



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**Statement on behalf of Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism**

**High-level Inter-Regional Conference on ‘Whole-of-Society-Approach’ to
Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to
Terrorism**

Ulaanbaatar, 20 June 2019

Madame Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to read a statement on behalf of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, who was unable to join you here today.

[Quote]

H. E. Mr. Damdin Tsogtbaatar, Foreign Minister of Mongolia,
H. E. Mr. Thomas Greminger, Secretary General OSCE
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am sorry that I am unable to join you in person for this important conference.

We at the United Nations are grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Counter-Terrorism Coordination Council of Mongolia for collaborating with the OSCE Secretariat and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to organize this event.

This conference in Mongolia is a landmark event and is very important for a number of reasons.

It is the second in a series of regional conferences that are taking place around the world to build on the outcomes of the first ever United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States that was held in New York in June last year. In the coming months, similar high-level conferences will also be held in Kenya, Belarus, Hungary, the UAE and Austria.

At the High-level Conference last year, Member States discussed strengthening of global action to prevent violent extremism, including by engaging youth and preventing the misuse of new technologies and the Internet by terrorists.

This Conference today is thus a critical follow-up to those discussions. Its outcomes will contribute to the second High-level Conference that the United Nations will convene next year in New York.

Today's Conference in Ulaanbaatar also represents our collective commitment to multilateralism and our determination to work with each other to solve the pressing global challenges of today. In a time when the value of multilateralism is being debated in some parts of the world, our coming together here in Ulaanbaatar is a critical contribution to our collective global efforts to address the scourge of terrorism.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The growing threat of violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism, is one of the most significant challenges facing the international community.

In recent months, we have witnessed horrific terrorist attacks against places of worship and other soft targets that have claimed many innocent lives, spread fear, and contributed to growing polarization and intolerance around the world.

Terrorists continue to exploit the Internet and social media platforms to spread their poisonous narratives, glorify their barbaric attacks, and foment socio-economic and cultural divisions.

The transnational nature of these evolving threats means it is more important than ever that we come together to strengthen multilateral cooperation to address violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

I hope the next two days will be an opportunity to exchange good practices and lessons learned in tackling violent extremism in the OSCE region and beyond.

In this context, let me briefly set out five points that are guiding the work of the United Nations as we respond to the growing demand for support from Member States to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism. These elements also play an important role in prioritising our partnership and field engagements.

First, governments need to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach, involving all parts of society, when implementing national and regional plans of action to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

This should include civil society and other non-government organizations, which make a unique contribution to tackling violent extremism in their communities.

I particularly welcome the active involvement of civil society organizations in this conference.

We must also ensure that women are fully involved as leaders and agents of peace in our joint efforts. We must tap into their expertise and ensure a gender inclusive approach to everything we do.

Second, we need to start at the grassroots, where families and local communities are at the front line of efforts to protect vulnerable people from falling prey to pernicious ideologies of wicked recruiters.

We all know there is no “one size fits all” response to address drivers of radicalization to terrorism that vary within as well as between countries, and over time.

We need the insights and support from local communities to understand what these drivers are, how they evolve and interplay, and how best to address them.

Third, we need to harness the creativity and energy of young people to tackle intolerance and violent extremism.

Young people should be fully involved in all aspects of policy-making and implementation at the global, regional, national and local levels, as set out in various Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions.

With the rise of misinformation on social media, young people also need to be educated and empowered to identify and denounce manipulative narratives, xenophobia and hate speech.

Fourth, our efforts must fully respect universal human rights. This includes respect for freedom of beliefs, freedom of expression, freedom from discrimination of any kind, and cultural rights.

We also need to effectively involve civil society partners in our countering and preventing violent extremism work.

Lastly, we should scale up our work to support the victims of terrorism, which will assist our wider efforts to build resilience to violent extremism.

When we highlight their voices, uphold their rights and provide them with support and justice, we are also rejecting the dehumanizing and divisive narratives of violent extremists.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I wish you all an informative and productive conference.

I look forward to your important contributions to the work of the United Nations as well as next year’s United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies in New York, where I hope His Excellency Mr. Tsogtbaatar Damdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia will come and brief the participants about the outcomes of this important conference in Ulaanbaatar.

Thank you.

[Unquote]