



**Statement by Ms. Asako Okai  
Assistant Secretary-General & Director, UNDP Crisis Bureau**

**UNOCT Third High-Level Strategic Dialogue  
9 December 2020, 09:00am-11:00am**

Excellencies, Distinguished panelists, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to join this important dialogue.

We share with the State of Qatar and the Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) a strong commitment to preventing violent extremism (PVE) and Human rights as two critical sides of the same coin of any Counter Terrorism strategy.

For UNDP prevention of violent extremism means addressing the root causes of violent extremism through a development approach – tackling the poverty, inequality and exclusion, among other causes, that can drive marginalised people to turn to violent extremist groups.

PVE interventions must be informed by in-depth analysis of the context, including human rights and gender dynamics, and address the root causes and drivers of violent extremism through a development approach which advances the Sustainable Development Goals – especially SDG16 – and which respects and promotes the rights and freedoms we all stand for.

UNDP delivers PVE support in 34 countries in collaboration with UN entities and CSOs. This includes regional programming with UNOCT and other partners, including the EU and UNODC, in Central Asia and South East Asia, which support Member States in strengthening capacities to develop, coordinate and implement gender-responsive Action Plans on PVE whilst supporting community-led initiatives on PVE.

We appreciate the strong commitment to UN collaboration through the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. As co-chairs of the working group on PCVE (*preventing and countering violent extremism*), UNDP is committed to share learning from local, and national levels on new frontiers on issues like climate security, youth empowerment, behaviour science informed M&E and mental health and psychosocial support to global policy discussions.

Our cooperation with the State of Qatar provided enormous impetus for introducing and promoting several new programmatic areas of work including using Behaviour Science as a tool to develop and monitor PVE. We are happy that this area of work will be expanded through recently established Hub on Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism based in Doha which was launched on 7 December and attended by the UNDP Administrator.

We just completed new [ground-breaking research](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs. The pandemic could push the numbers of people living in extreme poverty to 1 billion by 2030. The report outlines an ambitious but feasible set of integrated investments in governance, social protection, green economy, and digitalisation that have the potential to exceed the development trajectory the world was on before the pandemic, even when taking COVID-19 impacts into account.

These findings correspond to the work we are doing on prevention of violent extremism. We believe that these areas could be further strengthened in the context of the strategic partnership with the State of Qatar in the coming years in areas such as addressing offline and online hate speech and herein the role of the parliamentary system, the media and religious leaders.

There is much that the State of Qatar and the UN achieved working together, and there is much we can achieve in the future. That is why I am delighted to be able to contribute to today's dialogue, and I look forward to continuing to work together during 2021 and deepen the UN-Qatar partnership.