



**Video Message by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**Joint OSCE and UNOCT Passenger Data Exchange Seminar
*29 – 30 October 2020, Vienna***

Dear Colleagues,

Good morning and good afternoon to everyone joining us from around the world.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this seminar organised by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

This event builds on the success of a first joint seminar last year, and forms part of our joint UNOCT-OSCE Biennial Action Plan for 2019-2021.

It also builds on the high-level regional counter-terrorism conference that we held together in February in Vienna on “Foreign Terrorist Fighters – Addressing Current Challenges”.

I am grateful to His Excellency, Ambassador Hasani, Chair of the OSCE Permanent Council, and to Mr. Luca Fratini, Director, Office of the Secretary General, for this close and productive partnership.

Dear Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended the world as we knew it.

Besides overcrowded hospitals and the silent streets of entire cities under lock-down, the disruption caused by the virus has perhaps been most visible on international travel.

Thousands of flights were cancelled; hundreds of empty cruise ships moored off coasts; and border crossing points closed around the world.

Yet, as governments work to contain the virus and re-open their economies, we must be prepared to facilitate and secure the eventual resumption of international travel.

In our globalized world, this is not only inescapable, it is critical to recovering and building back better.

Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record systems play a central role in this regard.

They enable a targeted and risk-based approach to screening travellers, minimizing disruption to legitimate movements, while hindering, detecting and investigating those of terrorists and other criminals.

But these systems, made mandatory by the Security Council, are also very complex to establish.

That is why we have created the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme.

The programme is a joint venture led by my Office that utilizes the expertise of a range of United Nations partners, including the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Office of Information and Communication Technology, but also non-UN entities, such as INTERPOL.

Since its launch under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General in May last year, 38 Member States have confirmed participation in the Programme – including four OSCE participating States and two OSCE Partners for Co-operation.

Our goal is to help Member States build their capabilities to collect and analyse data related to known and suspected terrorists, and to disseminate the results to national and international authorities.

And all while upholding international law, including international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law.

The Programme provides comprehensive assistance to Member States across four areas:

First, legislative assistance to put in place a legal framework that regulates the collection, processing and protection of data.

Second, technical assistance to set-up a Passenger Information Unit, including training and drafting standard operating procedures.

Third, facilitating air carrier engagement and connectivity, thanks to our close cooperation with the transport industry.

And fourth, providing technical support to deploy, free of charge, our ‘goTravel’ software to collect and process passenger data.

In addition to capacity-building, the Programme seeks to forge networks of practitioners, at the global and regional levels.

This is where the role of the OSCE can be particularly valuable, building on its excellent work in assisting Member States to date.

We saw from the experience of the European Union that an informal working group on API/PNR is an excellent forum for States to support one another and share best practices and lessons learned.

We are working with the OSCE to replicate this model for those countries which are not part of the EU informal working group.

The final session of this seminar will look at good practices in establishing such a group, and we have already put in place an online platform for this group to exchange information.

Dear Colleagues,

To rise to the most pressing challenges of the 21st century, such as eliminating the scourge of terrorism, we need a new kind of multilateralism.

A multilateralism made of networks that build on and reinforce diplomacy, connect practitioners and engage stakeholders across civil society and the private sector.

With this seminar today, we have a new network in the making – and you have the United Nations as your partner to counter terrorist travel.

I wish you productive discussions and look forward to hearing about the outcome of this seminar.

I thank you.