

03

**COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2024-25)**

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Twenty Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'Countering Global Terrorism at Regional and International Levels'

THIRD REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

DECEMBER, 2024 / Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)



THIRD REPORT
COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2024-25)

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the
Twenty Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'Countering
Global Terrorism at Regional and International Levels'

Presented to Lok Sabha on 03 December, 2024
Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 03 December, 2024



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

DECEMBER, 2024 / Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

COEA NO.--

Price: Rs.

© **2024 by Lok Sabha Secretariat**

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha
(_____ Edition) and printed by

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE (2024-25).....	(ii)
INTRODUCTION.....	(iii)
Chapter I Report.....	1
Chapter II Observations /Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government.....	19
Chapter III Observations / Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's Replies.....	61
Chapter IV Observations / Recommendations in respect of which Replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.....	64
Chapter V Observations / Recommendations in respect of which Final Replies of the Government are still awaited.....	66

APPENDICES

I. Minutes of the Second Sitting of the Committee held on 25 October, 2024.	69
II. Analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Observations / Recommendations contained in the Twenty Eight Report of the Committee On External Affairs (17 th Lok Sabha).....	71

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. D. K. Aruna
3. Shri Vijay Baghel
4. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
5. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
6. Shri Arun Govil
7. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
8. Shri Navaskani K.
9. Shri Kripanath Mallah
10. Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
11. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
12. Shri Sanatan Pandey
13. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy
14. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
15. Shri Y. S. Avinash Reddy
16. Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
17. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
18. Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
19. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
20. Shri Akshay Yadav
21. Vacant

Rajya Sabha

22. Dr. John Brittas
23. Smt. Kiran Choudhry
24. Smt. Sagarika Ghose
25. Dr. K. Laxman
26. Ms. Kavita Patidar
27. Shri A. D. Singh
28. Kunwar Ratanjeet Pratap Narayan Singh
29. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
30. Vacant
31. Vacant

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Shri Anjani Kumar | – | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | – | Director |
| 3. | Ms. K. Muanniang Tunlut | – | Deputy Secretary |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on External Affairs (2024-25) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Third Report (18th Lok Sabha) on action taken by the Government on the Observations /Recommendations contained in the Twenty Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (17th Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Countering Global Terrorism at Regional and International Levels'

2. The Twenty Eighth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on 05 February, 2024. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report were received on 30 April, 2024 (English Version) and 03 May, 2024 (Hindi Version).

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their Sitting held on 25 October, 2024. The Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee have been given at Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Twenty Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs is given at Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI
25 November, 2024
04 Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER-I

This Report of the Committee on External Affairs deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Twenty Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'Countering Global Terrorism at Regional and International Levels' which was presented to the Lok Sabha and also laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on 5 February, 2024.

2. The Action Taken Notes on all the 48 observations/recommendations contained in the Report, have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs. These have been categorized as follows: -

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -

Recommendation Nos.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 48

Total-41

Chapter-II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:-

Recommendation Nos.30 and 32

Total- 2

Chapter-III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -

Recommendation Nos. 33 and 38

Total-2

Chapter-IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: -

Recommendation Nos. 13, 27 and 47

**Total-3
Chapter-V**

3. The Committee desire that final replies to the comments and observations/recommendations contained in Chapter-I of this Report and recommendations included in Chapter V may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

JOINT ACTION PLAN FOR CURBING USE OF DRONES

(Recommendation No. 11)

5. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

The Committee note that the Government has made various efforts to check the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists such as, implementation of Drone Rules by Ministry of Civil Aviation; Drone and Anti-Drone courses being run by NSG for State Police Forces and Central Armed Police Forces; Procurement of Anti-Drone equipments to counter Rogue Drones; developing capacity and infrastructure of India's law enforcement infrastructure, both at the Centre and in all States and Union Territories to combat the menace of virtual assets; issuance of advisories by RBI to regulate the crypto currency market in India; legal framework under the Information Technology Act 2008, IT Rules 2009, IT Rules 2021 and subsequent amendment of 2022, etc. The

Committee further note that concerns have been raised by India in various bilateral and multilateral security related meetings. The Committee acknowledge the important steps taken by the Government in providing legal framework to check the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists but further desire that collaborative efforts amongst different Ministries and agencies should be strengthened and enforcement of existing laws should be strictly monitored to ensure its effective implementation. Efforts may also be made at various bilateral, regional and multilateral fora to work out a Joint Action Plan to curb the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists’.

6. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“National Security Guard (NSG) is mandated to conduct Counter Terrorism Capacity Building of all States/CAPFs as part of the National Counter Terrorism Grid. NSG conducts number of Counter Terrorism Courses and Exercises in a Training Year. The rapid advancement of Drone Technology has resulted in drones increasingly becoming weapon of choice of the terrorists to commit terrorist crime. With the view to enable and enhance the capability of States/CAPFs to deal with the emerging threat, NSG conducts Drone/ Anti Drone Training as part of Capacity Building for all States/CAPFs. NSG has trained 356 State Police Force and CAPFs till date.

NSG, in coordination with Ministry of External Affairs, European Union (EU) and Enhancing Security Cooperation In and With Asia (EU, ESIWA) has organised a one day seminar on the Topic "Countering Terrorist Exploitation of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) at New Delhi on 08 Feb 2024. ESIWA is a project developed by the EU to support deeper and more operationally relevant security dialogues with partner countries. Commercial unmanned aerial systems (UAS) have been developing rapidly in recent years, both in terms of technological sophistication and consumer availability. Seizing the opportunity to exploit these relatively inexpensive and adaptable devices, terrorist organisations and individual violent extremists across the world have deployed 'off the- shelf' drones for various strategic purposes The swift rise of this phenomenon and the evolving technologies involved is a clear and present threat that needs immediate mitigation strategies.

The Track 1.5 Roundtable was conducted for better understanding the range of current threats emanating from (particularly consumer-grade) UAS technology, and the emerging best practices regarding regulatory, tactical, and investigative responses.

Anti-drone solutions are being developed/deployed by agencies of Ministry of Home Affairs, including the Intelligence Bureau, to tackle the threats emanating from Drone incursions”.

7. The Committee had desired that collaborative efforts amongst different Ministries and agencies should be strengthened and enforcement of existing laws strictly monitored in addition to working out a Joint Action Plan at various bilateral, regional and multilateral fora to curb the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists. In its action taken reply, the Ministry has highlighted the measures taken by the NSG which include conducting Counter Terrorism Courses and Exercises, Drone/Anti Drone Training as part of Capacity Building for all States/CAPFs, one day seminar on countering terrorist exploitation of Unmanned Aerial System in coordination with Ministry of External Affairs, EU and ESIWA, etc. The Committee have also been apprised that Anti-drone solutions are being developed/deployed by agencies of Ministry of Home Affairs, including the Intelligence Bureau, to tackle the threats emanating from Drone incursions. While taking note of the efforts taken so far, the Committee would like to know the fresh steps being taken for inter- Ministry and inter-agency cooperation and monitoring of the implementation aspect of the laws and regulations in force as well as formulation of Joint Action Plan with other countries to effectively curb the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists. The Committee also desire that the Government should focus on these

areas so that coordinated efforts would result in a tangible outcome in countering new and emerging technological tools employed by global terrorists.

**NEGOTIATIONS WITH ICANN
(Recommendation No. 13)**

8. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

‘The Committee further note that negotiations are ongoing with ICANN for setting up cluster of internet root servers in India. The Committee desire that the negotiations should be concluded at the earliest so that internet root servers are based in India to enable immediate response to cyber/malware attacks and contain/check such attacks at the ISP gateways itself. In view of the increasing incidents of cyber/malware attacks perpetrated by terrorists/terrorist organizations, the Committee stress the need to be proactive and not merely reactive towards such incidents and urge the Government to evolve a strong mechanism for collaborative efforts amongst the agencies concerned. The capabilities of these agencies to counter cyber/malware attacks in the country may also be enhanced’.

9. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“MeitY is in discussion with Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to host multiple root servers in India. Based on the network topology, network architecture and India’s fast-expanding Internet penetration, ICANN is proposing to deploy a constellation of IMRS (ICANN Managed Root Server) single instances placed next to recursive servers (mainly of Indian Internet Service providers) across the country, that would ensure greater resiliency. MeitY /NIXI is in the process of discussion the way forward with ICANN along with concerned stakeholders in India”.

10. The Committee had desired that the ongoing negotiations with ICANN for setting up cluster of internet root servers in India should be concluded at the earliest to enable immediate response to cyber/malware attacks and contain/check such attacks at the ISP gateways itself. The Committee had also urged the Government to evolve a strong mechanism for collaborative efforts and enhancing the capabilities of the agencies concerned to counter cyber/malware attacks in the country. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry has informed that MeitY/NIXI is in the process of discussing the way forward with ICANN and concerned stakeholders in India. Laying stress on the need to bring the discussion to a fruitful conclusion at the earliest, the Committee urge the Ministry to actively facilitate the ongoing talks/discussions with ICANN and other stakeholders. The Ministry may also apprise the Committee regarding the initiatives taken in evolving a strong mechanism for collaborative efforts amongst the agencies concerned as well as enhancing their capabilities to counter cyber/malware attacks in the country.

**CREATION OF POOL OF DEDICATED EXPERTS
(Recommendation No. 19)**

11. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

`The Committee note that India's counter terrorism doctrine is based on the principle recognized by the UN that terrorism in all its forms is a

criminal activity and is not justified on any ground be it political, religious, ethnic, social, etc. India is guided by its policy of 'zero tolerance' towards terrorism and has adopted a multi-pronged approach in regard to counter terrorism. Besides being fully compliant with various United Nations Security Council Resolutions on terrorism, India has entered into various structured co-operation and dialogue mechanisms like Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties, Extradition Treaties, etc. with the countries of interest. India also pursue counter terrorism and other security concerns through various regional/multilateral forums like SAARC, BIMSTEC, SCO RATS, BRICS, UN, etc. and is also a full member of the Paris-based FATF and FATF Styled Regional Bodies viz, Eurasia Group and Asia Pacific Group. The Committee further note that due to emerging challenges in Counter Terrorism domain within creasing use of technology, drones, misuse of internet by terrorists, cryptotrans actions, use of encrypted communication platforms and social media by terrorists, India's counter terrorism mechanism has been evolving continuously in terms of amendments in legislations, facilities and equipments for Law Enforcement Agencies, technological up-gradation, skill enhancement of personnel, etc. The Committee acknowledge the efforts made by the Government to upgrade its counter terrorism apparatus but stress the need for continuous review of such mechanisms to keep pace with new and emerging challenges in the counter terrorism domain such as aerial terrorism, encrypted messaging services, digital mode of terror financing, etc. Going by the *modus operandi* of global terrorist groups, the Committee desire that the Government should keep one step ahead and create a pool of dedicated experts for new and emerging technologies, cyber related matters and financial technology innovation in coordination with all the Ministries/Departments /Agencies concerned'.

12. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

"National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS) is the competent authority for Legal Frameworks for countering terrorism for RATS-SCO.

NSCS is currently negotiating a Cooperation Program of the SCO Member States in Countering Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2025-2027, which is likely to be adopted at the forthcoming SCO Summit in July 2024.

MHA agencies such as IB undertake Capacity building programmes to train their personnel in new and emerging technologies jointly with other countries including USA.

As Chair of the UNSC's counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), India had hosted a Special meeting of the Committee in Mumbai and New Delhi on 28 & 29 October 2022. During the meeting, the Committee unanimously adopted 'Delhi Declaration' on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

In the General Assembly of the UN, India has been striving to bring renewed focus on the issue of terrorism, through engagement with relevant UN bodies, through working with other member states to bring effective UN documents such as Resolution on Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its subsequent reviews as well as through financial support to the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

In Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), issues related to Counter Terrorism and Cyber Security are discussed through IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security. India also contributes on these subjects through participation in the Indian Ocean Commission.

ASEAN and India have a standing mechanism called 'ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC)+India' that meets regularly. Joint Secretary (Counter Terrorism) leads the meeting from India.

The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions to deal with cyber attack and cyber terrorism. Section 66F of the Act, 2000 specifically prescribes stringent punishment for cyber terrorism.

In addition, Government takes prompt action under section 69A of IT Act for blocking of websites/ URLs with objectionable contents, including suspending the accounts of such encrypted message services used for terrorism whenever requests are received from designated nodal officers or upon Court orders for blocking of websites/ URLs. Section 69A of the Information Technology Act 2000 empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for

preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above”.

13. Stressing the need for continuous review of its counter terrorism apparatus to keep pace with new and emerging challenges in the counter terrorism domain and in view of the *modus operandi* of global terrorist groups, the Committee had desired that the Government should keep one step ahead and create a pool of dedicated experts for new and emerging technologies, cyber related matters and financial technology innovation in coordination with all the Ministries/Departments/Agencies concerned. The Committee, however, find that creation of a pool of dedicated experts as desired by them, has found no mention in the action taken reply of the Ministry. The Committee, hence reiterate this aspect of their recommendation and urge the Government to take follow up action in this regard, in consultation with all the Ministries/Departments/Agencies concerned as well as the stakeholders.

**MoUs/MoCs ON CYBER SECURITY
(Recommendation No. 27)**

14. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

‘The Cyber Diplomacy Division in MEA is also at the forefront in facilitating the MoUs/MoCs for CERT-In and has been encouraging

CERT-In to have MoUs/MoCs with more and more countries. During 2022 and 2023, Cyber Diplomacy Division has proposed 27 MoUs/MoCs to CERT-In. Currently, the number of MoUs/MoCs of CERT-In are 13 while another 12 are in various stages of renewal. The Committee desire that the MEA/Cyber Diplomacy Division and Indian Missions abroad, where required should actively facilitate negotiations/signing of MoUs/MoCs by CERT-In with the remaining countries so as to strengthen cyber security in the country. The Committee further desire that the MEA/Cyber Diplomacy Division should proactively coordinate with other GOI stakeholders so that necessary and urgent clearances are given to CERT-In for MoUs/MoCs with other countries smoothly and promptly’.

15. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“CERT-In is in the process of revising the draft MoU and hence all the MoUs requiring renewal and new initiatives taken by CD Division will await the necessary revision.

NSCS is currently reviewing the existing policies and IT Act implementation. In view of this, concurrences from NSCS on the standard draft MoU and draft JDI which was shared by CERT-In in October 2023 is awaited.

A total of 13 MoU/MoCs are in the final stage of renewal/signing. CERT-In will sign these MoUs with the International counterpart agencies, on receiving concurrence from NSCS. CERT-In will also share the standard draft MoU for negotiation with other counterpart agencies for fresh negotiations through MEA (CD) after getting NSCS concurrences.

MEA will proactively coordinate with GOI stakeholders”.

16. The Committee had desired that the MEA/Cyber Diplomacy Division and Indian Missions abroad, all actively facilitate negotiations/signing of MoUs/MoCs by CERT-In with the remaining countries also and proactively coordinate with other GOI

stakeholders for obtaining the necessary and urgent clearances. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated that a total of 13 MoU/MoCs are in the final stage of renewal/signing. CERT-In will sign these MoUs with the International counterpart agencies and also share the standard draft MoU for negotiation with other counterpart agencies for fresh negotiations through MEA(CD)after getting NSCS concurrences. The Committee are of the firm view that signing of MoUs/MoCs on cyber security and finalization of the standard draft MoU should be completed without further delay and urge the Ministry to take up the matter with the NSCS at the Highest level for obtaining the necessary concurrences. The progress achieved in this regard may also be intimated to the Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF BRICS COUNTER TERRORISM ACTION PLAN

(Recommendation No. 33)

17. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

The Committee note that the BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan containing specific measures to implement the BRICS Counter Terrorism Strategy adopted by BRICS Leaders in 2020 was finalized at the 6th BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) meeting and subsequently endorsed at the 13th BRICS Summit held virtually on 9th September 2021. The Committee further note that the BRICS CT sub-groups will propose activities under the Action Plan for implementation. The Committee recommend that the Government should identify the activities needed to be incorporated in the said Action Plan in the context of India and make efforts to include these activities for implementation by BRICS. The Committee also recommend that the Government should evolve a mechanism for monitoring the status of implementation of the Action Plan in letter and spirit and propose the

same to the BRICS CT sub-groups’.

18. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“As per BRICS Calendar, this year Russia has scheduled the meeting of BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group in July 2024 in Moscow.

In the last (8th) BRICS JWG-CT meeting (June 12-14, 2023) at Pretoria, South Africa has chaired the sub-working group of Terror Financing and South Africa was entrusted to prepare a concept paper on terror financing.

During the 15th BRICS Summit (Aug 22-24, 2023), the Johannesburg Declaration has been adopted with the theme to partnership for mutually accelerated growth sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism”.

19. The Committee had recommended that the Government should identify the activities to be incorporated in the BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan in the context of India and make efforts to include these activities for implementation by BRICS and also evolve a mechanism for monitoring the status of implementation of the Action Plan proposing the same to the BRICS CT sub-groups. In its action taken note furnished to the Committee, the Ministry has informed about BRICS JWG-CT meeting held in June 2023, BRICS Summit held in August 2023 and meeting of BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group held in July 2024, but is silent on the action taken on the recommendations of the Committee. Since then,

the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Report of September 2024 has also made recommendations to India regarding financing of terrorism. The Committee, hence, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Government to make all out efforts to implement FATF Report and ensure that the BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan is more outcome oriented as well as more relevant for India.

STRENGTHENING OF UN COUNTER TERRORISM ARCHITECTURE

(Recommendation No. 38)

20. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) of the United Nations which was adopted by consensus in 2006 is a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. The Committee understand that during the negotiations of the 7th review of the GCTS, India has succeeded in deterring efforts against any attempts to divide and dilute the global efforts to fight terrorism by focusing on few manifestations of terrorism while ignoring the rest. The Committee desire that the Government should continue to constructively engage in the negotiations during upcoming reviews of GCTS after taking stock of the progress in implementation of the Strategy, identification of the priority areas for focus and coming up with constructive suggestions for future implementation by the UN system. The Committee also stress the need for member States to develop strong political will to root out terrorism, strengthening member States' capacity to counter terrorist threats and ensuring better coordination with the UN Counter Terrorism Architecture and programmes and urge the Government to take further initiatives in this regard'.

21. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“India actively participates in the negotiations for biennial review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) of the UN.

For the UN system to credibly address the menace of terrorism and ensure effective action, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar proposed an eight-point action plan in his address to the UNSC on 12 January 2021, which included the call for summoning political will to unhesitatingly combat terrorism, mentioned review of UN’s GCTS as offering an important occasion to strengthen measures to prevent and combat terrorism and build capacities of member states as well as the need for adequate funding to UN Counter Terrorism bodies from UN regular budget”.

22 Stressing the need for UN member States to develop strong political will to root out terrorism, strengthen member States’ capacity to counter terrorist threats and ensure better coordination with the UN Counter Terrorism Architecture and programmes, the Committee had urged the Government to take further initiatives in this regard. In its Action Taken Reply, the MEA has stated that in an address to the UNSC on 12 January 2021, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar had proposed an eight-point action plan for the UN system to credibly address the menace of terrorism and ensure effective action. The Committee, however, find that the Government has not highlighted the efforts made or initiatives taken in this regard since January 2021. Contrary to the expectation of the Committee, their recommendation has not been acted upon in right

earnest. The Committee, hence reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Government to take further initiatives including follow up action on its eight-point action plan and make continuous efforts for strengthening the UN Counter Terrorism Architecture for effective action and addressing the menace of terrorism to a large extent.

**SHARING OF FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UPDATES WITH FATF
(Recommendation No. 44)**

23. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that India has actively participated in FATF as well as in FATF Style Regional Bodies (FSRB).It participates in periodic sharing of intelligence updates on financing of Al Qaeda, ISIL, and their affiliates. India also actively participated in development of a guidance by FATF titled 'Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Guidance' in 2019, formulation of revised guidance on Beneficial Ownership as part of FATF work project and other live projects of FATF. India as a FATF member works together with other members in the form of a task force towards the common objectives of the FATF Ministerial Mandate to tackle money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing. The Committee are of the view that focus should be given to pre-empt and prevent terrorist financing through new technology and virtual assets through optimum use of Artificial Intelligence and sharing of real time inputs. The Committee, therefore, recommend that India and the FATF should work towards up-gradation of periodic sharing of intelligence updates on financing of Al Qaeda, ISIL, and their affiliates to real time sharing of intelligence updates to achieve the said goal. The Committee also desire that the Government should play a more pro-active role in FATF and improve its coordination with members of the task force to achieve the common objectives of tackling money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing'.

24. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“The Risks, Trends & Methods Working Group (RTMG) of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on every plenary (3 plenary in a year) issues a paper “ISIL AQ and Affiliates Financing update”. India consistently highlights the activities of these terrorist organizations on this platform.

India as the member of FATF actively participates in the activities of all the 5 working groups of FATF i.e. Policy Development Group (PDG), RTMG, Evaluations and Compliance Group (ECG), International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG), Global Network Coordination Group (GNCG)”.

25. The Committee had recommended that India and the FATF should work towards up-gradation of periodic sharing of intelligence updates on financing of Al Qaeda, ISIL and their affiliates to real time sharing of intelligence updates to pre-empt and prevent terrorist financing through new technology and virtual assets. The Committee, however, find that the Ministry has not outlined the efforts or achievements made in regard to sharing of real time intelligence updates in its action taken notes furnished to the Committee. Stressing the need to be pro-active rather than being reactive in regard to money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing, the Committee urge the Government to progress to real time sharing of financial intelligence updates with the FATF.

MODALITIES FOR PERMANENCY OF NMC SECRETARIAT

(Recommendation No. 47)

26. The Committee, in their Twenty Eighth Report, had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that the 3rd No Money for Terror (NMFT) Ministerial Conference on Countering Terror Financing was held on 18 & 19 November 2022 in New Delhi in which 77 countries and 16 multi-lateral organizations participated. The Committee further note that at the concluding session, Union Home Minister has offered to establish a Permanent NMFT Ministerial Conference (NMC) Secretariat in India, in order to sustain the continued global focus on countering the financing of terrorism. The Committee are of the view that establishment of a permanent NMC Secretariat would enhance cooperation and collaboration amongst the international community in suppressing the sources of terror funding and curbing the growth and expansion of terrorist activities globally. As a victim of terrorism for more than three decades, India would also benefit from the focused attention to countering the financing of terrorism. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government to pursue the matter for early finalization of all the modalities so that a permanent NMC Secretariat is established in India'.

27. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

"IB, NIA and MHA are in constant consultation with MEA for finalization of all the modalities for permanency of NMC Secretariat. Negotiations and consultations regarding setting up of NMC Secretariat are undergoing with France and Australia. MEA is trying to build consensus among various stakeholders, Australia and France".

28. The Committee had urged the Government to pursue the matter of establishing permanent NMC Secretariat in India for early finalization of all the modalities. The Ministry, in its Action

Taken Reply, has stated that IB, NIA and MHA are in constant consultation with MEA for finalization of all the modalities for permanency of NMC Secretariat. Negotiations and consultations regarding setting up of NMC Secretariat are undergoing with France and Australia. The Committee have further been informed that MEA is trying to build consensus among various stakeholders, Australia and France. The Committee hope that the modalities for permanency of NMC Secretariat in India would be finalized sooner than later and desire to be apprised of any new developments or progress in this regard.

Chapter-II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation Sl. No. 1)

The Committee note that despite efforts by the international community, including those led by the UN Security Council, terrorism continues to remain the gravest threat to humanity. The threat of terrorism is also expanding at a rapid pace into new areas, particularly in Asia and Africa. Aerial terrorism is gradually emerging as a potent form of terrorism while the share of digital mode of terror financing also increases. The Committee, however, note that there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism or global terrorist or terrorist activities. India had proposed the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) to the UN General Assembly in 1996, but a consensus could not be achieved so far due to the position taken by some member countries on qualifying the definition of terrorism. The Committee understands that several countries have expressed support for CCIT and the leaders of prominent multilateral groupings—NAM, BRICS and SCO have called for an early finalization of CCIT. The Committee is of the firm view that a comprehensive and coordinated approach is the need of the hour for countering global terrorism, especially as terrorists are increasingly making use of advancements in technologies to achieve their vicious goals. It also goes without saying that a formal Convention within the UN Counter Terrorism Architecture would be the most appropriate forum to start with. The Committee, therefore, urges the Ministry to step up its diplomatic efforts at multilateral, regional and bilateral levels stressing the need for the international community to reach an agreement on the draft text of the CCIT at the earliest. The Government may also take initiatives for a global counter-terrorism movement focusing on abuse of new and emerging technologies like internet, social media platforms, encrypted messaging services, crypto currencies, unmanned aerial vehicles/drones, etc. for preventing and neutralizing terrorist threats and activities.

Reply of the Government

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Division of Ministry of External Affairs continues to engage the SCO platform in seeking its support for the early adoption of CCIT.

In a “Joint Statement by the Council of Heads of the SCO Member States on cooperation in countering radicalization leading to terrorism, separatism and extremism” adopted in the SCO Summit held on 4 July 2023 under India’s Chairmanship, India called upon the international community for seeking consensus on the adoption of Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).

The XV BRICS Summit Johannesburg II Declaration of 2023 called for an expeditious

finalization and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the UN framework.

This Ministry has repeatedly flagged the issue of misuse of ICTs in its bilateral, regional, multilateral and UN engagements through its Cyber Diplomacy (DC) Division.

Anti-drone solutions are being developed/deployed by Information Bureau in coordination with other agencies to tackle the threats emanating from Drone incursions.

Information sharing with foreign partners on terrorist use of dark net, encrypted services, anonymity services, websites and social media apps is undertaken.

As Chair of the UNSC's counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), India had hosted a Special meeting of the Committee in Mumbai and New Delhi on 28-29 October 2022 in which the Committee unanimously adopted the 'Delhi Declaration' on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

All concerned Ministries/ Departments are making concerted efforts at multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, stressing the need for the international community to reach an agreement on the draft text of the CCIT. Besides that, several counter terrorism operations are being carried out by Indian agencies to prevent the abuse of new and emerging technologies like internet, social media platforms, encrypted messaging services, crypto currencies, unmanned aerial vehicles/ drones etc.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 2)

The Committee note that Global Terrorist Groups (GTGs) such as ISIS and Al Qaida are highly dependent on the encrypted messaging platforms for instructions and preparations of terror attacks, revival of their sleeper cells and have heavily made use of crowd funding and virtual currencies like bitcoins for terror financing. In addition to instigating lone wolf attacks, GTGs also radicalize youth through misinformation and false narrative via extensive use of social media platforms. The global response to GTGs includes passing of UN Resolutions, designation as terrorists, inclusion in the FATF grey and black list, prohibition of accesses of advanced technologies in the hands of terrorist, bilateral/joint operation in investigation of terror related cases, etc. Despite counter terrorism efforts across the globe, GTGs remain as a major challenge for global peace and security. In view of the threat to the global community and to humanity at large, the Committee desire that collective global efforts against GTGs should be strengthened and intensified through active coordination and effective implementation of the various UN resolutions and strict adherence to FATF norms for restricting the source of their financing. The Committee also urge the Government to initiate vigorous campaigns for collective action against these terrorist groups to prevent them from building capabilities to carry out terrorist attacks and disturbing global peace and security.

Reply of the Government

India actively participates and supports the UN resolutions pertaining to terrorism.

Cooperation is being strengthened with our bilateral and multilateral partners as well as the UN in countering the exploitation of cyber space for propaganda, radicalization and recruitment by terrorist groups including GTGs both at domestic as well as international level.

There is an ongoing exchange of best practices with key countries in countering GTGs' efforts to radicalize youth towards terrorism including effective monitoring of cyber content and disseminating counter narratives.

Moreover, cooperation is being actively sought globally in persuading multinational social media service providers to remove the online radical/secessionist/terror content and also sharing details about the users posting such content.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 3)

The Committee note that with the emergence of new technology and rise in the usage of internet, increase in cyber incidents is a global phenomenon. However, there is lack of global regulations in the use of cyberspace for terrorism and terrorist related activities. Though India proposed to include terrorism as a separate crime under the ongoing process of UN Ad Hoc Committee towards having a comprehensive international convention to counter the use of ICTs for criminal purposes, there was no significant support from member States to include 'cyber terrorism' as a separate crime. The Committee further note that effort is still being made to include 'serious crime' which may indirectly include cases related to terrorism on dual criminality basis and subject to certain other conditions and safeguards as would be agreed upon, in the proposed convention by member States. The Committee are of the view that a multifaceted approach involving the active participation of stakeholders including global cyber security and law enforcement organizations at regional and international levels is imperative to counter global cyber terrorism. The Committee, therefore, stress the need for the Government to make persistent efforts at the UN Ad Hoc Committee and work towards deeper cooperation amongst UN member countries so that a comprehensive international convention to counter the use of ICTs for criminal purposes is evolved at the earliest. The Committee also urge the Government to take initiatives for promoting regional and international cooperation in developing joint strategies, cyber threat intelligence sharing mechanisms, cross border initiatives, capacity building etc. to combat cyber terrorism.

Reply of the Government

MHA participates in various regional and multinational forums i.e. SCO, BRICS, BIMSTEC and others and is making efforts to enhance the cooperation between the member States in the area of

cybercrime.

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) led the Indian delegation to the Concluding Session of UN Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes in New York on 29 January–9 February 2024.

Extensive and dedicated cyber-patrolling is carried out by agencies under MHA to identify and disrupt radical, violent and extremist elements likely to carry out anti-India/terror actions.

In this regard, cooperative measures are in place at bilateral/multilateral level as well.

National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) project has been launched by CERT-In with the objective to generate situational awareness of existing and potential cyber security threats and enable timely information sharing for proactive, preventive and protective actions by individual entities. Among others, Intelligence and Investigation agencies are also involved as stakeholders in the National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) of CERT-In.

Cyber Threat Intelligence (CTI) is collected, studied, analysed and generated by CERT-In and provided to Law Enforcement and intelligence agencies for immediate appropriate actions.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 4)

The Committee note that ransomware attack is one of the methods used in cyber terrorism. In counter ransomware, there are 36 member States and EU who are coordinating with each other globally. The Committee further note that there is a combination of reasons for non participation of the other countries in the coordinated global efforts to counter cyber terrorism. The Committee understand that some countries do not perceive the threat or feel that they would actually be affected by cyber attacks. However, the fact remains that cyber terrorism is a global phenomenon and the borderless nature of cyberspace demands effective coordination amongst the international community to ensure that no country is compromised causing a cascading effect on the other countries. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government to make all out efforts for bringing the remaining countries under the coordinated efforts in countering ransomware for global cyber security.

Reply of the Government

National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) in National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS) is coordinating the Indian approach in International Counter Ransomware Initiative launched by USA.

MHA has also established a National Counter Ransomware Task Force (NCRTF) for effective

coordination.

India is making all out efforts to counter ransomware and other criminal use of cyber technologies. In this regard, the issue of ransomware is being discussed with other countries through established bilateral dialogues and also through mechanisms of the United Nations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 5)

The Committee note that regional and global terrorist organizations around the world have increasingly been using radicalization as tool to attract vulnerable sections of the society like impressionable youth. Radicalization has been taken as a central theme in the meetings of multilateral bodies like UN CTC, GCTF, SCO-RATs, etc. The GCTF has shared Best Practices on the issues of countering violent extremism and counter radicalization measures have been taken up in SAN-PVE and Colombo Security Conclaves. Project based collaboration has been started by EU countries to foster exchange and cooperation in prevention of radicalization. The Committee further note that various initiatives are underway by multilateral organizations like GIFCT, EU etc., for cyber patrolling to prevent misuse of internet by terrorists to spread radicalization. Trail of Dedicated Institution based mechanism in the vulnerable areas are also undergoing. The Committee are aware of the challenges being faced by India due to radical and extremist thoughts influencing the populace, particularly the youth and desire that the Government should be proactive and maintain close coordination with multilateral and regional bodies engaged in the prevention and spread of radicalization. India should also play a prominent role in working out/evolving counter radicalization measures and institution based mechanisms in collaboration with the international community for preventing the spread of radicalization and extremist ideology.

Reply of the Government

India led the negotiation for adoption of the “Joint Statement by the Council of Heads of the SCO Member States on cooperation in countering radicalization leading to terrorism, separatism and extremism” in the SCO Summit held on 4 July 2023 under India’s Chairmanship.

India, through various multi-lateral fora such as FATF and GCTF, works on the evolving counter radicalization measures and preventing spread of radicalization and extremist ideology.

Indian security agencies are persistently engaged in curbing radicalization through existing mechanisms of Graded Police Response (GPR) adopting a whole-of-government multi-stakeholder approach. Counter and De-radicalization initiatives are being undertaken in jails to minimize chances of radicalization amongst jail inmates.

India is a regular and active participant in recognized bilateral/multilateral fora engaged in anti-

radicalization discussions being undertaken worldwide to prevent vulnerable youth getting lured into violent extremist actions.

India actively participates in the negotiations for biennial review of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS), which recognizes the challenge of radicalization to terrorism and calls upon Member states to enhance efforts to counter this challenge.

India continues to engage with the UN CTC and other multilateral bodies on the important issue of radicalization.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 6)

The Committee note that virtual currency, online payment and dark web transactions have attracted great attention from terrorist organizations. As per the report of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Money Laundering entitled ‘Emerging Terrorism Financing Risks,’ virtual currencies such as Bitcoin, has increasingly been used in various illegal and criminal activities, facilitating money laundering and terrorist financing. The Committee are aware of the rapid stride in financial technology innovation by terrorists/terrorist groups and desire that the Government should work in close coordination with FATF and other bodies to bring about qualitative improvement in the regulatory capacity so that terrorists/terrorist organizations do not get new opportunity for financing of terrorism and related activities. Underlining the need to evolve a global regulatory consensus on bitcoin, the Committee urge the Government to make coordinated efforts amongst the global community in this regard.

Reply of the Government

FATF has formed a group called “Virtual Assets Contact Group (VACG)” for creating a global regulatory consensus on cryptocurrencies. India as a member of FATF is by default the member of this group.

India is a member of FATF and is actively involved in its activities and deliberations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 7)

The Committee note that 40 recommendations on Money Laundering and terrorist financing of the FATF are recognized under the UN Security Council Resolution 1617 and the Plan of Action annexed to General Assembly resolution 60/288 as important tools in the fight against terrorism. These recommendations call for the criminalization of the financing of terrorism in accordance with the International Convention for the

Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, among other actions. The Committee further note that several regional treaties and bilateral agreements on counter-terrorism and tackling of organized crimes have mechanisms in place to assist the member States in combating financial and digital terrorism. The Committee are of the view that effective implementation of the FATF recommendations as well as the actionable points under the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism by the global community would go a long way in combating money laundering and terrorist financing and hence, urge the Government to spread awareness on the need to take prompt action in this regard. The Committee also urge the Government to take initiatives for strengthening the mechanisms for combating financial and digital terrorism under various regional treaties and bilateral agreements.

Reply of the Government

Countering Financing of Terrorism is one of the key agenda in most of the regional and bilateral agreements and treaties. India has signed MLAT with 41 countries.

In order to ensure compliance with FATF standards and in view of the ongoing Mutual Evaluation Reports (MER), MHA (CTCR Division) has amended the Order dated 02.02.2021 (procedure for implementation of Section 51A of UAPA) on 15.03.2023 and 29.08.2023 to make the procedure more comprehensive and inclusive.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 8)

The Committee note that potential threat from Chemical, Radiological, Biological and Nuclear (CRBN) includes use of CRBN materials by non state actors in the form of dirty bombs, dispersal devices and bio weapons. India actively participates in the discussions at the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention aimed at preventing or mitigating the proliferation of biological or chemical weapons to non state actors. The Committee further note that in the 9th Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference held in Geneva from 28 November–16 December 2022, it was decided to establish a Working Group open to all States Parties to identify, examine and develop specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures and make recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the Convention in all its aspects. The Committee desire that the Government should extend all support and cooperation towards establishing a legally binding protocol and compliance and verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention to check the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons in the hands of terrorists. The Committee also desire that India should closely cooperate and collaborate with the UN and its relevant Committees/agencies as well as the member States in preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Reply of the Government

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has the mandate to address all natural and man-made disasters including CBRN contingencies. NDRF rescuers are trained in CBRN during basic DM training on induction and selected rescuers also undergo advance CBRN courses. Experts from DAE, DRDO and INMAS provide required guidance in conduct of CBRN training and also during operations. Foreign training slots are also being utilized by NDRF which has provided a good exposure to supervisory officers. MHA vide letter no 11-1/2023-DM-I(N) dated 02.03.2023 has authorized CBRN equipment for NDRF and action is underway for procurement to meet the training and field requirements.

NDRF is also training the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in the States to enable them to perform their role as first responders. The training and equipping of SDRF in States is an area which requires focused attention to achieve desired capability within a stipulated timeline. NDRF will continue to provide required assistance in training.

NDRF has declared 2024 as the "Year of CBRN." A workshop involving all important stakeholders in the country is being convened on 05th March 2024 to identify focus areas and frame roadmap ahead to meet CBRN contingencies.

The National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC) is the national focal point for effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). There are 193 member States to the CWC. The Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a UN like Organisation based in the Hague, the Netherlands is the implementing body for CWC.

There are three important organs of OPCW: (i) Conference of the State Parties (CSP), (ii) Executive Council (EC), (iii) Technical Secretariat (TS). CSP is the highest policy making organ and EC is the second highest in decision making CWC matters. TS is the working secretariat. Four regular sessions of ECs and CSP (CSP-1 and EC-3) pertaining to Chemical Weapons Convention are held every year. For better co-ordination on the matters of CWC, the upcoming issues to be considered in the CSP and EC Sessions are shared with the Directors of NACWC and their views/comments are taken on each issue before communicating NACWC's inputs to D&ISA Division of MEA. India is regularly participating in these sessions and interacting with other States Parties of the CWC.

In order to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons, there is robust mechanism of Verification under Article VI of Chemical Weapons Convention Act -2000. NACWC keeps a vigil on chemical industries by collecting industries declarations pertaining to chemicals under CWC. Further, amongst the declared facilities, plant sites undergo verification process every year in accordance with CWC. Verification of chemical facilities is conducted by OPCW Inspectors under the supervision of NACWC officers. India has undergone 369 verifications/inspections of chemical industries till 2023. India supported the OPCW in carrying out 22 verifications/inspections during the calendar year 2023.

Section 17 of the CWC Act, 2000 lays down that no export or import of chemicals listed in Schedule 1, 2 and 3 in the Annex on chemicals to the Convention can be undertaken except in

accordance with the provisions of the Notifications made under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992. Under this Act, for the purpose of trade, dual use items have been classified under SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies) items. Most commonly traded dual use chemicals fall under SCOMET items. Accordingly, the chemicals listed under Schedule - 1, Schedule - 2 and Schedule - 3 of the CWC Act, 2000 have been respectively included in Category 1-A, 1-B, 1-C and 1-E of the SCOMET list for regulation of exports and imports. All applications for license for export of SCOMET items are considered by an Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG) in the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), which inter alia includes a representative from the National Authority as a member. During the year 2022-23, total twelve (12) meetings of the IMWG were conducted by the DGFT. In the above meetings, total sixty-seven (67) Chemical Weapons Convention related schedule chemicals i.e., seven (07) Schedule-2 and sixty (60) Schedule-3 chemical cases were approved by DGFT.

India attaches great importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons in 2023 was an important milestone in the history of the OPCW. India supports peaceful uses of chemical technology and the enhancement of International Cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

In 2023 and 2024, India participated in 28th Session of the Conference of the States Parties held from 27 November–1 December 2023 in The Hague and also in One Hundred and Fifth Session of the Executive Council (5-8 March, 2024), One Hundred and Fourth Session of the Executive Council (10-13 October, 2023), One Hundred and Third Session of the Executive Council (11-14 July 2023) and One Hundred and Third Session of the Executive Council (14-17 March, 2023). Since 2018, the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) has been conducting Analytical Skills Development Courses in collaboration with the Technical Secretariat, which have benefited several States Parties. Last Analytical skill development courses conducted by CSIR-IICT sponsored by OPCW took place from 4-15 September, 2023.

India also participated in table top exercise on countering chemical terrorism held in November 2023 that highlighted the importance of implementing laws, enhancing capabilities and improving preparedness. India is partnering with Kenya under the OPCW's mentorship programme to share our experience in national implementation.

India has also been participating with an inter-ministerial delegation in BTWC Working Group meetings. It may be recalled that as decided by the Ninth Review Conference of the BTWC (Biological & Toxin Weapons Convention) (Geneva, Nov–Dec 2022), the Working Group (WG) on the Strengthening of the BTWC dedicated to the organization of its work until 2026.

The first substantial meeting of the WG on strengthening of BTWC took place in Geneva from 7-18 August 2023, wherein the working group discussed International Cooperation and Assistance, S&T Review Mechanism and National Implementation. Second substantive session of the Working took place from 4 to 8 December 2023 in Geneva, wherein Confidence-building

and transparency , Compliance and verification and Organizational, institutional and financial arrangements were discussed. Subsequent sessions would take place in 2024.

The UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 (2004) prohibited access of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems to non-state actors (in particular for terrorist purposes), and prescribed measures and controls on WMD, their delivery systems and related materials, equipment and technology. India believes that UNSCR 1540 is a measure towards the implementation of the General Assembly resolution sponsored by India on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, adopted by consensus every year since 2002.

As a responsible member of the comity of nations, India is committed to working with the international community in advancing the common objectives of the global non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. India has been engaging with relevant committees of the UN on non-proliferation of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials, equipment and technology, including the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) [UNSCR 1540 Committee], in the relevant areas.

As part of the Comprehensive Review of the implementation of UNSCR 1540, and in the context of renewal of the UNSCR 1540 Committee's mandate, India participated in the consultations on the Comprehensive Review report related to the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and on the new Security Council resolution that extended the Committee's mandate for another 10 years, until 30 November 2032. India's inputs related to the proliferation of WMD-related materials, equipment and technology, the evolving nature of proliferation risks and the regional approach to assistance mechanisms, among others, were suitably incorporated into UN Security Council resolution 2663 (2022), adopted on 30 November 2022, and the Comprehensive Review report.

Further, India recognizes the important role of multilateral export control regimes in the non-proliferation of WMD, their delivery systems and related materials, equipment and technologies, including to terrorists and other non-State actors. India has been engaging actively in the multilateral export control regimes of the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Australia Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime, including by sharing its best practices or implementation experiences in the area of export controls and participating in the development of guidelines for export controls and lists of materials, equipment and technologies regulated under these regimes.

India had assumed the Chairmanship of the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) for the year 2023, a multilateral non-proliferation export control regime, which through regular information exchange among its 42 members on transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies and issuing of related export control lists and guidelines, seeks to promote transparency and greater responsibility in such transfers and contribute to regional and international security and stability.

As the Chair of the WA in 2023, India worked in close cooperation with the WA and its member countries in addressing the core functions and other issues of the regime, towards ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of the organization. This enabled significant agreements on the WA's

Lists, Best Practice Guidelines / Documents and Policy Proposals related to export controls on conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.

Furthermore, representatives of over 20 outreach partner countries (non-members of the WA) and participating States (members) of WA took part in an enhanced technical briefing, hosted by WA in Vienna during India's Chairmanship in June 2023. The WA enhanced technical briefing in 2023 discussed the implementation issues related to export controls and Arrangement control list-related issues, and the participants included government officials from significant exporters and importers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies.

India, as the Chair of WA in 2023, underlined the value of maintaining fully effective export controls and encouraged countries to take the WA control lists as a reference in their national systems. India also presented on the role of inter-agency cooperation in effective export controls, and its approach and initiatives on outreach and internal compliance, taking into account the relevant international best practices.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 9)

The Committee note that the problem of terrorism in India is largely sponsored from across the border. Terrorist outfits are provided safe havens, material support, finance and other logistics by Pakistan's ISI to carry out terrorist activities in India. The Committee are of the firm view that terrorist attacks in the country can only be curbed by dismantling all terrorist networks and safe havens and recommend that an action plan/mechanism may be worked out at the earliest for effective sharing of resources, capacity enhancement and pooling of available experts of the Central agencies as well as coordinated global efforts to root out terrorist networks and safe havens in the neighbouring countries.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of External Affairs continues to highlight the issue of cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan in various bilateral/multilateral/UN fora through its Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran (PAI) Division. The Division has regularly apprised its interlocutors regarding use of terrorism as an instrument of State policy by Pakistan at all relevant fora.

India, as the member of FATF, had actively participated in the discussions pertaining to non-compliance of FATF standards by Pakistan which resulted in the grey listing by FATF. Pakistan was bound to adhere to the 27-point ICRG Action Plan which was focused on dismantling state-sponsored terrorist network within its territory. Pakistan is still under reporting obligation to FATF through ICRG/APG.

Intelligence led preventive disruptions have been at the core of dismantling terror infrastructure which has led to busting of several terror modules assisted by cross-border handlers, across India.

Anti-infiltration grid has been strengthened to prevent inflow of inimical elements through porous borders. Besides, there is enhanced agency to agency coordination supplemented by impeccable investigations that act as deterrent.

India has been engaged with other member states to bring a suitable language on safe havens in the biennial review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) of the UN.

Multi Agency Centre (MAC) & SMAC have been functioning towards sharing of resources to dismantle terrorist networks and safe havens within India. Covert actions are being taken for dismantling the terrorist networks and safe havens functioning across India's borders as any overt actions will lead to breach of international law, which may bring criticism at international level besides creating tension with neighbouring countries.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 10)

The Committee note that the issue of cross-border terrorism in India was raised with the Government of Pakistan when situation was conducive for talks between the two countries. There has been no high-level interaction with the Government of Pakistan in the last three years. However, the Government consistently raises at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, the issue of Pakistan's continuing support to cross-border terrorism and terrorist infiltration and has also conveyed its continued concerns of cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan to its Counter Terrorism partner countries and the international community at large. The Committee desire that the Government should keep up its diplomatic efforts to expose the nefarious activities of Pakistan and its links with various terrorist outfits at every fora while strengthening its land borders and sea routes to prevent terrorist infiltration. The Committee also desire that the Government should make regular assessment on whether the situation is conducive for resumption of high-level interaction with the Pakistan Government and take steps accordingly.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of External Affairs, through its Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran (PAI) Division, regularly sensitizes the interlocutors about Pakistan's support to terrorism including attempts towards mainstreaming of terrorism. It may be recalled that in August 2019, Pakistan took a number of measures to downgrade the bilateral relations with India. The onus is now on Pakistan to create a conducive environment to normalise bilateral ties with India.

India proposed listing of 5 Pakistan based terrorists to the UNSC 1267 (Al-Qaeda and ISIL) Sanctions Committee during its tenure as Chair of the UNSC (2021-22), out of which one terrorist (*Abdul Rehman Makki*) was listed by the Committee on 16 January 2023.

India has also been engaged with other member states to bring a suitable language on safe havens in the biennial review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) of the UN.

At the multilateral fora, this Ministry responds appropriately to any allegation levelled by Pakistan, aiming to expose its nefarious activities and plans.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 11)

The Committee note that the Government has made various efforts to check the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists such as, implementation of Drone Rules by Ministry of Civil Aviation; Drone and Anti-Drone courses being run by NSG for State Police Forces and Central Armed Police Forces; Procurement of Anti-Drone equipments to counter Rogue Drones; developing capacity and infrastructure of India's law enforcement infrastructure, both at the Centre and in all States and Union Territories to combat the menace of virtual assets; issuance of advisories by RBI to regulate the crypto currency market in India; legal framework under the Information Technology Act 2008, IT Rules 2009, IT Rules 2021 and subsequent amendment of 2022, etc. The Committee further note that concerns have been raised by India in various bilateral and multilateral security related meetings. The Committee acknowledge the important steps taken by the Government in providing legal framework to check the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists but further desire that collaborative efforts amongst different Ministries and agencies should be strengthened and enforcement of existing laws should be strictly monitored to ensure its effective implementation. Efforts may also be made at various bilateral, regional and multilateral fora to work out a Joint Action Plan to curb the use of drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications by terrorists.

Reply of the Government

National Security Guard (NSG) is mandated to conduct Counter Terrorism Capacity Building of all States/CAPFs as part of the National Counter Terrorism Grid. NSG conducts number of Counter Terrorism Courses and Exercises in a Training Year. The rapid advancement of Drone Technology has resulted in drones increasingly becoming weapon of choice of the terrorists to commit terrorist crime. With the view to enable and enhance the capability of States/CAPFs to deal with the emerging threat, NSG conducts Drone/ Anti Drone Training as part of Capacity Building for all States/CAPFs. NSG has trained 356 State Police Force and CAPFs till date.

NSG, in coordination with Ministry of External Affairs, European Union (EU) and Enhancing Security Cooperation In and With Asia (EU, ESIWA) has organised a one day seminar on the Topic "Countering Terrorist Exploitation of Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) at New Delhi on 08 Feb 2024. ESIWA is a project developed by the EU to support deeper and more operationally relevant security dialogues with partner countries. Commercial unmanned aerial systems (UAS) have been developing rapidly in recent years, both in terms of technological sophistication and consumer availability. Seizing the opportunity to exploit these relatively inexpensive and

adaptable devices, terrorist organisations and individual violent extremists across the world have deployed 'off the- shelf' drones for various strategic purposes. The swift rise of this phenomenon and the evolving technologies involved is a clear and present threat that needs immediate mitigation strategies. The Track 1.5 Roundtable was conducted for better understanding the range of current threats emanating from (particularly consumer-grade) UAS technology, and the emerging best practices regarding regulatory, tactical, and investigative responses.

Anti-drone solutions are being developed/deployed by agencies of Ministry of Home Affairs, including the Intelligence Bureau, to tackle the threats emanating from Drone incursions.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 12)

The Committee note that the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) which has been designated under Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000 to serve as the national agency in the area of cyber security incident response, has been undertaking a number of measures including formulation of Cyber Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) for countering cyber-attacks and cyber terrorism for implementation by all Ministries/Departments of Central Government, State/UT Governments and their organizations; creation of a panel of IT security auditing organizations; launching of National Cyber Coordination Centre project; Cyber Threat Intelligence, Cyber security mock drills, etc. CERT-In has also entered into cooperation agreements in the area of cyber security with CERTs of 11 countries, viz, Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Estonia, France, Israel, Japan, Maldives, Nigeria, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The Committee further note that such MoUs have also been signed at the industry level. Keeping in view the fact that cyber attacks have become a global phenomenon, the Committee feel that greater global cooperation on cyber security is needed and urge the Government to secure the participation of all the countries in this regard. The Committee also urge the MEA and Indian Missions abroad to facilitate signing of such MoUs between CERT-In and CERTs of other countries as well as MoUs at the industry level.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of Home Affairs and its agencies including the Intelligence Bureau are already in process of CERT to CERT cooperation as well as signing of various MoU with partner countries at bilateral level.

Currently, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has 11 active Bilateral agreements in the form of MoU/MoC/PoC in the area of cyber security with counterpart agencies in Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Estonia, Japan, Maldives, Nigeria, Russian Federation, UK, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

CERT-In is regularly coordinating with leading service providers and product vendors within and outside the country to obtain advance information on latest cyber threats and attack trends

and devise appropriate proactive and preventive measures. To deal with complex, sophisticated cyber-attacks, CERT-In partners with industry leaders in the area of cyber security including CISCO India, CloudSEK, Google India, Quick Heal, Information Sharing and Analysis Centre (ISAC), Microsoft, Micro World Technologies (eScan), NIELIT, K7 Computing, Kaspersky, Skills DA and Redinent Innovations.

NSCS is currently in the process of reviewing the existing IT policies and IT Act implementation.

Thirteen MoU/MoCs are in the final stage of formulation. CERT-In will sign these MoUs with their International counterparts or agencies, once all relevant provisions are jointly finalised with NSCS. CERT-In will also share the draft MoU with its counterparts through MEA (CD Division) prior to obtaining final signatures.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 14)

The Committee note the misuse of internet and social media platforms by terrorists/terrorist groups for the radicalization and recruitment of vulnerable and brainwashed youths. The easy availability of radicalizing materials like audios, videos and literature; preaching extremism and openly denouncing other religions have contributed to radicalization. The Committee further note that a whole-of-the-Government approach taking on board all potent stakeholders of the society, especially community and the family, has been adopted to mitigate and confront the problem of radicalization and violent extremism. Under the Graded Police Response, family members of affected persons have actively been involved in counter radicalization process. The Committee acknowledge the important role of the community and family towards countering radicalization, but desire that legal measures for prevention of radicalization and recruitment of vulnerable and brainwashed youths should be put in place/enforced effectively. The Committee also desire that suitable action may be taken against those persons responsible for disseminating audios, videos and literature preaching extremism and openly denouncing other religions.

Reply of the Government

There are various provisions under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, UAPA, 1967 and Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 to counter radicalization.

In the Provisions under UAPA, 1967,

Section 2 (o) defines the “unlawful activity” in relation of an individual or association; and Section 2(p) defines the ‘unlawful association’.

Under Provisions of IPC, 1860,

Section 153A deals with promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc. and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony is punishable offence;

imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration, is punishable offence under Section 153B of IPC.

The Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), as the apex police training body at the national level, has continued to train and sensitize police officers from across Indian States and friendly countries on full range of issues pertaining to professional policing. The Bureau has also engaged with police entities of several foreign countries for the express purpose of capacity building and cooperation in various areas including counter terrorism, transnational organized crimes, and capacity building training courses/ training.

The Bureau further endorses efforts to strengthen mechanisms and cooperation in the fields of sharing of best practices in Policing, Investigation of Crime, Combating Crime, Crime Prevention, Cyber Crime, Crime against Women, Human/Drug Trafficking, Dark Web, Economic & Financial Crimes including Money Laundering, Terror Financing, Misuse of Internet, Counter Terrorism, Violent Extremism, Counter Radicalization/ De-radicalization, Intellectual Property Rights, Corruption and other domains of professional concern.

The Bureau also endorses laying greater emphasis on joint training and sharing of experiences & developing skill sets in an institutionalized manner, under the aegis of the respective national bodies mandated for police training.

Under the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), BPR&D conducted events on 'Counter Radicalization in February 2023 and Misuse of Internet in May 2023 for the CICA member States.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 15)

The Committee note that India's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU-IND), responsible for coordinating and strengthening the efforts of national and international intelligence, investigation and enforcement agencies in pursuing the global efforts against money laundering and terrorist financing has signed 48 agreements with its counterpart FIUs of other countries for exchange of financial intelligence. The Committee are aware of the increasing use of internet technology, virtual currency, online transactions, etc. by terrorists/terrorist groups and desire that the Government should maintain active coordination with the FIUs of other countries to ensure seamless flow of financial intelligence so as to prevent money laundering and financing of terrorism in the country. The Government should also explore the opportunity of signing more agreements with the remaining countries and constantly work towards strengthening the collection and sharing

of financial intelligence through effective networking of FIUs at national, regional and international levels.

Reply of the Government

Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND), under the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), is a member of Egmont Group since 2007. The Egmont Group is a united body of 174 Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) which provides FIUs with a platform to securely exchange expertise and financial intelligence to combat money laundering, terrorist financing (ML/TF), and associated predicate offences. Therefore, the Egmont Group provides a platform to FIU-IND to exchange the information in matters related to money laundering, terrorist financing and associated predicate offences with the member FIUs in line with the Egmont Principles of Information Exchange. FIU-IND has also signed 50 Memorandums of Understanding with counterpart FIUs for enhanced cooperation in information exchange in matters related to money laundering, terrorist financing and associated predicate offences and the signing of MoUs is an ongoing process with the counterpart FIUs.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 16)

The Committee note that the Government is committed to tackling the menace of terror financing in the country and keeps on evolving its strategies to be on par with the terrorists' organizations. To counter the use of crypto currencies and virtual assets in terror financing, Virtual Digital Assets Service Providers have been notified as Reporting Entities with effect from 07.03.2023 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002. Further, in order to enable the service providers to effectively detect and report suspicious transactions, FIU-India has factored in various scenarios that could be indicative of terror financing into the Red-Flag indicators to be issued for the said Reporting Entities. The Committee also note that as on date, use of crypto currencies and virtual assets have not been noticed/identified in any of the cases related to terror financing being investigated by the Directorate of Enforcement. The Committee, however, desire that the Government should remain vigilant in the matter and tighten its detection and identification mechanism so that no cases of terror financing through crypto currencies and virtual assets occur in the country. The Committee also urge the Government to keep one step ahead of the financial technology innovation of terrorists/terrorist organizations.

Reply of the Government

To counter such acts Government has intensified Cyber Patrolling for identifying terror networks and along with Counter Terrorism (CT) hotspots, surveillance over the encrypted devices as well dark web besides initiating capacity building programmes for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

NIA is empowered to probe cases of cyber terrorism under the NIA (Amendment) Act, 2019. A dedicated division namely, “Anti-Cyber Terrorism Division” has been created in the NIA for focused investigation of offences relating to cyber terrorism, including exploitation of information and communication technologies by terrorists.

Besides, India hosted special session of United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNCTC) (October 28-29, 2022) wherein the overarching theme was countering the use of Internet and drones by terrorist groups. In another meeting, ‘No Money For Terror (NMFT) (November 18-19, 2022), the issues of emerging technologies in the field of terror financing were discussed.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 17)

The Committee note that the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board provides robust regulatory measures for the security of nuclear and radiological material through continuous oversight. India also has an inter-ministerial Counter Nuclear Smuggling Team to strengthen the inter-agency platform for the exchange of information, coordination, cooperation to counter nuclear smuggling incidents to prevent illicit movement of radioactive material. The Committee further note that the National Disaster Response Force under the Ministry of Home Affairs is one of the agencies responding to CBRN contingencies in the public domain in coordination with other stakeholders while the National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention is a national focal point for effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention to which India is one of the initial signatories. The Committee acknowledge the mechanisms/systems put in place by the Government to deal with CBRN threats from terrorist organizations but desire that coordination amongst all the agencies and stakeholders concerned should be streamlined for prevention and quick response to CBRN contingencies. As there has been a quantum shift in terms of access to advanced technology by terrorist groups, the Committee underscore the need to remain vigilant and keep abreast of such terrorist groups through continuous updation/induction of advanced technology, intelligence sharing, capacity enhancement through training of agencies and security personnel, CBRN security exercises, increased collaborations and close cooperation with the international community in this regard. The Committee also desire that assessment of India’s preparedness for response to CBRN threats in the country should be a continuous process so that the Government is fully prepared to face such threats and is not found wanting in the event of CBRN emergencies/attacks.

Reply of the Government

In a key meeting on preparedness at Nuclear Power Plants (NPPs) held on 17 April 2022 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Home Minister, NDRF has been directed to place CBRN Teams in close vicinity of NPPs to attend to offsite emergency situations. In compliance with the directions, teams have been earmarked for each NPP and DMs/DC’s of the NPP districts

have been asked to provide sites near the NPPs for establishment of Regional Response Centers (RRCs).

Pursuant to the directions given by Union Home Minister during National Security Strategies Conference (NSSC) held at IB HQ in August 2023 to train State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) personnel for response at NPPs, concerned States have been notified and training of SDRF personnel in 6 States has already commenced w.e.f 19.02.2024.

NDRF regularly conducts Mock Exercise with all stakeholders on various CBRN scenarios at NPPs, Airports, Seaports and other vital installations. So far, 1290 CBRN related Mock Exercises have been conducted across the country since raising of the Force.

Relevant stakeholders are involved in framing of a comprehensive SOP clearly delineating roles and responsibilities to meet large scale contingencies, as per directions issued during NSSC-2023.

The threat of chemical terrorism stems largely from accessibility to toxic chemicals. The National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC), under the Cabinet Secretary, addresses necessary measures to prohibit or restrict the accessibility of dual-use chemicals to indirectly address the challenge of countering terrorism. To keep close coordination amongst all the agencies and stakeholders concerned, NACWC is regularly consulting Directors of all relevant Ministries including Ministry of Home Affairs. NACWC has coordinated between CBRN Strategic Planning Directorate and Defence Research and Development Establishment, Gwalior for mainstreaming the capacity building training of our Armed Forces against Chemical Warfare Agents. The Authority is regularly providing OPCW sponsored international training on Assistance & Protection against chemical weapons under Article X of CWC to first responders i.e NDRF, MoD.

The efforts of NACWC resulted in India becoming the world's fourth country to have both a Single Small Scale Facility for Protection Purpose (SSSF) and an Other Facility for Protection Purpose (OFPP). SSSF is imparting training on live agents against chemical warfare agents for capacity building of our armed forces. 355 participants have been trained in 14 courses conducted till date.

To raise awareness and to mitigate any possible chemical emergencies, a mobile application has been created by NACWC on the UMANG platform in October 22 and can be searched under the name of the National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention.

India is one of the initial signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention facilitates the exchange among States Parties of information and equipment that can help protect populations against the effects of a chemical weapons attack. It also mandates the Technical Secretariat to provide assistance to States Parties that request it. The OPCW's Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) fulfils this task and can be deployed upon request of a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention that is in need of emergency assistance arising out of a chemical attack.

MEA will encourage agency for regular assessment of CBRN threat and be prepared.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 18)

The Committee note that the Ministry's holistic approach to counterterrorism at regional and international level has helped in bringing our core concerns of cross-border terrorism to mainstream national discourse. Many terrorist entities and individuals who find shelter in neighbouring countries and are also engaged in terrorism against India, have been proscribed by the United Nations, the European Union and other countries. The Committee understand that India is now at the forefront of global standards setting on the issue of counterterrorism and our agencies have also gained a lot over the years through international cooperation. The Committee, however, feel that a lot more needs to be done especially in the light of the prevailing domestic terrorism scenario. The Committee stress the need to build up on what we have gained after due assessment of the areas which are lacking, and focus on Joint efforts and strengthening international cooperation in the fight against the scourge of terrorism.

Reply of the Government

The Multi Agency Centre (MAC), operating under the Intelligence Bureau, has Special Focus Groups that have been formed for coordination and synergy among various stakeholders dealing with Counter Terrorism.

Efforts are also on to enlist key Pakistani terrorists by UN under UNSC 1267 and by other countries such as US, UK, etc. Regular inputs/updated dossiers along-with requisite evidentiary documents have been shared with concerned authorities to expedite the process.

The CT and UN(P) Divisions of Ministry of External Affairs work closely with DoR, ED, IB, NIA and other concerned agencies/ departments in addressing issues pertaining to AML/CFT, black-listing, asset seizures and prohibition of cross-border movement. This integrated approach is also extended when interacting with multilateral anti-terror organisations such as UNOCT, UNODC, FATF, Eurasian Group and Asia-Pacific Group.

MEA leads Joint Working Groups with 26 countries and four international groupings including EU, and meetings are held regularly in the presence of all stakeholders including MHA, Cabinet Secretariat, and DoR to create effective trans-regional counter terrorism capability.

International cooperation with several countries is steadily taking shape at formal and informal levels. This will be utilised in the fight against the scourge of terrorism especially for proscribing the left out terrorist entities and their groups acting against the interest of India in particular and the world at large.

Pakistan continues to support and assist cross-border terrorism against India. In addition, narcotics smuggling and terror financing are serious concerns, which are used to aid terrorist activities. India should continue and strengthen its efforts in highlighting and exposing Pakistan's policy and activities in this regard to our partners, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 19)

The Committee note that India's counter terrorism doctrine is based on the principle recognized by the UN that terrorism in all its forms is a criminal activity and is not justified on any ground be it political, religious, ethnic, social, etc. India is guided by its policy of 'zero tolerance' towards terrorism and has adopted a multi-pronged approach in regard to counter terrorism. Besides being fully compliant with various United Nations Security Council Resolutions on terrorism, India has entered into various structured co-operation and dialogue mechanisms like Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties, Extradition Treaties, etc. with the countries of interest. India also pursue counter terrorism and other security concerns through various regional/multilateral forums like SAARC, BIMSTEC, SCO RATS, BRICS, UN, etc. and is also a full member of the Paris-based FATF and FATF Styled Regional Bodies viz, Eurasia Group and Asia Pacific Group. The Committee further note that due to emerging challenges in Counter Terrorism domain within creasing use of technology, drones, misuse of internet by terrorists, cryptotrans actions, use of encrypted communication platforms and social media by terrorists, India's counter terrorism mechanism has been evolving continuously in terms of amendments in legislations, facilities and equipments for Law Enforcement Agencies, technological up-gradation, skill enhancement of personnel, etc. The Committee acknowledge the efforts made by the Government to upgrade its counter terrorism apparatus but stress the need for continuous review of such mechanisms to keep pace with new and emerging challenges in the counter terrorism domain such as aerial terrorism, encrypted messaging services, digital mode of terror financing, etc. Going by the *modus operandi* of global terrorist groups, the Committee desire that the Government should keep one step ahead and create a pool of dedicated experts for new and emerging technologies, cyber related matters and financial technology innovation in coordination with all the Ministries/Departments /Agencies concerned.

Reply of the Government

National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS) is the competent authority for Legal Frameworks for countering terrorism for RATS-SCO.

NSCS is currently negotiating a Cooperation Program of the SCO Member States in Countering Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2025-2027, which is likely to be adopted at the forthcoming SCO Summit in July 2024.

MHA agencies such as IB undertake Capacity building programmes to train their personnel in

new and emerging technologies jointly with other countries including USA.

As Chair of the UNSC's counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), India had hosted a Special meeting of the Committee in Mumbai and New Delhi on 28 & 29 October 2022. During the meeting, the Committee unanimously adopted 'Delhi Declaration' on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

In the General Assembly of the UN, India has been striving to bring renewed focus on the issue of terrorism, through engagement with relevant UN bodies, through working with other member states to bring effective UN documents such as Resolution on Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its subsequent reviews as well as through financial support to the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

In Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), issues related to Counter Terrorism and Cyber Security are discussed through IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security. India also contributes on these subjects through participation in the Indian Ocean Commission.

ASEAN and India have a standing mechanism called 'ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC)+India' that meets regularly. Joint Secretary (Counter Terrorism) leads the meeting from India.

The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 has provisions to deal with cyber attack and cyber terrorism. Section 66F of the Act, 2000 specifically prescribes stringent punishment for cyber terrorism.

In addition, Government takes prompt action under section 69A of IT Act for blocking of websites/ URLs with objectionable contents, including suspending the accounts of such encrypted message services used for terrorism whenever requests are received from designated nodal officers or upon Court orders for blocking of websites/ URLs. Section 69A of the Information Technology Act 2000 empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence relating to above.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 20)

The Committee note that a number of outcome documents have been issued after bilateral Summits and other meetings with various countries and at regional and multilateral fora. The Ministry of External Affairs has also stated that counter terrorism is an ongoing issue and the status of implementation of such outcome documents is regularly monitored at various levels. The Committee are of the considered view that the desired impact in countering terrorism can only be seen in the effective implementation of the outcome documents by all the countries concerned and recommend that a mechanism for Joint assessment at bilateral and multilateral levels should be proposed/evolved and follow up action taken on a continuous basis.

Reply of the Government

As Chair of the UNSC's counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), India had hosted a Special meeting of the Committee in Mumbai and New Delhi on 28-29 October 2022. During the meeting, the Committee unanimously adopted 'Delhi Declaration' on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes. We continue to make efforts to include a reference to 'Delhi Declaration' in relevant multilateral documents.

We have also been engaged with other member states in the UN General Assembly to bring effective documents such as Resolution on the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its subsequent reviews.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 21)

The Committee note that as a result of India's counter terrorism efforts on the global arena, there is regular exchange of information with foreign partners/agencies and efforts are underway to setup recognized CT Nodal points for expeditious exchange of actionable inputs. The Committee desire that the exercise of setting up Nodal points for counter terrorism should be completed at the earliest to facilitate seamless flow of intelligence on terrorist threats and for initiating prompt response against the ruthless designs of terrorists/terrorist groups.

Reply of the Government

As part of ongoing efforts to tackle terrorism, there is regular exchange of information by IB and other agencies with designated foreign associates.

A total of 28 Nodal points for counter terrorism information/intelligence exchange and sharing have been set-up with 10 countries and 7 Multilateral platforms.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 22)

The Committee understand that extradition treaty is one of the legal frameworks for combating transnational crimes and terrorism. India has signed extradition treaties with 50 countries (treaties with Kazakhstan and Morocco are yet to be ratified) while extradition arrangements are in place with another 12 countries. The Committee hope that these treaties would serve as an effective tool to secure cooperation and assistance to enable India in countering terrorism, organized crimes, drug trafficking, money laundering, counterfeiting of its currency notes, etc. The Committee are also aware that successful operation of extradition treaties hinge upon harmonious working relations between the signatory countries and desire that the Government should work towards strengthening its diplomatic ties and maintaining closer cooperation with each one of them. The scope for signing more extradition treaties with other countries may be assessed and concrete steps taken in that direction. Despite the challenges in arriving at a consensus in the United Nations, the Committee recommend that the Government should consider pitching for a uniform Convention on Extradition at the United Nations.

Reply of the Government

India has active Extradition Treaties with 43 countries.

The United Nation General Assembly vide its resolution 45/116 has adopted a Model treaty on Extradition which was subsequently amended by General Assembly Resolution 52/88. The model treaty on Extradition may be used as a basis for concluding bilateral Extradition treaties among them.

The UN Conventions relating to terrorism: UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: UN Convention against Corruption etc. contained provisions on Extradition and the parties to such conventions may use those Conventions as the basis for Extradition in connection with offences covered by those conventions.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 23)

The Committee note that Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) in Criminal Matters is in force with 41 countries. India has also signed 28 Agreements/MoUs on security cooperation with other countries. The Ministry has also stated that signing of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters with Germany & Mozambique are at final stage while negotiation meetings are going on with Kenya, Philippines and Nepal for finalization of text of the Treaty. Proposals for signing of Security Cooperation Agreements etc. with USA, Brazil, Mongolia, Belarus etc. are in the pipeline. The Committee understand that MLAT in Criminal Matters would improve the effectiveness of the contracting countries in prevention, investigation, prosecution and suppression of crimes and enable continued cooperation between the intelligence and law enforcement agencies of the

participants. At the same time, Security Cooperation Agreements provide an institutional mechanism to enhance cooperation for combating transnational crimes and international terrorism, cyber crimes, drug trafficking, money laundering, counterfeiting of Indian currency notes, human trafficking etc. The Committee, therefore, desire that the ongoing process of negotiations and signing of MLATs and Security Cooperation Agreements should be completed at the earliest. The potential for signing of such treaties/agreements with the remaining countries should also be explored and efforts made for effective operationalization of these treaties/agreements.

Reply of the Government

India has signed Treaties/Agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal matters with 01 Multilateral namely BIMSTEC Convention and with 45 countries.

The Ministry of External Affairs is assisting the Ministry of Home Affairs in the negotiation of MLAT's as and when required and also plays a coordination role between the concerned foreign State and the MHA in facilitating negotiations including through Video Conference.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 24)

In order to enhance its capacity on counter terrorism, India has established Joint Working Groups on Counter Terrorism (JWG-CT) with 27 countries. It has engaged with regional bodies such as BIMSTEC, SAARC, ASEAN Regional Forum, SCO, BRICS and QUAD forum. Regular training courses, conferences and joint exercises are conducted in collaboration with State police and foreign partners and new technological tools are being procured for enhancing capacity in Counter Terrorism operations. The ambit of Multi Agency Centre dealing with Counter Terrorism has been expanded to include linkages of other crimes with terrorism. National Security Guard (NSG) and NIA nodes and capacities have been expanded to deal with Counter Terrorism responses. Besides, legal action against wanted terrorists in other countries is also pursued through the INTERPOL. The Ministry has further informed that on the basis of the UN Counter Terrorism Strategy, a draft National Counter Terrorism Strategy has been formulated and shared with MHA. Besides, during the regular JWG-CT and other bilateral meetings, best practices on CT have been exchanged with the participating countries. The Committee while acknowledging all the efforts made by the Government, desire that in view of India's continued vulnerability to terrorism and its consequences, the Government should improve its counter terrorism strategy by incorporating best practices on counter terrorism of other countries, enhance its domestic counter terrorism infrastructure by infusing resources, upgrading its capabilities and making use of new technological tools. Stressing the need to make the JWGs and regional bodies more effective and outcome oriented, the Committee recommend that a comprehensive assessment of their working may be carried out and an action plan be prepared accordingly. The Committee also urge the Government to strengthen its coordination with the INTERPOL and utilize its database relating to

terrorist and terror offences to pre-empt and respond to terrorist strikes/attacks in the country swiftly and decisively.

Reply of the Government

Since 2015, NSG has participated abroad and at home in Joint Training Exercise with Friendly Foreign Countries with a view to share best practices and to enhance interoperability with the Forces. These Joint Training/ Exercises provide an excellent platform to NSG Commandos and Special Forces of Friendly Foreign Countries to share their best practices and evolve better drills which may be put to use in any future CT scenario. There are enormous Tangible & Intangible gains/outcomes from Capacity building Training and Joint Exercise. These exercises and Training has enhanced mutual operational capabilities, combat skills, interoperability and operational efficacy to deal with terrorism in all its manifestation.

Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercise (JATE) "Manesar Anti terror 2022". NSG has hosted the prestigious multinational Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercise (JATE) "Manesar Anti-Terror 2022" under the frame work of RATS SCO. The exercise was aimed at exchanging expertise, best practices and build synergy between the CT Forces of the SCO RATS Member Countries to enhance capabilities for conducting Anti-Terrorist operations and countering other security threats collectively.

Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercise (JATE) "Eurasia Anti-Terror 2023". India's Counter Terrorism Force, National Security Guard, in coordination and support with other law enforcement agencies, conducted the Exercise on 06 July 2023, on the basis of threat inputs shared by Executive Committee of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (EC SCO RATS). The representative of NSG had attended the Closing Ceremony of the Exercise held on 20 & 21 September 2023 in Bishkek (Kyrgyz Republic).

TARKASH- NSG has conducted the sixth edition of TARKASH-VI i.e. Indo-US Joint Counter Terrorism Exercise (TARKASH-VI) with US Special Forces of Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) from 16 Jan 2023 to 14 Feb 2023 at 27 Special Composite Group, Chennai.

Quad TTX- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, popularly known as QUAD has been established as the informal alliance among India, Japan, Australia, and the United States to secure a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. The Quad member states focus on multiple initiatives such as global health, infrastructure, climate change, technological advances, and counterterrorism. The member states recognize that an increase in emphasis on furthering the ongoing cooperation is a strategic inevitability and there is an overwhelming requirement to further formalize it at the earliest. NSG on regular basis participating in QUAD TTX. The details are as under:-

(a) QUAD TTX 2021. QUAD TTX 2021 was organised in New Delhi under the aegis of the NSG with view to provide an opportunity to take forward their shared vision of enhancing international cooperation, mutual understanding and establish synergy between QUAD countries under the menace of terrorism.

(b) 3rd QUAD counter-Terrorism Table Top (Exercise TTX and Working Group Meeting) Colonel Sunil Mishra, Group Commander (Operations) attended the "3'd QUAD Counter-Terrorism Table Top Exercise (TTX) and Working Group Meeting" held from 26-29 October 2022 at Sydney, Australia.

(c) Quad Consequences Management Table Top Exercise Officer from NSG attended the Quad Consequences Management Table Top Exercise held from 20-23 June 2023 at Arctic Warrior Centre, Joint Base Elmendorf-Rechardson (JBER) in Alaska, USA. The scope of the Table Top Exercise was to explore mechanisms for regional collaboration and coordination during a terrorism CBRN attack in the region and discuss the challenges and best practices for requesting, receiving and deploying international assistance in response to a terrorist attack

India presently has Joint Working Groups (JWGs) with 32 countries.

In the General Assembly of the UN, India has been striving to bring renewed focus on the issue of terrorism, through engagement with relevant UN bodies, through working with other member states to bring effective UN documents such as Resolution on Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its subsequent reviews as well as through financial support to the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

In Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), issues related to Counter Terrorism and Cyber Security are discussed through IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security. India also contributes on these subjects through participation in the Indian Ocean Commission.

Apart from formal channels of cooperation with international organisations including INTERPOL, cooperation through informal channels is also underway with countries willing to work with India by sharing their best practices and other things for countering terrorism at regional and international level.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 25)

The Committee note that both legislative frameworks and institutional mechanisms exist under various Ministries like Home Affairs, Finance, Electronics and Information Technology, etc. for countering terrorism in the country. All concerned Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Government including, *inter alia*, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Intelligence Bureau, Cabinet Secretariat, National Investigation Agency, National Security Guard, Bureau of Police Research and Development, Financial Intelligence Unit, Department of Revenue, National Security Council Secretariat, Central Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security etc, are represented in the JWG-CT meetings depending on the agenda of the meetings. The Committee appreciate the ‘whole of Government approach’ in countering terrorism but are of the considered view that the challenges in coordination amongst multiple agencies in the execution of counter terrorism measures should be overcome and seamless flow of intelligence and real time sharing of inputs be ensured so that the desired impact is felt on the ground. The Committee urge the Government to maintain close inter-Ministry and

inter-agency cooperation amongst all the stakeholders involved in counter terrorism to anticipate and respond to all forms of terrorist threats and terrorist attacks in the country promptly. It should be the endeavour of the Government to strengthen and upgrade its institutional mechanisms on a continuous basis through induction of trained personnel and experts in the field of new and emerging technologies, innovative technological tools and international collaborations.

Reply of the Government

MAC-JTFI platform of IB serves as a nodal point for inter-agency cooperation.

Various Special Focus Groups have been formed under MAC to deal with dynamic and ever evolving security threats and challenges and for effective coordination.

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), has been designated under Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000 to serve as the national agency in the area of cyber security incident response.

CERT-In has created a panel of 'IT security auditing organizations' for auditing, including vulnerability assessment and penetration testing of computer systems, networks & applications of various organizations of the Government and organizations across sectors.

CERT-In has formulated Cyber Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) for countering cyber attacks and cyber terrorism for implementation by all Ministries/Departments of Central Government, State/UT Governments and their organizations. In addition, guidelines, documents and templates have been published to assist development and implementation of sectoral Crisis Management Plans. CCMP provides strategic framework to coordinate recovery from a cyber crisis.

Cyber security mock drills are being regularly conducted to enable assessment of cyber security posture and preparedness of organisations in the Government and critical sectors. CERT-In participates and contributes in the cyber security drills and exercises conducted by international forums such as QUAD and Counter Ransomware Initiative.

Under India's G20 presidency CERT-In has conducted 2 international exercises on countering cyber crisis and building cyber resilience.

Mechanisms exist for timely sharing of techint inputs collected by NTRO with relevant agencies.

Since intelligence reports on terrorism are time sensitive, NTRO has established a secured network to enable real time sharing of terrorism related Techint with the responding agencies and to facilitate follow up discussion to fine tune the counter terrorism operations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 26)

The Committee note that the Cyber Diplomacy Division of the MEA leads the Cyber Diplomacy Dialogues with the participation of various Government of India stakeholders like MHA, MEITY, CERT-In, NCIIPC, DRDO, CBI, NSCS, etc. The Division also leads the UN Open Ended Working Group on Security in the use of ICTs (OEWG) and working groups on ICT in BRICS, SCO and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The Committee further note that the Cyber Diplomacy Division provide diplomatic support in international forums on the basis of inputs received from NSCS, MHA and MEITY which specifically deals with cyber security dialogues, policy making in cyber crime and on issues related to data protection and internet governance respectively. The Committee are of the view that greater cooperation and coordination must exist amongst all the agencies/stakeholders on cyber related issues and urge the MEA/Cyber Diplomacy Division to play a more proactive role in obtaining real time cyber related inputs from the agencies/stakeholders concerned so as to leverage the same in its diplomatic outreach through Cyber Dialogues and its various engagements in regional, multilateral and UN at appropriate time and level. The Committee also urge the MEA to actively work at facilitating new opportunities for international collaboration, capacity building and building trust in the area of cyber security and take fresh initiatives to activate/energise the working groups on ICT in BRICS, SCO and ARF so that so that tangible progress may be made in these forums.

Reply of the Government

In the SCO architecture, cyber security related issues come under the purview of the International Information Security Working Group, permanently Chaired by Russia. SCO Division and Cyber Diplomacy (CD) Division of MEA are actively engaged with other relevant stakeholders of GoI in this mechanism. Various elements of cooperation in International Information Security are currently under negotiation.

CD Division of MEA continues to cooperate with GOI stakeholders to present the Indian perspective in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums including UN. Cyber Security Dialogues, on the other hand, are led by NSCS.

The BRICS Working Group on Security in the use of ICT is being led by CD Division in MEA.

The Ninth Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Security in the Use of ICTs from 17-18 May 2023 was convened in Johannesburg where India actively participated and played a constructive role not only during the meeting but also in finalising the Summary of this meeting which was adopted during the NSA level meeting held on 24 & 25 July 2023 in Johannesburg.

The Working submitted a ‘Progress Report on BRICS Roadmap of Practical Cooperation on Ensuring Security in the Use of ICTs’.

CERT-In, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, actively participates in, and contributes to, various Cyber dialogues and Inter ministerial meetings led by the CD and CT Divisions of MEA. CERT-In also provides technical support to MEA in the Global Cyber Security Cooperation Portal proposed by India and also participates in the UN Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) in the use of ICTs.

National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC), which functions under the NTRC, proactively provides all relevant inputs to MEA pertaining to their cyber security breaches. In addition, NCIIPC actively participates in cyber-security dialogue whenever requested by the MEA's Cyber Diplomacy Division.

NCIIPC is regularly sensitizing the declared critical sector entities about any potential inimical cyber activities. Besides the victims of the cyber threat actors, Cert-In, IB (MHA), R&AW (Cab Sectt) are also kept in loop regarding the incidence of cyber threats and their origin.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 28)

The Committee note that the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) platform is being used as a coordinated platform among various Ministries including MHA, MEA and MoF, etc. on the issue of counter terrorism including terror financing. MAC platform is also being used for capacity building as well as for real time coordination among Law Enforcement Agencies responsible for counter terrorism. Further, the ambit of MAC dealing with counter terrorism has been expanded to include linkages of other crimes with terrorism. Multi Agency Centre and Subsidiary Multi Agency Centre have also been re-organized to function on 24x7 basis for real time collation and sharing of intelligence with central security agencies and law enforcement agencies of States for prompt action. The Committee further note that a Standing Focus Groups on Economic Intelligence has also been functional on MAC platform for coordination among stakeholders on the issue of terror financing. The Committee acknowledge the pivotal role played by the MAC as a coordinated platform on the issue of counter terrorism and desire that it should be strengthened and fortified with adequate resources, infrastructure and infusion of teams of IT experts. The functioning of Multi Agency Centre and Subsidiary Multi Agency Centres should be made more responsive through enhancement of its capabilities, optimum use of artificial intelligence and new technological solutions. The Committee also stress the need for Government agencies to keep abreast of the latest technologies and technological tools used by global terrorist groups through identification of new instruments of terrorism, adopting pro-active measures to counter it effectively and sharing of real time intelligence on terrorist threats. Coordinated efforts may also be made amongst the Ministries concerned for continuous upgradation of the counter terrorism mechanism and technological tools in the country.

Reply of the Government

Various Special Focus Groups have been formed under MAC to deal with dynamic and ever evolving security threats and challenges and for effective coordination.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 29)

The Committee note that India leads the security pillar in regional cooperation under BIMSTEC of which Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) is a sub-sector. The CTTC has six sub-groups focusing on intelligence sharing, legal and law enforcement issues, anti- money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism, narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, human trafficking and illegal migration and cooperation on countering radicalization and terrorism. The principal dialogue mechanism for the CTTC sub-sector of cooperation under the Security pillar is the Joint Working Group (JWG) on CTTC. The Committee understand that BIMSTEC regional organization cooperation in counter terrorism is an area of high priority in the BIMSTEC framework and cooperation in Counter-Terrorism within the BIMSTEC framework is a work in progress and desire that the JWG on CTTC should be strengthened to ensure deeper cooperation amongst the member countries and to activate and re-energize all the sub-groups to function as effective instruments for countering terrorism and transnational crime. Acknowledging the important role of BIMSTEC in fostering regional cooperation in counter terrorism, the Committee recommend that concerted efforts should be to made to make this organization more responsive to cross border terrorism faced by India and other emerging forms of transnational crime. Formal and informal interaction amongst intelligence agencies of India and BIMSTEC countries should also be enhanced so that inputs on terrorist threats and imminent terrorist attacks are shared on real time and responded to promptly. In addition to security dialogues, the Committee also recommend that the Government should take initiatives for organizing more capacity building programmes on CTTC for security personnel and law enforcement officers under the BIMSTEC framework.

Reply of the Government

We have provided a way forward for Implementation of the BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking wherein it was suggested to organize Cooperation Workshops and Capacity building programme like Exchange of experts on combating terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking biannually; Continue training and capacity-building programs for law enforcement agencies involved in combating terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking; and Program to build expertise in areas such as hostage rescues, hijack termination, and counterfeiting prevention.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 31)

The Committee note that the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) provides a setting in which members can discuss current security issues and develop cooperative measures to enhance peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region. The Committee further note that in the 18th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime held virtually in 2022, the Priority Areas identified in the ARF Work Plan for CTTC viz, illicit drugs; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear matters; preventing and countering violent extremism and trafficking in persons were discussed. However, no new activities in support of the ARF Work Plan for CTTC for 2022-2023 have been decided. In view of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) being an important platform for security dialogue in the Indo-Pacific, the Committee desire that the Government should continue to actively participate in the various work streams of the ARF and its meetings and expand its diplomatic outreach amongst the members of the Forum so that the issue of cross border terrorism, infiltration and illegal migration resorted to by terrorists against India find mention in the priority areas of the ARF Work Plan. The Committee also urge the Government to contribute towards enhancing the ARF's relevance and effectiveness in addressing the increasingly complex challenges amidst the continuously evolving regional landscape.

Reply of the Government

During 19th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on CTTC (24 May 2023), 'Our Eye Initiative' (intelligence sharing initiative in ASEAN region on the lines of 'Five Eyes') was discussed which would enable ASEAN member States to share Strategic Information through ASEAN Direct Communication Infrastructure (ADI) and Counter Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF).

The ARF Ha Noi Plan of Action II (2020-2025) adopted in 2020 includes 'Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime' among its 7 areas of cooperation for developing and implementing concrete and practical actions

The Indian side has raised the issue of counter terrorism at high levels at ARF meetings.

At the 30th ARF Foreign Ministers Meeting in July 2023 in Jakarta, EAM emphasized that ARF members must adopt a uniform, unified and zero tolerance approach to terrorism, which includes dismantling sanctuaries and financing networks, countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross border terrorism

At the ARF Senior Officials Meeting held virtually in June 2023, Secretary (East) stressed upon the issue of counter terrorism.

India has consistently emphasized the grave threat posed by terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, in its contributions to the ARF Annual Security Outlook published every year.

The issue of cross border terrorism, infiltration and illegal migration resorted to by terrorists against India (should) find mention in the priority areas of the ARF Work Plan.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 34)

The Committee note that the QUAD Working Group on Counter Terrorism was announced during the QUAD Foreign Ministers Meeting hosted by India in 2023. The Committee hope that formation of this working group would go a long way in furthering cooperation and coordinated response among the QUAD nations and sharing of experiences and best practices in countering terrorism and urge the Government to make all out efforts for the effective functioning of the QUAD Working Group on Counter Terrorism.

Reply of the Government

The QUAD Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) was formed during the QUAD Foreign Ministers Meeting held in March 2023 in India. First meeting of QUAD CTWG was held in Honolulu Hawaii, USA on December 19-21, 2023. Further, India has been active participant in QUAD Table Top Exercise.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 35)

The Committee note that as Coordinator in the Confidence on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in the priority area of ‘Combating Terrorism’ under the ‘New challenges and threats’ dimension of the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures, India has hosted virtual workshops titled ‘Counter Radicalization’ and ‘Misuse of Internet’ in February and May 2023 respectively The Committee are pleased that India is playing an active role in CICA and urge the Government to forge strong bonds with CICA member States for coordinated response to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as sharing of intelligence, expertise and best practices in this field. More workshops on counter terrorism measures on all aspects of new and emerging technologies adopted by terrorist groups may also be organized and all the CICA member States may be encouraged to participate. As the CICA Plan of Action on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy has also been adopted, the Committee recommend that the Government should take the initiative to

evolve an effective mechanism to monitor the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by CICA member States.

Reply of the Government

The CICA Plan of Action (PoA) on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy provides for implementation of the Strategy individually by the member States in accordance with their national legislation. Under its Pillar III, the PoA, *inter alia*, encourages cooperation among international and regional organizations as well as relevant UN agencies for more effective and practical cooperation. A proposal to establish partnership between the CICA Secretariat and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has been recently tabled by the Secretariat. It is under active consideration among the member States of CICA and has our support. India will continue to be engaged with the CICA member States on the subject of implementation of the PoA on all occasions that it is discussed during CICA institutional mechanisms such as the CICA Special Working Group and the Senior Officials Committee meetings, which operate on the basis of consensus. The topic was also discussed in the meeting with the Secretary General of CICA during his visit to India in February 2024.

On the lines of the earlier successful workshops organized on the topics ‘Counter Radicalization’ and ‘Misuse of Internet’ in February and May 2023 respectively, India would host further workshops/activities based on the Agenda of the CICA and interest of member States of CICA, in its capacity as Coordinator of the priority area of ‘Combating Terrorism’, under the ‘New challenges and threats’ dimension.

As Coordinator of the priority area of ‘Combating terrorism’, India has shared a detailed Concept Note outlining the approach towards combating terrorism with the CICA Secretariat. The CICA Secretariat has further circulated it among the member States of CICA. The Concept Paper is under active consideration of the member States of CICA.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 36)

The Committee note that India is party to all the 13 UN Sectoral conventions relating to terrorism and has supported UNSC Resolution 1269 and 1368 which clearly identify terrorism as a threat to international peace and security. Further India has fully implemented resolutions 1267, 1333 and 1363 relating to terrorism by Taliban regime in Afghanistan. India has also taken several initiatives for strengthening the UN Counter Terrorism architecture led by United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) and regularly contributed towards various UNOCT programmes and the UN Trust Fund for Counter Terrorism. The Committee further note that India has also successfully hosted the Special Meeting of the UN Security Council’s Counter Terrorism Committee (UNCTC) in Mumbai and Delhi on 28-29 October 2022. Besides, the Terror related domestic laws have been amended in order to ensure action against UN designated individuals and entities. The Committee acknowledge the Government’s commitment to countering terrorism and desire that it should continue to prioritize the fight against global terrorism by fortifying its

institutional, legislative and policy framework domestically and at the same time strongly advocating the need for UN member States to do so. The Committee also desire that India should persistently advocate the need for actively supporting the efforts of the UN and its bodies including its global capacity building programmes, regular and substantial contribution to the UN Trust Fund for Counter Terrorism, effective implementation of all the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council in letter and spirit etc. by member States. The Committee further urge the Government to play a pro-active role in strengthening the collective international efforts to prevent and counter terrorism through the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism.

Reply of the Government

Counter terrorism has been a key priority for India at the UN, including during our recent tenure of the UN Security Council in 2021-22.

For the UN system to credibly address the menace of terrorism and ensure effective action, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar proposed an eight-point action plan in his address to the UNSC on 12 January 2021, which included adequate funding to UN Counter Terrorism bodies from UN regular budget.

As a part of India's high level signature events during its Presidency of the UN Security Council in December 2022, EAM Dr. S Jaishankar chaired a UN Security Council briefing on "Global Counter Terrorism Approach: Challenges and Way Forward" on 15 December 2022. A Presidential statement was issued at the end of the meeting, which, *inter-alia*, called on Member States to fulfil their obligations enshrined in relevant international counter terrorism conventions and protocols to which they are a party, as well as recognized the need for adequate funding for programs, technical assistance, and capacity building provided by the entities the UN Counterterrorism Global Compact, including the Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) for counter terrorism to effectively support counterterrorism efforts of Member-States, especially developing ones, and encourages Member States to contribute voluntary funding in this regard.

In the General Assembly of the UN, India has been striving to bring renewed focus on the issue of terrorism, through engagement with relevant UN bodies, through working with other member states to bring effective UN documents such as Resolution on Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its subsequent reviews as well as through financial support to the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

India is a member of Advisory Board to the UN Counter Terrorism Center (UNCCT). India is also member of Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, which was launched in June 2019.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 37)

The Committee note that during its tenure in the UNSC in 2021-22, India has submitted the names of five known terrorists for listing under the UNSC 1267 [Al-Qaeda and ISIL] Sanctions regime. Out of these, Abdul Rehman Makki has been accepted for listing by the Sanctions Committee on 16 January, 2023. The Committee desire that India should continue to pursue the matter of listing the remaining four terrorists under the sanctions regime to thwart/curb the nefarious activities of these terrorists against the country.

Reply of the Government

The matter of listing of individuals under UNSC 1267 is being taken on priority by a SFG as per MHA SOP.

Regular inputs/updated dossiers along with requisite evidentiary documents have been shared with concerned authorities to expedite the process.

Assistance is also being solicited from partner nations like US, UK, etc. to co-sponsor the proposals for designations.

India continues to pursue the listing of terrorists under the UNSC 1267 (Al-Qaida and ISIL) sanctions regime through bilateral and multilateral channels.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 39)

The Committee note that the UN Global Counter Terrorism Coordination Compact was established in 2019 and has a close and mutually reinforcing relationship with the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF). The formation of the UN Global CT Compact comprising of 42 entities including INTERPOL, Inter Parliamentary Union and World Customs Organisation has streamlined and strengthened the UN system-wide prioritization and implementation of CT and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) measures. The Committee further note that presently, UNOCT in partnership with various counterterrorism global compact entities, international and regional organizations as well as member States, runs more than 20 global capacity building programmes to assist member States to prevent and counter the threat of terrorism. The Committee understand that effective utilization of the UN Global CT Compact platform and active participation in the global capacity building programmes of the UNOCT would enhance collaboration, joint mobilization of resources and implementation of joint programmes and projects on counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism and hence urge the Government to maintain close cooperation and coordination with all the entities.

Reply of the Government

In the General Assembly of the UN, India has been striving to bring renewed focus on the issue of terrorism, through engagement with relevant UN bodies, through working with other member states to bring effective UN documents such as Resolution on Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and its subsequent reviews as well as through financial support to the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

India is a member of Advisory Board to the UN Counter Terrorism Center (UNCCT). India is also member of Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, which was launched in June 2019.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 40)

The Committee note that the three main subsidiary bodies established by the UN Security Council that deal with terrorism related issues are the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, the Counter Terrorism Committee or 1373 Committee and the 1540 Committee dealing with preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. The Committee understand that effective implementation of the UN Security Council's Sanctions regime can be an effective tool in countering the activities of terrorists and terrorist groups by restricting their travel and suppressing their funding avenues and urge the Government to support the UN efforts wholeheartedly and collaborate actively with member States in this regard. On the need for de-politicization of the sanctions regime, evidence-based listing and de-listing with greater transparency by the Sanctions Committee, the Committee urge the Government to make persistent efforts at the UNSC to achieve the same.

Reply of the Government

The matter of listing of individuals under UNSC 1267 is being taken on priority by a Special Focus Group (SFG) as per MHA SOP.

Regular inputs/updated dossiers along with requisite evidentiary documents have been shared with concerned authorities to expedite the process.

Assistance is also being solicited from partner nations like US, UK, etc. to co-sponsor the proposals for designations.

India continues to pursue the listing of terrorists under the UNSC 1267 (Al-Qaida and ISIL) sanctions regime through bilateral and multilateral channels.

For the UN system to credibly address the menace of terrorism and ensure effective action, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar proposed an eight-point action plan in his address to the UNSC on 12 January 2021, which included:

i. “reform the working methods of the Committees dealing with Sanctions and Counter Terrorism. Transparency, accountability and effectiveness are the need of the day. The practice of placing blocks and holds on listing requests without any rhyme or reason must end. This only erodes our collective credibility.”

ii. “enlisting and delisting individuals and entities under the UN sanctions regimes must be done objectively, not for political or religious considerations. Proposals in this regard merit due examination before circulation.”

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 41)

The Committee note that at a Special Meeting of the UNSC’s Counter Terrorism Committee hosted by India in Mumbai and Delhi on 28 and 29 October 2022, a strong Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes was adopted. The Declaration focused on the threat from unmanned aerial systems including drones, online radicalization and recruitment as well as terrorist financing through crypto currencies and other virtual means. The Committee stress the need for effective implementation of the Delhi Declaration by member States in the global fight against terrorism and urge the Government to take up the issue of conducting periodic review of its implementation in the Counter Terrorism Committee of the UNSC

Reply of the Government

The Special Meeting of Counter Terrorism Committee of UNCTC held in India (2022) focused on three significant areas in which emerging technologies are experiencing rapid development, growing use by member states (including for security and CT purposes) and an increasing threat of abuse for terrorism purposes viz (i) Use of Internet and social media (ii) new payment technologies and fundraising methods, and (iii) unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

This Ministry continues to push for inclusion of reference of ‘Delhi Declaration’ on Countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes in relevant multilateral documents.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 42)

The Committee note that during India’s Presidency of the UNSC in August 2021, a High-Level Open Debate on ‘Enhancing Maritime Security-A Case for International Cooperation’ was held on 9 August 2021. The outcome document of this meeting was a Presidential Statement on Maritime Security piloted by India, the first such UNSC product adopted by the unanimous consent of all 15 member States with a holistic view of maritime security. The Committee hope that India will continue to take further initiatives to ensure maritime security, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. The Committee also urge the

Government to work towards furthering cooperation with member States for effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, freedom of navigation, enhancing capacities and capabilities on maritime security, etc. and strengthening the collective efforts and regional and international cooperation in combating piracy, transnational crimes, human trafficking, trafficking in arms and other illicit activities through the maritime route.

Reply of the Government

Domestically, Indian Parliament passed the Maritime Anti- Piracy Bill 2022 in December 2022, which is a step forward towards further cooperation with the signatories of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982 in repression of piracy on the high seas.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 43)

The Committee note that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 with the objective of setting standards and promoting effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system. It has 40 members - 38 countries and 2 regional bodies (i.e. the European Commission and the Gulf Cooperation Council). The Committee further note that the FATF has expanded its work to include Proliferation Financing and Virtual Assets in its Agenda. The Committee are aware of the new mode of terror financing adopted by terrorists/terrorist groups including virtual assets and stress the need for monitoring this new terror financing mode closely. The Committee desire that the Government should work in close coordination with the FATF and implement all the standards set by the body to curb the use of virtual assets by the terrorist groups and constantly monitor the progress in this regard. The need for implementation of the complete regulations on virtual assets by all the countries, particularly our neighbours must be voiced at various regional and multilateral fora. The Committee also desire that the Government should evolve an effective actionable implementation framework and constantly review the working of the regulatory framework on virtual assets as well as the actionable implementation framework to meet any challenges emanating from use of new technology for terrorist financing in the country.

Reply of the Government

The sectoral risk assessment of Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASPs) has been carried out to identify and assess the ML/TF risks emerging from virtual assets activities and the activities or operations of VASPs.

GOI by notification dated 07th March 2023 brought VASPs and entities dealing in virtual assets

within the purview of PMLA. All the requirements provided under PMLA and PML Rules for a reporting entity would be applicable to VASPs.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 44)

The Committee note that India has actively participated in FATF as well as in FATF Style Regional Bodies (FSRB). It participates in periodic sharing of intelligence updates on financing of Al Qaeda, ISIL, and their affiliates. India also actively participated in development of a guidance by FATF titled 'Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Guidance' in 2019, formulation of revised guidance on Beneficial Ownership as part of FATF work project and other live projects of FATF. India as a FATF member works together with other members in the form of a task force towards the common objectives of the FATF Ministerial Mandate to tackle money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing. The Committee are of the view that focus should be given to pre-empt and prevent terrorist financing through new technology and virtual assets through optimum use of Artificial Intelligence and sharing of real time inputs. The Committee, therefore, recommend that India and the FATF should work towards up-gradation of periodic sharing of intelligence updates on financing of Al Qaeda, ISIL, and their affiliates to real time sharing of intelligence updates to achieve the said goal. The Committee also desire that the Government should play a more pro-active role in FATF and improve its coordination with members of the task force to achieve the common objectives of tackling money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing.

Reply of the Government

The Risks, Trends & Methods Working Group (RTMG) of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on every plenary (3 plenary in a year) issues a paper "ISIL AQ and Affiliates Financing update". India consistently highlights the activities of these terrorist organizations on this platform.

India as the member of FATF actively participates in the activities of all the 5 working groups of FATF i.e. Policy Development Group (PDG), RTMG, Evaluations and Compliance Group (ECG), International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG), Global Network Coordination Group (GNCG).

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 45)

The Committee note that the FATF Cell in the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance acts as the national focal point for effective liaison with the FATF and other FATF styled Regional Bodies. FATF Cell looks after the coordination of work related to FATF/APG/EAG Secretariats. FATF Cell regularly coordinates with agencies of India's anti ML/CFT infrastructure namely ED, FIU-IND, RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, MHA, NIA, MEA

etc. The Committee desire that the Government should work towards strengthening the FATF Cell and expand its diplomatic outreach with FATF Cells of other countries to ensure closer cooperation and coordination.

Reply of the Government

India participates in the bilateral meetings with other member jurisdiction during every plenary to expand its diplomatic outreach with FATF and other countries.

FATF Cell of DoR, Ministry of Finance, engages in bilateral meetings with counterparts of other countries on the sidelines of plenaries of FATF, APG, and EAG. It actively processes the informal cooperation requests raised during the bilateral meetings. FATF Cell actively contributes lead reviewers for review of progress of grey-listed countries in Joint Groups. FATF Cell of India maintains close diplomatic relations with its counterparts in BRICs countries through the BRICS AML/CFT Council. In 2023, India restarted the India-US Bilateral AML/CFT Dialogue. It is an annual high-level dialogue. The dialogue for 2023 happened in New Delhi, India. FATF Cell actively participates in CT dialogues organized by MEA with various countries.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 46)

The Committee note that for monitoring of Terrorist Financing Risk, the Directorate of Enforcement has strong internal mechanism with a Special Task Force unit established at the headquarters level. The Committee also note that in Terror Financing cases, the main challenge is identifying the trail of money as generally the proceeds of crime are transferred through hawala channels or in the form of religious donations of small amount. The Committee stress the need for overcoming the challenge in identifying the trail of money in Terror Financing cases and urge the MEA to extend all cooperation to the Directorate of Enforcement in this regard through diplomatic outreach and coordination with international agencies and organizations.

Reply of the Government

MEA has been extending cooperation to Enforcement Directorate (ED) in all counter-terrorism related activities in regional and multilateral forums, as well as at bilateral level.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 48)

The Committee note that during India's G20 Presidency, high priority has been accorded to the subject of counter-terrorism and serious efforts have been made to achieve consensus on effective global counter terrorism measures. The G20 Leaders in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration recognized terrorism as one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and condemned terrorism and all terrorist acts. The Committee also note that the G20 Leaders emphasized that efforts to increase the effectiveness of international cooperation should be strengthened to deny terrorist groups safe haven, freedom of operations, movement and recruitment, as well as financial, material or political support. The Committee hope that India would play a pivotal role in strengthening international cooperation and ensuring effective coordinated response to root out safe havens of terrorist groups and curbing their freedom of operations, movement, recruitment and financial, material or political support. The Committee also desire that the Government should advocate the need to take specific actions and concrete steps by all the member States to combat all forms of terrorism and terrorist acts through the G20 forum and other international fora like the UN system and the FATF.

Reply of the Government

We have emphasized the importance of counter-terrorism cooperation among all G20 members at the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in February 2024, as well as the G20 Sherpas' meetings in December 2023 and April 2024, under the Brazilian Presidency. We will continue to do so during the discussions on relevant G20 documents to be adopted during the concluding phase of the Brazilian G20 Presidency. G20 declarations and commitments resonate across the world and are carried forward by concerned international organizations and sovereign governments.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

CHAPTER-III

OBSERVATION/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation Sl. No. 30)

The Committee note that SAARC mechanisms *viz*, SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, High Level Group of Eminent Experts, SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, Cooperation in Police Matters and SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk have been created towards collective action in fighting the menace of terrorism. The Committee further note that matters related to security are reviewed under the mechanism of the meetings of the Interior/Home Ministers and Secretaries. However, though the above mechanism exists, it is difficult to ascertain how far these are being utilized. The Committee are of the view that regional cooperation is vital for countering terrorism and renewed coordinated efforts should be made by SAARC to combat the menace of terrorism for peace, stability and development in the region. As a founding member of SAARC, the Committee desire that India should play a more proactive role in this Regional Body and spearhead fresh initiatives for effective functioning and optimum utilization of the SAARC's mechanisms for countering terrorism. The Committee underline the need for constant review of security matters at the Highest level and urge the Government to actively coordinate with member countries in this regard. The Committee also urge the Ministry to strive for outcome oriented, measurable and quantifiable goals in the fight against global terrorism.

Reply of the Government

In the recently held 59th Programming Committee meeting of SAARC, the two related agenda items were on (a) 9th meeting of SAARC Ministers' of Interior/ Home, (b) 12th SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police matters and meeting of SAARC Terrorism on Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD). The report of the meeting on these terrorism on SAARC terrorism related items are as under:

The delegation of Pakistan conveyed to the Committee that they will approach concerned authorities to ascertain their willingness for holding the Ninth Meeting of SAARC Ministers of Interior/ Home, preceded by the Ninth Meeting of SAARC Secretaries of Interior/ Home and the Ninth Meeting of SAARC Immigration Authorities. However, it should be ensured that all the other technical meetings are held prior to the Ministerial meeting.

The delegation of Sri Lanka conveyed that Sri Lanka is in the process of conveying dates to host the Twelfth SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters, preceded by the Seventh Meeting of the Focal Points of the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) and the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD),

As noted in the Standing Committee report, though there are mechanism under SAARC on terrorism viz., SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, High Level Group of Eminent Experts, SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, Cooperation in Police Matters and SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk, however the progress in SAARC on terrorism is minimal because of obstructions created by one Member State. One Member State has obstructed the developments in SAARC. Increased cross-border terrorist attacks in the region and growing interference in the internal affairs of Member States by one country has created an environment which is not conducive to the proper functioning of SAARC. In this context, it is noted that the one Member State is sponsoring cross-border terrorism to India.

There have not been any significant activity on any of the SAARC mechanism on Terrorism for more than seven years (since 2017).

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

(Recommendation Sl. No. 32)

The Committee note that as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, India is also a member of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Organization of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (RATS-SCO), a Permanent body of the SCO dealing with counter-terrorism. The Committee further note that the Council of RATS SCO has taken various decisions to counter terrorism such as Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercise (JATE), Joint Border Operation (JBO), Joint Information Operations (JIO), Updation of RATS SCO Unified Search Register of wanted Terrorists, Separatists and Extremists, etc. The Committee understand that Action Plans on conduct of JBO-2023, JATE-2023 and JIO-2023 are still under consideration. The Committee are of the view that members of RATS SCO would be better equipped in countering terrorism through the said Joint Exercise/Operations and desire that Action Plans for conducting the Joint Exercise/Operations should be finalized without further delay. The Committee, therefore urge the Government to take up the matter with the RATS SCO and extend all assistance for expeditious conduct of the same.

Reply of the Government

Action Plan on Conduct of Joint Border Operation (JBO)-2023: Action Plan of JBO-2023 was not finalized as Indian side objected to operational sections of borders proposed by China and Pakistan under the Plan for JBO-2023, as their proposals affected India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. As a result JBO-2023 was not conducted.

Action Plan for Conduct of JATE-2023: JATE-2023 "Eurasia Antiterror" was conducted in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, as per the approved JATE Action Plan. India participated as an 'Observer' in the Closing Ceremony of JATE-2023 held in Bishkek on September 21, 2023. Indian delegation was led by Shri Pankaj Kumar Singh, DNSA(IA), NSCS along with the representative from the NSG.

Action Plan on conduct of Joint Information Operation (JIO)-2023: Action Plan of JIO-2023 has been finalized and approved. The theme of JIO-2023 is to counter the extremist ideology of terror group “Islamic State” being spread through social media and on the internet. Implementation of JIO Plan 2023 is ongoing.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

CHAPTER- IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

(Recommendation Sl. No. 33)

The Committee note that the BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan containing specific measures to implement the BRICS Counter Terrorism Strategy adopted by BRICS Leaders in 2020 was finalized at the 6th BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) meeting and subsequently endorsed at the 13th BRICS Summit held virtually on 9th September 2021. The Committee further note that the BRICS CT sub-groups will propose activities under the Action Plan for implementation. The Committee recommend that the Government should identify the activities needed to be incorporated in the said Action Plan in the context of India and make efforts to include these activities for implementation by BRICS. The Committee also recommend that the Government should evolve a mechanism for monitoring the status of implementation of the Action Plan in letter and spirit and propose the same to the BRICS CT sub-groups.

Reply of the Government

As per BRICS Calendar, this year Russia has scheduled the meeting of BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group in July 2024 in Moscow.

In the last (8th) BRICS JWG-CT meeting (June 12-14, 2023) at Pretoria, South Africa has chaired the sub-working group of Terror Financing and South Africa was entrusted to prepare a concept paper on terror financing.

During the 15th BRICS Summit (Aug 22-24, 2023), the Johannesburg Declaration has been adopted with the theme to partnership for mutually accelerated growth sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

Comments of the Committee

(Please refer to Para No. 19 of Chapter I of this Report)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 38)

The Committee note that the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) of the United Nations which was adopted by consensus in 2006 is a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. The Committee understand that during the negotiations of the 7th review of the GCTS, India has succeeded in deterring efforts against any attempts to divide and dilute the global efforts to fight terrorism by focusing on few manifestations of terrorism while ignoring the rest. The Committee desire that the Government should continue to constructively engage in the negotiations during upcoming reviews of GCTS after taking stock of the progress in implementation of the Strategy, identification of the priority areas for focus and coming up with constructive suggestions for future implementation by the UN system. The Committee also stress the need for member States to develop strong political will to root out terrorism, strengthening member States' capacity to counter terrorist threats and ensuring better coordination with the UN Counter Terrorism Architecture and programmes and urge the Government to take further initiatives in this regard.

Reply of the Government

India actively participates in the negotiations for biennial review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) of the UN.

For the UN system to credibly address the menace of terrorism and ensure effective action, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar proposed an eight-point action plan in his address to the UNSC on 12 January 2021, which included the call for summoning political will to unhesitatingly combat terrorism, mentioned review of UN's GCTS as offering an important occasion to strengthen measures to prevent and combat terrorism and build capacities of member states as well as the need for adequate funding to UN Counter Terrorism bodies from UN regular budget.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

Comments of the Committee

(Please refer to Para No. 22 of Chapter I of this Report)

CHAPTER-V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

(Recommendation Sl. No. 13)

The Committee further note that negotiations are ongoing with ICANN for setting up cluster of internet root servers in India. The Committee desire that the negotiations should be concluded at the earliest so that internet root servers are based in India to enable immediate response to cyber/malware attacks and contain/check such attacks at the ISP gateways itself. In view of the increasing incidents of cyber/malware attacks perpetrated by terrorists/terrorist organizations, the Committee stress the need to be proactive and not merely reactive towards such incidents and urge the Government to evolve a strong mechanism for collaborative efforts amongst the agencies concerned. The capabilities of these agencies to counter cyber/malware attacks in the country may also be enhanced.

Reply of the Government

MeitY is in discussion with Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) to host multiple root servers in India. Based on the network topology, network architecture and India's fast-expanding Internet penetration, ICANN is proposing to deploy a constellation of IMRS (ICANN Managed Root Server) single instances placed next to recursive servers (mainly of Indian Internet Service providers) across the country, that would ensure greater resiliency. MeitY /NIXI is in the process of discussion the way forward with ICANN along with concerned stakeholders in India.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

Comments of the Committee

(Please refer to Para No. 10 of Chapter I of this Report)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 27)

The Cyber Diplomacy Division in MEA is also at the forefront in facilitating the MoUs/MoCs for CERT-In and has been encouraging CERT-In to have MoUs/MoCs with more and more countries. During 2022 and 2023, Cyber Diplomacy Division has proposed 27 MoUs/MoCs to CERT-In. Currently, the number of MoUs/MoCs of CERT-In are 13 while another 12 are in various stages of renewal. The Committee desire that the MEA/Cyber Diplomacy Division and Indian Missions abroad, where required should actively facilitate negotiations/signing of MoUs/MoCs by CERT-In with the remaining countries so as to strengthen cyber security in the country. The Committee further desire that the MEA/Cyber Diplomacy Division should proactively coordinate with other GOI stakeholders so that necessary and urgent clearances are given to CERT-In for MoUs/MoCs with other countries smoothly and promptly.

Reply of the Government

CERT-In is in the process of revising the draft MoU and hence all the MoUs requiring renewal and new initiatives taken by CD Division will await the necessary revision.

NSCS is currently reviewing the existing policies and IT Act implementation. In view of this, concurrences from NSCS on the standard draft MoU and draft JDI which was shared by CERT-In in October 2023 is awaited.

A total of 13 MoU/MoCs are in the final stage of renewal/signing. CERT-In will sign these MoUs with the International counterpart agencies, on receiving concurrence from NSCS. CERT-In will also share the standard draft MoU for negotiation with other counterpart agencies for fresh negotiations through MEA (CD) after getting NSCS concurrences.

MEA will proactively coordinate with GOI stakeholders.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

Comments of the Committee

(Please refer to Para No. 16 of Chapter I of this Report)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 47)

The Committee note that the 3rd No Money for Terror (NMFT) Ministerial Conference on Countering Terror Financing was held on 18 & 19 November 2022 in New Delhi in which 77 countries and 16 multilateral organizations participated. The Committee further note that at the concluding session, Union Home Minister has offered to establish a Permanent NMFT Ministerial Conference (NMC) Secretariat in India, in order to sustain the continued global focus on countering the financing of terrorism. The Committee are of the view that establishment of a permanent NMC Secretariat would enhance cooperation and collaboration amongst the international community in suppressing the sources of terror funding and curbing the growth and expansion of terrorist activities globally. As a victim of terrorism for more than three decades, India would also benefit from the focused attention to countering the financing of terrorism. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government to pursue the matter for early finalization of all the modalities so that a permanent NMC Secretariat is established in India.

Reply of the Government

IB, NIA and MHA are in constant consultation with MEA for finalization of all the modalities for permanency of NMC Secretariat. Negotiations and consultations regarding setting up of NMC Secretariat are undergoing with France and Australia. MEA is trying to build consensus among various stakeholders, Australia and France.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/17/2024 dated 29/04/2024]

Comments of the Committee

(Please refer to Para No. 28 of Chapter I of this Report)

NEW DELHI
25 November, 2024

04 Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25) HELD
ON 25 OCTOBER, 2024**

The Committee sat on Friday, 25 October, 2024 from 1430 hrs. to 1640 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, Extension Building, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
3. Shri Arun Govil
4. Shri Sanatan Pandey
5. Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
6. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
7. Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
8. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj

Rajya Sabha

9. Dr. John Brittas
10. Smt. Kiran Choudhry
11. Smt. Sagarika Ghose
12. Dr. K. Laxman
13. Shri A. D. Singh
14. Kunwar Ratanjeet Pratap Narayan Singh
15. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Shri Anjani Kumar | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | - | Director |
| 3. | Ms. K. Muanniang Tunglut | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. | Ms. Maya Menon | - | Under Secretary |

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Shri Vikram Misri | : | Foreign Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Randhir Kumar Jasiwal | : | JS(XP) |
| 3. | Shri Nagaraj Naidu Kakanur | : | JS(AMS) |
| 4. | Ms. Pratibha Parkar | : | JS (Parl & Coord.) |
| 5. | Dr. Suresh Kumar | : | JS (WANA) |
| 6. | Ms. Priyanka Sohoni | : | DS (FSO) |
| 7. | Shri Abhishek Upadhyay | : | DS (FSO) |

2. At the outset, Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee and apprised them of the agenda for the day.

3. XXXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

4. XXXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX.

5. The Committee then took up for consideration the Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Twenty Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (17th Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Countering Global Terrorism at Regional and International Levels'. Chairperson invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. After deliberations, the Committee adopted the Draft Report with minor modifications suggested by the Members.

6. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Action Taken Reports incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.

7. XXXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX.

8. XXXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX.

9. XXXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX.

10. XXXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX.

The Committee then adjourned

(The witnesses then withdrew)

A verbatim proceedings of the Sitting has been kept on record.

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TWENTY EIGHTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (17TH LOK SABHA)

(i) Total number of Observations/Recommendations 48

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -

Recommendation Nos.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 48

Total-41

Percentage : 85.41%

(iii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:-

Recommendation Nos.30 and 32

Total-2

Percentage : 4.17%

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -

Recommendation Nos. 33 and 38

Total-2

Percentage : 4.17%

(v) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: -

Recommendation Nos. 13, 27 and 47

Total-3

Percentage : 6.25%