

**Briefing by CTED Executive Director Mike Smith
to UN Security Council**
New York, 19 March 2008

It is a great pleasure and an honour to have been invited to make this statement before the Security Council. It gives me the opportunity, early in my tenure as Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), to express my appreciation for the confidence and trust that you, the members of the Council, have shown in me, in approving my appointment to this position.

On 10 December 2007, the Council adopted resolution 1787 (2007), which extended the mandate of CTED until 31 March 2008 and which requested me, in consultation with Council members, to recommend changes to the organizational plan of the Executive Directorate. I duly carried out that review of the Directorate's organization and methods of work, consulting with all the members of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the wider United Nations membership, CTED staff, other relevant United Nations agencies and experts outside the system.

I presented a revised version of the organizational plan to the Committee on 24 January 2008, where it was subsequently endorsed and forwarded to the Security Council. It is now before the Council in document S/2008/80, dated 8 February 2008.

When the Council adopted resolution 1373 (2001) on 28 September 2001, following the heinous attack on the World Trade Center in this city two weeks earlier, it was underlining for the whole world the threat that terrorism poses to us all. It also set out in that resolution the measures that all countries needed to take to combat that threat, including criminalizing terrorist acts, denying terrorists safe haven and financial resources, preventing terrorists from crossing borders and increasing cooperation with each other in order to prevent terrorist attacks and bring perpetrators to justice. All of those elements of resolution 1373 (2001) remain critical to addressing that threat and that resolution remains as relevant today as it was six and a half years ago.

At the same time, it is worth noting that considerable progress has been made. Most countries in the world have now criminalized terrorism. We have seen hundreds of new ratifications of the key counter-terrorism conventions and protocols, and there has been an almost unprecedented level of international exchange of information and cooperation among relevant agencies across borders, with the purpose of disrupting planned terrorist attacks and enabling the arrest and prosecution of those engaged in terrorism.

Given those developments, the need today is less to ensure that countries understand the seriousness of the challenge and more to ensure that they have the capacity and the expertise to implement the counter-terrorism measures set out in resolution 1373 (2001). To put it another way, these days the Counter-Terrorism Committee tends to spend less time establishing whether countries have put in place appropriate legislation and counter-terrorism machinery, and more time evaluating how

effective their border control arrangements, their counter-terrorism coordination machinery and their law enforcement capabilities are. In this process, we have become more aware of the capacity, resource and infrastructural constraints that are impeding full implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) in particular countries and regions.

The general progress made in the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001) was part of the background for my review of CTED's organizational plan. At the same time, that review was very much informed by three specific priorities that were repeatedly raised with me in the course of my consultations with members of the Council and the wider United Nations membership. The first of these is the consistency of our judgements across various countries and regions — something that is critical to the credibility of all our work. The second is facilitation of technical assistance. If we are to add real value to countries' counter-terrorism efforts, we need to be able to find solutions to the vulnerabilities that we identify. And the third is communication. There is clearly a need to explain, particularly to the wider United Nations membership, what we do and how we can help countries in their efforts to confront terrorism.

Let me say a little about the specific proposals in the revised organizational plan and how they address those concerns. The principal organizational change to CTED is the establishment, within the Assessment and Technical Assistance Office, of five cross-cutting functional groups in the areas of, respectively, technical assistance; terrorist financing; border control, arms trafficking and law enforcement; general legal issues; and issues raised by resolution 1624 (2005), as well as the human rights aspects of counter-terrorism. Those groups have been meeting regularly since their establishment and are already producing useful revisions of strategy, in the case of the technical assistance group, and revised criteria for harmonizing technical judgements about the implementation of particular elements of resolution 1373 (2001), in the case of the other groups.

Additionally, two smaller units have been created: one, a quality control unit to review documents before they leave the Executive Directorate and to ensure that they are consistent in style and format; and the other, a communications and outreach unit to develop more proactive communications strategies. Both of those units have been working actively over the past few weeks and are having a positive impact on the work of the Directorate.

As regards our methods of work, the revised organizational plan suggests several innovations. First, it proposes a more flexible approach to visits to countries, to allow for more focused visits tailored to the needs and situation of the country concerned. Secondly, it proposes a more comprehensive engagement with donors, the better to match their capabilities and programmes with the vulnerabilities identified in our dialogue with countries. Thirdly, it suggests that CTED become more actively involved in the work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force — a proposal that simply recognizes that implementing the requirements of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) implements, at the same time, most part of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Finally, it suggests greater effort to strengthen collaboration and cooperation

with the experts of the Security Council Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1540 (2004). It also highlights the usefulness of strengthened relations with international, regional and subregional organizations.

I am confident that implementing those changes in the structure and work of CTED will improve the credibility and usefulness of our work in future.

Let me now mention two particularly significant pieces of work on which we are currently engaged. First, we are close to finalizing the 192 Preliminary Implementation Assessments — or PIAs — one for every Member of the United Nations. This is a new and innovative tool that will greatly enhance our dialogue with Member States on the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001). Some 160 of these have already been adopted by the Committee and sent to the capitals of the States concerned.

Secondly, we are putting the finishing touches to a revision of “Survey of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001)” — a document in which, I know, the Committee and this Council have taken considerable interest. That survey looks at how countries in all regions and subregions across the globe are proceeding in their counter-terrorism efforts generally, where they are encountering difficulties and what gaps and vulnerabilities remain to be addressed in particular regions. I am hopeful that members will find it a valuable diagnostic tool to inform consideration of what next steps should be taken to address the ongoing threat of global terrorism.

The appalling bombing of the United Nations offices in Algiers on 11 December 2007 serves as a sober reminder that, notwithstanding the positive efforts we have collectively made, terrorism continues to be a serious threat to us all, and it continues to evolve and to manifest itself in new and dangerous ways. Member States have to do more to address this threat, and we, the United Nations, have to do a better job to help them in that endeavour. It is my hope that, with the renewal of CTED’s mandate and the implementation of the proposals set out in the revised organizational plan, the Directorate will be able to assist the Security Council, through the Counter-Terrorism Committee, to make an appropriate contribution to this collective global effort.