Speech by Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde
Open Briefing to Member States
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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin by thanking you for taking the time to come to this Open Briefing to Member States on the work of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. We all know how busy this time of the year is for all of us, so I appreciate your continuing interest in CTITF’s work.

You will recall that the last briefing of CTITF was held in July this year. During the second review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in September, Member States adopted a new resolution reaffirming their support for the Strategy (A/RES/64/297). The resolution also called upon CTITF to provide quarterly briefings to Member States in order to enable States to assess the work being undertaken by the Task Force and provide policy guidance and feedback on the implementation of the Strategy. It gives me great pleasure, therefore, to be a part of this undertaking to update all Member States on the implementation of this important document.

Since my last open briefing in July, there have been a number of significant developments. First amongst them is the adoption of resolution 64/297 of the General Assembly, which I consider to be yet another landmark achievement in the international community’s collective resolve against terrorism. I thank all Member States for their active participation and discussions in the run-up to the adoption of this resolution. With this new resolution, I am glad to note that Member States have provided CTITF and all its member entities the flexibility to begin engaging directly with States on the implementation of relevant provisions of the Strategy. While coordination and cooperation between UN entities on counter-terrorism matters is necessary, it is not an end in itself. Our common objective is the effective and practical implementation of the Strategy, which is only possible through frequent and wholesome engagement and exchange of information between CTITF and Member States.

Secondly, I would also like to make mention of the comprehensive – or should I say marathon – side events that the CTITF Office organized in partnership with IPI, in close collaboration with Member States, around the second review of the Global Strategy. The side events were notable for three key elements: first, in the scope of coverage, the side events covered eleven separate sessions on distinct and wide-ranging counter-terrorism topics over the course of two days. Second, the side events were important for launching high-profile products. In partnership with the IAEA, CTITF launched the report on “International Responses to, and Mitigation of a Potential Terrorist Attack using Nuclear and/or Radiological Weapons or Materials” and in partnership with OHCHR, we launched two Basic Human Rights Reference Guides on “stopping and searching of
persons” and on “security infrastructure.” And finally, during the side events, CTITF benefited from the participation of high-level dignitaries, such as SRSG Miroslav Jenca, who was there to launch the Project on the Implementation of the Global Strategy in Central Asia, and also the Foreign Minister of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Moctar Ouane, who presided over the session on capacity-building in counter-terrorism matters in the Sahel region. I am extremely thankful to them for their interest and participation.

The third notable development in the work of the Task Force this past autumn was the first workshop on Promoting In-Depth knowledge of the Global Strategy, which CTITF organized in cooperation with the Government of Indonesia in Bali this past November for Member States of the Southeast Asian region. The workshop brought together officials not just from ministries of foreign affairs, but also from ministries of education, interior, officials from law enforcement agencies, as well as civil society organizations. The workshop was critical in promoting not just broader awareness of the Global Strategy, but also the recognition that a whole-of-government approach and greater involvement of civil society are needed in its effective implementation.

I am grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the personal attention he has given to the cause of supporting the victims of terrorist crimes, hosting the screening of the film “Killing in the Name,” which was a source of great satisfaction for CTITF. On this subject, CTITF also organized a workshop on supporting the victims of terrorist crimes in Siracusa, Italy, earlier this month in partnership with the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences. Developing the international legal and institutional framework on assisting victims is important in order to promote the international norm that terrorism is unjustifiable and unacceptable, and this workshop was aimed at facilitating the development of a compendium of best practices for supporting victims of terrorist crimes.

Finally, the first meeting of the Project on the Implementation of the Global Strategy in Central Asia was conducted last week in Bratislava, Slovakia. The goal of the meeting was to identify relevant best practices and gaps in order to make concrete recommendations on Pillars I and IV of the Strategy for the Joint Central Asia Action Plan. The meeting reinforced the need for Member States in Central Asia to combine both law enforcement strategies with preventive approaches that address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including on inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue. The Project, over the course of its process, will promote a more cohesive coordination role of regional organizations as well.

These events that I have just mentioned, despite their significance in taking the UN’s leadership in global counter-terrorism efforts forward, are still a part of CTITF’s overall activities. The bulk of CTITF’s work is carried out within the Task Force’s working groups, which range from countering the use of the internet by terrorists to protecting human rights. I would now like to list a number of activities where CTITF and its entities are focused on.
On preventing and responding to WMD attacks, the IAEA has led the Task Force working group on this topic in the publication of an excellent report aimed at familiarizing Member States with the actions undertaken by the UN to assist in areas of prevention, response and mitigation of terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction particularly nuclear and radiological weapons or materials. The OPCW shall be undertaking future work on the next phase of this working group, which will focus on inter-agency coordination in the event of terrorist attacks using chemical and biological weapons.

The financing of terrorist activities is one of the essential subjects of the Strategy. In this regard, CTITF will build upon the report published by the working group on tackling the financing of terrorism last year and focus on key recommendations of the report and assist Member States in implementing them. CTITF looks forward to working with CTED in the upcoming project on preventing the abuse of charitable organizations by terrorists, which will bring together Member States from various parts of the world and explore best practices on how charitable organizations can be protected. The first workshop in this endeavour is expected to take place in South East Asia in March 2011.

Our collective counter-terrorism efforts would amount to nothing if in the process we disregard our primary obligation to uphold the dignity and the rights of each and every individual. Pillar IV of the Strategy is a critical aspect of the work of the Task Force and CTITF is committed to promoting the provisions of this Pillar at all levels. The Task Force cherishes the participation of OHCHR as a key entity, and we value our work together in preparing the Basic Human Rights Reference Guides that are aimed at providing guidance to Member States and their officials in all relevant fields on how human rights compliant measures can be adopted in a number of counter-terrorism areas. As I mentioned before, two Guides have thus far been finalised and are available on the CTITF website: on stopping and searching of persons and on security infrastructure. Three more are currently being developed: on detention in the context of countering terrorism, on the principle of legality in national counter-terrorism legislation and on the proscription of organisations at the national level.

Furthermore, on 17-18 February 2011, the Working Group will hold its first regional expert symposium on ‘Securing the fundamental principles of a fair trial for persons accused of terrorist offences’, in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting will be the first of a series of international meetings, held at the regional level on a rotating basis, on issues related to the protection of human rights in the context of countering terrorism and to exchange experiences regarding good practices with respect to the protection of human rights in this regard. A report on the outcome of the expert meeting will be produced with a view to providing guidance to Member States on how human rights can best be protected in the context of fair trial.

One of the hallmarks of the CTITF work is the Project on the Integrated Assistance on Countering Terrorism, or I-ACT, which underscores the need for a holistic counter-terrorism approach at the national and international levels. The I-ACT initiative brings together all the relevant stakeholders not only at the national level - within each Member
State - but also at the international level - within the UN - in order to ensure that assistance rendered from the UN to a Member State is coordinated.

The objectives of the I-ACT Initiative are three-fold: to enhance information sharing among the CTITF entities and to provide an information-sharing service tool to do this, namely the web-based I-ACT information-sharing system; to enhance and support the coordination role of the CTITF, by facilitating information-sharing among our entities and by providing a platform for partnering states and entities in their outreach to donors; and not least; and finally, to make a difference on the ground in partnering Member States by not only helping them identifying gaps in the implementation of the Strategy but also by assisting them in addressing these gaps by providing technical assistance to them.

Through the valuable support of EOSG, CTED, and UNODC, we now have a structure in place which allows us to focus on the implementation phase of I-ACT. And through the mapping/gap analysis process we have gained not only the expertise but also built the capacity to deepen our collective engagement with our partners Nigeria and Burkina Faso, while also laying the groundwork for broadening the Initiative with additional partnering countries/sub-regions.

We have made significant progress thus far in promoting the equal implementation of all four pillars of the Strategy. In Nigeria, we have completed the mapping and analysis process and identified key gaps for the consideration of the Government of Nigeria and donors to collaborate on. Next year, we expect to begin delivery of technical assistance projects to Nigeria under this initiative. In Burkina Faso, we are currently consulting on identifying the shortfalls through a comprehensive mapping exercise, and expect to liaise with donors on the results. In the future, the CTITF Office and our partners will work on future partnering countries and regions and we are examining the different modalities for how we can engage and assist countries within the I-ACT framework. We also look forward to broadening the use of the web-based Information System. Our key aim is to make I-ACT an efficient tool for enhanced assistance delivery across all four pillars of the Global Strategy.

We have seen recently an increased focus on how the internet is being abused by terrorists for spreading violent extremism and recruitment. I am happy to note the progress CTITF has made, in partnership with a number of our entities, particularly the 1267 Monitoring Team, on best to proceed on protecting the internet. The working group on this topic in CTITF has prepared a report on the legal aspects of countering the abuse of the internet by terrorists, and its upcoming meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on counter-narratives to terrorism holds immense promise in taking our efforts further. I would also like to commend the Monitoring Team for its work on screening event of "The Terrorist Who Came Home," which is the first in a series of documentaries intended to highlight the stories of repentant terrorists and demonstrate the negative impact of terrorism on communities. The screening of the first documentary shall take place on 10 January 2011 at IPI.
The three-year programme of the Lucca-based UNICRI Center on Policies to Counter the Appeal of Terrorism has also entered in its implementation phase. The Center’s activities will focus on analyzing and preventing pathways into terrorism, early intervention efforts against terrorist recruitment as well as rehabilitation initiatives. Meanwhile, the Center has organized a series of missions to get in direct touch with the countries that have policies and programmes to counter the appeal of terrorism. CTITF and UNICRI are working actively in exploring public-private partnerships on counter-terrorism issues, a subject which is also of great interest to a number of Member States.

The most recent of CTITF’s initiatives is the working group on border management. Co-chaired by CTED and INTERPOL, the objectives of the working group are to provide advice and assistance to Member States in their efforts to implement a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address the threat of terrorism in the context of cross-border activities, by combining the contributions of specialized international organizations and United Nations entities with border management and control mandates or relevance. The entities of the Border WG will coordinate their efforts to work with all relevant stakeholders in compiling existing international standards, legislation, strategies and guidelines and exchange information with all partners to develop new ideas on the effective implementation those standards and operational best practices. The first meeting of the working group will take place in Brussels next month, where a number of key priority areas and immediate products will be identified.

Naturally, each of those activities involves smaller measures and steps that are just as important, but I have skipped on those elements in the interest of time. My purpose is to provide a snapshot of the range of topics on which CTITF entities are engaged in, and it is only growing at this stage. For example, in 2011, CTITF has invited UNIDO and the Alliance of Civilization as entities, which will allow the Task Force to further enhance coordination and collaboration across the board on a broader range of topics which affect international counter-terrorism efforts. Furthermore, CTITF’s focus on supporting victims of terrorist crimes will intensify through a media training programme for victims, as well as a study on financial support for them. (UNODC is spearheading the study on criminal justice response to supporting victims).

I would like to take opportunity to welcome the extension of the mandate of CTED that was passed by the Security Council two days ago. CTED is a critical entity of CTITF and one of its most important partners. The new resolution is especially welcome since it brings many elements of the Strategy into the work and focus of the CTC and CTED, which will only assist the organization in ensuring that no resource is spared in countering violent extremism and incitement and protecting human rights while countering terrorism. I sincerely hope that over the course of next year CTITF and CTED develop a close bond that reinforces each others’ activities and efforts.

As provided in the new resolution, CTITF has embarked on a well thought out communications strategy and outreach programme that will provide information to all our partners as well as Member States. CTITF’s quarterly newsletter has been launched, and Member States have received the first edition of The Beam in September. The next
edition will be published in January. The Task Force’s website has been revamped and our engagements with the media have increased. I would like to thank DPI for all the support in increasing CTITF’s visibility. It is now the purpose of the Task Force to let outsiders know that the UN is not just an active player in counter-terrorism, but one that adds value to the international efforts against this menace.

As you know, this is my last briefing to you in this capacity as chairman of the Task Force, since I have been asked to return to France to offer my services in the French judiciary. Therefore, I would like to take a moment to express how grateful I am for the support that CTITF has received from so many Member States, UN and international organizations and all our partners. I would personally like to thank Mike Smith of CTED, and all our colleagues, for their exemplary partnership and unstinting support. Finally, I would like to say that CTITF could not have achieved even a fraction of what it has if it was not for the highly professional, extremely hardworking and committed team that work at the CTITF Office. I would like to thank them for the long hours they have put into building this impressive core of activities, despite the frustrations. I would not be here without them.

I will end here and take your questions.

Thank you very much.