
Senior Officials Segment, 7 April, 2016
Session III – Priorities for National PVE Plans of Action (14h30-16h30)
Chairperson : Ambassador Heidi Grau, Head of the Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

Introductory Remarks by the Chairperson:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our topic for this session III is at the heart of the UN SG’s Report on PVE – which invites all States to adopt a national Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism.

Let me share with you a few remarks before I ask our contributors some key questions for them to address. And then open the floor for discussion.

At the end of December 2015, the United Nations Secretary-General published his Plan of action on Preventing Violent Extremism. The plan is part of the UN's wider, global framework of preventive action and it will be a key instrument to guide our common efforts in this field. This now requires that we take into consideration what this “preventative” approach really means for our action.

The SG’s Plan of Action emphasizes that, over the past two decades, the international community has sought to address violent extremism primarily within the context of security-based counter-terrorism measures. However there is a growing international consensus that such counter-terrorism measures have not been sufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism.

Thus the Plan of action strengthens the acknowledgement of the necessity to adopt a more global approach, which essentially implements systematic preventive measures which directly address the root causes as well as immediate causes of violent extremism that can lead to terrorism.

In this context, Switzerland is committed to support its partners in their efforts to implement systematic prevention measures addressing political, social and economic causes that drive people, in particular youngsters, toward violent extremism.

We hence recognize the importance of promoting inclusive societies, based on values of peace, tolerance, respect for diversity, human rights and rule of law.

Let me recall that the Division I’m heading, the Human Security Division at the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has a long standing experience of working in conflict resolution, fight against impunity, protection of human rights and political participation in pluralistic environments – a soft "human security" experience that I think can be useful to work with our partners in the field in addressing the prevention of violent extremism.
Legitimate grievances must find room to be expressed through democratic and political dialogue, not through violence. Prevention hence starts with fostering such non-violent alternatives to violent extremism and open spaces for dialogue. To achieve this, it is necessary to work with all stakeholders - governments, civil society, armed groups, including radical ones. Inclusion is key.

Finally, in undertaking such work, appropriate analysis of the causes that underlie violent extremism, based on each particular context, seems to me an initial “must”, to make sure specific causes are addressed with appropriate tools, and the “do no harm” principle is duly considered.

Let me now turn to our honorable speakers for this session – and ask them to address the following questions in their (brief : maximum 5 minutes) presentations.

1. What are key priorities and good practices in developing and implementing National PVE Plans of Action?
2. How can we ensure national and local ownership in the development and implementation of National PVE Plans of Action? What is the role of civil society and of the private sector in this regard?
3. How can we ensure impact under the seven priority areas as reflected in the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action and how can we encourage the development of PVE sensitive policies in these seven areas?
4. How can the United Nations System effectively support Member States in addressing the drivers of violent extremism through their National PVE Plans of Action and other tools? How could better international cooperation help in preventing violent extremism? How can the United Nations system support States in strengthening their PVE action? How can the UN help States to devise specific PVE activities?