

UN ACTION TO COUNTER TERRORISM

December 2007

Background Note

United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a global counter-terrorism strategy on 8 September 2006. The strategy – in the form of a Resolution and an annexed Plan of Action – is a unique instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. Its adoption marks the first time that all Member States have agreed to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism. Efforts to implement the strategy began following its formal launch on 19 September 2007. A symposium on advancing the implementation of the strategy was held in Vienna, Austria, on 17-18 May 2007 and the President of the General Assembly has convened an informal meeting for 4 December 2007 to discuss ongoing and planned activities undertaken by Member States and the United Nations system to implement the strategy. The General Assembly will hold the two-year formal review of the strategy and its implementation in September 2008.

Highlights of the strategy

- ◆ The strategy builds on Member States' consistent, unequivocal and strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, while setting forth concrete measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and to strengthen individual and collective capacity of States and the United Nations to prevent and combat terrorism, all while ensuring the protection of human rights and upholding the rule of law.
 - ◆ It brings together a range of new proposals and enhancements of ongoing activities to be undertaken by Member States, the United Nations system, and other international and regional actors, all under a common strategic framework.
 - ◆ Important new initiatives set forth in the strategy include :
 - Improving the coherence and efficiency of counter-terrorism technical assistance delivery so that all states can play their part effectively.
 - Voluntarily putting in place systems of assistance that would address the needs of victims of terrorism and their families.
 - Addressing the threat of bioterrorism by establishing a single comprehensive database on biological incidents, focusing on improving States' public health systems, and acknowledging the need to bring together major stakeholders to ensure that biotechnology's advances are not used for terrorist or other criminal purposes but for the public good.
 - Involving civil society, regional and sub-regional organizations in the fight against terrorism and developing partnerships with the private sector to prevent terrorist attacks on particularly vulnerable targets.
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- Exploring innovative means to address the growing threat of terrorist use of the internet.
- Modernizing border and customs controls systems, and improving the security of travel documents, to prevent terrorist travel and the movement of illicit materials.
- Enhancing cooperation to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.
- ◆ The strategy clearly affirms that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.
- ◆ It also reaffirms the responsibility of States to deny financial and operational safe havens to terrorists and to prevent terrorists from abusing the system of political asylum, bringing them to justice on the principle of extradite or prosecute.
- ◆ By adopting the strategy the General Assembly has concretely reaffirmed and enhanced its role in countering terrorism. Implementation of the provisions of the strategy calls for all Member States to take swift action and demonstrate the international community's unwavering determination to defeat terrorism.

For more information please visit: <http://www.un.org/terrorism>.

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