Launch of the 2nd Edition of the INTERPOL-UNOCT Handbook on *Using the Internet and Social Media for Counter-Terrorism Investigations*, 22 November 2021.

<u>Welcome and opening remarks delivered by Mr Odd Reidar HUMLEGARD, Special Representative of INTERPOL to the United Nations</u>.

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> Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

> It is my pleasure to be here at the launch of the **2nd Edition of the INTERPOL-UNOCT Handbook on** *Using the Internet and Social Media for Counter-Terrorism Investigations*. I would like to thank Mr Voronkov and Ms Giniotiene for their remarks.

> The second review of the General Assembly **resolution on INTERPOL and UN cooperation** calls for strengthening our two Organization's cooperation in countering the use of information and communications technologies for terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

> I believe this Handbook is an excellent demonstration of the strong cooperation between UNOCT and INTERPOL, and our joint commitment to support member countries' efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Online Terrorism and Violent Extremism

> Terrorists' use of information and communication technologies, including the Internet and social media, is **constantly evolving,** as terrorists adopt new modi operandi to exploit the cyber domain to finance their activities, spread harmful propaganda, and incite, recruit for, and organize terrorist attacks.

> Technology has benefited terrorists by facilitating their reach to a wider audience and enabling anonymity, **broadening opportunities for criminal activity and enhancing the risk for offline violence.**

> Increased online activity, coupled with the socio-economic grievances resulting from the **COVID-19 pandemic**, have further accelerated this trend.

> This transnational phenomenon highlights the need to **leverage the benefits** of information and communications technology **to counter their misuse** by terrorists.

Project Background

> Since July 2018, UNCCT and INTERPOL have delivered **capacity building workshops** for the benefit of three regions – the Middle East and North Africa, Southeast Asia and South Asia.

> The **first edition of this Handbook** on Using the Internet and Social Media for Counter Terrorism Investigations, published in **June 2019,** drew on the best practices and lessons learned acquired from the capacity building activities implemented under UNCCT's Global Counter-Terrorism Programme on Cybersecurity and New Technologies and the expertise of INTERPOL's Counter-Terrorism, Cybercrime and Capacity Building and Training Directorates.

> The Handbook was created to support law enforcement agencies utilize the Internet and social media for **counter-terrorism investigations.** It may prove a useful asset for national efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1373 and other relevant resolutions.

> Law enforcement face multiple challenges in online investigations. To keep delivering results, investigators will need to continue **to keep their skills and knowledge on par** with the latest developments in the field. It is for that reason that we have updated our Handbook with new knowhow, trends, tools and practices.

Second Edition

> While updating our Handbook, we aimed to address **the practical needs of practitioners in the field**. Accordingly, an anonymous Questionnaire was circulated among member countries to assess field priorities. The Questionnaire informed us of the threats practitioners face due to online terrorist presence. It also informed us of terrorist trends, for example, that the creation, activation and use of multiple fake accounts is one of the most commonly used approaches by terrorists to maintain an online presence.

> The new edition contains much-anticipated and updated sections on **'terrorist threat assessments in the context of the Internet and its gender dimension'.** The integration of a gender perspective is not only essential to acquiring accurate intelligence, but also to ensuring that intelligence operations comply with international human rights and gender equality standards.

> Updates have also been made in regards to **good practices in online investigations** and the **international collection of e-evidence**, complimented by a new dedicated section on **practical online investigation examples.**

> Last but not least, the second edition offers an **updated repository** of useful online tools, websites and resources for conducting investigations, as well as **new templates** ready to be used by the investigator.

INTERPOL's policing tools and services

> INTERPOL maintains an important role in supporting law enforcement detect and respond to online terrorist presence. The INTERPOL **Digital Forensics Laboratory**, in our Innovation Centre in Singapore, supports Member States in building national digital forensic capabilities. On request and on an ad hoc basis, it can also provide digital forensics assistance to analyze digital devices that may contain relevant data for criminal investigations.

> Since 2016, INTERPOL has driven the development of the world's only international database of facial images of suspects and persons of interests provided by member countries. This **INTERPOL Facial Recognition System** incorporates powerful facial recognition software and an algorithm that are capable of comparing thousands of images and detecting those that potentially belong to the same individual. INTERPOL member countries contribute approximately 100 new images each day, from all areas of crime, including terrorism.

> And finally, law enforcement can exchange information with their counterparts around the world through INTERPOL's **I-24/7**, the secure global police communications system, available from any National Central Bureau or connected frontline agency. INTERPOL Notices, Diffusions and other messages shared through INTERPOL channels can increase investigative leads and ultimately advances counter-terrorism activities.

> I thank you for your kind attention.

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Closing

> Excellencies, there is no doubt that with the rapid technological advances of today, the global crime landscape has become more complex than ever. Terrorism constitutes no exception in this regard, with criminals becoming more creative and crime less detectable.

> This newly updated version of the Handbook is a **tangible result** of UNOCT and INTERPOL's close cooperation and working relationship, which we hope can really make a difference for law enforcement on the ground, assisting them in navigating the modern complexities of online investigations, allowing them to harness the benefits of communication technologies in their fight against terrorism.

> I thank you for your kind attention and I will gladly answer any questions you may have at the end of the session.