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**Working Group meeting of the Sixth Committee on Measures to eliminate international terrorism**

Chair: I apologize for the delay because the original time that was announced was 4:00 p.m., and since we commenced a little ahead of that time I was waiting for as many delegations as possible to be present with us.

We shall proceed to continue to conduct our business in informal consultations. As announced, we shall first consider this afternoon the question of convening the high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate a joint organized response of international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Then after we shall revert to our informals on the draft Comprehensive Convention. The question of convening the high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate a joint organized response of the international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is based on a proposal by Egypt.

In this connection, your attention is drawn to the letters of the Permanent Representatives of Egypt to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary General and to the Chairman of the Sixth Committee at the 60th session. These are in documents A/60/329 and A/C.6/60/2.

Since the item was proposed, the Working Group and the Ad Hoc Committee, established pursuant to General Assembly Solution 51/210, have discussed this issue. Previous reports contain summaries of discussion on this item.

I draw your attention to our Annex III to the 2013 report of the Ad Hoc Committee as well as the oral report by the Chair of the Working Group on the work of the working group and on the results of the informal consultations held last year contained in document A/C.6/70/SR27. Both documents are available on the PaperSmart portal.

I shall first queue the floor to the sponsor delegation and the Distinguished Delegate of Egypt has the floor.

Egypt: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The delegation of Egypt is of the view that the issue of convening a high-level conference as has been suggested is a very urgent need and more pressing than even before, taken into account two major issues. The first one, the increased and the growing rhythm of terrorism that we are witnessing in our world today; and the second point is the fact that there is no consensus at the Genera Assembly, especially amidst the Sixth Committee about the draft Comprehensive Convention to counter terrorism for reasons that we consider as being political in its essence and linked also to some concepts.

And this is why I think we have to [elevate 0:3:57] a bit the level of discussions from the technical and the expert level as was the case in the past years of [upgrades 0:04:07] and improve it to the political level. And this in order to discuss the political items that hinder the efforts to reach the aspired consensus. We need to reach a decision either by consensus and by agreeing on the outstanding issues, or we need to agree on the fact that we do not agree. And based on that, we would spare no efforts in order to hold at least annual meetings because so far the annual meetings have led to no outcomes, despite the efforts made by the experts.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: I thank the Representative of Egypt for his statement, and I now wish to open the floor for comments and views on this question. The floor is open.

I yield the floor to the delegate of Iran.

Iran: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the question of holding an international conference, let me express the view of NAM countries by making exact reference to the final NAM sub-document which NAM countries call on all the state to endorse in principle the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the UN to define terrorism, to differentiate it from struggle for national liberation, and to reach comprehensive and effective measures for concerted action, and note in this regard the proposal of the government of Arab Republic of Egypt.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: I thank Iran for his statement. Venezuela?

Venezuela: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, Ambassador Perera. I would like to say that my delegation associates itself with the position of Non-Aligned Movement, and we also would like to express our strong support to your work and to the possibility of having this diplomatic conference in order to achieve an understanding regarding this convention. And we would also call upon all states to be flexible and to look for a way of common ground in order to find a final solution on this item.

Thank you very much.

Chair: Thank you, Venezuela, for your statement and assurance of support. I now give the floor to South Africa.

South Africa: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon to everyone. My apologies for being late. Mr. Chairman, on this one of the high-level diplomatic conference we have been – as an African group, we are speaking on behalf of the African group. As an African group, our position is very clear and consistent. We have been restating our positions. Even in the plenary we were very clear on this position that we support the idea of convening a high-level conference as proposed by Egypt. And even in our first meeting, the first meeting of the Working Group, we also stated the same position and, yeah.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chair: Thank you, South Africa, for your statement. And now I give the floor to Nicaragua.

Nicaragua.: Thank you. Since this is the first time that I speak in this working group I would like to commend you for your hard work, and I would like to take this opportunity to say that Nicaragua strongly supports our Egyptian colleague's proposal for a high-level conference on terrorism. It's definitely necessary and it's urgent, as he said. And this is something that Nicaragua can stand behind with the other groups that spoke in favor of it as well.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Nicaragua. The European Union has the floor.

European Union: Merci, Monsieur le Président. Thank you, Chairman. The European Union would like to reiterate the position that it had already put forward on several occasions. And although we are very engaged in this process, we do not believe that a high-level conference would be the way to proceed. In our bid to overcome the obstacles that we are still dealing with, we think that this discussion should take place within this Sixth Committee, in our working group, or in another form. But we believe that this discussion must first take place at the expert level so that we can then move on to the intergovernmental phase.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, European Union. Kenya has the floor.

Kenya: Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I must also apologize for coming late. I think I went to our usual room and I found a more difficult subject going on there. Before I get into what is – will be a restatement of our position, I just want to thank you, Ambassador Perera, for your continued hard work and diligence and the dedication you have put over the years into this subject.

Kenya supports the position of NAM and also that is espoused by South Africa. And we fully support the idea of having a high-level conference as been put forth by my brother and friend from Egypt.

I think that it is urgent and necessary. As has been said by one of the distinguished speakers before me, is should not be in question. But after the time that we have taken on this matter, I think perhaps the trick is rather than continuing to do what we have done year in, year out would behold a conference at high levels and then perhaps probably will be able to get some further guidance on the way forward from such. With that said, I would want to support the idea as espoused by my colleague from Egypt.

I thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Kenya, for your statement. And now United States has the floor.

United States: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just very briefly, not to belabor the point, but to reiterate the longstanding position of the U.S., which is that in the current situation where the differences of view remain, we think it is premature and not the right time to convene a high-level conference.

Thanks.

Chair: Thank you, United States. And, Sudan, you have the floor.

Sudan: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Since it is the first time that I take the floor during this session, I would like to reiterate our thanks and appreciation to your effort and to your outstanding work that you are doing in discussing this item. My delegation would like to join its voice to the proposal made by Egypt. We would like also to support the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as the African group.

As we are mindful of the fact that this item and discussion on this item has lasted for years within this committee, and we are still at the point zero, or case zero, so negotiations are not advancing even by one meter. This is why I think that we have to move to another level, at higher level. Maybe that may activate this issues through a political perspective, and then the political perspective may be of guidance to the technical perspective. This is why my delegation is supporting the idea of convening a high-level conference that will also take stocks of all the consultations that have taken place within this committee and under the auspices of United Nations.

And thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Sudan, for your statement and for the kind remarks addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Algeria.

Algeria: Merci, Monsieur le Président. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank you for having convened this meeting. My delegation aligns itself with the statement that has just been made by the Distinguished Colleague from Iran stating the position of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I'd also like to endorse the position put forward by the distinguished representative and our brother from South Africa on behalf of the African group regarding this. The mandate was specifically outlined in the resolution on measures to eliminate international terrorism regarding the high-level conference.

Chair: Thank you, Algeria, for her statement. The Syrian Arab Republic has the floor.

Syrian Arab Republic: As a matter of fact, and at the outset, I thought that we should give due time and attention to this issue. But after the colleagues of Egypt and Iran have talked on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, everything was said. The Syrian Arab Republic aligns itself with the Non-Aligned Movement and we align ourselves to the proposal made by the colleague and friend of Egypt.

But today, and following long decades during which we have witnessed a lot of cause, we do really need an international conference to agree on the definition of terrorism and what are the terrorist acts. What acts constitute a terrorist act? And we have stayed in this committee, we have participated in the proceedings of this committee, and we do respect everything that is happening here. But more than 10 delegations today have supported the convening of the international conference. Only one or two voices have said that it's not appropriate to hold the conference.

So I would like to ask. At this time, the world is knowing a high number of terrorist acts. The phenomenon of terrorism is spreading and the different forms of manifestations are evolving. If this time is not convenient, when will time be convenient? This is the first question.

The second question; what is the alternative to not holding this high conference? As the colleague from Egypt said, this conference may lay the political basis for our committee and for the work of any committees that would like to reach a clear definition of terrorism and maybe reach a UN Convention on fighting terrorism.

So I would like to ask those two questions. If this is not the convenient time, when is it possible? And the second question. Those who say that this is not the proper time, those who say that it’s not the solution to have this conference – what is the alternative solution? Because we’ve been postponing this item from a year to another without any results.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Syria.

Morocco has the floor.

Morocco: Thank you, Chair. Since this is the first time that my delegation takes the floor, just would like to assure you of our support and glad to see you come back to the Working Group and chairing these works.

So my delegation associates itself, of course, with the declarations made by South Africa on behalf of the African Group and by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. And, of course, we do support the proposition by Egypt.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Morocco. Any other delegations wishing to take the floor?

India?

India: Thanks, Chair. We would like to reiterate our delegation’s position on the issue of high-level conference – the proposal of the high-level conference which is that in the view of our delegation, without the semblance of some sort of an agreement here at our level or the technical level, it would really serve no purpose to have a high-level conference on the matter.

However, having said that, it is also our view but that what we have heard today and we have been hearing on this issue for quite some time, are basically two differing views of delegations which is regarding what is needed to push the matter forward. We would like to suggest that perhaps there is a need to find a middle way, a middle path, in these two differing views and perhaps the delegations can explore that in various ways so that they can find the appropriate way which is acceptable to everyone to really push the process forward.

Thanks.

Chair: Thank you, India. Any other delegations? That does not appear to be the case. May I ask Egypt whether he would like to add anything before I … [indiscernible 19:35.0].

You have the floor, sir.

Egypt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My distinguished colleague from Saudi Arabia could not attend here today, and so he would not be able to deliver a statement on behalf of the OIC.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Egypt. Well, the discussion today on this item has followed the patterns of our previous discussions with two clear divergent approaches which have characterized past deliberations. I do note that one delegation had referred to the need to find the middle path, and I do hope delegations will also follow – pursue such possibilities. I did refer to when I made my opening statement on Monday and outlined the elements of the draft resolution which I had proposed a couple of years ago of having a reference to a two-step process which had surfaced in our previous discussions, namely a binding – the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention together with a binding commitment regarding the convening of a high-level conference. So these are ideas, proposals which I encourage delegations to further discuss among yourselves and make available to make some progress on this matter.

Distinguished Delegates, we shall – the summary of the debate of course will, following usual practice, be reflected in the report that will emerge from the work of this working group.

Distinguished Delegates, we shall now refer – revert to our informals on the draft Comprehensive Convention, and as indicated at our meeting on Monday, prior to opening up of the floor to delegations, I would like to invite Mr. Horna, Coordinator, to brief us on the informal consultations that he has held thus far on the CCIT.

You have the floor, sir.

Angel Horna: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ambassador Perera. I shall be brief.

First of all, let me express to you the gratitude of Peru’s delegation for entrusting us with this task and for the honor of serving as coordinator of the outstanding issues relating to the draft CCIT. In that regard, I should also like to express the recognition of my delegation to the work carried out by our highly esteemed colleague, Maria Telalian, during the last years.

I would like to start this brief oral report, Mr. Chair, by informing the Working Group that at the end of last year, the Chair of the Sixth Committee for the 70th General Assembly, following a decision of the Bureau, requested me to consider conducting informal consultations concerning outstanding issues of this draft CCIT, and taking into account paragraph 25 of Resolution 70/120. Upon that request and following our preparation meeting with the chair of the Sixth Committee back then and yourself, and also following a number of preliminary bilateral contacts, a meeting was held on the 5th of May, which was announced in the journal. In that meeting, you might recall that several delegations took the floor and welcomed the decision of the Bureau of the Sixth Committee to conduct those intercessional discussions on the topic.

It was also stated that in view of the then upcoming fifth review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, a general preference indicated that those informal informal consultations be resumed after the adoption of the strategy. This, in view of those delegations, would allow time to reflect on the substance of the outstanding issues before us while building upon the momentum of the possible achievements of the fifth biannual review of the GCDS.

At the end of that meeting, I suggested that the outcome of that exercise – that is, the intercessional discussions – would be to be better prepared for a fruitful discussion in the framework of this working group.

Once the strategy was adopted in July, I resumed bilateral contacts with interested delegations both before and after the summer. It is my view that this afforded delegations to remain engaged and to farther discuss the outstanding issues relating to the draft Comprehensive Convention and also to consider ways of moving the process forward.

Mr. Chair, after the beginning of this working Group last Monday under your chairmanship as well as following your kind request to serve as both Friends of the Chair and the coordinator, I have held some informal contacts with delegations, both bilaterally and in small groups, basically yesterday and the day before yesterday, and I have tried to make myself available to all colleagues. At this point of the process, which has been very short, I believe we still need to continue with informal consultations in order to have a more thorough assessment of the situation. In this regard, I could – I would come back to you in the following meeting of the Working Group.

Mr. Chair, without prejudice of the foregoing and despite differing views in the negotiations, several delegations have expressed their willingness to cooperate constructively with a view to bridging the remaining differences and seem to be ready to show flexibility and the necessary political will for this purpose. Indeed, while views of the international community might differ, I am pretty confident that we all share the core notion which is based on the nature of the protected value, in this case, the basic rights of civilians.

With that, Mr. Chair, I would like to leave it for the time being, and I thank you for your attention.

Chair: I thank the coordinator, Mr. Horna, for his report and also for the efforts that you have been making. And as you did mention, time was indeed short. We were to have met tomorrow but [their advanced meeting for this 27:35], when obviously more time is required for you to carry out the task entrusted to you. Nevertheless, I am indeed heartened by the fact that you did mention that a number of delegations have indicated their willingness to demonstrate flexibility, which is something which we have been stressing over a period of time. And so may I invite any comments from the floor to what the coordinator has just reported?

Venezuela?

Venezuela: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take this moment perhaps to request the Chair or to inform about the progress of the articles that were produced several years ago, and to see exactly where we’re stuck and perhaps to try to find a common ground with delegations that are not ready to move forward, that perhaps if we are ready to move forward on the articles that have been set that have no conflicts and to see if that perhaps would be a possibility to find and accommodate different positions on this matter.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Venezuela. On Monday, at the first meeting I dealt with at length on the Bureau proposal and the different elements of that proposal which are integrated, and also highlighted the possible ways forward. And also I also underlined the fact that all proposals remain on the table as is the practice, and nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. And I’m confident in the coming days, the coordinator will make every endeavor to discuss with delegations and there is a possibility that certainly the Bureau will further consider these proposals and come back to you with any new elements that might emerge from these consultations.

Thank you.

Any other delegations wishing to comment? That does not appear to be the case.

Distinguished Delegates, I am pleased to note that we have had some interesting discussions and very constructive interaction. Last Monday we suggested that there may be some possibilities for common understandings that could be further pursued in bilateral contacts and in that context as I mentioned, I’m heartened by what the coordinator just reported. Obviously, as was mentioned, he requires further time and I appeal to you to show maximum flexibility and to engage with the coordinator as we engage in the collective task of finding ways and means of moving forward.

Therefore, I encourage delegations to utilize the period between now and our next meeting, afternoon of 1st November, to actively engage in further consultations leading hopefully to the fulfillment of the mandate that had been entrusted upon us.

We have to fully utilize the International Law Week next week for high-level contacts with the presence of legal advisors from capitals towards decisions that might enable us to conclude our work. And I’m personally aware that some of these senior legal advisors who will be present with us next week have been involved in our process of the Ad Hoc Committee from the First Bombings Convention even up to the Comprehensive Convention, and some of them are quite familiar with the issues. So we should maximize opportunities, and certainly that is my intention to engage some of them as we proceed with our deliberations.

So I urge all delegations to exert every effort to reach a positive outcome during the current session. Our mandate [at this stage 32:30.4] is bringing this process to a closure. Friends of the Chair and I will continue to be available in the margins of the work of the Sixth Committee for bilateral contacts and consultations. As I said, I particularly encourage you to engage with Mr. Horna, with the new coordinator, on the outstanding issues.

With that, these informals are adjourned.