Concluding Remarks
Regional Workshop on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in South Asia

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The Workshop was co-organized by the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office (CTITF)

Honourable Minister, H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

• To start with, I would like to express my thanks to the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh for co-organizing and hosting this Regional Workshop on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in South Asia. I would specifically wish to extend the CTITF’s sincere gratitude to the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni MP, and to the distinguished Minister of Home Affairs, H.E. Advocate Shahara Khatun, for gracing this Workshop with their eminent participation and presence.

• The venue of this workshop is particularly appropriate: Bangladesh, through determined leadership and visionary policies, has registered notable successes in the struggle against terrorism. The leadership of Bangladesh has voiced its strong support for regional cooperation, and the United Nations stands with Bangladesh in this effort.

• Over the course of the last two days, we have benefited from the active participation of all eight SAARC nations, civil society organizations from the region, CTITF entities and capacity-building partners from near and far. We thank all participants for their contributions, which have enabled this workshop to register a number of points on counter-terrorism collaboration and on the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

• As part of my concluding remarks, I would like to mention five Chair’s non-binding conclusions that this Workshop has reached:

• First, participants acknowledged the value of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as a comprehensive policy framework which allows Member States, including those in South Asia, with the appropriate strategic measures against terrorism. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy’s adoption through consensus by all Member States is an asset that provides opportunities to South Asian States for collaboration with each other and with other international partners, including the United Nations. Participants also welcomed the role of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) in the support it provides to Member States on the implementation of the Strategy.

• Second, participants placed a special emphasis on the need to focus on Pillar I of the Strategy, namely measures to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, which was noted for its particular relevance in the South Asian context. Participants underscored that terrorism,
committed in whatever form, wherever and for whatever reason, has no justification. At the same
time, participants noted that growing extremism and radicalization, economic or political
marginalization, dehumanization of victims of terrorism and other forms of violence and
intolerance between different communities were elements that, among other problems, enable
terrorists to spread their violent practices.

• Third, some participants also highlighted the need for enhanced capacity-building efforts,
particularly on de-radicalization, education, rehabilitation of victims and on promoting dialogue
and understanding between communities. Participants also underscored the need for stronger
focus, including through capacity-building, for improved border control measures in South Asian
States, interception of counterfeit currency, prevention of drug trafficking and the protection of
the internet from terrorist abuse. The possibility of the establishment of a regional center for
training and capacity-building was also discussed in detail by participants, and the need for such a
center’s collaboration with other regional training centers was highlighted.

• Fourth, some participants also underscored the need for a South Asian regional action plan or
strategy for the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the region in
consultation with the SAARC Secretariat, and further called upon the United Nations to facilitate
the process with the inclusion of regional States and relevant regional stakeholders. There was
general support for the proposal; however, additional consultations will be required before this
project could be initiated. Participants welcomed the active role of SAARC in promoting regional
cooperation on countering terrorism, particularly the SAARC Convention for the Suppression of
Terrorism (1987) and the Additional Protocol. As a follow up to the Workshop, the United
Nations CTITF, in collaboration with relevant CTITF entities, will partner with the regional
States, SAARC Secretariat and other relevant regional partners on the development of a South
Asian regional action plan for the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in
the region.

• Fifth, and finally, participants also stated the importance of maintaining and improving good
governance, rule of law and respect for human rights in all national and regional counter-
terrorism efforts. The role of effective and credible criminal justice systems was particularly
noted for its significance, and national legal regimes were discussed. Training and capacity
building of criminal justice and law enforcement officials was also raised, and the sharing of best
practices and technological expertise, such as in forensics and investigative techniques, were
cited.

• In conclusion, I would like to offer my thanks to our donors – Austria, Germany, Norway,
Turkey, Switzerland and the United States – for making this workshop possible. My thanks are
also due to the event organizers, CTITF staff and Foreign Ministry and Home Ministry officials,
especially Ambassador Abdul Momen, Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed and Ms. Saida Muna Tasneem,
for their hard work in bringing this event. And last but not the least, our thanks to all of you –
participants from across the region and beyond – for taking the time to come here and sharing
your insights with us.

• Ladies and gentlemen, it can be said that no region in the world has suffered from the horrors of
terrorism more than South Asia. The people of South Asia hope and aspire to live without fear of
terrorism. We at the United Nations remember the victims of terrorism who continue to re-live
with their grief everyday. And the United Nations, in sharing that grief, is committed to
supporting this region wherever it can to fight this menace. I would like to once again thank you
all for your participation.