



Second United Nations
**HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE
ON COUNTER-TERRORISM**

28-30 JUNE 2021

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS • NEW YORK

Remarks by Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

**Second United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of
Member States**

**Plenary Wrap-up of SESSION II: Preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism in
the age of transformative technologies**

30 June 2021, 11 a.m.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Following three very interesting break-out discussions, it is my pleasure to distil the key takeaways of Session II in company of the three chairs of these break-out discussions.

First, let me give the context in which Session II is situated: The same technologies which offer us new ways of addressing increasingly complex challenges, are the very same which violent extremist groups are using strategically to drive us apart, fuel hate and recruit followers.

During the pandemic we have seen how initiatives to prevent the use of the online spaces by violent extremist groups have increased, whilst civic space has significantly shrunk. In UNDPs recent Oslo III Conference on Prevention of Violent Extremism, experts echoed that human rights and civil society engagement must not be seen as contradicting but in full complementarity to Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism efforts. In response to this, UNDP is currently developing evidence-based tools to design, monitor and evaluate PVE programming in terms of its human rights impact.

2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

www.un.org/counterterrorism/HLC2021
[@UN_OCT](https://twitter.com/UN_OCT) | [#UNiteToCounterTerrorism](https://twitter.com/UNiteToCounterTerrorism)

Local actors including civil society plays a key role in ensuring early action, locally developed solutions and support building trust for preventing violent extremism within communities in off line space. They also must be considered key partners for addressing the use of technologies by violent extremist groups in online spaces. Importantly, as they engage, their rights and safety must be upheld and protected.

This year's UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy review engaged 140 women's and women-led civil society organization representatives across the world who advocated for amongst other, investment in a culture of human rights and accountability. The global community must ensure that these recommendations are not only heard but considered at all levels of policy, programming and partnerships for prevention.

Working in partnerships to address root causes of radicalisation, the people-centred approaches of behavioural science are increasingly recognised as being important drivers of change as also stressed in the UN Secretary General's Guidance Note on Behavioural Science launched on 21 June 2021.

In the past year, important steps have been taken towards further integration of behavioural science in prevention, including the launch of the UNOCT International Hub on Behavioural Insights to Counter Terrorism in Doha and the UNDP guidance note on "Applying behavioural science to support the prevention of violent extremism based on experiments across five countries.

We are only scratching the surface of how behavioural science can contribute to prevention and we are constantly identifying new innovative approaches to prevent misuse of cyberspace. Increasing complexities require us to move quickly, respond, adapt and transform our approaches.

I am pleased to now hand over to our presenters who will shed light on some of the lessons and experiences which have been shared during the break-out discussions of Session II.

Debrief (16 minutes)

For our first presentation, I will hand over to Major General Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al-Ansari who is the Chairman of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee of Qatar. He will report back from the break-out discussion on 'Prevention through innovative programmes, including sports and behavioural insights to unite communities and build resilient societies'

2021 COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

....[presentation by Major General Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al-Ansari]...

Thank you Major General Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al-Ansari for these insights and now we turn to Mr. John Frank, the Vice President of United Nations Affairs at Microsoft, who will report back from discussion on Preventing misuse of cyberspace and new technologies: developing ideas, skills, and toolkits for practitioners; and finally,

....[presentation by Mr. John Frank]...

With great appreciation to Mr Frank, I now hand over to Ms. Jennifer Loten for the final presentation. Ms Loten is the Director General of the Canadian International Crime and Terrorism Bureau and will share key takeaways from the discussions on The critical roles of civil society and local actors in building partnerships for prevention.

....[presentation by Ms. Jennifer Loten]...

To close, let me thank each of our distinguished speakers for summarising these important discussions and to all of you contributing to the break-out discussions by bringing new thinking and innovation to prevention efforts.

Thank you.