



**[Pre-recorded statement]**

**Closing Remarks of Mr. Jehangir Khan, Director  
United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre  
United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and  
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs  
Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit joint**

***Virtual Training on Biological Preparedness and Response for Nigeria***

**14-16 December 2021**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to close this Virtual Training on Biological Preparedness and Response for Nigeria, jointly organized by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit.

I would like to extend special gratitude to our partners in UNODA, as well as in Nigeria, including the Office of the National Security Adviser, the Nigerian National Authority on Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions and the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations in New York for their excellent cooperation in organizing this event. I take pride in the fact that our collaboration brings concrete results, engaging over 100 participants from 30 entities in Nigeria.

This course builds upon three trainings on countering bioterrorism that UNCCT has delivered in Nigeria in 2021 and gathered more than 177 participants. In this specific course on biological preparedness and response, we partnered with UNODA under the National Preparedness Programme funded by the European Council Decision supporting the Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is not a coincidence that Nigeria pays special attention to the threat of bioterrorism. Recently, there have been a number of concerning incidents, for instance: an individual in Germany prepared an attack in the name of Da'esh and manufactured an improvised explosive device containing ricin; and several attempts of deliberate COVID-19 contamination through direct human-to-human contact have been recorded.

Moreover, the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh is investigating allegations of bioterrorism in Iraq.

The concerns about the biological threats are aggravated by the consequences we face with the outbreak of COVID-19. The pandemic has highlighted the potential comparable effects that an act of bioterrorism could have.

At the same time, new scientific developments and emerging technologies are transforming life, industry and the global economy in positive ways. However, equally, through advancements in biotechnology, it is possible for terrorists with limited technical knowledge to develop or modify pathogens at home using readily accessible materials and equipment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In his report, *Our Common Agenda*, Secretary-General António Guterres, identified terrorism as a strategic risk and emphasized the need for preparedness, including in the event of “a high-consequence biological attack.”

During the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy last June, the United Nations General Assembly urged all Member States to take and strengthen national measures, as appropriate, to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials, equipment and technologies related to their manufacture.

I am proud to highlight that this year our Programme on *Preventing and Responding to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism*, which has been developed in line with the Strategy, has delivered capacity-building activities for more than 1,200 participants and continues to work diligently to strengthen Member States' national capacities to combat terrorism and crime contributing to the implementation of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

I hope that this *Training on Biological Preparedness and Response* has fulfilled your expectations providing you with knowledge on important topics such as risk assessments, identification, screening, sample collection, response, biosafety and biosecurity.

Allow me to conclude by saying that, in spite of our common efforts, there is still much to be done in countering bioterrorism threat. UNCCT remains committed to strengthening bio-preparedness and bio-response to protect our people and be resilient towards rapidly evolving threats. We will continue to unite our efforts with those of UNODA and other international partners to confront these threats.

Thank you.