

GHANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF GHANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
19 EAST 47TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TEL. 212-832-1300 • FAX 212-751-6743



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Statement

By

MR. ROBERT TACHIE-MENSON
*Minister, Permanent Mission of Ghana
to the United Nations*

On

Agenda Item 100

MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

*New York,
Wednesday, October 11, 2006*

Mr. Chairman, the menace of terrorism is one of the central challenges of the 21st century which has affected virtually every member of the international community.

In this atmosphere of threats, atrocities and general insecurity, it is important that we strengthen our resolve to confront this menace with the necessary political will, innovation and resourcefulness.

It is against this backdrop that we welcome the adoption by the General Assembly on 8th September 2006 of a resolution on a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy which constitutes the basis of a plan of action to address the conditions conducive to terrorism, while respecting human rights.

This landmark resolution points the way forward, while at the same time signaling the resolve of the international community to meet the challenges posed by this threat with unity and a sense of purpose.

It is our hope that the adoption of this strategy on counter-terrorism will also give impetus to the negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Even though significant progress has been made in negotiating the text of the convention on international terrorism, it is disappointing that disagreement on a few outstanding issues has stalled the finalization of the convention.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate its endorsement of the formulation which “condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomsoever, wherever and for whatever purposes”. This agreed formulation which is stated in paragraph 81 of the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005, and in the resolution on a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, should form the basis of any definition of terrorism in convention being negotiated. The formulation could also be the key in helping to unlock the stalemate on the issues that have bedeviled the negotiations.

Once it is accepted that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed for whatever purposes should be condemned, it logically follows that no purpose or objective may be used to justify any terrorist activity.

Moral relativism has no place in this definition. In this regard, we call on all member countries in the spirit of goodwill and compromise to endeavour to resolve the outstanding issues.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation believes that the following cardinal principles are essential and should underpin the text being negotiated:

- 1) No cause, ideology, religion, creed, or grievance justifies the deliberate, senseless, or wanton killings of civilians and non-combatants.
- 2) The definition should be a purely legal formulation, in the sense that it should not be coloured by political, religious, cultural or other extraneous considerations. This is to avoid subjective and self-serving interpretations of the text which weaken its effectiveness.
- 3) The convention should have as one of its objectives, the creation of mechanisms to give comfort, solace and reparations to victims of terrorist atrocities. It is important that we avoid the ludicrous situation where the distinction between victim and perpetrator is virtually non-existent.

It is only by cutting through the political obfuscation that has stalled the negotiations that we can move forward to a final product that has moral clarity and authority, credibility, and commands the respect of the international community.

Mr. Chairman, in this war against terror, we are confronted with a hydra-headed monster which threatens the whole basis of civilization. Progress made by the international community over the ages in peace and security, economic and social issues and indeed in all fields of human endeavour are at risk.

This should galvanize us to settle our differences and work out the necessary consensus, that will enable us take effective measures against this threat.

Thank you.