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STATEMENT BY

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REPUBLIC OF GHANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

DURING THE SIXTH COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION OF
AGENDA ITEM 111: "MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL
TERRORISM" AT THE 76TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5 October 2021
United Nations HQ,
New York

Madam Chairperson

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your election to steer the work of the Sixth Committee. You can count on the African Group's strong cooperation and support throughout the Session.

The African Group associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The African Group would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on "Measures to eliminate international terrorism" contained in document A/76/201.

Madam Chairperson,

There is no justification for terrorism. This is the reason the African Group strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as well as all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever, by whomever, against whomever it is committed, including State terrorism. Moreover, we reaffirm that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

For the African Group any act of terrorism is a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. The African Group recognizes the non-derogable obligation of States as it relates to respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in accordance with the UN Charter.

Madam Chairperson,

The African Group welcomes the adoption on 30 June 2021, by the General Assembly, of the 7th Review of the United Nations Counter-terrorism Strategy which tackles, amongst others, issues relating to the return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and the exacerbation of extremist narratives and hate speech, new and emerging threats such as the misuse of technology for terrorist purposes, the misuse of internet resources - including social media platforms - for recruitment, as well as the importance of upholding Human Rights in the fight against terrorism. The African Group also welcomes that the 7th GCTS review's recognition of the detrimental effects of terrorism on the full enjoyment of human rights including the right to life; the call upon Member States to ensure that their territories are not misused for the planning and incitement of terrorism against other countries; and

the concern regarding the rising phenomenon of the transfer of foreign terrorist fighters to and between conflict zones, a phenomenon which we are suffering from in Africa. Such updates were in our view very pertinent and timely.

The African Group values the sincere engagement of the Secretary-General for a successful review of the UN counter terrorism architecture and reiterates its support to the UN Office for Counter Terrorism under the Direction of Mr. Vladimir Ivanovich Voronkov and looks forward to continuing cooperation with the Office. We also commend the UNOCT on the successful 2nd Counter-terrorism week, which was also marked by the convening of the Second United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held from 28 to 30 June 2021, under the theme “Countering and Preventing Terrorism in the Age of Transformative Technologies: Addressing the Challenges of the New Decade”.

The African Group looks forward to the full implementation of the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and urges the United Nations and donor partners to provide the necessary assistance and capacity-building to Member States that may so require in implementing their obligations in this regard.

Madam Chairperson

The African Group appreciates the work done so far by the ad hoc committee in drafting a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We reiterate the importance of the conclusion of a comprehensive convention for combating international terrorism (CCIT) and encourage the continuation of efforts to that end. We welcome the resumption of the informal consultations on the outstanding issues relating to the draft CCIT, and we further call upon all Member States to cooperate in resolving the outstanding issues.

The African Group stands ready to work actively with other delegations to achieve consensus regarding the draft comprehensive Convention on international terrorism. In view of this, the African Group supports the proposal to convene a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate an international response to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and we believe that the proposal should be given serious consideration.

Madam Chairperson

It would be recalled that since the days of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Africa has long recognized the need to take concrete measures to counter the phenomenon of terrorism. We continue to remain committed in the fight against terrorism and have through the successor body to the OAU, the African Union,

adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in 1999 which entered into force in 2002.

The continued effort and commitment of the African Continent is further manifested through the establishment of the African Center for Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) in Algiers to guide, promote, sensitize, prevent, protect and Strengthen the capacity building of relevant stakeholders through the provision of operational and technical advice and support, as well as the delivery of trainings and other forms of capacity building, to address issues relating to terrorism and implement their obligations under the global and continental regime.

Madam Chairperson,

While expressing concern about the increased incidences of kidnappings and hostage-takings, the African Group considers that the financing of terrorism is a matter of grave concern as the payment of ransoms to terrorist groups constitutes one of the main sources of terrorism financing. In this regard, the African Group urges Member States to cooperate in addressing the issue of the payment of ransoms claimed by terrorist groups.

Moreover, the African Group calls upon Member States to prevent refugee status from being abused by the perpetrators, organizers or facilitators of terrorist acts, and thus calls upon Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure, before granting asylum, that the asylum seeker has not planned, facilitated or participated in the commission of terrorist acts. Furthermore, the African Group calls upon Member States to collaborate in the pursuit of developing and implementing effective counter-narrative strategies, and the Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives.

It is also our view that more attention in the fight against terrorism needs to be paid to the further strengthening of inter-state cooperation. States should expand the range of assistance available in the apprehension of terrorists and in the investigation and prevention of terrorist acts. It is in this context that we welcome the creation and operationalization in Djibouti of the center of excellence (IGAD) in the prevention and fight against violent extremism, aimed at strengthening the capacity of African countries to adopt coordinated approaches to counter terrorism. The African Group welcomes the initiatives to encourage cooperation between the UN and regional organizations in the fight against terrorism.

We appreciate the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) elaborated by the African Center for study and Research on Terrorism and the United States' Africa Center for Strategic Studies. We also welcome the Madrid Declaration and Plan of Action on combating terrorism in West and Central Africa.

Madam Chairperson,

The 7th GCTS review resolution clearly recognized the necessity of enhancing the capacities of Member States and their respective institutions, including law enforcement institutions, in countering terrorism in order to end the vacuum that is often misused by terrorist organizations. Fighting the scourge of terrorism requires national ownership as well as enhanced capacities, systemic coordination among Member States with substantial support from the international community. Measures to eliminate international terrorism must include building relevant, high-impact capacity to address this evolving threat.

The African group welcomes the establishment in Rabat, Morocco, of the UNOCT Program Office for Counter Terrorism and Training in Africa, which will make an important contribution in counter terrorism through capacity-building support to Member States of the region. It will serve as a training hub to build counter-terrorism capacities and cooperation in Africa, particularly in West Africa and the Sahel. This training hub will develop and deliver specialized counter-terrorism and law enforcement training programmes to requesting Member States in Africa.

We also welcome the establishment of the regional programme office of the Office of Counter-Terrorism in Nairobi, Kenya, to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism in East Africa.

The African Group also welcomes the decision of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) to establish the Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre in Tanzania. It is expected that upon its establishment, it will seek to collaborate with the Rabat Programme Office to enhance its capacities *inter alia*.

It is also important to note that the current COVID 19 pandemic entails a greater sense of urgency for these assistance and capacity building efforts. The devastating socio-economic impacts of the pandemic that are already being felt across the globe through the loss of lives and livelihoods, and a commensurate economic downturn, will no doubt exacerbate the conditions that are known to breed terrorism. This is a worrying set of circumstances in Africa, where the evolution of terrorism is alarming, and where we have witnessed an increase in terror attacks and the proliferation of terror groups, including the mushrooming of Da'ech affiliate groups throughout the continent.

Madam Chairperson,

Measures aimed at ensuring more effective implementation of counter-terrorism conventions and related UN resolutions, as well as capacity-building in developing

countries are vital for a well-functioning universal international law approach to combating terrorism. Africa always endeavors to live up to its international obligations in the fight against terror and in the implementation of related UN resolutions. However, many African Member States are constrained by inadequate resources and weak capacity and call upon the international community for the necessary assistance required to enable them to fulfill their obligations and commitments. It is of critical importance that the UN and its Member States work hand in hand with Africa to prevent the threat of terrorism from derailing the hard-won gains that Africa has made in unifying, developing and working towards a more prosperous, peaceful future.

In this common endeavour to eradicate international terrorism, we continue to be motivated by the memories of the victims of terrorism and the suffering of the survivors of terrorist acts. In closing, let me reiterate the unhindered commitment of the African Group to eradicate terrorism, both in Africa and elsewhere.

I thank you for your attention.