

5 October 2001

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo,
President of the 56th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Conclusion of the Plenary Meetings
on “Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism”**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We have had an unusually long but very important and constructive debate during the last five days. It is unprecedented in the history of the UN for 167 Member States and 4 Observers to participate in the debate on a single agenda item. This fact alone eloquently demonstrates how seriously all Member States and the whole international community regard the acts of terrorism that took place on 11 September. It was because we all believed that they were not only attacks on the United States but assaults on the whole civilized world.

As we all know, this agenda item “Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism” (item 166) has long been on the agenda of the Sixth Committee. However, in light of the importance and urgency of the issue in the aftermath of the tragedy of 11 September, we decided that the debate on this item be held in plenary meetings while consideration of the technical aspects of the item remain within the purview of the Sixth Committee.

Before the beginning of our debate, we had an invaluable opportunity to listen to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York, our host city, who gave us a very clear perspective on the terrorist attacks and conveyed the expectations that U.S. citizens, particularly the citizens of New York, have of the United Nations at this critical time. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him again and offer our very best wishes for our host city’s speedy recovery.

During our deliberations, all participants joined wholeheartedly in condemning the terrorist attacks of 11 September, reaffirming General Assembly resolution 56/1 of 12 September 2001 in which the General Assembly condemned these attacks in the strongest terms and called for international cooperation to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers, and sponsors of the outrages.

Member States voiced the view that international terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security as well as a crime against humanity. Undoubtedly, international terrorism is one of the most formidable challenges to the world community in the 21st century, and the United Nations should play the key role in intensifying international efforts to eliminate such terrorism.

In this regard, I wish to recall that the General Assembly has taken important steps by adopting the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism in 1994 and its supplementary

Declaration in 1996. The Security Council has also taken initiatives such as the adoption of resolutions 1269 of 19 October 1999, 1368 of 12 September 2001 and 1373 of 28 September 2001, which not only condemned all forms of terrorism but also specified measures to be taken by Member States to prevent and suppress terrorist acts.

Member States recognized the urgency of dealing with all forms and manifestations of international terrorism and those who harbor and support the perpetrators, organizers, and sponsors of international terrorism. They stressed the need to enhance international cooperation and to promptly take all necessary measures to prevent and suppress terrorist activities.

Member States concurred in the view that a primary task facing the international community at present is to ensure that an effective legal framework for the prevention and elimination of international terrorism is in place. To this end, I call upon all Member States that have not yet done so to become, as a matter of priority, parties to the existing international conventions relating to terrorism. In this context, it is noteworthy that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice has recently adopted the revised Draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice. Many Member States also expressed their intention to take necessary measures to implement international conventions within their domestic jurisdiction.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge Member States to accelerate the work of the General Assembly with a view to early conclusion of the pending conventions on international terrorism in order to enhance the capacity of the international community to combat terrorism. As President of the General Assembly, I also wish to kindly request the Sixth Committee to expedite its work and submit its report to the General Assembly as early as possible, preferably by 15 November 2001.

Finally, I recall that during our debate Member States shared the view that the international community should resolve to fight terrorism as a phenomenon separate from any religion or ethnic group. In this regard, the necessity of dialogue among civilizations was stressed. Also some delegates suggested a high level conference on international terrorism, while some others called upon the international community to address the root causes of terrorism. At the same time, the need for a clearer definition of terrorism was raised for our further consideration.

Our week-long deliberation was instrumental in reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in dealing with global and high-profile issues such as international terrorism. It is my sincere hope that the United Nations and the international community will take further necessary measures to combat international terrorism, building on the deliberations we have had for the last five days.

Thank you.