

19 September 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the Launch of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism
Strategy**

Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you today to the launch of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy which the General Assembly adopted on Friday, September 8, 2006 by consensus.

Before we start, I would like to invite you to join me to observe a minute of silence for all the victims of terrorism.

Our gathering on this occasion marks an important step forward for the United Nations in the fight against the scourge of terrorism that remains one of the most serious threats to international peace and security of our time.

Terrorism knows no borders. During the past decade, many lives of innocent victims have been lost around the world: in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and in America on that sad day of September 11, 2001.

The United Nations has, throughout this time, remained committed and steadfastly mobilized its efforts to fight this scourge. The Security Council has been an active player in this regard, especially through the passing of resolution 1373 and other related resolutions.

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy that we adopted has given the General Assembly a unique opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to countering terrorism. It also reaffirms the General Assembly's role in this regard. The passing of the resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy with its annexed Plan of Action by 192 Member States represents a common testament that we, the United Nations, will face terrorism head on. And that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, must be condemned and shall not be tolerated.

The General Assembly has played a vital role in the past in formulating a number of important international legal instruments to counter terrorism. And in this regard, I would like to urge Member States to become parties to these instruments and implementing them without delay.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will complement the General Assembly's legal framework by providing practical and action-oriented measures that can be taken over time - short, medium and long term, as appropriate. Four main areas have been addressed in the Plan of Action.

Firstly, the Plan of Action recognizes that conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism must be addressed in a comprehensive manner, while none of these conditions can justify the commission of terrorist acts.

Secondly, the Plan of Action provides several concrete proposals guiding us towards better measures to combat terrorism. In this regard, Member States and the United Nations system must work together and in a coherent fashion.

Thirdly, the Plan of Action has recognized "capacity-building" as the cornerstone in the fight against terrorism - thus it includes a section aimed at improving capacity of Member States as well as the United Nations agencies in order to more effectively prepare them in preventing and handling terrorist attacks.

And lastly, the Plan of Action recognizes the need to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law while countering terrorism -- the respect for human rights is integral to the fight against terrorism. One section has been designated to specifically address this issue, and this idea also runs throughout the Plan of Action.

Terrorism will continue to challenge all of us, and it can come in different forms and methods of destruction. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy must therefore remain a living document, which can be updated to respond appropriately to a changing environment and technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank my predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, for his leadership and unwavering commitment to the issue of terrorism. I also extend my warm congratulations to Ambassador Vanu Gopala Menon of Singapore and Ambassador Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo of Spain - Co-Chairs of the consultation process - and, most importantly, to all of you - the Member States - for the efforts and support that have paved the way for the successful adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Furthermore, I thank the Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for his commitment, dedication and contribution to promote the work of the United Nations on countering terrorism.

It is now time for all of us to honour our words. We have to translate the Strategy into real action. Please join me in the launch of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

This is only the first step of many to implement our Strategy. We have more work to do in the face of constant threat of terrorist attacks. In particular, we need to exercise our utmost efforts in order to conclude the negotiation of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism as soon as possible.

Let us work together and remain united on this front.

Only when we act together can we rid the world of the scourge of terrorism and make the world a better and safer place for ourselves and our children.