

(Check against delivery)

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GERT ROSENTHAL, PERMANENT
PREPRESENTATIVE OF GUATEMALA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE OPEN
DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY CAUSED BY TERRORIST ACTS:
A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO COUNTER-TERRORISM
(January 15, 2013)**

Mr. President:

Thank you for convening this open debate, and your Foreign Minister for presiding the first part of the meeting. We are also grateful for the concept note prepared by your delegation. Also we appreciate the presence of the Secretary-General, and express our gratitude for his presentation.

Mr. President:

From a national perspective, it could be argued that terrorism is not an endemic scourge in my own country, or, in more general terms, in our Latin American region. However, from a broader perspective, we find in this phenomenon one of the major challenges that humanity faces. That is why we categorically reject terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, no matter its origin. There is simply no pretext to infringe on innocent persons the horrors, suffering and costs of this scourge. We believe that a terrorist act wherever it occurs, as happened in your country a few days ago, harms and offends all of humanity. That is also why we must take preventive actions and design decisive and collective measures within the framework of international cooperation.

The United Nations play a fundamental role in this matter. Besides the set of international conventions and protocols designed to combat terrorism, we dispose since 2006 of a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), which we tend to update every two years. Furthermore, this Council has placed itself in the forefront of mobilizing international cooperation against terrorism. It is unnecessary to list the numerous resolutions that refer directly or indirectly to this matter, nor to the bodies established to this end.

As the Strategy expressly notes, the fight against terrorism is not limited to the realm of espionage, defense and security. Equally or maybe even more important is to address the causes conducive to the spread of terrorism, that motivate individuals or groups to use indiscriminate violence against innocent persons, or at least incite the use of violence and xenophobia. This encompasses a broad thematic agenda, ranging from the promotion of economic and social development to the strengthening of the institutions of democratic governance and the rule of law. It also entails addressing the sources of strong tension which reflect a background of ethnic, religious or ideological differences, in the context of mobilizing the classical instruments of conflict prevention. This requires assigning a special role to the virtue of tolerance in the values that we wish to instill in each of our societies and at the international level. At the same time, we also must pay heed to avoiding using counter-terrorism measures as a pretext to violate basic human rights of our respective populations.

Mr. President:

It is not possible to speak about a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism without mentioning the need to adopt, as soon as possible, the long-overdue comprehensive convention on terrorism, due to the multidimensional character of this phenomenon. In weighing the value-added of a

comprehensive convention which would be in addition to existing instruments to combat international terrorism, we find merit, among other aspects, in the following:

- First, a comprehensive convention would contribute to avoiding impunity for those that commit terrorism, at present one of the major threats to international peace and security;
- Second, it would facilitate cooperation and mutual legal assistance among States to bring to justice those that are responsible for these acts;
- Third, it would offer a definition for terrorism, allowing for the universal criminalization of this despicable act;
- Fourth, it would fill existing gaps in the work of the Security Council, in particular in Committee 1373 (2001) and the measures applied by the sanctions committees.

As a separate issue we are concerned with a specific matter which refers to the link between organized transnational crime and terrorism. This topic is briefly touched upon both in the concept note circulated by the delegation of Pakistan and in the Presidential Statement whose text we will approve this afternoon. The commonality between some of the criminal cartels that operate in our own region with terrorist groups is the absolute disdain with which human life is treated. There is already abundant evidence that terrorist groups accede to criminal activities to finance their violent actions, but what is also perceivable on the horizon is the possibility of criminal cartels acceding to terrorist activities as part of their strategy of accumulating illicit wealth.

The need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to address this complex phenomenon, as suggested in the concept note, also leads us to a final reflection. It concerns the imperative of achieving a greater level of coherence among the different efforts being undertaken by the United Nations to meet the challenge of terrorism. The creation of the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) in 2005 marked a step in the right direction, but one can question whether the goal of coherence is benefitted by the arguably excessive decentralization of the efforts of the Security Council to combat terrorism in its diverse subsidiary bodies, including those derived from resolutions 1373 (2001), 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 1540 (2004). We have the same doubts regarding the level of coordination between the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the various Departments of the Secretariat that service the work of the General Assembly. This is not the place nor the time to make specific proposals on how to achieve greater coherence within the United Nations System in the area of counter-terrorism, but as members of the Security Council we should start to discuss among ourselves if there is enough internal coherence in the carrying-out of the work entrusted to the various aforementioned sanctions committees.

At any rate, we greatly value the work of the United Nations in combating terrorism, in support of Member States, which, ultimately, are the ones that share the main responsibility in facing this grave scourge.

Thank you.