

**Opening Remarks by
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Forum Celebrating the 5th Anniversary of the Launch of the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme

Budapest, Hungary, 19 July 2024

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, I am honoured to welcome you all to the 5th anniversary of the launch of the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel (CT Travel) Programme.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary for co-organizing this event. I wish to highlight our excellent partnership with Hungary whose continued support towards our collective efforts in combatting terrorism is invaluable.

I also take this opportunity to thank all of you joining us today. You are here because your country or organization has helped to shape the CT Travel Programme into the success that it is today. You have provided expertise and resources in the form of generous financial contributions or in-kind support as a strategic partner or you have tapped into the Programme's comprehensive assistance package.

Allow me to take the opportunity to acknowledge the financial support and contributions from the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Germany, the United States of America, India, Australia, Japan, the State of Qatar, Hungary, and the Republic of Korea.

I wish in particular to highlight the donation by the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the software which is a critical component of the Programme that is based in this building. We are most grateful for the support provided by the government of Hungary.

There are three points that come to mind as I reflect on the last 5 years of the Programme. Why is this Programme so successful? What sets the Programme's support apart from others? And how has this Programme delivered results?

First, what makes this Programme successful? CT Travel was designed in response to United Nations Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, requiring all Member States to collect and use travel data, namely advance passenger information (API) and passenger name records (PNR). The purpose is

to not only detect terrorist travel, but also to improve the use of international databases relating to known and suspected terrorists and other criminals and to enhance information exchange.

To achieve this, we leverage the mandates and in-house expertise available through a truly “One-UN” approach. The Programme is led by UNOCT and implemented in close partnership with 6 implementing partners: the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations Office of Information and Communication Technology (OICT), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

In May 2019, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, launched the CT Travel Programme, as a global ‘One-UN’ initiative. And here we are 5 years later: today’s Forum will demonstrate that the success of this Programme is down to the results of these effective and strong partnerships.

Second, what type of support does the Programme provide? For the past five years, we have been providing comprehensive, yet tailored support to Member States. 75 Member States have partnered with the Programme so far, 57 of which have received technical assistance. The aim is for these Member States to have the capacity to prevent, detect, and investigate the movement of terrorists and other criminals in accordance with international standards and recommended practices, including human rights, and relevant privacy laws.

And third, I would like to highlight the concrete results of this support:

- o In many countries, we have strengthened legislative frameworks to regulate the collection, transmission, use, retention and safeguarding of passenger data, in compliance with international standards and human rights law;
- o We helped to establish and train Passenger Information Units (PIUs), embedded within national law enforcement structures, who can analyse and make use of the data for counter-terrorism purposes;
- o We have helped Member States to engage with the transport industry and set-up a national Passenger Data Single Window, to collect the data efficiently and effectively;
- o We have deployed the UN-owned ‘goTravel’ software, based on the model donated by the Netherlands, to these PIUs, enabling the collection and analysis of data through a secure and supported solution; and
- o We have established a global network of regional platforms to share best practices, enable technical discussions and enhance regional and international law enforcement cooperation.

This comprehensive, yet tailored approach is what sets the Programme apart. It provides assistance to Member States in every region of the world, working within varied national and institutional contexts to establish or strengthen capacities to address the ever-evolving terrorist threat.

Today’s Forum will recognize the tangible milestones achieved by Member States. We will hear concrete examples from Programme Partners highlighting the impact of their efforts. We will hear from representatives from several Programme beneficiaries, namely Mongolia, Georgia, and the Kyrgyz Republic, who will reflect on the concrete outcomes of the Programme’s implementation. We will also hear from key strategic partners on our joint efforts.

UNOCT is committed to excellence and a solid results culture. In this framework, we have just completed an independent evaluation of the Programme. I am very pleased to report that this evaluation highlighted the relevance, coherence, efficiency, impact and the valuable contribution the Programme is making in addressing the critical needs of Member States in establishing or strengthening their threat detection capabilities. The evaluation also allowed us to further integrate human rights norms and standards, gender mainstreaming, and data protection as central elements of our implementation methodology. We will continue to aim for the Programme to be the “gold standard” for articulating a comprehensive approach to strengthening national capacities which promotes the protection of human rights, and supports efforts to achieve peace and security

We take pride in the fact that the success of the Programme is recognized both by independent evaluators, and most importantly, by the beneficiaries and strategic partners who are present here today.

To conclude, as we listen to today’s speakers, I invite you to start thinking about how our United Nations CT Travel Programme can continue to be a success for the next 5 years. A success not only for our beneficiaries, but also for our implementing partners and for our strategic and funding partners. You are all central to the Programme and we look forward to your continued engagement and support to sustain and indeed shape our efforts in the years to come.

I want to thank all of you, especially those who travelled from afar, for joining us in celebrating the 5th Anniversary of the CT Travel Programme.