Good afternoon Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
All protocol observed,

I welcome this High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism organized under the initiative of Secretary-General Guterres and by the newly established UN CT Office and the newly appointed Under-Secretary-General Ambassador Voronkov. This is a good start!

We face terrorism on a global scale, with long-term public, political, and moral consequences.

Terrorism has gone global with efforts to inspire, recruit, and radicalize individuals to commit despicable acts. I think we all agree that our CT efforts must also have a strong international dimension.

UN epitomizes universal CT commitments and principles. That is why we are here today.

Distinguished participants,

Today, we face a multitude of threats. Among them DAESH has been a unifying factor for counter-terrorism efforts. We are at a critical juncture.

By the end of 2017, DAESH lost practically all its territories in Iraq and Syria. But, the threat is not over!

DAESH is evolving. It now aims to perpetrate sensational acts of terror outside the region, through individuals and cells, using the internet and social media.

DAESH is transforming itself from a hierarchical structure to a formation of multiple autonomous cells, going underground and becoming harder to detect.

DAESH finds fertile ground in different geographies, its *modus operandi* is mimicked, and with terrorist elements migrating to other conflict areas, the risks are diversified. Returning and relocating FTFs continue to be a major challenge for us all. We must also develop efficient strategies with regard to their families.

Turkey has long been at the forefront of efforts to counter DAESH, Al Qaida, and their affiliates. Preventing FTFs from using Turkey has been a key priority. To date, we have detained more than 11 thousand (11,462) DAESH and Al Qaida affiliates; around 4,000 (3,814) individuals have been arrested.

We have deported around 6,500 travellers suspected of having links to terrorist organizations. Our non-entry list has surpassed 63 thousand individuals.
Successful operations by our relevant agencies against DAESH prevented attacks, facilitated arrests of high-level DAESH operatives and also suppressed attempts to use Turkey for reorganization. We will continue to exert pressure on this network and any facilitator connected with it, including the interdiction of financing for these groups.

Turkey also conducted two successful CT operations to ensure border security through elimination of the terrorist threat emanating from Syria: Operation Euphrates Shield (OES) and Operation Olive Branch (OOB).

Our CT efforts also ensure the security of the international community in general.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our own struggle has taught us crucial lessons:

The inter-connectivity between terrorist cells is significant. Hence, we need to achieve a similar level of synergy among us. Prompt information exchange, intelligence sharing and close cooperation is crucial. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, relevant countries, despite having prior information on suspects, failed to share them until the attacks actually took place.

We must remain unbiased in countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We must form a unified front and adopt a unified message: There can be no safe haven or impunity for any terrorist. No act of terrorism should go unpunished. For that, we must implement the universal principle of “either prosecute or extradite”.

Security is indivisible. We cannot compartmentalize and adopt different approaches against terrorism. We need to be coherent and principled. Otherwise, our joint efforts to counter this threat are bound to fail.

Our strategy against DAESH, and terrorism in general, should also include efforts towards building capacity and resilience to address violent extremism in a sustainable manner.

Violent extremism comes from all strata of the society, belong to many diverse religious and non-religious groups; from ethnic separatists to extreme left and right. We reject any association of violent extremism with any religion. Beware of Islamophobia, populism and extreme-right rhetoric.

Distinguished participants,

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to emphasize that the phenomenon of FTFs does not exclusively belong to terrorist groups exploiting religion, such as DAESH and Al Qaida. YPG is an excellent case in point.

Any individual joining YPG or any other PKK-affiliated group in Syria and Iraq are simply FTFs. Identifying them as “volunteers” is an insult to the memories of victims of PKK terrorism.

Before handing over the floor, I would like to congratulate Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and his team for this timely conference and wish him luck in his endeavours.

Thank you.