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Remarks by Ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis, U.S. Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, at a Security Council Open Debate on the Work of its Counterterrorism Committees

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AS DELIVERED

Thank you, Mr. President. At the General Assembly in September, President Obama reminded us that terror attacks are not simply an assault on one country but an assault on the very ideals upon which the United Nations was founded. Through concerted action and international cooperation, the world has made significant progress in combating the scourge of terrorism, but we have not yet eliminated it. Though al-Qaeda's core has weakened, we have seen the rise of affiliated groups around the world, such as in the Sahel and the Arabian Peninsula.

The Security Council's three counterterrorism Committees exemplify our common efforts and reflect the international community's multifaceted approach to confront this challenge. Thwarting nefarious actors from supporting acts of terror; building national capacity to address terrorism domestically; and working to prevent the most dangerous weapons and materials from falling into the wrong hands – these are all essential elements of a comprehensive approach to counterterrorism, and they require constant multilateral cooperation. The Council's sustained commitment to promoting implementation of resolutions 1267, 1373, and 1540 has helped build stronger legal, policy, and institutional counterterrorism frameworks at the national and regional levels. We commend the Committees for their dedication, their Chairs for their leadership over the past two years, and the three expert groups for their continued excellent work.

Mr. President, the 1267/1989 sanctions regime remains a critical tool for countering al-Qaeda and affiliated groups, which continue to pose grave danger to international peace and security. The actions of this Committee help prevent these groups from perpetuating acts of terror. The United States encourages the Committee to reinvigorate implementation and enforcement of the regime, in particular to strengthen the international community's ability to thwart terrorist finance and travel. We further urge the Committee to impose targeted measures against al-Qaeda-linked militants operating in the Sahel, especially those responsible for violence in Mali. The Committee should hold special meetings to discuss the financing of terrorism through kidnapping for ransom and to focus on key regions victimized by terrorism.

We remain committed to ensuring that the Committee's procedures are fair, and we commend the Ombudsperson, Kimberly Prost, for her important role in aiding the Committee's review of delisting petitions.

Finally, we recognize the dedicated service to this Committee of Richard Barrett and several other long-standing members of the Monitoring Team who will depart at the end of this year. We deeply value their work. Moving forward, we encourage the Team to continue focusing on implementation challenges, particularly in those States in which sanctioned individuals and entities are located, and we would welcome recommendations for actions the Committee might take in cases of non-compliance.

Mr. President, the effectiveness of international efforts to combat terrorist activities depends on countries' ability to take action domestically. The Security Council's Counterterrorism Committee and Counterterrorism Executive Directorate have played a vital role in building the capacity of nations to deal effectively with terrorism. We strongly support their efforts to monitor and promote the implementation of resolutions 1373, 1624, and 1963, as reflected in our voluntary contributions across the UN system for regional and national training. The valuable work of the CTC and CTED includes training judges and prosecutors, developing witness protection programs, and programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremists. The appointment of a UN Counter Terrorism coordinator, as proposed by the Secretary-General, would further strengthen our collective counterterrorism efforts by fostering a more strategic and coordinated UN approach to these issues and integrate the work of the three counterterrorism expert panels.

In addition, the United States strongly supports implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and the work of the Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force. The UN should continue working with multilateral entities, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum, to increase international capacity to counter violent extremism. We look forward to the UN developing a close partnership with the new International Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism in Abu Dhabi and the soon-to-be established International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law in Tunisia.

Mr. President, one of the greatest threats to international security is terrorists gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. For eight years, the 1540 Committee has been dealing with this threat. We have seen significant progress toward full implementation of resolution 1540, for which we thank the 1540 Committee and its experts. But much more remains to be done.

Full implementation of resolution 1540 is a long-term endeavor that requires continuing Security Council commitment as well as engagement with regional, sub-regional, and intergovernmental organizations, and industry. We must continue to find ways to integrate the competencies and capabilities of these organizations into the global effort. We also hope that the 1540 Committee's expanded group of experts will energize implementation.

Only with sustained financial support can the goal of full implementation be reached. The United States has donated a total of \$4.5 million to the UN Trust Fund for 1540 implementation, and we encourage all Member States to make voluntary contributions to the fund.

Mr. President, the ongoing threat of terrorism around the world should reinforce for us the importance of these committees and their work. We are pleased with the committees' progress, are grateful to those who have made it possible, and are confident that under the capable leadership of the Chairs, the Council's counterterrorism efforts will guide and reinforce Member States' actions to combat terrorism in the coming years. Thank you.

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