



PALAU



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STATEMENT TO THE SIXTH COMMITTEE

by

H.E. Mr. Stuart Beck
**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary/
Permanent Representative**

on

"MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM"

11 October 2006

New York

Good Morning Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank you for chairing this important meeting and leading us as we consider the various efforts to eliminate international terrorism. We are encouraged by the significant progress that has been made on this agenda item in the recent past, and we are confident that under your able leadership, we will be able to make substantial progress towards completing our outstanding negotiations in this critical area.

Mr. Chairman,

This morning we would like to concentrate our remarks on the most pressing measure to eliminate international terrorism currently under consideration by the Committee: the Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Negotiations on the text of the draft convention have advanced considerably during recent sessions of the General Assembly under the leadership of the Sixth Committee, and we welcome the Committee's continued efforts to facilitate these negotiations. We urge the Committee to continue to make every effort towards a successful conclusion to negotiations before this session expires.

Mr. Chairman,

Palau is deeply committed to promoting a global response to the problem of international terrorism. International terrorism threatens all States, regardless of their size. Palau faces a unique danger from terrorism. A single terrorist attack on our soil could have a devastating effect on our tourist industry, and thus our development.

We therefore urge the completion of negotiations on the draft convention at the earliest possible date. We strongly support the call by Secretary General, expressed in his April, 2006 report "Uniting Against Terrorism: Recommendations for a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy," to conclude the convention as soon as possible. Moreover, we concur with the Secretary General's belief that completion of the convention would send a strong signal of international unity and would strengthen the moral authority of the United Nations. To that end, we encourage all Member States to make every effort in the upcoming negotiations to demonstrate flexibility, and consider compromise solutions in order to overcome the few areas of disagreement that remain.

Mr. Chairman,

As we move forward in negotiations we would like to express our views on two critical issues. First, we believe that as we continue to negotiate and search for a compromise solution, care must be taken to make sure that the final product of our negotiations is consistent with the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy recently adopted by the General Assembly. In particular, we believe that it is important that the final product of our negotiations not be seen as condoning some acts of terrorism while condemning others. As the Secretary General stated in his April 2006 Report, terrorism is never acceptable, no matter how righteous or justified the cause. The draft convention, when completed, must reflect this simple, yet critically important concept.

Second, we believe that care must be taken in completing our negotiations to avoid creating redundancy and confusion in international law. We note, and share, the concern expressed by the Secretary General in his April, 2006 report that the organizational fragmentation that has taken place in the United Nations system as it has attempted to combat terrorism may lead to needless duplication and repetition of accepted international legal obligations in a variety of instruments. Such fragmentation may undermine the coherence and unity of international law, resulting in decreased legitimacy. We therefore urge Member States to avoid restating well-established principles of international humanitarian law as they complete their negotiations on the draft convention. Moreover, we believe that behavior already regulated by international humanitarian law should be excluded from the coverage of the convention, which should seek to address behavior which is not yet regulated by existing international law regimes.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe the time is not yet ripe to convene a high level conference on the question of international terrorism; however, we believe that such a conference may be appropriate once the negotiations on the draft convention are completed. Convening the conference prematurely will only delay the negotiations on the draft convention, possibly making agreement impossible. We therefore urge Member States to assign priority to the completion of the comprehensive convention above all else during the current session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

Palau is willing to take any action within its power to be of assistance during the upcoming negotiations. In light of the General Assembly's recent adoption of a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, a successful conclusion of the negotiations surrounding the draft convention will provide a strong signal indicating the international community's unity of purpose in the fight against terrorism. We commend Member States on the significant progress made thus far in negotiating a draft convention, and look forward to the completion of this important component of a sustainable and effective strategy to combat a threat that affects us all.

Thank you.