

Statement by Amb. Koonjul on Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts - 4 October 2002

Since this is the first formal meeting under your presidency, let me; first of all, convey my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption as President of the Security Council for the month of October. Let me also place on record our warm thanks to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Tafrov of Bulgaria, for his wise stewardship of the Council last month.

Heartiest congratulations go to Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), for the outstanding work he and his team continue to do in the Committee. Despite the demanding nature of the task, Ambassador Greenstock has steered the work of the Committee not only with resolute determination and unmatched professionalism, but also with great openness and transparency. We are pleased to learn that he will continue to chair the Committee for the next six months. We will continue to cooperate closely with him, and we assure him of our full support.

Let me also express my deep appreciation for the outstanding work performed by the team of the counter-terrorism experts, whose contribution to the work of the CTC has been extremely valuable and positive. I seize this opportunity to wish Dr. Gehr, Mr. Daoues and Ms. Broekhuis, who, I understand, will be leaving us shortly, plenty of success in their new endeavours. We will indeed miss them.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the state of implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) almost exactly one year after it was adopted on 28 September 2001. It is a matter of great success for the United Nations that 173 Members of the United Nations community submitted their reports, as required by the resolution. That shows the commitment of the international community to tackle the problem of terrorism in a serious manner. Mauritius fully subscribes to the assessment made in this respect by Ambassador Greenstock, the Chairman of the CTC. We are pleased with the progress made, and we are confident that Member States will continue to take all necessary measures to comply fully with resolution 1373 (2001).

Immediately after the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), Mauritius strengthened its legislative and administrative mechanisms in order to address the problems of terrorism. In our initial report, submitted to the CTC in December, we highlighted the major steps we had taken and which we proposed to take in order to combat terrorism. In July 2002, when we submitted our reply, we reported on the various actions taken at the national level. Several pieces of legislations were passed, among others the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Financial Intelligence and Anti- Money-Laundering Act and the Prevention of Corruption Act. The Banking Act and the Financial Services Regulations, which govern our offshore activities as well as our local banking sector, do not provide for any hawala-type banking system. Since 1990, Mauritius has no foreign exchange restrictions, and transactions through an informal banking system are, therefore, neither convenient nor profitable.

Mauritius has also become a party to the United Nations International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. Conscious of the threat posed by terrorism to national, regional and international peace and security, Mauritius has aligned itself with all international and regional initiatives in the fight against terrorism.

We recognize the difficulties many countries are facing in effectively implementing resolution 1373 (2001). Those difficulties range from the lack of necessary expertise to the total absence of regulatory and legislative frameworks. We are pleased that the CTC is paying particular attention to the question of assistance, and we are grateful to all those countries, institutions and agencies that have expressed their readiness to extend assistance in the various areas. We would therefore encourage those countries which have problems to get in touch with the CTC or the experts in order to discuss their specific problems. At the same time, we renew our appeal to those Member States who have not submitted their initial reports to do so as soon as possible.

The cornerstone of resolution 1373 (2001) is to develop a truly comprehensive and concerted approach to robustly deal with the scourge of terrorism, which manifested itself in the most disastrous and evil manner on 11 September 2001. It is absolutely imperative that all nations work individually and collectively to ensure that the world does not witness a repetition of those acts. The work of the CTC therefore remains extremely relevant inasmuch as it can assist and monitor legislative, judicial and

administrative mechanisms put in place by Member States to fight terrorism. The CTC is fully aware of the fact that not all countries are or can be at the same level of implementation of resolution 1373 (2001). We therefore support the gradual approach that the CTC is following and which gives time to allow for capacity-building at the national level and to respond to the obligations of resolution 1373 (2001).

We believe that the monitoring exercise should continue until we are satisfied that each country has been equipped legislatively and administratively to create a terrorist-proof society. In this respect, however, care must be taken to ensure that basic individual human rights are not sacrificed in an obsessive drive to fight terrorism. Here I would like to recall the very insightful statement that the Secretary-General has just made. The place of respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism has, indeed, been the object of extensive deliberations in many parts of the world. There is, indeed, a very fine line between the respect of fundamental rights and the need for a country to take all necessary measures to prevent terror-related activities.

While resolution 1373 (2001) does not contain any specific provision concerning respect for human rights, it is important that the concept be clearly embodied in all national legislation governing the fight against terrorism. We therefore welcome the idea that the CTC will remain in touch with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Sergio de Mello. Likewise, it will be important for the international community to reach agreement as quickly as possible on an acceptable definition of terrorism. We sincerely hope that work in that respect will continue in the appropriate forum.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank all the Members for the support that they have extended to me as Chairman of Sub-Committee B. I look forward to enjoying the same trust and cooperation for the next three months.