



## The UN Global Programme gathers International Expert Group to explore 'The Impact of COVID19 on the Security of Major Sporting Events'

### Press Release

**New York, 15 July 2020-** High-level representatives and leading experts from the field of sport, security and health gathered at a virtual “**International Expert Group Meeting on The Impact of COVID19 on the Security of Major Sporting Events**”. Participants exchanged views on the challenges caused by the pandemic on major sporting events and agreed on the urgent need to develop comprehensive preventive measures encompassing health, safety and security aspects.

Over 300 high level representatives from UN Members States, international and regional organizations, international and continental sports federations, local organizing committees, the business sector and the scientific community attended the event. The meeting featured interventions from senior representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), INTERPOL, the Council of Europe (CoE), “Coordination Nationale pour la Sécurité des Jeux Olympiques et Paralympiques 2024 (CNSJ)”, Portugal's Home Affairs Ministry, Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the implementing Agency for Crime and Security of the the Caribbean Community (CARICOM IMPACS).

Discussions highlighted the urgency of understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the security of sporting events of international interest or dimension, including from a terrorism prevention perspective, helped identify new vulnerabilities and opportunities in this context, and paved the way for the development and implementation of activities aimed at addressing current challenges while optimizing the use of available resources.

More concretely, the findings of the virtual expert group will feed into the *UN Global Guide on the Security of Major Sporting Events, Promoting Sustainable Security & Legacies* that will serve as a core reference for policy and decision-makers related to the security planning of major sporting events.

“It is hard to say when and where we will all return back to a form of normality. However, should this situation endure, we know that sport and sporting events will be critical in helping support and inspire our societies in these challenging times,” said **Mauro Medico, Director at UNOCT** speaking on behalf of the United Nations partners at the opening of the event. “This is the reason why we hope to use the discussions of this meeting to shape our upcoming United Nations Global Guide, that once

finalized will act as a reference to help preparing, organizing, hosting and managing sporting events while mitigating the threats posed by terrorism,” he added.

**Massimiliano Montanari, CEO of the International Centre for Sport Security**, who presented the progress of the *UN Guide on the Security of Major Sporting Events*, said that “there was a way to protect major sporting events before 9/11 and a way after it. Similarly, there will be a new way to secure events in the post COVID19 world. We need to identify new vulnerabilities and at the same time follow new integrate approaches which might enhance both health, safety and security”.

The virtual event was the second International Expert Group (IEG) meeting that was held under the framework of the *United Nations Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events, and Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism*. The programme is led by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), in partnership with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), in consultation with the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and with the participation of INTERPOL.

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