



**Opening statement by Mr Mauro Miedico on behalf of Mr Jehangir Khan,
Director of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.**

**21st Meeting of the UNCCT Advisory Board
27 October 2020, 11:00-13:00**

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Before updating you on the UNCCT performance in the second and third quarters, I would like to first brief you on the background, process, and outcomes of the evaluation of UNCCT 5-Year Programme, which was conducted by KPMG between January and September 2020.

Slide 3

In 2019, the Centre welcomed the proposal of Ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi, the Chair of the UNCCT Advisory Board, to conduct an evaluation of the Centre. As you know, the current 5-Year Programme is coming to an end this year and UNCCT needed a fresh outlook on its performance before a new Strategic Programme Framework is formulated and approved. This decision was also endorsed by the Secretary-General last year.

The overall objective of the evaluation was to produce a strategic, forward-looking report that would assess progress made towards attainment of the UNCCT 5-Year Programme in a balanced manner. It is envisioned that the report will guide the future orientation of our capacity-building work, including how to strengthen and promote UNCCT as a Centre of Excellence.

Slide 4.

As with everything else this year, the evaluation process was impacted by COVID-19. In April, it became clear that KPMG would not be able to conduct physical face-to-face interviews and visit beneficiaries on the ground, as initially envisioned. Instead, the evaluation team conducted online interviews and in-depth study of 23 projects from 3 countries – Indonesia, Nigeria, and Pakistan, as well as one region – Central Asia. Approximately 110 stakeholders were interviewed, including 18 Advisory Board Members. Interviews and in-depth studies were complemented by an electronic survey of the Counter-Terrorism Compact entities.

Slide 5.

One of the main findings of the evaluation was that UNCCT has benefited from the creation of UNOCT and the elevated political, diplomatic, and administrative clout it has established. Moreover, UNOCT has also enabled UNCCT's deeper integration into the United Nations' counter-terrorism architecture.

It was noted, however, that strategic and programme governance, monitoring and evaluation, as well as information management, are key areas for continued improvement.

Slide 6.

Despite the evaluation's conclusion that UNCCT has not yet achieved 'excellence', the findings indicate that the overall performance trend, in accordance to OECD/UNEG evaluation criteria for effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and coherence is positive and satisfactory.

Finally, KPMG found that the sustainability of the 5-Year Programme could not be determined due to the lack of evidence on the outputs and outcomes achieved. In this regard, it is important to note that KPMG stressed that the lack of evidence does not necessarily mean that there was an absence of results, as anecdotal information from programme and project managers showed. So, while there is room for improvement, the feedback from members of the Advisory Board is generally very positive.

Slide 7

As noted by Mr Voronkov, KPMG has made 16 recommendations, most of which relate to programmatic issues.

For example, recommendation two: enabling the outcome monitoring of UNCCT programmes. And recommendation eight: orienting around a six-year strategic plan, synchronized with Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy biennial review.

It was also recommended to consolidate the Special Projects and Innovation Branch with UNCCT, in order to create a single capacity building development unit within UNOCT, which is recommendation 14.

Additionally, the KPMG report identified areas for improvement, primarily in terms of measuring effectiveness of UNCCT's work and instilling a results-oriented culture. These include improvement of monitoring and evaluation, and enhancement of strategic guidance in programme design.

Slide 8

UNOCT has agreed to all recommendations in principle and that the report provides useful and positive suggestions that will support UNCCT in its further development as a Centre

of Excellence, the manifestation of which should proceed in tandem with the recommended “culture of excellence” which we feel UNCCT has already begin to demonstrate.

The report, however, does not provide sufficient guidance on implementation of its recommendations. In this regard, UNOCT senior leadership has agreed to develop an action plan to ensure the effective implementation of the management response.

We look forward to continue engaging with Advisory Board members on further development of UNCCT.

Slide 9

Excellences,

Let me turn now to the update on the work of UNCCT over the past two quarters.

UNCCT continues to implement its major flagship programmes around the world that cover all the key priority areas identified under the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its review resolutions.

Slide 10

Under the overall direction and guidance of Mr. Voronkov as UNCCT Executive Director, the Centre is currently implementing a total of 45 programmes and projects, engaging beneficiaries from 172 countries. As recommended by the Advisory Board, UNCCT has continued developing and implementing larger multi-year programmes for achieving greater impact and sustainability.

Slide 11

Of those 45 projects, 26 are at the global level, 13 at the regional, and 6 at the national level. The distribution of the projects according to the pillars is as follows:

- Pillar I: 13 projects or 29%
- Pillar II: 13 projects or 29%
- Pillar III: 9 projects or 20%
- Pillar IV: 10 projects or 22%

As mentioned at the last meeting, we use the global programmes to provide tailored assistance to Member States at the national level – thus responding to the advice of the Board to ensure focus on national level activities.

Slide 12

The current COVID-19 crisis has strongly impacted our work, but UNCCT programmatic priorities continue to adapt to the new realities in a resilient manner. In these challenging times,

UNCCT continues to prioritize the well-being of its staff, ensuring delivery of UNCCT project and programmes, and engaging with Member States and implementing partners. We also make sure that our work is visible to our partners and beneficiaries around the world.

Slide 13

The global pandemic has not changed *what* we do but changed *the way* we do our work. To ensure the Centre's business continuity, we had to adapt to the travel restrictions by developing our online capacity building delivery, so that UNCCT continues successfully implement its mandate as per the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

We had to learn and adapt fast, and after a drop in capacity building activities organized by the Centre in the second quarter, UNCCT saw a significant increase in the number of activities in the third quarter of this year.

As noted by Mr Voronkov, the Centre has delivered 28 outreach events, 21 workshops, 17 expert meetings, and one virtual scoping mission. Through workshops, organized by the Centre, we engaged 1,560 beneficiaries from 172 countries.

Slide 14

At the end of the third quarter, UNCCT utilization rate against the released budget of USD 29 million was USD 13.3 million or 46% of the total budget. The current utilization rate is 4% lower compared to 2019 third quarter results, which is in itself a very good result, considering the pandemic situation

Slide 15

UNCCT continues to focus on ensuring diversified, predictable and sustainable funding, as recommended by the Advisory Board Members, and we have made significant progress in this regard.

For example, in the second quarter, UNCCT received US\$200,000 contribution from Australia. The funding will go towards UNCCT support of the ASEAN Bali workplan priorities. In the third quarters, UNCCT received a contribution of €80,000 from Spain to support UNCCT's Victims of Terrorism Programme and Civil Society Engagement.

In addition, UNOCT is in advanced negotiations with Germany to support part of the UNCCT Global CT Programme on Cybersecurity; as well as with the US and the EU in relation to the Screening, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration efforts in Central Asia. Overall, these pledges amount to approximately \$2 million for UNCCT, with an additional \$2 million for our partners in our joint efforts under these global programmes.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to be the main contributor, providing 74% of cumulative contributions and pledges to UNCCT since the inception of the Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism, with 30 donors making up the remaining 26%.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Australia, Spain, Germany, the US, the EU and all other donors for their contributions and continuous support of the Centre.

Slide 16

Excellencies,

UNCCT continues to implement its mandate successfully and, today, I would like to brief you on some of the progress we made in this regard. Given the number of programmes and projects and limited time, I will only provide a few examples of our capacity-building work at the global, regional and national level.

Slide 17

Under Pillar I, the Centre continues to deliver PCVE activities, working closely with CTED and other Global Compact partners, incorporating flexible and innovative approaches to our capacity-building support to Member States, civil society, regional and multilateral organizations.

For example, in August, the StratCom team, jointly with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, delivered a Virtual Regional Crisis Communications Workshop to Member States officials in East Africa: Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Sudan.

Slide 18

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unique issues related to terrorism financing, including in the context of protecting charity organizations and financial relief work from terrorist abuse. The UNCCT Countering the Financing of Terrorism programme, under Pillar 2, continues its efforts to adapt and protect the NPOs from terrorist abuse.

For example, in August, a second Virtual Capacity-Building Workshop for Bahrain took place. The workshop was organized to address FATF Recommendation 8 on the protection of NPOs from terrorist abuse and attended by 161 officials from Bahrain's relevant ministries and national agencies, private sector institutions and NPOs.

While in Border Security and Management we have been leading the UN's contributions to and co-leading the GCTF initiative to develop a watch-listing manual.

Slide 19

UNCCT's Pillar 3, continues to advance national level CT and PVE strategies, take strategies into UN-supported action and implement activities.

For example, the Central Asia Team has facilitated support from the EU flagship STRIVE Asia Programme for Tajikistan, which has begun working with experts, in coordination with OSCE, on how to integrate National Action Plans for PVE. Additionally, Turkmenistan has taken the next step and moved forward, with UNOCT support, on an action plan for its national CT strategy that was approved by the President last year.

Slide 20

Finally, under Pillar 4, we made a significant progress on the international cooperation to assist victims of terrorism. On 21 August, UNCCT in collaboration with the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism organised the third commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, which took place online this year. Over 282 people attended the online event, including 135 representatives from 81 Member States, eight representatives from three regional organizations and 139 representatives from civil society organizations, victims' associations and UN entities. The event was broadcast live on UN WebTV, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and received more than 9,500 views and 130 million social media impressions.

Allow me to conclude my remarks by showing you a short clip of a film produced under UNCCT Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme, which highlights the Central Asian experience and the UN support available to other Member States that have repatriated or are committed to repatriating their nationals from camps in northeastern Syria and Iraq. The full video, entitled "Returning home, rebuilding lives" was shown at a side event on the margins of the high-level segment of the 75th UN General Assembly.

On behalf of UNCCT, I would like to thank all Advisory Board members for your strong ongoing support to the Centre and look forward to our continued collaboration.

Video

Thank you, Mr Chairman.