



MALDIVES

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Joint Debate on Agenda Item 16: Culture of Peace and 117: The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Statement by the Republic of Maldives
United Nations, New York, 12 February 2016

Thank you Mr. President,

As we speak today, in various parts of the world, violent extremism and its more sinister handmaiden, terrorism is destroying the very values, we as modern societies hold dear; the values of human dignity, peace and security. It is escalating an already unprecedented humanitarian crisis as millions of people are being forced out of their homes. The new manifestations of terrorism pose a greater threat to our international security, peace and humanity than ever. The urgency to implement concrete actions to prevent and counter terrorism is imperative.

Mr. President,

This debate is indeed very timely and my delegation expresses our deep appreciation to the Secretary General on his report titled "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism".

Maldives vehemently condemns all acts, methods and practices of violent extremism and terrorism in all its forms of manifestation, committed by whomever, wherever and on whatever grounds. The Maldives believes that streamlined counter-radicalization efforts must be amplified to ensure a lasting victory against violent extremism. Recent events relating to Da'esh/ISIS, Boko Haram and other extremist factions tells us on the immediate need to redouble our efforts on national, regional and international level to unite and harmonize our actions against terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. President,

Ever increasingly we are reminded that the phenomena of terrorism is not one country's problem. Nor is it a regional problem. Terrorism knows no borders; it is pervasive and global. The problem, therefore, must be tackled as such; through a global unified strategy. To address the interlinked and evolving nature of terrorism, we need to build strong partnerships to counter our common threats to security. The Government of Maldives has joined other states in a coalition to build partnerships to resolve the interlinked threats. We are also working with our international partners to enhance efforts to combat terrorism. The Government of Maldives remains committed to working with our regional and international stakeholders to suppress threats through increased cooperation and international solidarity.

Mr. President,

We will not win this fight merely by military might. Winning the war on values, progress and ideology remains a big challenge. We need to allow our societies to empower their minds and open their hearts to respect the other. We need to protect our children, enlighten them through education and empower our youth. Then only could we cultivate a culture of respect that will enable the forging of a joint vision on tolerance and reject terrorism. Countering terrorism is a battle that we can win only if we fight it with our minds.

As Governments we have the responsibility to reconnect with our youth and present them appropriate alternatives. In that regard, the Maldives reiterates and recognizes youth as an asset of society and that empowered and facilitating a platform for them to express their views is imperative. As major policy priority, the Government is addressing the needs of the large youth population of the country to provide them opportunities to realise their true potentials.

Mr. President,

We must further harness the tools we have and strengthen legal frameworks, in particular to detect and disrupt the stem of foreign terrorist fighters and any terrorist-related travel. Since the adoption of the landmark resolution 2178 by the United Nations Security Council, the Government of Maldives has embarked on a number of concrete actions to curb the stem of foreign terrorism fighters and in ensuring the safety and security of all Maldivians. Consistent with the spirit of the UNSC Resolution 2178, the Maldives has enacted a new Anti-Terrorism Bill in 2015, under which it is a serious criminal offense for any Maldivian to travel to fight in terrorist wars on foreign soil. The Government remains vigilant in monitoring suspected acts of terror to prevent terrorism and tackle conditions conducive to terrorism. Further, the Maldives has also enacted a Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Act which criminalises money laundering and terrorist financing in the Maldives. Both these key acts provide a robust framework which focuses preventive measures for addressing violent extremism.

Mr. President,

Islam is increasingly being associated with terror and extremism. Islamophobia, as a spectrum of negative expressions continues to expand rapidly. The Maldives too is not immune to the tentacles of radicalised Islam. Efforts must be intensified to build the bridges between our communities promote our common values of peace, compassion and tolerance. We should choose those fights and actions that counter and eliminate the false connotations associated with religions, ethnicity and culture rather than reinforce them.

The terrorism we see today in the world defies all logic. Instead, it is mindless and vicious violence, perpetrated most often against the weak and the marginalized, against ethnic and religious minorities, and against defenceless societies. The Maldives believes that violent extremism and terrorism should have no place in our modern societies and should not remain unpunished. The perpetrators should be held accountable as soon as possible and empower victims. We believe that the best and the strongest defence against terrorism would be to present a unified and cohesive front against this menace that threatens not only our co-existence, but all ethics of civilization. The Maldives stands committed and ready to work with the international community on this front.

Thank you.