

STATEMENT BY MR. A. GOPINATHAN, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE ON AD HOC COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL
ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 51/210 OF 17 DECEMBER 1996 (MEASURES TO
ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM) AT THE SIXTH COMMITTEE OF
THE UNGA ON MARCH 31, 2003

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your re-election. We are happy to see you once again presiding over our deliberations. We wish you every success and assure you of our fullest co-operation. We extend felicitations to the other members of the Bureau. We would like to place on record the valuable contribution made by Amb. Richard Rowe, as a co coordinator, towards the work of the Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches the highest importance to the work of the Adhoc committee established by General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 1996, which has been dealing with the elaboration of a draft international Convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, formulation of a joint organised response of the international community to terrorism and elaboration of a draft comprehensive Convention on international terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Having been exposed to depredation of terrorism for decades, India has always taken a strong stand on countering international terrorism. Our experience shows that terrorists aim at the destruction of the peaceful life of the people. They attack innocent civilians, places of worship, parliamentary institutions, government establishments, modes of transport, voters and candidates engaged in peaceful democratic electoral processes, places of business and places of recreation. We have witnessed several such instances in recent months, in places ranging from Indonesia to Kenya and the Russian Federation. India has been the victim of state-sponsored terrorism for almost two decades. Our experience is that some terrorists' attacks have been genocidal in nature, like the killing of 24 members of Kashmiri Pandit families in Nandimarg village in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir a few days ago.

We believe that terrorism is a common enemy of all peoples, all beliefs and religions and of peace and democracy. It violates the most fundamental of all human rights, namely the right to life. Terrorism can only be defined with reference to the act and its consequences, not by a description of the perpetrators of the act and ascribing labels to them. Terrorists are criminals and therefore, alibis or rationalisations advanced by the advocates of the "root causes" of terrorism cannot absolve terrorists from their culpability.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community has recognised the need for cooperation among all States in the efforts to eliminate the scourge of terrorism. Toward this end, member states under the aegis of the UN have so far successfully developed a legal framework of twelve international Conventions to address specific aspects of international terrorism. India is a party to all these Conventions. The Government of India has also decided very recently to ratify the International Convention for suppression of the Financing of terrorism.

The Indian proposal for the early conclusion of a comprehensive Convention against international terrorism has been under the active consideration of this Committee. My delegation sincerely thanks all the delegations for their support and active participation in the consideration of the draft comprehensive Convention. During the General debate in the 57th session of the General Assembly, a number of States reiterated their support for the successful completion of the comprehensive Convention on international terrorism. The Commonwealth Law Ministers' meeting and the recent NAM Summit reiterated the need for the early conclusion of the comprehensive Convention on terrorism and called upon all states to co-operate in resolving the outstanding issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The Ad-hoc Committee has been successful in reaching agreement on most of the provisions of the text of the draft Convention. Yet, some important provisions, namely Article 2 on definitions, Article 2 bis on the scope of the Convention and Article 18 on exclusion of security forces are still outstanding. A review of the outstanding issues done in the last Adhoc Committee session was very helpful in identifying issues that require compromises.

Mr. Chairman,

On the question of relationship with earlier Conventions there appears to be a general agreement that the comprehensive Convention should not supersede or override, but should add value to and supplement the sectoral Conventions. We are supportive of this approach.

In a situation where acts of terrorism continue to occur worldwide in different forms and manifestations, the early conclusion of negotiations and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention would send a strong signal that the international community is united in purpose and determined to work together towards the eradication of this phenomenon from its roots. We urge all delegations to work together in a spirit of cooperation and accommodation toward achieving this objective by successfully carrying out the mandate of completing the legal framework of Conventions which are being considered in this Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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