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October 17, 2016

**United Nations Sixth Committee Working Group on “Measures to eliminate international terrorism”**

Chair: The meeting is resumed. Distinguished Delegates, it’s an honor for me and my partner, Sri Lanka, to continue to work towards strengthening the legal framework for combating international terrorism. I’m most grateful for the continued trust and confidence that you have placed in me.

The Working Group met last year. We meet again this year to renew our consideration of a subject that has beset the international community for many years. As a phenomenon, international terrorism poses a continuing threat to the fabric of society. International terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

We are meeting against a poignant backdrop of escalating acts of terrorism across the globe, continuing to take [indiscernible 5:33]. The stark reality – this stark reality must generate in all of us a sense of urgency to enhance greater international cooperation and collectively [indiscernible 5:53]. Over the years, the General Assembly has played a crucial role, in elaborating some of the universal counter-terrorism [indiscernible 6:04], thus contributing to the progress of development of international law and its qualification.

In recent years, our work has produced three universal counter-terrorism instruments which have all entered into force. Our current work is part of the continuing efforts to enhance the existing legal framework for the prevention and suppression of international terrorism. The present effort in elaboration of a draft Comprehensive Convention has been going on since 2000. I continue to remain hopeful that we can overcome the differences with outstanding issues and conclude our task. Once again, I look forward to working together with you all as we seek to finalize our goal.

Distinguished Delegates, over the years, a practice has emerged in our working efforts. It is now established that members of the Bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee continue to serve as Friends of the Chair in the context of the Working Group of the Sixth Committee, subject to their availability.

May I take it that it is a wish of the Working Group to proceed on this basis? I see no objection. It is so decided.

Mr. Petr Válek of the Czech Republic, Mr. Thembile Joyini of South Africa, will accordingly continue to assist as Friends of the Chair during the present session. Ms. Ana Cristina Rodríguez-Pineda of Guatemala and Ms. Maria Telalian of Greece are no longer available to assist the Chair in that capacity.

It is my understanding that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has designated Mr. Angel Horna of Peru, and the West European and Other States Group has designated Mr. Andreas Kravik of Norway to persist as Friends of the Chair.

Distinguished delegates, Resolution 70/120 of the General Assembly provides us with the mandate of the Working Group. Pursuant to Operating Paragraph 24, the General Assembly has established the Working Group with a view to finalizing the process on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, as well as discussions on the item included in its agenda by Assembly Resolution 54/110 concerning the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

Our mandate is thus twofold. At its first meeting on 3rd October, the Plenary decided to establish the current Working Group and persistent to the practice that has emerged, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of the General Assembly Resolution 51/210, decided to open it to all states, members of the United Nations or members of specialized agencies, or of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The reference in the mandate to, “with a view to finalizing the process on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism” in Resolution 70/120 places on us a responsibility to make the best use of the time at our disposal, to seek to complete the task at hand. Such a result requires our concerted efforts and the [indiscernible 10:15]. I have no doubt that working together we can realize our common goal. This is a message that I sought to convey in my letter, dated 7th October, addressed to permanent representatives regarding our work at this session.

The completion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism is our goal. At the general debate earlier in the course of the Sixth Committee session, reveals that such remains the desire of the international community. The international community has always expected a robust response from the United Nations to strengthen international cooperation to deal with this scourge, and it rests on our shoulders to fulfill that expectation.

While the various parts of the organization have increasingly been undertaking efforts to counter terrorism, it is our task within the framework of the Sixth Committee to ensure that the General Assembly remains relevant as the principal organ for international norm-setting in this field.

Distinguished Delegates, I now draw your attention to turn to the question of documentation. With respect to the outstanding issues concerning the draft Comprehensive Convention, reference is made to the report by the Ad Hoc Committee at its 16th session in 2013, Document A/68/37 Annex I. The report contains the preamble and Articles 1, 2, and 4 to 27 of the draft Comprehensive Convention prepared by the Bureau, incorporating the various provisions contained in Document – contained in A/C.6/65/L.10, Annex I for discussion. Annex II to the Report contains written proposals relating to the outstanding issues surrounding the draft Comprehensive Convention.

On the question of convening the high-level conference, I again draw your attention to the 2013 Report of the Ad Hoc Committee. You may also find relevant a letter dated 1st September, 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt, Document A/60/329 and a letter dated 30th September, 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt, addressed to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, Document A/C.6/60/2.

You may wish to note that Annex III to the 2013 Report of the Ad Hoc Committee contains an informal summary prepared by the Chair on the exchange of views during the peer rebate and the informal consultations in respect of the two issues, concerning which the Working Group is currently seized. If you will recall, that informal summary is intended for reference purposes only, and not as a record of the discussion. The 2013 Report may be found on the papers marked Boardroom.

The website of the Ad Hoc Committee also has all the necessary documentation and reports on this subject. The address is http://www.un.org/law/terrorism/index.html. In addition, the oral report of the Chair of the Working Group and the work of the Working Group, and are Results of the informal consultations held last year are contained in Document A/C.6/70/SR.27, available in the PaperSmart portal.

Distinguished Delegates, three meetings are envisaged for the Working Group. In addition to today’s meeting, we have two other meetings on Friday the 21st October in the morning and on Tuesday, 1st November in the afternoon. The Working Group is supposed to report back to the Sixth Committee on Friday, the 4th of November.

As in the past, I suggest that we dispense with the general exchange of views, and instead devote our time to addressing the outstanding issues that are before us. The debate freely on the item “Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism,” has been rich and diverse. Some delegations made statements on the draft Comprehensive Convention and the high-level conference. Indeed, delegations once more stressed the importance that they attach to the conclusion of the draft Convention.

These sentiments need to be brought into realizable outcome. We shall proceed to discuss the substance of the context of informal consultations and in bilateral context. Informal consultations on the draft Convention will begin immediately after the adjournment of this meeting. The time between now and the next meeting will be fully utilized for bilateral context.

The Working Group also has the mandate to discuss the proposal made by Egypt, concerning the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations. We will devote time to a discussion on this item at our meeting on Friday, 21st October. Any remaining time would be used for discussions on the draft Comprehensive Convention. Depending on the progress of our work, it is envisaged that we would conclude on Tuesday, 2nd November.

Are there any delegations which shall take the floor at this stage, before we commence our informal consultations? I do not think that is the case.

Following the adjournment of this meeting, we shall immediately convene our informal consultations.

This meeting is adjourned.