

**Report of the Expert Group Meeting on African Perspectives
on International Terrorism, Addis Ababa, 3 and 4 June 2009**

Organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa



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**Expert Group Meeting on African Perspectives on
International Terrorism, Addis Ababa, 3 and 4 June 2009**

Report and recommendations

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Abbreviations	3
I. Introduction	4
II. Session 1: An overview of international terrorism and its impact on Africa	6
III. Session 2: Delineating the African response to terrorism	16
IV. Session 3: Promoting holistic regional and subregional approaches in preventing and combating international terrorism and other criminal activities	18
V. Session 4: Contributions of the United Nations, including the significance for Africa of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy	23
VI. Session 5: Deepening the engagement of the United Nations with African stakeholders	29
VII. Recommendations	31
Annexes	
I. List of participants	36
II. Programme of work	40

Abbreviations

ACSRT	African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAFT	Financial Action Task Force
ICPAT	Intergovernmental Authority on Development Capacity-Building Programme against Terrorism
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organization of African Unity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

I. Introduction

1. On 3 and 4 June 2009, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Secretariat, convened in Addis Ababa the Expert Group Meeting on African Perspectives on International Terrorism. Participants included representatives of the African Union, the regional economic communities, relevant United Nations entities members of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, a representative of the Task Force Secretariat, and non-governmental experts. Officials of the Office of the Special Adviser provided input to and support for the Meeting.

2. The Meeting was convened as a forum for experts to discuss African perspectives on terrorism, and as the first step in a process designed to enrich the ongoing global debate on terrorism and suggest ways in which the global and African perspectives could reinforce one another. Given that many in Africa view the current discourse on terrorism as a distraction from the more pressing challenges facing the continent, participants emphasized the importance of addressing issues of terrorism and counter-terrorism in the context of the many complex security and other challenges facing the continent, such as trafficking in drugs, firearms and persons, ongoing civil wars, post-conflict reconstruction, small arms and light weapons proliferation, and chronic poverty and underdevelopment.

3. Participants noted that among the challenges going forward was how to build on what had already been achieved on the continent, how global and African efforts could be more closely linked, and how the various initiatives at the subregional level could be reinforced by those at the continental level. In this vein, the discussions led to a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening cooperation between the African Union and regional institutions within Africa, as well as between African institutions and the United Nations, in the context of implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the African Union counter-terrorism framework. The recommendations are contained in section VII.

4. Some of the key findings and recommendations that emerged from the meeting are as follows:

(a) There is no single African perspective on these issues, but rather it comprises the different views of Governments, civil society and the private security sector, each of which needs to be conveyed to and taken into account by the United Nations. More attention needs to be given to including civil society and the private sector in the counter-terrorism debates on the continent and at the United Nations;

(b) With the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the more recent shift away from the “global war on

terror” rhetoric space has opened up to engage in a discussion of counter-terrorism that goes beyond the narrow military, law enforcement and other security-related issues. However, to maximize the impact of the Strategy on the continent, its implementation must take into account local and subregional contexts, with African institutions and other stakeholders assuming a key role. This calls for the African Union, in particular its African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), in Algiers, to continue to assume a leading role in raising awareness of the threat and stimulating more information-sharing and capacity-building activities on the continent, as well as in the empowerment of and ensuring a stronger voice from the regional economic communities;

(c) There is a diversity of ongoing United Nations activities related to countering terrorism in Africa. However, more efficient and effective information-sharing and coordination between the United Nations and Africa is needed to ensure that African stakeholders are kept apprised of what the United Nations is doing, and vice versa. In addition, the quality of engagement between the United Nations and Africa needs to be strengthened, with a view to better reflecting the African voice in United Nations counter-terrorism work. In particular, African perspectives need to be heard more clearly in New York;

(d) Interaction between the United Nations and Africa on counter-terrorism issues needs to be more coherent. To this end, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, should organize a conference on the continent which brings together relevant United Nations and African stakeholders to agree on Africa’s priorities and needs and to outline a division of labour among the United Nations and African institutions, as well as partner countries, for addressing them;

(e) For the African voice to adequately reflect the importance that Africans place on addressing terrorism’s underlying conditions, stakeholders involved in issues related to efforts to reduce poverty and marginalization, improve governance, strengthen the rule of law and combat corruption need to be brought into the discussions of counter-terrorism both at the United Nations and the African Union;

(f) The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa can play a useful role in facilitating greater engagement between United Nations Headquarters and African stakeholders, particularly those that have not traditionally been involved in the counter-terrorism debate, for example, civil society, the private sector, the media and African Union institutions, such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and in raising the profile of the African voice.

5. The present report is not a complete record of the proceedings and does not necessarily reflect the views of all participants.

Introductory session

6. Participants noted that the recent move away from the “global war on terror” rhetoric that dominated the post-11 September 2001 era has created space for a new discourse on terrorism and counter-terrorism in Africa, one shaped by African realities and priorities. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, by reflecting the views of all Member States, emphasizing the importance of addressing the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and highlighting the connections between terrorism and pressing security and other challenges, such as poverty and underdevelopment, helped to align the counter-terrorism discourse at the United Nations more with the perspective of many African stakeholders and has the potential to be very significant for Africa. The Strategy thus offers the necessary framework to begin a post-“global war on terror” discussion of terrorism and counter-terrorism on the continent, one which should not focus exclusively on military and other security-related aspects of the response.

7. The United Nations Strategy has created a common understanding regarding what is needed to combat terrorism effectively on the continent. However, to be effective, its implementation must take into account local and subregional contexts, with African institutions and other stakeholders assuming a key role.

8. Despite the resource and other constraints facing African States, it was highlighted that Africa was among the first regions to develop a regional counter-terrorism framework, which includes the 1999 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, the 2002 Algiers Plan of Action of the African Union on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa and the 2004 African Union Protocol to the OAU Convention, as well as the African Union regional counter-terrorism centre, ACRST.

II. Session 1: An overview of international terrorism and its impact on Africa

9. Participants noted that terrorism was not a new phenomenon for Africa and had been a part of most of the liberation wars, succession movements and insurgencies that had taken place on the continent over the past 50 years. Although many parts of Africa share similar vulnerabilities to terrorism, participants highlighted that the threat

level varied from subregion to subregion and it was thus difficult to forge any common perception of the threat. This was considered unsurprising on a continent as vast and diverse as Africa, where most of the recent attacks had been limited to a few locales (e.g., Algeria, Morocco, Sahel and Horn of Africa), where some continue to view terrorism as a predominately Western problem, and the fact that many more people are directly affected by disease, crime, poverty and hunger than by global terrorism.

10. In describing the variations of the terrorist threat on the continent, it was pointed out that experts had broken it down into a number of categories, which include: (a) domestic terrorist attacks on African interests; (b) international terrorist attacks on Western interests; (c) use of African territory as a safe haven; (d) Africa as a terrorist breeding ground and source of recruits; and (e) Africa as a transit point for terrorists and fund-raising tied to other illicit activities.

11. Although the vulnerabilities to terrorism vary from subregion to subregion and even within each of them, it was noted that most African countries share a number of vulnerabilities and are forced to confront similar challenges as they seek to develop and implement strategies to address the threat.

12. For example, the physical, economic, political and institutional weaknesses across much of the continent leave many countries vulnerable to terrorist infiltration, recruitment and/or violent radicalization. In this regard, a number of participants referred to the long stretches of porous, remote and largely unmonitored and uncontrolled borders that facilitated undocumented migration and drugs, arms and human trafficking. When combined with the wide ungoverned or undergoverned spaces that continue to exist across Africa, this provided an enabling environment for the generation of income and training which could help to support terrorist activities.

13. In addition, despite the transnational nature of many of the terrorist and other security-related threats on the continent, participants noted how cross-border legal and other forms of counter-terrorism cooperation, including border monitoring and the sharing of intelligence and other information, remain inadequate across much of Africa and thus need urgent attention.

14. Further, despite the ongoing efforts of bilateral and multilateral actors to provide counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance, it was highlighted that significant limitations exist at the institutional and operational levels to addressing not only terrorism but other security challenges in Africa. In many parts of the continent, this includes the lack of an effective criminal justice system and other democratic

institutions that are essential not only for combating terrorism but crime and corruption, and for improving governance, dealing with internal and external conflicts and improving the lives of those in vulnerable communities.

15. The point was made that with the end of the “global war on terror” rhetoric, African Governments would find that space for engaging in extrajudicial counter-terrorism activities, such as extraordinary rendition, would shrink. This reinforces the need to strengthen national criminal justice capacities in order to allow Governments to combat terrorism within the law. It was noted that African intelligence services had taken on increasingly important roles in countering terrorism, but often without any mechanisms for holding those services accountable for their actions. Thus, existing intelligence oversight mechanisms should be strengthened and new ones created, where necessary.

16. It was stressed that inadequate attention to and awareness of the threat of terrorism and the culture of violence as the norm had helped to make the continent more susceptible to terrorism. The limited information that African Governments make available about vulnerability to terrorist threats and the potential impact of a terrorist attack have exacerbated the problem.

17. Throughout the Expert Group Meeting, participants pointed to the critical roles that civil society and the media could play in helping African States to increase awareness of the threat and the impact of an attack on local communities and development priorities, and in deepening public support for government action to address it in a manner that upholds the rule of law and does not hamper the work of civil society.

18. It was highlighted that the inclination of most African Governments to view counter-terrorism as an exclusively government responsibility and the related over-sensitivity on the part of security forces and their tendency to consider everything relating to terrorism as top secret had significantly limited the information flow to the media and civil society, thus inhibiting their ability to gain a full picture of the threats facing, and vulnerabilities on, the continent.

19. Participants recognized that it was important for the media to become more engaged in counter-terrorism matters, but stressed the need to develop more professional and responsible media in Africa. This, some considered, was needed before one could allow them to gain access to the information related to terrorist threats and counter-terrorism initiatives that they demand. To this end, it was suggested that the United Nations and African Union could contribute to the

development of a code of conduct for the media in the context of reporting on matters related to terrorism and counter-terrorism.

20. With respect to civil society, it was noted that in addition to limited information flows between governments and civil society groups, the operating space given the latter varied from country to country. Participants recognized that the ability of civil society to act in some countries on the continent was heavily circumscribed by Governments, with counter-terrorism measures being used in some instances to justify State repression of civil society groups, particularly from marginalized communities.

21. In general, participants highlighted the critical role that civil society could play in raising awareness of the threat and consequences of terrorism and building counter-terrorism capacity. With respect to the latter, the important work being carried out across the continent by the Institute for Security Studies, often in partnership with intergovernmental bodies, was mentioned. It was emphasized that greater civil society involvement in counter-terrorism initiatives was critical to ensuring a bottom-up approach to addressing the threat (i.e., one driven by local and subregional perspectives and actors). In this context, participants stressed the important role that the African Union, regional economic communities and the United Nations could play in helping civil society groups from across the continent to engage. With respect to United Nations efforts to involve civil society in its work addressing global problems, it was noted that the global body had come a long way but that one still should proceed with caution when referring to the relationship between civil society and the State in an organization with a membership as large and diverse as the United Nations.

22. It was also noted that building public support for counter-terrorism in Africa would continue to be problematic in places in which Governments show a lack of respect for human rights and the rule of law, all too common occurrences across the continent. Participants commented on how, following the attacks of 11 September 2001, a number of African States, often under pressure from the West and the Security Council, adopted counter-terrorism legislation that was inconsistent with international human rights norms. Thus, participants agreed on the need to devote more attention to ensuring a human rights-based approach to countering terrorism on the continent. In this regard, it was noted that the African Union was making efforts to incorporate human rights into its counter-terrorism work. For example, it was developing a paper on human rights and counter-terrorism, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights and was planning to organize a workshop on that subject in December 2009.

23. The point was also made that, after the considerable progress made in the 1990s and the early part of the present decade, democracy and good governance was receding in parts of the continent. In particular, it was noted that some countries that had been on the frontline of the fight against terrorism were now facing democratic reversals.

24. Turning to the African response to terrorism, participants noted that African Governments, despite capacity shortcomings in a number of areas, had taken measures to combat and prevent the threat. Not surprisingly, however, given the more pressing priorities across much of the continent and the limited resources available, few had developed and implemented a set of comprehensive measures.

25. In looking at the continent-wide response to terrorism, the participants emphasized that it was necessary to recognize that terrorism did not begin after 11 September 2001. The swift adoption in 1999 of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in response to the attacks on the continent by Al-Qaida in August 1998 and the recognition of the devastating consequences of the terrorism and religious extremism confronted by Algeria during the 1990s was a testament to that fact. Yet, participants commented on how this significant political act at the OAU level was not followed up with the necessary implementation at the national level.

26. The point was made that it was only after the security realities changed in the aftermath of the 11 September events, with the United States of America growing increasingly concerned that Africa was on the verge of becoming another recruiting ground and base of operations for terrorists fomenting attacks against it and its allies and, related to that, the Security Council requiring all States to adopt tougher counter-terrorism measures, that one began to see an upward movement in national counter-terrorism initiatives across the entire continent.

27. This led the African Union convening a high-level meeting on terrorism in September 2002 to discuss how to: (a) strengthen African counter-terrorism efforts in the belief that the 1999 OAU Convention did not provide a comprehensive framework to combat terrorism; (b) enhance the implementation of that largely moribund Convention; and (c) respond to the obligations imposed on all African (and other) States by the Security Council in resolution 1373 (2001). These discussions eventually led to the adoption of two African Union counter-terrorism instruments: the 2002 Plan of Action and the 2004 Protocol.

28. It was noted that national implementation of the African Union framework remained spotty across the continent. Despite the existing framework on paper, the point was made that getting all member countries of the African Union to treat counter-terrorism as a priority remained difficult because of the different perceptions of threat and the range of other challenges facing countries. Participants stressed the need to focus more attention on raising awareness of the threat of terrorism that did in fact exist, despite the perception that it was low across much of Africa.

29. Participants noted the significance of the 2002 Plan of Action of the African Union, which foresaw the African Union playing a critical role in improving the sharing of information on counter-terrorism, and cooperation and coordination among its members, the regional economic communities, and the United Nations with a view to raising awareness of terrorist threats across Africa and helping African States gain access to needed capacity-building assistance.

30. Attention was also given to the other African Union institutions that could play a significant role in furthering implementation of both the African Union framework and the United Nations Strategy. These include the African Union Peace and Security Council, the Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, and the newly established African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. Two African Union mechanisms that participants considered deserve special attention are the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its African Peer Review Mechanism, with African ownership and improved governance at the very core of those bodies.

31. Participants discussed some of the challenges confronting the African Union as it seeks to implement its continent-wide counter-terrorism mandates. They also highlighted the importance of developing complementary subregional programmes tailored to the needs, priorities and realities of the countries in each subregion, where a common perception of the threat is more likely to be found.

32. Turning to the role of the regional economic communities in particular, which were established to address economic and development issues, participants noted that most had yet to develop frameworks and/or concrete programmes for addressing the terrorist threat. Many have had to confront, at the practical level, the debate which emerged after 11 September 2001 as to whether terrorism constitutes a serious threat on the same scale as poverty, the health crisis and internal conflicts, and to the extent to which the limited resources of the communities should be allocated to counter terrorism. Participants noted that one notable exception to the general reluctance

of regional economic communities to engage in counter-terrorism issues was the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Capacity-Building Programme against Terrorism (ICPAT) and that there were promising developments coming out of the Southern Africa Development Community as well.

33. Participants highlighted the importance of getting the regional economic communities to articulate to United Nations Headquarters the vulnerabilities, needs and priorities of their member States and the subregion as a whole. The efforts of ICPAT to engage with counter-terrorism officials at United Nations Headquarters were commended, as these interactions are critical to ensuring that United Nations efforts to monitor and support the implementation of its counter-terrorism mandates were not a top-down exercise initiated and dictated by United Nations Headquarters but rather that they adequately reflected the concerns of the continent and its diverse subregions.

34. In discussing the role of the United Nations, it was noted that the global body had a central role to play in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa. With the capacity shortcomings and vulnerabilities in many African countries, nearly every part of the United Nations system has an important contribution to make. These different parts include both the traditional counter-terrorism bodies, such as those established under the auspices of the Security Council, in particular the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate, the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and entities not traditionally associated with counter-terrorism, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These and other United Nations actors are members of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, which is comprised of 24 entities of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies, funds and programmes and is charged with improving cooperation and coordination among the various United Nations entities in the field of counter-terrorism.

35. The importance of coordinated, strategic and sustained engagement by different parts of the United Nations system with States, the African Union and regional economic communities and other subregional initiatives, as well as civil society, was highlighted as being critical to helping the continent to strengthen its counter-terrorism capacities in implementing the United Nations Strategy and African Union counter-terrorism framework.

36. A number of ways to make United Nations engagement in Africa more effective were noted. For example:

(a) United Nations actors should increase their knowledge of the particular sociocultural, economic and political situations on the ground as they seek to engage with countries. This could be achieved in a number of ways, including by placing more United Nations counter-terrorism experts in the field on a full-time basis;

(b) Effective partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional stakeholders are needed to foster local buy-in, which can also help to ensure that United Nations capacity-building programmes are sustainable and that there is appropriate follow-up;

(c) Given the number of entities on the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, engagement with the African Union and the regional economic communities needs to be efficient and well coordinated, while maximizing synergies and minimizing duplication so as not to overburden already overtaxed bureaucracies;

(d) With the political sensitivities surrounding the use of the term “counter-terrorism” in many parts of the continent (and parts of the United Nations system), the United Nations will need to pay careful attention to how it packages its programmes relating to counter-terrorism;

(e) Given the interlinkages among the range of security challenges confronting much of the continent, holistic responses need to be developed at the national, subregional and regional levels;

(f) Because of the often limited absorption capacity that exists within African Governments, an integrated United Nations approach on and to the continent is essential;

(g) There is a need for the greater engagement of UNDP in the field, which could greatly improve the capacity of the United Nations system to promote the implementation at the local level of the United Nations Strategy and other broad-based counter-terrorism frameworks, such as the Plan of Action of the African Union.

37. Participants noted that the one exception to the general reluctance of UNDP to engage in this area is a Danish-funded UNDP project in Kenya, which UNDP is currently carrying out in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Kenyan National Counter-Terrorism Centre under the Office of the President. The project was designed to help, inter alia, to promote the adoption and effective implementation of national counter-terrorism legislation which safeguards human rights and to raise awareness among the

general public of the reasons why such a law is needed. Participants cited the Kenyan project as a good practice which should be replicated in other African countries.

38. In the context of increasing the efforts of the United Nations system towards enhancing coherence and efficiency at the country level and increasing joint United Nations activities, it was proposed that UNDP and other relevant United Nations actors, as well as donors, could include counter-terrorism capacity-building projects among the projects that can be funded from the multi-donor trust funds that UNDP is often called upon to administer.

39. Recognizing the general reluctance of UNDP to engage in counter-terrorism issues, participants stressed that the goal should not be to transform UNDP into a counter-terrorism actor or view development through a counter-terrorism lens. Rather, it should be to pursue the opposite approach, namely, that efforts to combat terrorism in Africa be viewed more often through the lens of development, good governance and poverty reduction (all higher priorities for most of the continent) and that UNDP factor in the counter-terrorism benefits that would be realized as a result of its work in these areas. In this regard, it was noted that the shift away from the “global war on terror” rhetoric may make it easier for UNDP to change its posture on these issues and engage in the counter-terrorism discourse.

40. It was suggested that building firewalls between the development and security sides of institutions, whether at the global, continental or subregional level, may in the end impede efforts to inject more of an African perspective into the United Nations counter-terrorism programmes and initiatives and build public support for efforts to prevent and combat terrorism on the continent.

41. Turning to the potential significance for the continent of the United Nations Strategy, participants noted that it offered African States a vehicle for broadening their own national counter-terrorism approaches, including by involving a wider range of stakeholders. The challenge of translating the broad paper commitments made by diplomats in New York into action on the ground in a way that made the most sense for each subregion was highlighted. Participants asserted that a prerequisite to stimulating more inputs from subregional and local stakeholders was continuing to raise the necessary awareness of the Strategy on the continent among a wide range of stakeholders. It was noted that, with the exception of ministries of foreign affairs, there seemed to be a lack of awareness and understanding of it in many African capitals. It was recommended that more effort was required to disseminate information about the

Strategy beyond the ministries of foreign affairs and to reach the counter-terrorism practitioners, civil society and the private sector.

42. Participants agreed that efforts to spread the word should come from many directions: the United Nations and its Member States, the African Union and relevant subregional bodies across the continent. It was noted that part of this effort should include highlighting both the multidimensional aspect of counter-terrorism, which includes issues of development and governance and is reflected in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the benefits that would accrue from integrating African voices in efforts to implement the global framework.

43. Participants suggested that the United Nations needed to reach out more to counter-terrorism practitioners, such as prosecutors, judges and other law enforcement officials, as well as non-traditional counter-terrorism actors, both within governments (e.g., health, education and social services officials) and intergovernmental bodies, and civil society. This should include carrying out in the field more outreach initiatives that would involve the African Union and subregional bodies and civil society. It was suggested that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, through its existing relationships with African stakeholders and in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, could provide a bridge between the United Nations and the continent on issues related to the Strategy. In addition, it was recommended that the Office should periodically brief African permanent representatives in New York on counter-terrorism developments on the continent in order to help ensure that African delegations in New York are kept up to date as to the diversity of programmes and activities on the continent.

44. It was recommended that the example set by South Africa late in November 2008 when it brought together more than two dozen national departments and agencies to discuss the implementation of the Strategy at the national level should be replicated by other African States, in cooperation with, among others, the Task Force. That meeting had helped to ensure that all relevant agencies and departments were informed of the Strategy. It was noted that a follow-up meeting would be held in November 2009, with a view to developing a national implementation plan. In addition, participants suggested that, where appropriate, the Task Force, in cooperation with the relevant regional economic community or United Nations field office, could organize subregional, multi-stakeholder meetings as a means of obtaining a better understanding of the threat perception,

vulnerabilities, ongoing initiatives and capacity needs and priorities in the subregion.

III. Session 2: Delineating the African response to terrorism

45. Before dwelling on the African response to terrorism, participants discussed the range of terrorism and other security challenges on the continent. Among the challenges discussed were the presence of Al-Qaida-related groups in the Mahgreb and the Sahel, the links between those groups and the increased drug trafficking in the Sahel, the rise in maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea, and the failed state of Somalia. It was noted that while the perception of the threat was high in both North Africa and the Horn and was increasing in West Africa, it remained limited in Central and Southern Africa.

46. Discussion then focused on the response of the African Union, with particular attention paid to its counter-terrorism framework and ACSRT. With respect to the 1999 OAU Convention, it was noted that 39 of the 53 States members of the African Union had ratified the instrument, with only 10 having ratified the 2004 Protocol. Participants remarked that the 2002 Plan of Action was a strategic document that defined the broad range of activities under which States members of the African Union have agreed to fight terrorism. It was emphasized that, much like the United Nations Strategy, this African Union instrument recognized the importance of the elimination of poverty and marginalization as a critical means of terrorism prevention.

47. Participants considered the role of ACSRT and the efforts of its Early Warning and Prevention Unit to work with focal points in African Union member States and the regional economic communities, of which there are 43 and 7, respectively. With respect to the national focal points, it was noted that the high number reflected a desire for African Union members to exchange information on terrorist threats across the continent.

48. It has been proposed by ACSRT that each African Union member State set up a counter-terrorism coordination unit involving representatives from the relevant ministries and appoint someone from that unit to liaise with ACSRT, depending on the issue. It was stressed that the focal point, rather than an individual, should be seen as a coordinating unit within each national Government.

49. In addition to the expanding network of focal points, participants discussed the efforts of ACSRT to develop a confidential database

which would contain information submitted by the focal points on terrorist threats and trends, as well as the names of terrorists and terrorist groups and sources of funding across the continent. This information would then be analysed and cross-checked by ACSRT staff in order to determine whether it merited inclusion in the database. The European Union has provided ACSRT with €1 million to establish the database, to which the focal points will have access.

50. In addition to the above database, it was reported that ACSRT was developing a databank of African experts on terrorism across the continent so that African Union members can more readily draw on the expertise and experiences of other countries. Both databases are expected to be operational in 2010.

51. Participants also considered the range of programmes undertaken by ACSRT, which relate to the implementation of the United Nations Strategy. These include training workshops for national officials across the continent in areas such as the financing of terrorism; the misuse of the Internet for terrorist purposes; the protection of vulnerable targets in Africa; and the development of technical skills in the field of detection and neutralization of explosives. These workshops are focused on sensitizing African Union member States to particular aspects of the threat on the continent, with a view to providing them impetus to develop and implement the necessary strategies to counter and prevent them.

52. Although ACSRT has become increasingly active in recent years, the point was made that too few are aware of its work as a result of an underdeveloped website and limited public information capacities. The point of view was expressed that ACSRT should concentrate more on sharing information with African and United Nations stakeholders and interested civil society organizations, including by putting more information in both English and French on its website.

53. Some expressed concern that, given the limited financial and human resources of ACSRT and the fact that it needs to engage with all African Union members, its effectiveness might be enhanced by focusing on fewer issues but in a sustained manner and in closer collaboration with the United Nations and other partners. The suggestion was made for it to develop and approach potential donors with a multi-year programme concentrating on only a few practical issues, preferably ones that were not already being addressed by the regional economic communities, other subregional bodies or the United Nations. It was reported that this was what ACSRT was planning on doing for the period 2010-2013.

54. Participants noted the diversity of counter-terrorism activities and programmes being carried out on the continent by a range of United Nations bodies and African institutions. However, it was noted that there had yet to be a focused and sustained effort by the United Nations to engage with a broad range of African stakeholders in a coherent manner on developing a programme that (a) highlights Africa's unique challenges and role in implementing the United Nations Strategy and (b) establishes the counter-terrorism priorities and needs of Africa, driven by input from African stakeholders. Participants suggested that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, organize a conference in Africa that would bring together relevant United Nations and African stakeholders, as well as interested partner countries, to agree on Africa's priorities and needs and to outline a division of labour among the United Nations and African institutions, as well as partner countries, for addressing them.

IV. Session 3: Promoting holistic regional and subregional approaches in preventing and combating international terrorism and other criminal activities

55. Participants stressed that, in order to maximize the impact in Africa of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, efforts to further its implementation needed to reflect a bottom-up approach, rather than be dictated by the United Nations in New York or Vienna. Deepening the involvement of the subregions, including actors such as the regional economic communities, was one way to ensure such an approach. It was also suggested that a critical component of this approach should be sustainable capacity-building activities which covered the range of issues in the Strategy. In order for those activities to be sustainable, however, more attention needed to be given to developing the requisite expertise at the subregional, national and local levels.

56. With respect to the subregional bodies such as the regional economic communities, participants noted that they had not been provided with any clear guidance as to the type of programmes they should develop to support counter-terrorism efforts among their members. Participants suggested that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force should be able to offer such guidance, drawing on some of the good practices that have so far been developed by a few of the subregional bodies on the continent. It was stressed, however, that the models for subregional counter-terrorism cooperation that have worked in some parts of Africa might not work

in others given the different threat perceptions and political realities across the continent. Participants were of the view that efforts to develop subregional mechanisms should proceed step by step, seeking to build and maintain political support from the critical stakeholders along the way.

57. Participants recognized that many of the regional economic communities, which were faced with resource constraints and threats that their members viewed as more pressing than terrorism, had yet to develop a counter-terrorism framework or carry out activities in this area.

58. One notable exception, however, was ICPAT, which represented an innovative approach to developing an effective subregional counter-terrorism mechanism on the continent. ICPAT is funded by European and other donors and administered by an African organization with research and networking experience in the security area (the Institute for Security Studies). It has succeeded in overcoming the human and financial resource limitations that have hampered other parts of IGAD, other regional economic communities and the African Union, and the lack of political support for enhancing subregional cooperation among its members in the security field.

59. This capacity-building programme focuses on capacity and confidence-building measures in the IGAD region, working closely with partners at the continental and global level. Its work is focused on five areas: (a) enhancing judicial measures; (b) working to promote greater inter-agency coordination on counter-terrorism within individual IGAD member States; (c) enhancing border management capacities; (d) providing training and sharing information and best practices; and (e) promoting strategic cooperation. It was noted that ICPAT had carried out country-specific capacity-building initiatives in each of those areas, at times in partnership with the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Eastern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, and with contributions from such institutions as the International Organization for Migration and the Commonwealth, as well as governmental and non-governmental experts from the subregion.

60. Participants highlighted some aspects of the work of ICPAT which have allowed it to extricate counter-terrorism from the politics in such a tense subregion and to develop an effective and respected programme. These include: (a) the partnership between IGAD and a civil society organization (Institute for Security Studies) which gives ICPAT the flexibility it might not otherwise have if it were a purely intergovernmental body; (b) the bottom-up approach of ICPAT,

whereby consultations with individual IGAD members are undertaken as a core component of programme development; (c) its ability to act as a bridge between the global and continental levels and the subregion, which allows it to share with its members relevant best practices and expertise from outside; (d) its ability to engage directly with experts and practitioners on the ground, rather than with or through ministries for foreign affairs; (e) its successful efforts to involve civil society, members of which are often involved in ICPAT workshops and the research components of its work; (f) its comprehensive approach, which includes awareness-raising, capacity-building, and implementation support; and (g) IGAD members have a sense of ownership of ICPAT, rather than a sense of it being imposed from outside the subregion.

61. Participants noted that if the Heads of State in the extremely tense IGAD subregion can agree to establish ICPAT, then there is hope that at least some aspects of the Programme can be replicated in other parts of Africa where security issues are not so politically fraught.

62. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was the other regional economic community to receive considerable attention during the Expert Group Meeting. Participants highlighted the significant security vulnerabilities and challenges in West Africa, which include the prevalence of small arms and light weapons, instability, civil wars, increasing cooperation between drug traffickers and Al-Qaida-related actors, and the lack of the necessary legal framework in many ECOWAS countries and at the subregional level to address terrorism and facilitate the necessary cross-border cooperation. It was noted, however, that financial and human constraints within ECOWAS, and the fact that not all ECOWAS member States consider terrorism to be a priority concern, had limited its capacity to develop a subregional framework.

63. It was stressed, however, that a number of West African States had taken important steps in recent years to strengthen their capacities to prevent and combat terrorism, based on a recognition that the vulnerabilities to and the threat of terrorism in the subregion were real. Participants noted that ACSRT and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate had worked with a number of countries in the subregion, often on an individual basis, on a range of counter-terrorism issues but that in order to carry out its work most effectively and efficiently, an effective and committed subregional partner was needed. In addition, it was pointed out that cooperation among States in the subregion was lacking and thus there was real need to develop a subregional framework in order to stimulate and facilitate such cooperation.

64. Thus, while recognizing the political and resource constraints within ECOWAS, participants highlighted the need for ECOWAS to develop a multidimensional framework that included counter-terrorism and stimulated more inter-State cooperation in terrorism matters. In addition, participants stressed the importance of ECOWAS as a platform for the exchange of terrorism-related information among its member States and for training in capacity-building.

65. The point was made that, despite being created to address economic issues, many of the regional economic communities are engaged in peace and security issues, partly based on the recognition that economic growth depends on peace and stability. ECOWAS, for example, has a developed robust conflict prevention framework and is engaged in all sorts of other security-related issues. Thus, participants suggested that any counter-terrorism initiatives could be framed in the context of ongoing ECOWAS programmes. Starting with such an approach, it was suggested, might be important in a subregion in which the issue of counter-terrorism is so sensitive.

66. A first step towards developing an ECOWAS counter-terrorism programme could be for ECOWAS, perhaps in cooperation with a respected African think tank, to undertake an assessment of the threat and vulnerabilities in the subregion. This could highlight for ECOWAS member States the linkages between terrorism and a range of other security challenges confronting the subregion and how a more coherent response is needed to protect West African (as opposed to Western) interests from terrorism.

67. In general, participants emphasized that a critical element of building subregional support for counter-terrorism initiatives was to frame the discourse in the context of issues that were likely to resonate more than counter-terrorism in the relevant subregion. For example, such issues could include the rule of law, good governance, criminal justice reform, conflict prevention or peacebuilding.

68. In addition to the contributions that the regional economic communities can make and in some cases have made to developing a subregional response to the terrorist threat, participants considered the work of other subregional mechanisms, including both the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional bodies and the organizations of police chiefs. The latter have been established in four African subregions, with the four subregional bureaux of INTERPOL functioning as the secretariats. Based on practical cooperation and shared concerns and benefiting from their close relationship with INTERPOL, with its expertise and resources, these subregional

mechanisms have been able to develop and implement a series of practical counter-terrorism-related programmes.

69. With respect to the FATF-style regional bodies, participants noted that three of them have African members: the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force, the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money-Laundering in Africa and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group. The challenges that African States face in meeting the international standards set by FATF to address money-laundering and terrorist financing, when so many African economies are cash-based, were highlighted. Participants focused particular attention on the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, discussing its work in assessing the compliance of its members with FATF standards, its studies of emerging typologies of terrorist financing in East and Southern Africa, and its efforts to provide and facilitate the delivery of much-needed technical and other capacity-building assistance to its members.

70. Given the variety of counter-terrorism programmes under way across the continent, whether involving the United Nations, ACSRT or subregional actors, or a mixture thereof, participants highlighted the challenge of ensuring effective coordination among the various actors. Some participants noted that each stakeholder appeared to be working independently, without regard to the work of the others. For example, the question was raised as to why ACSRT needed to be involved in terrorist financing issues given the focused work being carried out in this field by the FATF-style regional bodies, the International Monetary Fund and other actors.

71. The need to minimize duplication of effort and maximize synergies among stakeholders, it was stressed, becomes even more important in a climate of the shrinking resources available for this work as a result of the global financial crisis.

72. Participants highlighted the need for African institutions to do a better job of sharing information about and publicizing their work across the continent and at the level of the United Nations. For example, it was suggested that there should be a vehicle for sharing subregional best practices both with other subregions and with ACSRT. It was noted that ACSRT was creating a web portal through which all regional economic communities should be able to share information. It was suggested that the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate include on its website information concerning subregional best practices and experiences.

73. The point was made that the global organization should focus more attention on ensuring that African stakeholders are kept apprised

of its wide-ranging initiatives related to the implementation on the continent of the United Nations Strategy. In addition, participants highlighted the role that the United Nations could play in developing a coherent counter-terrorism programme for Africa, which reflected African needs and priorities and was aimed at building local capacities and expertise. A first step should be to assess the current United Nations, African Union and subregional counter-terrorism initiatives, existing gaps, and which stakeholder or stakeholders should take the lead in filling them. In addition, it was suggested that the Task Force, perhaps in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, should organize a meeting on the continent that brings together the relevant global, continental and subregional actors with a view to undertaking such an assessment, developing such a programme, and agreeing on a division of labour for moving forward that emphasizes the need for strengthening existing and building new partnerships among global, continental and subregional actors.

74. It was noted that there was enough counter-terrorism activity being undertaken in Africa to create an African voice, but some participants considered that, due to a lack of coordination across the continent and between the continent and the United Nations, that voice was not being heard at the global level. Participants expressed the hope that the proposed meeting could be an important step in improving the current situation.

75. It was also noted, however, that, for the most part, the United Nations and the African stakeholders which had heretofore been involved in the counter-terrorism discourse had been limited to those working in the fields of law enforcement, border management or countering the financing of terrorism. For the African voice to reflect the importance that Africans place on addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, stakeholders involved in efforts to reduce poverty and marginalization, improve governance, strengthen the rule of law, and combat corruption, for example, the World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO and NEPAD and its African Peer Review Mechanism, need to be brought into the discussions. Participants stressed how the United Nations Strategy has opened up space to engage in a discussion of counter-terrorism that goes beyond the narrow law enforcement and other security-related issues. The challenge is to find a way to bring the non-security-related stakeholders to the table.

V. Session 4: Contributions of the United Nations, including the significance for Africa of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

76. With participants having considered and agreed upon the significance for Africa of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, discussions focused on the contributions that the United Nations could make and is making to implementation of the Strategy on the continent. The work of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate received most of the attention.

77. With respect to the Task Force, it was noted that a number of its working groups, which consist primarily of United Nations entities, were undertaking work of relevance to Africa, including in the areas of the protection of vulnerable targets, countering the appeal of terrorism, and human rights. However, its Working Group on Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism received the most of the attention. Under this initiative, interested countries are offered integrated assistance in connection with the implementation of the United Nations Strategy. Assistance is currently being provided to two African countries, Madagascar and Nigeria, to identify capacity needs that cut across all four pillars of the Strategy; work will then be undertaken with United Nations and external partners to find ways to meet those needs. The Working Group, which builds on the existing work being done by individual Task Force members such as the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, is offering countries integrated United Nations support for the implementation of the Strategy the national level.

78. Participants also discussed the work that the Terrorism Prevention Branch has carried out across the continent since the launching of its Global Project on Strengthening the Legal Regime against Terrorism in January 2003. Through tailor-made bilateral assistance and regional and subregional workshops, the Branch has delivered counter-terrorism technical assistance to all countries on the continent. Its work has focused on the ratification and implementation of the now 16 universal instruments against terrorism, often in partnership with other United Nations actors, ACSRT and subregional bodies. It was noted that the Branch had organized some 30 such workshops and trained some 1,860 African criminal justice officials since 2003. It was stressed that its permanent presence in the field offices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Nairobi, Dakar, Johannesburg and Cairo allowed it to better understand the local political context in which it was working and to engage in sustained follow-up upon conclusion of the various workshops.

79. Among the achievements of the Terrorism Prevention Branch is the role it plays in organizing the annual conferences of the ministers of justice of francophone countries, at the most recent of which the ministers adopted a convention on mutual legal assistance and extradition against terrorism. The convention was signed by 14 African countries and is the first regional convention to be adopted in Africa. The Branch has also played an important role in organizing the meetings of IGAD ministers of justice and contributed to the drafting of the IGAD conventions on mutual legal assistance and extradition in terrorism cases, which were approved by the IGAD Council of Ministers in April 2009.

80. The point was made that because terrorism in Africa is often linked with other transnational criminal activities, countries need to be legally equipped and sufficiently resourced to deal not only with crimes of terrorism, but also with a range of crimes potentially linked to terrorism, such as trafficking in drugs, firearms and persons, piracy and money-laundering. This highlights the importance of ensuring that counter-terrorism trainers team up more often with those involved in training national officials in related fields, with a view to delivering more unified programmes that help countries to develop the criminal justice capacities to address a range of interrelated transnational security threats.

81. Participants also considered some of the challenges that the Terrorism Prevention Branch faces on the continent as it seeks to implement its mandate. These include: (a) lack in many countries of the necessary counter-terrorism legal frameworks to allow for cross-border and other international cooperation; (b) lack of interdepartmental communication among relevant government departments, which has often limited the necessary sharing of information regarding the universal legal instruments; (c) limited availability of specialized expertise at the national level on how to deal with cross-cutting transnational security issues; and (d) lack of human resources at the national level devoted to issues related to international legal cooperation in terrorism matters, which may signal a lack of political will.

82. With respect to the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, its active engagement with African States through a variety of means, including field visits to 11 of them to date, was noted. It was pointed out that for each country on the continent, the staff of the Directorate at United Nations Headquarters had prepared a preliminary implementation assessment, which took stock of national efforts to implement Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005).

The Directorate was using these assessments, which are updated on the basis of information received from Member States, for holding a dialogue with countries in Africa and beyond. It was mentioned, however, that the Directorate has had difficulties in getting updated information from some African States. The point was made that this information was critical to ensuring that assessments adequately reflect what is going on on the ground.

83. As a result of the information gathered from the field visits and contained in the preliminary implementation assessments, the Directorate has been able to obtain a birds-eye view of the status of national counter-terrorism efforts on the continent. Participants noted that this had contributed to significant improvement in the efforts of the Directorate to identify African technical assistance priorities and to make referrals to interested donors.

84. The commitment of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate to deepening its relationships with African institutions, including ACSRT and the regional economic communities, was also highlighted, with the Directorate undertaking an increasing number of joint initiatives on the continent with African and United Nations partners.

85. It was noted that the workshops organized by the Terrorism Prevention Branch, the expert groups related to the three Security Council counter-terrorism committees and the activities of the Directorate, had helped somewhat to ease the burden on African States which are all required to report to each of the three committees. However, the underlying problem of the three separate channels of reporting and engaging in dialogue with the Security Council on counter-terrorism-related matters had not been resolved. The point was made that offering African institutions a single point of entry to the Security Council, and to the wider United Nations, for engagement on counter-terrorism would be useful.

86. In addition to the above-mentioned United Nations entities, participants noted the relevance of a number of others to the implementation in Africa of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and, more broadly, to enhancing the capacity of the continent to prevent and combat terrorism. These include the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office, the mediation support unit of the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Democracy Fund. Participants reiterated the importance of including these non-traditional counter-terrorism actors in future counter-terrorism discussions involving the United Nations and African institutions.

87. As in previous sessions, participants remarked on the diversity of ongoing United Nations activities related to countering terrorism in Africa and highlighted the need for more efficient and effective information sharing between the United Nations and Africa to ensure that African stakeholders were kept apprised of what the United Nations is doing and vice versa.

88. With respect to improving coordination among stakeholders engaged in supporting or implementing counter-terrorism initiatives on the continent, it was noted that it was largely a question of commitment. There was a need to take stock of and make better use of the mechanisms that currently exist for facilitating coordination, for example, the African Resource Network on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism (www.arntact.org), before deciding to create a new one.

89. Participants also focused on the need to strengthen the quality of engagement between United Nations Headquarters and Africa, with a view to better reflecting the African voice in United Nations counter-terrorism work. A number of interrelated recommendations in this area were put forward, including the need for: (a) a more coherent United Nations effort both at Headquarters and in the field, including one that better integrates the traditional counter-terrorism work of the United Nations into broader United Nations efforts to promote governance and stability on the African continent; (b) at least some United Nations Headquarters-based counter-terrorism work being devolved down to the field, with a view to integrating United Nations counter-terrorism experts into United Nations country teams; (c) representatives of ACSRT and the regional economic communities to visit New York on a more regular basis in order to brief the relevant United Nations bodies and expert groups on subregional and continental counter-terrorism vulnerabilities, priorities and activities; (d) parts of the United Nations system engaged in work relevant to addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism to become more involved in efforts to promote implementation of the United Nations Strategy on the ground; (e) the United Nations to create a platform to engage with civil society in Africa in issues related to counter-terrorism, with the Office of the Special Adviser possibly spearheading this effort; and (f) the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, in cooperation with Office of the Special Adviser, to offer a platform, either in New York or Africa, for United Nations and African stakeholders to discuss the continent's vulnerabilities, needs and priorities, and to develop a plan and agree on a division of labour to address them.

90. Such efforts could build on the successful meeting organized by the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate in July 2007, which

brought representatives from West African Governments and intergovernmental bodies to New York to discuss the counter-terrorism needs and priorities of the subregion and which has led to a number of concrete capacity-building initiatives.

91. More broadly, participants highlighted the useful role that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa could play in facilitating greater engagement between the United Nations Headquarters and African stakeholders and raising the profile of the African voice on the continent.

What is the African perspective on terrorism and counter-terrorism and how can it be better reflected in the work of the United Nations?

92. Participants agreed that there was no single African perspective on terrorism and counter-terrorism issues, but rather that it comprised the different views of Governments, civil society and the private sector, all of which need to be conveyed to and taken into account by the United Nations. Participants noted, however, that to date it was the views of African Governments but not the other continental stakeholders that had been communicated to United Nations Headquarters.

93. Although participants recognized that the search for a single African perspective was likely to remain elusive, they agreed that issues related to development, poverty reduction and peace and stability were among the core elements that Africans generally believe deserve priority in the context of countering terrorism. Participants also noted that these issues, although reflected in the United Nations Strategy, had yet to be taken fully on board at an operational level by the United Nations in the context of its counter-terrorism work. Related to this is one of the challenges confronting those interested in ensuring that United Nations counter-terrorism work better reflects African priorities: finding ways to ensure that the African stakeholders engaging with the United Nations on counter-terrorism were not the only ones focused on law-enforcement and security issues as well as the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

94. Participants recognized the importance of ensuring that the perspectives of African civil society on terrorism and counter-terrorism were taken into account by the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities. In this regard, participants noted that, in addition to having the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa spearhead United Nations efforts to engage with civil society on the continent, the existing mechanisms for civil society

participation in the work of the African Union and the regional economic communities should be operationalized.

VI. Session 5: Deepening the engagement of the United Nations with African stakeholders

95. The point was made that the adoption of the United Nations Strategy had refocused attention from the military style which had largely defined the fight against terrorism for much of the period following the attacks of 11 September 2001 to a softer, more nuanced approach that anchored terrorism firmly within the criminal justice system and endeavoured to strike the right balance between human rights and security.

96. It was noted that the new United States President's approach to counter-terrorism had fostered a global climate conducive to the emphasis of the United Nations Strategy on addressing the conditions that contribute to the spread of terrorism and what could be described as more of a developmental approach to counter-terrorism. United Nations engagement with Africa on counter-terrorism needs to acknowledge the paradigm shift represented by both the United Nations Strategy and the abandonment of the "global war on terror" rhetoric, with the focus more on developmental issues. The point was made that the United Nations engagement with Africa on counter-terrorism should be done within this agenda and the traditional peace and security agenda of the continent.

97. Participants reiterated that engagement between African actors and the United Nations must take into account the diverse subregional sensitivities and cultural contexts; this calls for the empowerment of and a stronger voice from the regional economic communities. In addition, it was suggested that this engagement needs to include not just the traditional counter-terrorism issues, but those encapsulated in the new counter-terrorism paradigm, namely, issues related to development and governance. A critical element of this will be involving the institutions working in these fields (e.g., NEPAD and its governance monitoring arm, the African Peer Review Mechanism). Further, participants stressed that United Nations engagement needs to emphasize the development of local ownership over counter-terrorism initiatives and projects, with a view to trying to change the perception that has existed across much of the continent since the 11 September attacks, namely, that counter-terrorism is a priority being imposed on Africa by external actors.

98. As in previous sessions, participants lamented the fact that the United Nations Strategy was little known outside the corridors of

United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Office at Vienna and ministries of foreign affairs. In addition to a lack of awareness, the point was made that effective implementation on the continent was hampered by a lack of capacity and of cooperation and coordination between United Nations and African actors, as well as the failure to involve civil society and the private sector in the discourse.

99. It was noted that the United Nations and the African Union needed to find ways to bring about the inclusion of these non-governmental stakeholders in order to operationalize the multi-stakeholder approach to counter-terrorism enunciated in the United Nations Strategy. For example, mirroring what occurs in some other thematic areas, it was suggested that non-governmental forums be organized on the margins of intergovernmental meetings on counter-terrorism at the global, continental or subregional level.

100. Participants noted the number of civil society networks that currently exist across the continent in fields such as peacebuilding, conflict prevention and the prevention of small arms and light weapons proliferation. Given the politically sensitive nature of the term “counter-terrorism” and the tendency for existing networks to be underfunded, it was suggested that, rather than creating new networks, civil society engagement on counter-terrorism become part of the existing frameworks and dialogues.

101. Participants also commented on how responsible, sensitive and professional media are critical to raising public awareness of the terrorist threats and vulnerabilities and building public support for counter-terrorism measures. Participants recommended that the United Nations-Africa partnership on counter-terrorism include a focus on training African media to report responsibly on issues of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

102. With respect to the African private sector, participants agreed that more creative approaches were needed to involve it in preventing and combating terrorism. Given the economic instability and insecure investment climate that follows a terrorist attack, those in the financial and tourism sectors would be likely to have a particular interest in contributing to continent-wide efforts to counter terrorism.

103. In addition to discussing engagement between the United Nations and Africa, participants noted the important role that the Group of Eight could play in helping to operationalize the shifting counter-terrorism paradigm. For example, it was suggested that counter-terrorism could be positioned at the centre of the Group of Eight and African partnership, within which NEPAD was conceived, and that more could be done to link the Group’s counter-terrorism initiatives

with the African counter-terrorism architecture. It was suggested that the Group of Eight Counter-Terrorism Action Group, the membership of which includes many of the main counter-terrorism donors, could call on the African Union and the regional economic communities to develop a common set of counter-terrorism needs and priorities which could be presented to and discussed with the Action Group at a meeting of that Group devoted to Africa. This might help to bring greater coherence to African engagement with the international community in counter-terrorism capacity-building issues.

VII. Recommendations

104. The recommendations below emerged from the discussions held during the Expert Group Meeting.

Recommendation I

In order to maximize the impact of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Africa, efforts to further its implementation need to reflect a bottom-up approach, rather than be dictated by the United Nations at Headquarters or Vienna. Implementation should therefore take into account local and subregional contexts, with African institutions and other African stakeholders assuming a key role. For example, the African Union, in particular its African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), should continue to assume a leading role and the regional economic communities should be empowered and encouraged to articulate the vulnerabilities, needs and priorities of their respective Member States and subregions.

Recommendation II

The African Union, regional economic communities, and the United Nations can play important roles in helping to involve civil society groups from across the African continent in the counter-terrorism discourse. For example, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should spearhead United Nations efforts to engage with civil society on the continent and the existing mechanisms for civil society participation in the work of the African Union and the regional economic communities should be better operationalized. Further, non-governmental forums should be organized on the margins of intergovernmental meetings on counter-terrorism at the global, continental or subregional level.

Recommendation III

Engagement and information-sharing between the United Nations and Africa needs to be deepened and expanded, with a view to better reflecting the African voice in United Nations counter-terrorism work. In particular, African perspectives need to be heard more clearly at United Nations Headquarters. For that voice to adequately reflect the importance that Africans place on addressing terrorism's underlying conditions, all stakeholders need to be brought into discussions of counter-terrorism both at the United Nations and the African Union. In this context, it would also be important to develop a code of conduct for the media to ensure professional and responsible reporting on matters related to terrorism and counter-terrorism.

Recommendation IV

With the adoption of the United Nations Strategy and the shift away from the “global war on terror” and its overemphasis on security responses to the threat, the African Union should convene a high-level meeting on holistic approaches to terrorism.

Recommendation V

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, in cooperation with the relevant regional economic communities or United Nations field office, should organize subregional, multi-stakeholder meetings as a means of achieving a better understanding of the: (a) threat perception; (b) vulnerabilities; (c) ongoing initiatives; and (d) capacity-building needs and priorities in the subregion. The Task Force should also provide the regional economic communities with clear guidance as to which programmes they should develop to support counter-terrorism efforts among their members. Efforts to develop subregional mechanisms should proceed in an incremental fashion and focus on such issues as the rule of law, good governance, criminal justice reform, security sector reform, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Recommendation VI

Given the variety of counter-terrorism programmes under way across the African continent, more attention needs to be given to ensuring effective coordination and information-sharing among them with a view to leveraging the use of limited resources, maximizing synergies and minimizing duplication of effort. In this context, modalities should be developed for sharing subregional best practices among subregions, ACSRT and the United Nations.

Recommendation VII

In order to stimulate more inter-State cooperation and information-sharing in terrorism matters, ECOWAS should develop a counter-terrorism mechanism which could serve also as a platform for capacity-building in the subregion and offer both ACSRT and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate a much-needed subregional partner.

Recommendation VIII

In order to strengthen the cooperation between United Nations Headquarters and African actors, it will be necessary to better integrate the traditional counter-terrorism work of the United Nations into its broader efforts to promote governance and stability on the continent. This could require devolution of some Headquarters-based counter-terrorism work to the field and representatives of ACSRT and the regional economic communities visiting New York on a more regular basis for briefings, and finding ways in which to increase the involvement of various parts of the United Nations system in efforts to promote the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In this regard, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa could play a useful role.

Recommendation IX

For the United Nations counter-terrorism engagement in Africa to be more strategic, effective and coherent, United Nations actors need to increase their knowledge of the particular sociocultural, economic and political situations on the ground. They also need to increase effective partnerships with regional and subregional stakeholders and strengthen their engagement with the African Union and the regional economic communities in order to maximize synergies and minimize duplication. It will be equally important to develop a more holistic response to counter-terrorism issues at the national, subregional and regional levels.

Recommendation X

A single point of entry should be created at United Nations Headquarters to facilitate engagement on counter-terrorism between the United Nations and the often over-burdened bureaucracies in African States and intergovernmental bodies. There is a need for the greater engagement of UNDP, both at Headquarters and in the field, to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to promote the implementation of the United Nations Strategy on the ground. UNDP should seek to include counter-terrorism capacity-building projects among those that can be funded from the multi-donor trust funds that it

is often called upon to administer. UNDP should also factor in the counter-terrorism benefits that will be realized as a result of its work in areas such as development, governance and poverty reduction.

Recommendation XI

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, should organize a conference on the African continent which will bring together relevant United Nations and African stakeholders to: (a) assess the diversity of efforts to date and identify gaps; (b) agree on Africa's priorities and needs; and (c) outline a division of labour among United Nations and African institutions, as well as partner countries.

Recommendation XII

In order to raise awareness on the continent of the United Nations Strategy and the opportunity it offers African States and institutions, the following measures need to be taken: (a) information about the Strategy should be disseminated to the counter-terrorism practitioners, civil society and the private sector, and strategy outreach initiatives in the field should involve the African Union and subregional bodies, civil society and the private sector; (b) African States should be encouraged to organize national workshops to discuss the implementation of the Strategy at the national level; and (c) the United Nations needs to make greater efforts to reach out to counter-terrorism practitioners and non-traditional counter-terrorism actors. In this regard, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, through its existing relationships with African stakeholders and in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, should serve as a bridge between the United Nations and the continent.

Recommendation XIII

The Group of Eight Counter-Terrorism Action Group, the membership of which includes many of the main counter-terrorism donors, should request the African Union and the regional economic communities to develop a common set of counter-terrorism requirements and priorities which could be presented to and discussed with the Action Group at a meeting of that Group devoted to Africa. This might help to bring greater coherence to African engagement with the international community on counter-terrorism capacity-building issues.

Annex I

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Annex II

Programme of work

Wednesday, 3 June 2009

8-9 a.m.	Arrival and registration
9-9.30 a.m.	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcoming remarks by the Director of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Patrick Hayford• Chief of the NEPAD Support Section, Regional Consultation Meeting Secretariat, Economic Commission for Africa, Emmanuel Nnadozie• Director of the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra• Head of the United Nations Liaison Office with the African Union, Baboucarr Jagne
9.30-10 a.m.	Introduction by the Director of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (Moderator) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectives and expected outcomes• Logistics• Self-introductions by participants <p>Session 1 <i>Chair:</i> Baboucarr Jagne, Head of the United Nations Liaison Office with the African Union</p>
10-11.30 a.m.	<p><i>Topic:</i> An overview of international terrorism and its impact on Africa: presentation of overview paper</p> <p><i>Presenter:</i> Eric Rosand, Co-Director of the Center on Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation</p> <p><i>Discussion:</i> Threats/vulnerabilities to terrorism and the continent's response to terrorism; relevance in</p>

Africa of the United Nations Global
Counter-Terrorism Strategy

11.30-11.45 a.m.

Tea/coffee break

Session 2

Chair: Thomas Imobighe, Director of
the Centre for Strategic and
Development Studies, Benin-Auchi
University

11.45 a.m.-1 p.m.

Topic: Delineating the African
response to terrorism

Presenter: Ambassador Boubacar
Gaoussou Diarra

Discussion: Progress and challenges
at the continental level; capacity
needs and priorities; building
capacity through training; adoption
of human rights-compliant counter-
terrorism legislation; strengthening
of criminal justice systems and
democratic institutions; dealing with
crime and corruption and improving
governance; conflict resolution and
protection of vulnerable
communities; integrating counter-
terrorism into broader development
assistance efforts

1-2.30 p.m.

Lunch

Session 3

Chair: Anton du Plessis, Head of the
International Crime in Africa
Programme, Institute for Security
Studies

2.30-3.45 p.m.

Topic: Promoting holistic regional
and subregional approaches in
preventing and combating
international terrorism and other
criminal activities

Presenters: Economic Community of
West African States,
Intergovernmental Authority on
Development/Capacity-Building
Programme against Terrorism,
Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-
Money Laundering Group

Discussion: Role of subregional organizations, regional economic communities and national authorities in addressing the challenges; strengthening the subregional response; developing new partnerships between subregional organizations and United Nations actors

3.45-4 p.m.

Tea/coffee break

4-5 p.m.

Discussion: Strengthening the capacity of national Governments in combating and preventing terrorism

Thursday, 4 June 2009

9-9.15 a.m.

Introduction

Session 4

Chair: Patrick Hayford, Director of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

9.15-10.30 a.m.

Topic: Contributions of the United Nations, including significance for Africa of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Presenters: Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

10.30-10.45 a.m.

Tea/coffee break

10.45 a.m.-12 p.m.

Discussion: What is the African perspective on terrorism and counter-terrorism and how can it be better reflected in the work of the United Nations on these issues?

12-2 p.m.

Lunch

Session 5

Chair: Eric Rosand, Center on

Global Counter-Terrorism
Cooperation

2-3.30 p.m.

Topic: Deepening the engagement of the United Nations with African stakeholders

Presenter: Peter Kagwanja, President of the Africa Policy Institute

Discussion: Raising awareness of the threat of terrorism and of the potential role of civil society, the media and the private sector with a view to building local support for combating and preventing the threat on the continent and developing and implementing effective, long-term and tailored counter-terrorism strategies

3.45-4.15 p.m.

Tea/coffee break

Session 6

Chair: Ambassador Curtis Ward, Curtis Ward Associates, United States of America

Wrap up and recommendations, including next steps

4.45-5 p.m.

Closure of the Meeting
