism, the experience—our own experience, Algeria's experience.

My country's efforts to combat terrorism was always aimed at increasing original and international cooperation, even before the manifestation of major acts that the world has known since then. Algeria has sought from the beginning to strengthen efforts against terrorism at the African level, and as a result, many international instruments, legal, and orders, and initiatives have emerged and are playing to their very important role in enhancing the effectiveness of the African efforts in this regard.

In the Sahel region, the concept of coordination and cooperation finds its full potential right now. In view of the prevailing situation, which requires both coordination and strengthening the capacities of the countries, of the region of the Sahel, on the basis of the principal of ownership, Algeria has engaged in a concerted approach through many mechanisms of cooperation, and I just would like to name a few.

First, the countries of the field—first, the working group of the countries of the field, on the Sahel, co-chaired by Algeria and Canada, under the Global Counter-Terrorism forum; secondly, the joint operational general staff, the committee called also CEMOC; third, the fusion and liaison unit, UFL, for mainly sharing intelligence; and there are many other for us, which remain of a great contribution to facilitate the deepening of security cooperation between the concerned countries.

Mr. President, a comprehensive approach to prevent violent extremism should be based on a comprehensive and objective assessment of the root causes of this phenomenon. We believe that the plan of action may constitute a sound basis for our consideration of the subject. My delegation stands ready to engage constructively in the consideration of the plan of action in all relevant fora. And thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I'd like to thank the Ambassador Permanent Representative of Algeria for his statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Belarus.

BELARUS: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I'd like to begin my statement by expressing condolences to the government and people of Egypt and to the family members of Former Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Mr. President, the delegation of Belarus considers that it is very timely to find a response to the problem of violent extremism.

Now, as the report of the Secretary-General can form a starting point in international efforts—international negotiations on this topic, certain aspects of the report, which have a direct cause and effect relationship to the phenomenon of international terrorism, could and should be examined in the context of the fifth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. They will certainly be taken into account by the competent national authorities. At the same time, we believe that just as current counter-terrorism mechanisms of the UN Secretariat as well as the existing intergovernmental processes and first and foremost the review of the global strategy are perfectly capable of duly reflecting this topic in their work.

The delegation of Belarus, nevertheless, would like to mention a number of problems in the report, a lack of balance. The report points to a number of issues that are not directly related to violent extremism. There is no doubt that the rule of law, good governance, the existence of mechanisms to protect the interests of minorities could in a broader sense be considered as factors that reduce the risk of violent extremism. On the other hand, we have to acknowledge that these factors are very general in nature, even though they're relevant. At the same time, such aspects as undermining, dismantling, or delegitimizing government institutions or interfering in internal affairs of states or hostile propaganda, these phenomena are directly linked to, not only with the increase in extremist views but also these views being transformed into concrete terrorist actions. And this needs—this was not analyzed in the report, and we hope that this balance will be reestablished in future intergovernmental negotiations.

Belarus is ready to work constructively with all stakeholders in developing and implementing sensible collective steps to counter violent extremism.

Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I'd like to thank the Distinguished Representative of Belarus, and I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Uruguay.

URUGUAY: Mr. President, I'd like to begin my statement by joining in with other member states who have expressed their deep condolences to the people and government of the Republic of Egypt as well as to the family of the Former Secretary-General who died today, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Uruguay aligns itself with the statement delivered by the community of Latin American and Caribbean States. But in our national capacity, Uruguay would like to state that in order to—that the fight against terrorism is of the utmost importance today, and we need effective action to prevent violent extremism leading to terrorism. In this regard, Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the values, purposes, and principles of the multilateral system, and we express our firm condemnation of violent extremism and terrorism in all its forms, whoever commits it, and wherever it is committed.

Uruguay is committed to a national strategy to fight against terrorism because we believe that in today's world no one is immune from the effects of terrorism, as can be seen in the visionary first paragraph of the action plan presented by the Secretary-General. The global counter-terrorism—in the global counter-terrorism issue, my country has pointed out repeatedly that international community actions need to go beyond military action. Actions should be based on a comprehensive approach, a long-term approach, with political and socioeconomic strategies that promote social inclusion, political participation, and fairness. At the heart of all of this, there should be a strong rule of law with solid institutions that make it possible for human rights to be respected. This is essential if we are to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Mr. President, Uruguay believes that the approach mentioned is indeed reflected in the plan of action presented by the Secretary-General. Uruguay very much appreciates that the plan of action highlights the fact that the phenomenon of violent extremism does not happen in a vacuum and that we need to pay attention to the structural causes in society, which lead some individuals to be attracted to groups which promote and practice fundamentalism. Uruguay shares the context and vision according to which there are push factors and pull factors, and that the plan of action is an important step forward in a broad-based approach to address the structural causes that are the basis of violent extremism, and we would promote the adoption of non-coercive measures to address these causes.

Uruguay has been a part of the discussion in the General Assembly on this issue, given its scope and also because we believe the General Assembly defends the sovereign equality between states. We would like to defend the competence of the General Assembly in this area and also in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Security Council in this regard. It's important that the joint work of all of the membership be able to provide substantive elements towards the preparation of a global strategy that can effectively address the phenomenon of violent extremism.

The consensus achieved on Friday morning with regard to the plan of action is a positive step forward in this regard. We must remember that many of the structural causes for violent extremism are directly linked to issues of security, such as the increasing number of armed conflicts; the resurgence of violence and repression; the massive violations of human rights, international law, international humanitarian law; the recruitment of child soldiers; the exploitation of persons; the trafficking in persons; elicit trafficking in actual resources, arms, and narcotics.

The situation described also leads to a huge migration crisis, which requires a solution for the millions of people displaced, and this number continues to rise. And the most—those that suffer the most are children, thus compromising the future of new generations. We need to demand and defend children's rights. There must be respect for tolerance, cultural, and religious diversity.

Mr. President, Uruguay would like to reiterate that the actions of the international community, both in the face of violent extremism as well as terrorism, must respect international law, particularly the United Nations Charter and the various resolutions emanating from the organs of this organization as well as international law and international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, and if indeed the consultations to endorse this plan of action are successful, Uruguay would like to receive more information, further details with regard to its future implementation, follow-up, coordination within the United Nations' system, and particular more information with regard to how this is to be funded. This is particularly relevant given that once this plan is adopted it will mean that member states are to draw up their own national plans to counter violent extremism.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Uruguay, and now I would like to give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Malaysia.

MALAYSIA: Thank you, Mr. President. At the outset, Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

We wish to thank the Secretary-General for the plan of action. We believe that a plan of action would provide us with an excellent basis for our deliberations as to how member states could address the issue of preventing violent extremism. We are, in this regard, of the view that the plan of action could be built upon further from our deliberations. The adoption of Resolution 70/254 demonstrates our readiness to deliberate further on the plan of action.

Mr. President, while there is no agreed definition on violent extremism, we firmly believe that violent extremism and terrorism must not be associated with any country, race, religion, culture, or nationality. We are encouraged that the plan of action has given due recognition of this.

Malaysia condemns all acts, methods, and practices of violence by terrorists and is of the view that terrorism is a serious global concern that could pose threat to the stability and security of nations. We acknowledge that there is a need for us to individually and collectively work together to prevent violent extremism. Nevertheless, we are of the view that international cooperation must not in any way undermine national efforts or authority to counter and prevent violent extremism.

We do not or can never justify acts of terror or violent extremism. Nevertheless, when we speak of preventing violent extremism, it is also imperative to understand the drivers of violent extremism, namely the factors that cause or contribute towards the radicalization of individuals or groups of people. These factors could be political, economic, or social or due to a multiplicity of factors including prolonged and reverse injustice, unequal access to resources and opportunities, gross violations of human rights, foreign occupation, and systematic discrimination.

Since the adoption of Resolution 2178, Malaysia has taken a number of measures aimed at addressing the threat of terrorism within and outside Malaysia to ensure the safety and security of its people, including through the enactment of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015. One key feature of this act is its provisions on rehabilitation and de-radicalization. The underlying basis for this provision is rooted in the belief that the fight against terrorism cannot be won through force or punitive measures alone. We are, therefore, encouraged that more attention and recognition have now been placed on the preventive measures, in particular, the first and fourth pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which are to tackle the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law while countering terrorism.

Mr. President, Malaysia believes that a multifaceted approach in addressing the root causes and underlying contributory factors that support extremism and terrorisms is required. We are of the view that the approach of winning the hearts and minds of people, especially the young generation, are equally important, as the security and intelligent elements in our common endeavor to counter these threats. The impact of this soft approach should not be underestimated.

We are concerned at the increase of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, resulting in the upsurge of Islamophobia, a phenomenon which is an affront to the human rights and dignity of Muslims. Malaysia in this regard stands ready to share its experience of marginalizing extremism, maintaining a multi-religious country where different faiths co-exist and prosper, and showing that Islam cannot only succeed but drive progress and development in a pluralistic society.

In an effort to counter the threat posed by terrorism through the electronic media, in particular the social media, Malaysia had initiated the Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Communication Center. The objectives of the center would be twofold: firstly, to contest the terrorist rhetoric and agenda in the region within the digital space by exposing their misinformation and disinformation; and secondly, to produce counter narrative and products to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Mr. President, Malaysia had also hosted the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the rise of radicalization and violent extremism in Kuala Lumpur on 2 October 2015. The meeting resolved, among others, to call upon ASEAN member states to speak up against and reject extremism and support moderation in line with the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of the Moderates adopted on 27 April 2015. The Langkawi Declarations aims to promote moderation and tolerance as core values for the region and its people to ensure that it would continue to be a peaceful and prosperous region.

Malaysia had also very recently hosted an international conference on de-radicalization and countering extreme violence last month. We believe that this is where our collective efforts could play an invaluable and important role in countering and preventing violent extremism. Malaysia, in this regard, welcomes cooperation and collaboration between the Global Movement of the Moderates (GMM) and the UN Alliance of Civilizations to develop concrete and pragmatic programs to further promote global peace and understanding.

Mr. President, Malaysia joins all stakeholders and member states to build upon existing synergies in exploring new proposals or suggestions that would create and promote awareness on the value of moderation in addressing current global challenges, particularly in our common goals of eradicating violent extremism across the world.

In closing, we look forward to listening to the views of and engaging constructively with other delegations on the plan of action at the upcoming Geneva conference and also the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review to be held later this year. I thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Malaysia, and I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Mali.

MALI: Mr. President, the delegation of Mali welcomes the initiative to call this current debate to discuss the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. My delegation welcomes the consensus that we saw during the adoption of Resolution A/70/L.41, and we take note of this plan of action, which constitutes an important step in our examination of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the United Nations planned for June 2016. The adoption of this Resolution shows certainly the unshakable commitment of our organization to work together against this phenomenon which is as complex as is it is dangerous, namely violent extremism.

Mali aligns itself with the statement delivered by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the OIC, and we would now like to make some comments in our national capacity.

Mr. President, today it is a secret to no one that the spread of terrorism and violent extremism constitute the primary threats to international peace and security. The outbreak of random violence throughout the world, including the Sahel region, the complexity of the attacks, their level of planning, coordination, and sophistication is more than sufficient proof that we have no other choice than to act collectively to focus our minds together to destroy this hydra of terrorism and its various branches: ISIL, AQIM, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, Al-Mourabitoun, to mention just a few. My country, Mali, was victim in 2012 to a terrorist, a narco-jihad attack, which—and my country continues to pay a heavy tribute to terrorism or violent extremism.

Violent extremism leading to terrorism is completely foreign to Malian society, which is known for its openness, its tolerance, and its practice of a peaceful and moderate Islam. Mr. President, in Mali, the authorities have understood the size of the challenge to prevent violent extremism. The government of Mali has begun with the support of Morocco a program to train Malian imams in strengthening their resilience to preserve the authentic values of Islam that is taught in the universities of Timbuktu and practiced in the Sahel Region, and has been for centuries. This initiative that's extended to the sub region will provide a vehicle for disseminating the values of Islam, namely the values of peace and tolerance. The approach of the government of Mali is to fight against the enlistment of young people and to fight terrorist and extremist networks. This is based on dialog and mutual understanding. We discredit the ideology of hate, intolerance, and the rejection of difference, and in addition to these national activities, there are other regional initiatives including neighboring countries and partners of Mali, such as the integrated United Nations Sahel strategy, and these also should help us to effectively fight against violent extremism.

Mr. President, before concluding, I would like to strongly stress that the government of Mali condemns terrorism and violent extremism, and we remain determined to fight the causes of this scourge.

Finally, I would like to join in with the advice of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, when he spoke at the beginning of this debate to pay tribute to the memory of all of the victims of terrorism and extreme—violent extremism, including the Blue Helmets and peacekeeping operations who—including MINUSMA, and I might point out MINUSMA was plunged into mourning once again last Friday by an attack on the Guinean contingent in Kidal This is the umpteenth attack on MINUSMA, and this is addressed in the plan of action. We need to equip peacekeeping soldiers to defend themselves by adapting the mandates of the missions to the terrorist environment in which they are deployed.

I thank you for your kind attention.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Mali.

Excellencies, we have heard the last speaker on this item. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 16 and 117. The meeting is adjourned.