



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Opening remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter- Terrorism

Expert-Level Briefing to African Permanent Missions on UNOCT Capacity Building Programmes

New York, 27 April 2022

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this expert-level briefing on the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism capacity building programmes and projects in Africa.

I am honored to be joined today by Mr. Parfait Onanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union; Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN; and Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, United Nations Development Programme.

As you are aware, today's event follows last month's briefing to the Africa Group in which I briefed on the terrorism landscape in Africa. I had the opportunity to listen to concerns expressed by Permanent Representatives on the persistent terrorist threat in parts of the continent. It was clear from our discussions that African Member States should put in place relevant counter terrorism strategies, policies and other measures to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, with the support of the UN.

Over the last few years, the number of terrorist attacks has been growing across different regions. Even those countries which have until now suffered few or no

attacks must be alert to terrorist efforts to move, plan, hide, recruit, arm, and fund-raise in or through their territory. In particular, the movement of terrorists across borders in Africa remains a challenge for CT efforts.

The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy recognizes that strengthening social inclusion and development agendas are also counter-terrorism imperatives. As the COVID-19 pandemic has caused setbacks to important and hard-won sustainable development gains, and as growing inequalities fuel polarization, counter-terrorism challenges intensify.

Today's briefing will introduce you to a range of UNOCT-led responses and programmatic support which help Member States to address some of these challenges. This meeting is also an opportunity for my Office to better understand the needs and priorities of your countries.

UNOCT is working throughout Africa to build and strengthen national and regional capacities to address the evolving threat of terrorism. As such, we have expanded our presence and activities in Africa.

Today, my Office is implementing 26 capacity building programmes and projects in Africa across all four pillars of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, benefitting some 44 Member States.

In addition, our new programme offices in Nairobi and Rabat are an important step to enhance our strategic engagement with African Member States, as well as facilitate regional capacity-building and cooperation. Moreover, the recently launched EU-UN Global Terrorism Threats Facility will operate out of Rabat with global reach to provide demand-driven, rapid support to Member States that need support to face evolving or urgent terrorist threats.

Stronger regional capacities across all counter-terrorism areas are an urgent priority. Regional cooperation is a crucial resource to leverage against terrorism.

We are supporting initiatives in several priority areas such as countering terrorist travel, protecting vulnerable targets, developing coordination mechanisms for law enforcement, enhancing the capacity of Member States to investigate and prevent cyberattacks, and countering terrorism financing. We are also supporting prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts, engaging with parliamentarians to implement relevant counter-terrorism obligations and promoting human rights and the rule of law.

My colleagues will provide a more detailed briefing of their respective programmes in the next segment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Africa faces a myriad of terrorism-related challenges and UNOCT stands ready to support.

I trust this meeting will provide you with a solid overview of how my Office can support your governments to address these challenges.

As we continue to expand our programming in the coming months, we look forward to working with you, the Member States, at the regional and national level to build capacities to implement the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

I hope that you will find today's briefing informative and useful, and that our presentations will inspire you to reach out to UNOCT to explore possible support.

I look forward to your engagement with my Office in the future, and to further strengthening our cooperation.

I will now invite Under-Secretary-General Onanga to take the floor.

Thank you.