



STATEMENT BY DR. NEERU CHADHA, COUNSELLOR, AT INFORMAL  
CONSULTATIONS OF THE PLENARY ON COUNTER TERRORISM  
STRATEGY AT THE UNITED NATIONS ON JUNE 30, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the two co-chairs for preparing this text. It is a good effort to address many structural and drafting suggestions made by several delegations during the last informal consultations. The new text is presented in a more coherent fashion and is considerably compressed.

Mr. Chairman, during the last informal consultations, we had emphasized that one aim of this exercise has to be to strengthen the international community's capacity to challenge and defeat terrorism. We had agreed that the text could focus on practical measures of cooperation among states for better and more effective implementation of international obligations under various instruments, especially for preventing acts of terrorism. We had stressed that we would favour a focused and result oriented strategy that to the extent possible steers clear from controversial elements and is based on elements of convergence. This was to avoid divisive debates which informed the sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee during negotiations of the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

We supported the present process while continuing to believe that the comprehensive convention would have provided the legal framework upon which a counter-terrorism strategy could have been based. What is regrettable is that agreement on a comprehensive convention was within easy reach. Unfortunately, we failed to exercise the political will to close the gap that would endow the international community with the legal basis upon which the global struggle against terrorism could be conducted. Notwithstanding the setback of not meeting the timeline set by the World Summit Outcome Document for

concluding a comprehensive convention, we continue to believe agreement on the draft convention is attainable.

In our current deliberations, Mr. Chairman, we have to understand that a legal document, which the comprehensive convention on counter-terrorism would have represented, cannot be substituted by a political document. Nor can an international

conference facilitate understanding of definition of terrorism in the absence of a convention that sought to provide one. We must, therefore, perforce leave out any controversial elements, which while desirable in a legal context, would be unattainable in a political document.

This brings me to the last point I wish to make. While some delegations have pointed to the absence of one or the other substantive element that in their view should be part of a UN strategy on counter-terrorism, there is the other side of the coin. Accommodating the views of 192 Member States on an issue that afflicts all regions and most countries of the world cannot be an easy task at the best of times. We agree with many opinions voiced in this forum in different ways that the revised draft proposal is bland and largely bereft of substantive content. At the same time, we understand the compulsions that led to the drafting of such a document, that is, the compulsions of compromise. If this draft were to additionally seek to compensate for the absence of a legal document, the result would be either no agreement or the acceptance of a minimum common denominator. And the latter is what the current revised draft on counter-terrorism strategy represents. A compromise between conflicting ideas, most of which would have to be resolved within a legal context.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would have liked to see the United Nations convey a far stronger message on counter-terrorism. We would have preferred a strategy which sends a strong signal to terrorists that their actions would not be tolerated irrespective of the motivations behind them. A strategy that unites the international community in its global fight against terrorism through practical measures that facilitate cooperation by way of extradition, prosecution and information flows. A strategy that signals the will of the international community to no longer tolerate the actions of the sponsors of terrorism or of those who wilfully fail to prevent terrorists from utilising their territories for moral

or material shelter. A strategy that provides comfort and support to the victims of terrorism.

In other words, Mr. Co-Chairs, most of us here desire a political document that meets the expectations of the vast majority of people who look to the United Nations for solutions to the global threats of our times. Regrettably, we cannot achieve what is desirable. But we must stop expending further time and resources by dragging on the process through legal proposals that cannot be acceptable to the broad membership under the political framework in which we are currently engaged.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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