



**Opening remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)**

**Briefing to the Permanent Representatives of Member States of the Organization of Islamic
Cooperation (OIC)**

**16 June 2022, 3 pm – 4.30 pm (NY time)
ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ New York**

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

Good afternoon. I would like to thank His Excellency, Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, for his warm welcome.

It is an honour and a privilege to brief such a diverse group of Member States, including so many of our closest and most vital partners.

I would also like to commend the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its ongoing Chairmanship of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, including its successful hosting of the 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Islamabad on 23 March, which adopted the Islamabad Declaration on “Partnering for Unity, Justice and Development.”

I note with appreciation the Declaration’s strong stance against terrorism, including the increasing threat posed by racially, ethnically, or ideologically motivated individuals and groups in various parts of the world.

I would also like to stress the symbolism of our meeting today. Just yesterday, my Office celebrated its five-year anniversary, having been established by General Assembly resolution 71/291 on 15 June 2017. I am very pleased to be celebrating this important milestone together with you, representatives of Member States that provided political and financial support for the creation of the Office five years ago, and that have continued to support us since. Your unwavering trust in UNOCT and its activities is noted and highly appreciated.

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

My Office works very closely with the Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and we are extremely grateful for your support and collaboration, both here in New York and at your respective capitals.

We have provided tailored technical assistance to several OIC Member States on a variety of topics to support their efforts to prevent and counter terrorism. For example, our Global Programme on Countering the Financing of Terrorism has worked with almost 30 OIC Member States since 2020, with 25 programmatic activities benefiting more than 2,100 participants from both the public and private sector.

We also have an established framework for cooperation with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation through the Memorandum of Understanding we signed in September 2018.

I propose to use this opportunity today to explore new ways to further strengthen our cooperation, including during the 77th Session of the General Assembly and beyond.

We hope in particular to gain a deeper understanding of your counter-terrorism priorities in order to better tailor our technical assistance and capacity-building support against terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism.

In this context, I will begin by sharing some key observations from the high-level international events organized by my Office this year, to help guide today's discussions.

First, our discussions during these events have underscored that the seventh review resolution of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which the General Assembly adopted by consensus in June last year, provides a robust framework to guide our counter-terrorism efforts for the next two years.

We commend the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Spain, for steering the negotiations to a successful outcome, and reiterate our appreciation to all Member States, including the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation States, for their constructive approach and contributions to the review process.

Second, our discussions made it clear that despite Member States' relentless efforts and the many successes in fighting terrorism, this global scourge continues to severely impact the lives and well-being of millions of people worldwide.

Al-Qaida, Da'esh and their affiliates continue to expand and consolidate their reach in conflict contexts and across large parts of Africa.

Protracted armed conflicts and resulting instability continue to create an enabling environment for violent extremism that may lead to terrorism, derailing progress towards peace and security, human rights, rule of law, and development goals.

Outside of conflict zones, terrorists continue to exploit and manipulate societal grievances and mistrust in institutions, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The threat has also evolved, presenting new and complex challenges for Member States.

Increased efforts online to recruit operatives and generate resources, the complex interplay between terrorism and organized crime, and terrorists' exploitation of new and emerging technologies continue to complicate the threat landscape.

Moreover, the threat of terrorism based on xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief, is becoming a matter of growing transnational concern.

Third, we identified six strategic priorities for international counter-terrorism efforts:

- Addressing the complex legacies of the crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq and Syria as well as the plight of tens of thousands of children and other individuals stranded in camps and in dire need of protection, repatriation, and rehabilitation – The Global Framework, co-led by my Office and UNICEF, continues to provide an 'all-of-UN' support to respond to the security and accountability needs of requesting Member States, and works with several OIC States in this area.
- Urgently working to contain and reverse the spread of terrorism in Africa;
- Prioritizing prevention, including by working together to address the conditions conducive to terrorism;

- Taking concerted action to tackle the growing, transnational terrorist threat from groups and lone actors motivated by xenophobia, racism, misogyny, and other forms of intolerance;
- Upgrading the technological awareness and preparedness of our counter-terrorism efforts; and
- Placing international human rights, the rule of law, gender and age-sensitive approaches, and the rights and needs of victims of terrorism at the core of all our efforts to prevent and counter terrorism.

Fourth, our discussions reaffirmed that through stronger multilateral cooperation, we can ensure that our counter-terrorism responses are coherent, targeted, and complementary.

I commend the efforts of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Member States for supporting justice, tolerance and peace, combatting terrorism and extremism, as well as confronting Islamophobia and other forms of hatred and discrimination.

We welcome the adoption by the Arab Interior Ministers Council of the new Arab Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategy in March this year. My Office, through its Counter-Terrorism Centre, has actively supported the development of this Regional Strategy within the scope of our joint project with the Council, and we look forward to further assisting its implementation.

We also welcome the endorsement by Central Asian States of the updated Joint Plan of Action for the comprehensive implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia in Tashkent in March. We look forward to continuing to support these countries in their efforts to implement the regional plan of action through the provision of capacity-building assistance.

I would also like to acknowledge the commendable counter-terrorism efforts of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Member States, including in the areas of: detecting and preventing cross-border terrorist movements; addressing linkages between terrorism and organized crime; countering the financing of terrorism; countering the use of new technologies for terrorist purposes; and countering terrorist narratives, both online and offline.

This year, my Office has been working to bolster our engagement with Member States, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, and other counter-terrorism

stakeholders by holding a series of international and regional high-level conferences. These included the:

- International Conference on Regional Cooperation among Central Asian States within the Framework of the Joint Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan;
- Annual Forum of Beneficiaries of Technical Assistance held in Doha, Qatar; and
- International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society, and Counter-Terrorism held in Malaga, Spain.

In addition to these events, the first Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism will be held here in New York on 8-9 September and a high-level international conference on “International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists” is scheduled to take place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 18-19 October this year.

I thank the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation countries for participating in our events and encourage your strong attendance in our upcoming high-level conferences with a view to share expertise and experiences and promote international cooperation in counter-terrorism.

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

We are also working to enhance inter-agency coordination and coherence in counter-terrorism efforts through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which brings together 45 entities, including 41 United Nations entities, as well as INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Financial Action Task Force.

The Compact serves as the United Nations leading platform for building synergies and strengthening partnerships to deliver comprehensive and results-oriented technical assistance and capacity-building support to requesting Member States.

As Compact secretariat, my Office is increasing online collaboration between Compact entities and Member States, including through information sharing via the Digital Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform. It is very encouraging that ten regional organizations have so far nominated focal points to the Digital Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform, including the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Thank you for this important step.

My Office is also working to consolidate and fully operationalize 13 programme and liaison offices in the field to deliver more coherent, impactful, and cost-effective capacity-building on the ground.

We are also stepping up our support to Member States and United Nations entities to mainstream human rights and gender through a dedicated capacity in my Office, as well as to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of terrorism across all counter-terrorism activities.

Ensuring sustained, predictable, and diversified resources is essential for my Office to fully and effectively deliver on its counter-terrorism mandate.

I take this opportunity to thank all our 35 donors, particularly the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for their generous voluntary contributions.

My Office is also seeking a greater allocation from the United Nations Regular Budget for policy, coordination, evaluation and other critical functions to enable better planning and sustainability. The support of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Member States is crucial in this regard.

Excellencies,
Dear friends,

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism will continue to respond to requesting Member States' needs to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in accordance with relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

In doing so, we will continue to benefit from your valuable insights, good practices, and recommendations.

Building on the Beneficiaries Forum in March, and to ensure continued dialogue and engagement with beneficiaries and partners, I have initiated the practice of organizing regular briefings with experts of regional groups of Member States, to update on our programmatic implementation and explore possible areas of cooperation.

This is a critical part of our work – to show the effectiveness of our programmes in full transparency. It is important to continue this practice to enhance understanding, insights, and visibility on the outcomes and added value of our work.

In this regard, I would like to propose, for your consideration, that we soon organize an expert-level briefing with representatives of the Permanent Missions of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Member States.

Such a briefing would enable my Office to present a comprehensive overview of our 18 global programmes and related technical assistance and capacity-building projects. It would also provide a platform for interactive discussion on counter-terrorism needs and priorities.

I look forward to hearing your views on this proposal and other opportunities to further strengthen our cooperation.

I thank you for your attention.