Special event of the Counter-Terrorism Committee with Member States on “countering terrorism through the use of new communications and information technologies”
United Nations Headquarters, 24 May 2012

Opening statement of CTED Deputy Executive Director

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

CTED and the Committee are together committed to identifying effective ways to prevent acts of terrorism and to bring to justice those who commit terrorist acts. CTED, to be more specific, has a significant role as facilitator of technical assistance in working with Member States in their implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions.

The subject matter before us today is of great importance.

The impact of new communications and information technologies is far too broad a question to be tackled technically and thoroughly in a one-day meeting.

Therefore, we have therefore decided to focus on three topics of particular relevance in the counter-terrorism context.

Session 1 will focus on mobile-telephone-based communications and financial transactions. During this session, panellists will discuss methodologies for tracking communications and the transfer of funds executed through mobile telephones, as well as the ability to utilize mobile telephones to establish the location of the user.

Session 2 will address the issue of enabling mobility and the processing of people through technology. Panellists will present the latest technologies used to regulate the movement of persons at border checkpoints, including a border-control system that verifies the identity of passengers through the use of iris or digit scans.
The focus of session 3 will be countering the use of the Internet for terrorism purposes. Following an overview of the primary ways in which terrorists use the Internet to carry out their activities, panellists will present the latest technologies and methodologies available to monitor the activities of terrorist organizations on the Internet and identify terrorists operating through social networks and online forums.

However, this is by no means an exhausted list of issues. There are other important aspects to reflect upon.

While there is a need for an effective and dynamic operational approach to prevent and suppress terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, there is also the same need to strictly observe the principle of legality, respect for human rights, as well as due process.

Throughout the day, there will be three panels, which consist of experts from Member States, international organizations, industry bodies, think tanks and private corporations, providing us with insights into those issues in their respective fields.

Following the three panels, we shall have the opportunity to raise issues and questions. As we anticipate that there will only be sufficient time for brief statements at the end of each session, delegations wishing to raise more in-depth concerns and questions are requested to submit written statements to CTED for inclusion onto the Committee’s website.

I wish you all a fruitful day, and look forward very much to hearing your ideas and proposals.

Thank you.