Statement by Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the meeting of the
Ad Hoc Committee established by Resolution 51/210 [Measures to Eliminate
International Terrorism] on June 29, 2009

Since I am taking the floor for the first time, let me express my delegation’s
appreciation for the untiring efforts that you and the facilitator have made towards
finalization of the draft Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism. I
assure you of India’s full cooperation and support and would also like to congratulate
the bureau members on their election.

Mr. Chairman,

Terrorism poses an unprecedented challenge for the International Community. Not only has its reach spread but the ability of terrorists to strike, at places and times of
their choosing, with intent to cause maximum possible damage, destruction to property
and death of innocent persons has increased manifold. This is a matter of serious
concern.

India has been a victim of relentless terrorist attacks for almost twenty years. We
have, therefore, an abiding interest to see the early conclusion of a comprehensive
convention against international terrorism that will provide the international community
with a legal framework that can supplement the existing Conventions to comprehensively deal with terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

In November 2008, a calm evening in Mumbai was shattered by brutal attacks
launched by terrorists simultaneously against a café, frequented by Indian and foreign
tourists, two major hotels, a railway station and other public places. The terrorist attack
was conducted like a commando operation. Each terrorist was armed and equipped
with sophisticated weapons and communication equipment. Innocent passengers including women and children were mowed down by bullets at the railway station and public places; hostages were taken in hotels and subsequently massacred. It is not without significance that this was the first terrorist attack in India in which foreigners were specifically segregated and targeted. This orgy of violence, which played on TV screens around the world for four days, led to the loss of 164 lives.

Several other locations around the world have similarly been targets of terrorist attacks resulting in death of scores of innocents and destruction of property.

This wave of terrorist attacks in different parts of the world points not only to the all pervasive and global nature of terrorism but reinforces the belief that terrorism continues to be the biggest threat to the world at present. Therefore, if not challenged effectively and collectively this monster would continue to rear its ugly head and wreak havoc time and again.

Mr. Chairman,

No cause can ever justify terrorism. The international community has always responded to threats of terrorism with resolute determination. This was shown when the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy was adopted in 2006. We must not let the momentum and conviction which we showed then drift to ambivalence.

The fight against terrorism demands effective international cooperation so that those who are responsible, whoever they are and wherever they may be, are brought to book. If the most dangerous terrorist groups have found ways to operate on a global scale, so must efforts to thwart them.

The terrorist networks draw on their collective strengths to exploit to maximum advantage the targeted governments’ and international community’s inadequate and uncoordinated responses. Denying these groups funding, refuge, communications, movement, access, training, means, and most importantly, recruits and legitimacy therefore requires concerted international effort. The 13 UN Conventions and Protocols remain fundamental tools that contribute to the fight against terrorism. Given its comprehensive scope, the CCIT would be another fundamentally important instrument that will bolster the international community’s capacity to fight all types of terrorism and enable it to bring perpetrators to justice.

We are optimistic that an agreement on this Convention can be reached soon. The International Community cannot afford to wait any longer. We are encouraged by the fact that serious attempts are being made to resolve the outstanding issues. We call
on all delegations to seriously examine the proposals before us and move forward to finalize the CCIT on an urgent basis.

Moving ahead with the adoption of a comprehensive convention against international terrorism will not only send a strong signal of international unity but also strengthen the moral authority of the United Nations.

The adoption of a CCIT, through exercise of the law-making powers of the General Assembly, is in the interest of all member States and would reinvigorate the multilateral and collective dimensions of counter-terrorism efforts.

Thank You.