



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

Joint Briefing to Member States on the Work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)

17 July 2018, 3.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Sixth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that we just discussed welcomed the capacity-building activities undertaken by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) – a part of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism. It also encouraged Member States to collaborate with the Centre and to contribute to the implementation of its activities, including through the development, funding and implementation of capacity-building projects.

This briefing to Member States therefore presents a perfect opportunity to brief you on the work of the UNCCT over the last few months. I am grateful that His Excellency Ambassador al-Mouallimi, the Chair of the Advisory Board, has agreed to join me today.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its establishment in 2011, UNCCT has implemented 75 capacity-building projects at the global, regional and national level. During this time, we have seen a significant increase in the implementation of projects across all four pillars of the Global Strategy to meet the growing demand for capacity-building support in counter-terrorism.

UNCCT is currently at the mid-point of its 5-Year programme which guides the Centre's programme of work from 2016 through 2020. We are taking steps to ensure that our programming is responsive to the evolving threats of terrorism, targeted to the needs of Member States, and sustainable and impactful on the ground. And we are delivering our capacity-building mandate in close cooperation with the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities through an "All-of-UN" approach, and in collaboration with relevant regional, sub-regional, and international organizations.

With these guiding principles in mind, we are consolidating smaller projects into larger multiyear programmes for enhanced sustainability and coherence of programming. As such, the Centre has initiated broad-scale programmes in the areas of border security and management, countering terrorism financing, youth skills development and employment, preventing and responding to terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction, and supporting the victims of terrorism.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNCCT is currently implementing 37 projects across all four pillars of the Global Strategy. Allow me to elaborate further on some of our key capacity-building activities and initiatives at the global, regional and national level.

At the global level, UNCCT has continued its capacity-building work on countering the financing of terrorism. We have expanded the scope of trainings by including new focus areas, such as sharing of financial intelligence across borders, and building new partnerships with a range of actors, including Financial Action Task Force. The Centre recently completed its second phase of delivery in Tunisia, and is working in Eastern and Southern African countries on the development of regional action plans on countering terrorist financing.

The Centre, together with CTED, ICAO, OICT and UNODC, initiated the development of a new global project under the Centre's border security and management programme to enhance the use of Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data, as required by Security Council resolution 2396. To ensure sustainability, the Centre will

benefit from the experience, expertise and resources of Member States that are already heavily invested in the responsible use of API and PNR data.

Building on a recently concluded aviation security project in Nigeria, the Centre has initiated a new project to prevent and counter threats to civil aviation in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, through the provision of training and quality assurance in line with international aviation security standards. To support the launch of this new initiative in Nigeria, the Centre undertook a comprehensive scoping mission to Abuja in June.

In the Centre has launched a joint project with INTERPOL to enhance the investigative capacities of requesting countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa, on the use of social media and open source information to prevent and counter the FTF phenomenon. The project's first regional workshop for South-East Asia was held in Viet Nam last week.

Also at the global level, the Centre is strengthening the capacity of Member States, UN entities, international and regional organizations in preventing violent extremism through strategic communications. In April, the Centre delivered a 'StratCom 101' training to 40 government officials and 30 civil society organizations and faith-based groups in one Member State, and has identified potential beneficiaries and geographic priorities for capacity-building support in this important area.

Human rights are integral to counter-terrorism efforts, and continue to remain a priority for the Centre. Our multi-year global human rights capacity building project continues to strengthen the skills and knowledge of law enforcement on human rights while countering terrorism. We are currently initiating Training of Trainers Programmes in six Member States across Africa and the Middle East to ensure sustainability and greater impact on the ground.

As part of its border security and management programme, the Centre is developing human rights training modules for border officials and has held two regional workshops on human rights at borders in the counter-terrorism context in South-East Asia and Southern Africa in June and July, respectively. The Centre has also recently published a pocketbook on international human rights in the screening of individuals at borders, following scoping missions

to South-East Asia and the G5 Sahel. A handbook on the subject will soon be available for distribution and on-line.

As part of efforts to respond to the challenge of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters and their families, the Centre is developing a handbook on compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law in addressing issues related to children accompanying foreign terrorist fighters. To support this work, the Centre convened an expert meeting in April in New York, and will hold the first regional consultative meeting in July in Jakarta.

As the Secretary-General has noted, we must continue to support victims of terrorism and uphold their rights. UNCCT has therefore developed a comprehensive programmatic framework to stand in solidarity with victims of terrorism, by promoting and protecting their rights, campaigning for global awareness on their plight, and building Member States' capacities to assist and show solidarity with victims.

Our work in this area includes listening to their voices through guest interviews and "ask the expert" series, filming of documentary series featuring victims of terrorism, media training, and development of handbooks of good practices. A multimedia exhibition that focuses on victims' voices will be held during August at the visitor's lobby of UN Building to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the regional level, UNCCT, together with the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), is implementing the third phase of the project on the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia. In April, I participated in the launch of this third phase in Ashgabat where five Central Asian countries reaffirmed their strong commitment to regional counter-terrorism cooperation through the implementation of the Joint Plan of Action. Together with Ms. Coninx, the Executive Director of CTED, we undertook a visit to the region in May to review implementation progress and priority needs.

This brings me to our close cooperation with UNESCO with which we have finalized a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a joint project on preventing violent extremism through youth empowerment in North Africa and the Middle East. In the coming months, we will be organizing national debates on global citizenship education and media information literacy policies in the MENA region, with the participation and engagement of approximately 100 civil society organizations.

Also at the regional level, the Centre is working closely with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat to support the implementation of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy for Southern Africa. In this regard, a workshop on Human Rights at International Borders for Southern Africa countries was undertaken in Botswana in July.

The UNCCT is also supporting the implementation of the PVE Strategy for East Africa, in close cooperation with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, through the provision of capacity-building assistance in strategic communications.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Through the Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism (I-ACT) initiative at the national level, the Centre, working with CTED, MINUSMA and the UN Country Team, helped develop a Comprehensive Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism Strategy for Mali and a Plan of Action for the Strategy's implementation. These were approved through a presidential decree issued in February. The official launch of the Strategy and Plan of Action took place on 10 July.

At the national level, through the Centre's initiative on youth engagement, skills development and employment facilitation, we are helping youth to acquire decent employment to remain resilient against violent extremism. The Centre, in collaboration with ILO, has trained more than 160 principals of Technical and Vocational Training Institutes in Bangladesh on best practices related to prevention of violent extremism, youth employment and entrepreneurship.

We are now expanding programming of this type to Indonesia and the Maldives, thereby taking our initiative that started in Pakistan two years ago to cover four countries in South and

South-East Asia. Through our partnership with Silatech on youth employment, we aim to expand into Africa in the coming months.

In March, together with Ms. Coninx we visited Iraq together with CTED, and this led to a further joint scoping visit by the UNCCT with CTED, resulting in the development of several capacity-building projects, including the development of a national counter-terrorism strategy, and projects on countering the financing of terrorism, strategic communications, youth engagement and employment, and prevention of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In delivering capacity-building assistance to Member States, the Centre benefits extensively from the guidance and support of its Advisory Board. The latest meeting of the Advisory Board was hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on 17 April, and considered the impact of the Centre's capacity-building support to Member States, as well as the way forward for the Centre's effective response to counter-terrorism threats.

I want to briefly set out the main points and recommendations that emerged from this meeting, as well as some of the follow-up actions that we intend to initiate in the coming period, in consultation with Advisory Board members.

Attended by Secretary-General Guterres, His Excellency Mr. Al-Jubeir, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Ambassadors from Permanent Missions in New York and Embassies in Riyadh, the meeting focused on the future composition of the UNCCT Advisory Board; the Centre's future thematic priorities; resource mobilization and utilization; and monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Centre's programmes and projects.

Regarding the composition of the Advisory Board, a number of Advisory Board members have recommended granting observer status to key donors and recipients of capacity-building assistance, as well as to some additional regional organizations. Members have also expressed

the need to review the Board's Terms of Reference to ensure clarity in membership criteria and responsibilities.

Based on further discussions with Advisory Board members, we will undertake consultations with Member States on the composition of the Centre's Advisory Board.

With respect to the Centre's thematic priorities, Advisory Board members highlighted foreign terrorist fighters' returnees and families; the prevention of violent extremism conducive to terrorism, including youth and women; border and aviation security; countering terrorist financing; the use of the Internet and social media; victims of terrorism; and South-South cooperation.

Advisory Board members further expressed the need to ensure the balanced implementation of the Global Strategy, to promote national ownership, and to integrate CTED's assessments and recommendations in the Centre's capacity-building assistance. Closer cooperation with civil society organizations, and increased coordination among UN entities to optimize synergies and avoid duplication also featured in the discussions.

These priorities broadly reflect the areas already included in the UNCCT 5-Year programme. While the Centre will continue project implementation in these priority areas, it will adjust its programming in certain areas such as preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, foreign terrorist fighters and API/PNR to reflect new trends and requirements. The Centre will also explore programming in new areas where it can add value such as terrorist use of new technologies.

In terms of resource mobilization, Advisory Board members emphasized the need to diversify funding, including through enhanced efficiency, accountability, transparency and inclusivity. A number of Board Members raised an issue of more regular budget in UNCCT activities.

With regard to assessing the impact of the Centre's capacity-building assistance, Advisory Board members welcomed the Centre's efforts to enhance transparency and

effectiveness, and highlighted the importance of focusing on high-impact projects and making project impact assessments.

Members also welcomed the Centre's efforts to improve its monitoring and evaluation framework, including the establishment of the Programme Review Board, as well as the ongoing audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

I intend to brief the Board on the conclusions of the audit once this is completed, as well as all Member States the next time we meet. The audit results will help us to guide further improvements in the way the Office is organized, and in our overall approach to programme management, with a focus on results on the ground.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your engagement and views are central in ensuring that UNCCT remains responsive to the technical assistance requests of Member States.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its significant contribution that led to the establishment of the UNCCT. I commend the Kingdom's impressive efforts on preventing violent extremism, and particularly in the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders, which I had the opportunity to observe first-hand during my bilateral meetings in Riyadh.

I would also like to thank the 29 other Member States that have provided generous funding to the Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism to support our activities, and to all the members of the Advisory Board for their invaluable contributions to the Centre.

I will now hand over to His Excellency Ambassador al-Mouallimi, the Chairman of the UNCCT Advisory Board, to share his insights.

Thank you.