

**Tenth Meeting of the United Nations
Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee Meeting
“Strategic Coordination of Counter-Terrorism Initiatives in Africa: challenges and opportunities”**

24-25 January 2024

**Written statement submitted by UNIDIR’s Director, Dr. Robin Geiss
(Draft 23.01.2024)**

Mr. Chair, Under-Secretary General Voronkov,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) welcomes the opportunity to join this 10th Meeting of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee.

Through the provision of evidence-based research and tools, UNIDIR contributes to the UN’s “whole-of-system” approach to countering threats posed by the acquisition and use of conventional weapons by terrorists. UNIDIR wishes to highlight five research areas and tools which it believes are particularly relevant when discussing best practices and lessons learnt in preventing and countering terrorism, and recommendations regarding counter-terrorism coordination in Africa:

First, under the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact BMLE Working Group, OCT, CTED and UNIDIR compiled, in 2022, **technical guidelines to facilitate implementation of Security Council resolution 2370 (2017)** on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons. The guidelines enable Member States to identify effective prevention and mitigation measures, as well as gaps, in their national approaches to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons. UNIDIR continues to promote and support their use.

Second, based on a UN General Assembly mandate, UNIDIR developed a voluntary **Counter-IED Capability Maturity Model and Self-Assessment Tool**. It assists Member States in assessing their preventative and responsive capabilities in countering threats posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and guides strategic planning and evaluation. Since its launch in 2020, at least eight African Member States have used this tool.

Third, since 2016 UNIDIR has supported 12 African States to comprehensively assess their Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) capabilities. National **WAM baseline assessments** provide a strategic overview of strengths and weaknesses for life-cycle management of weapons and ammunition. These assessments result in a roadmap to improve WAM and prevent the diversion of conventional arms, thus contributing to counter-terrorism efforts.

In January 2024, UNIDIR will release a study **on trends in the use of uncrewed systems by non-state armed groups, particularly terrorist groups in Africa**. This study will identify enabling factors and salient trends influencing the deployment of uncrewed systems in Africa. UNIDIR hopes that this study will help to inform appropriate national and regional strategies, policies, and countermeasures.

Finally, the linkages between the proliferation of conventional weapons and violent extremism in West Africa are well-established, yet rarely considered together. In December 2023, UNIDIR, Switzerland, and the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Development in Africa co-organised a regional seminar to address this gap. Experts urged for a **joined-up approach for preventing violent extremism and managing weapons**. Practical recommendations for operationalising such an approach will be published in March 2024.

UNIDIR remains committed to conducting research, promoting dialogue, and developing and providing support to interested parties on the use of tools to help strengthen counter-terrorism efforts in Africa. UNIDIR looks forward to the successful outcome of the African Counter-Terrorism Summit.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.