



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)**

**Opening Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism and
UNCCT Executive Director**

18th Meeting of the UNCCT Advisory Board

29 May 2019, 10:00-12:00

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by thanking the Chair, His Excellency Ambassador Al-Mouallimi, for his support and introductory remarks.

I also want to thank the Advisory Board members for attending this first Ambassadorial level meeting in 2019, for your continued support of the work of UNCCT through strategic guidance, technical expertise and financial contributions.

I want to focus my remarks on four areas, which we will discuss further during today's meeting.

Firstly, our capacity-building support to Member States in 2018.

Secondly, the deliberative process we have started in Riyadh to address four topical themes: thematic priorities, funding, monitoring and evaluation, and the role and composition of the Board.

Thirdly, the audit of UNCCT and subsequent change management process.

And lastly, an overview of the key strategic priorities for UNCCT's work and operations going forward.

Starting with the capacity-building: You have before you the Annual Report for 2018, which was circulated on to your Missions 30 April. This report is a compendium of UNCCT's activities in the last year, presented in a very detailed manner.

One can see that in 2018 UNCCT's annual expenditure increased to \$17.6 million, compared to \$10.6 million in 2017, representing an increase of 66%.

This demonstrates a continued upward trend in the delivery of capacity-building assistance by UNCCT since the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. It means more results and visibility.

Almost every week, UNCCT is leading or providing expertise at multiple capacity-building activities, trainings, and workshops. Our staff are in high demand whenever UN entities and regional organizations plan to organize counter-terrorism events.

I also increasingly get requests from Member States seeking UNCCT support to address specific terrorism issues or in the immediate aftermath of terrorist attacks.

As a result, UNCCT has expanded the scope of its capacity-building assistance under the existing priority areas of the 5-Year Programme, while adding new thematic areas of work to better address emerging and evolving terrorism threats.

At the same time, the Centre has consolidated small-scale projects into multi-year programmes to ensure sustainability of impact and efficient use of resources.

We have now comprehensive multi-year programmes in the areas of border security and management, countering financing of terrorism, WMD and CBRN terrorism, and supporting victims of terrorism. It is very important to ensure these programmes are more global and results-oriented.

We are also working to develop programmes on youth and human rights to ensure a strategic, sustained and holistic approach to youth engagement and human rights in the counter-terrorism context.

All of these broader programmes allow us to both take a more strategic approach on core issues, and to respond to Member State requests in an adequate manner.

They further illustrate the Centre's efforts to effectively respond to the General Assembly and Security Council mandates, including recent ones such as resolution 2462 on countering terrorist financing, while keeping closely aligned with the 5-Year Programme approved by the Advisory Board.

The Centre continues to play an important role in facilitating 'All-of-UN' capacity-building activities through seed funding and co-implementation of several Global Compact Interagency Working Group projects in the area of WMD terrorism, biometrics and others. The Director of UNCCT will make a more detailed presentation of the Centre's activities later.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

A little over a year ago, meeting in Riyadh with the participation of the Secretary-General and the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, we launched a deliberative process together to ensure that UNCCT would have strategic guidance on four issues: 1) thematic priorities, 2) funding, 3) monitoring and evaluation, and 4) the role and composition of the Advisory Board.

During this process, the Board exchanged views on the Centre's priority areas of work and how the UNCCT should mobilize and utilize its resources to deliver more effectively on its mandate as a Centre of Excellence and capacity-building arm.

The issue of monitoring and evaluation of the performance and impact of the Centre's work and operations was considered in further detail in separate expert meetings on the findings of the OIOS audit.

We will look forward to the continued guidance of the Chair and Members of the Advisory Board on the future role and composition of the Board in the framework of General Assembly resolution 71/291 adopted in 2017. I think the consultancy which will take place soon will be very helpful in this regard.

This leads me to my third point regarding our ongoing work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the audit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

As you are aware, the OIOS released its detailed audit report in December 2018, which provided 12 important recommendations in areas of strategic planning, organization and performance reporting, resource mobilization, and project management, in order to guide the Centre's efforts to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the management of its capacity-building support.

I was pleased to note that OIOS found no issues of a 'critical' nature.

OIOS has provided a detailed briefing on the results of their audit to the Advisory Board at the expert level.

Following a thorough review and assessment of these audit findings, I have accepted all of the recommendations and established a Task Force within my Office to implement each of them within the established timeframe.

During the sixth Review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Member States requested that the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism be well-organized to undertake its core functions.

In response, my Office has undergone a change management process, which builds on the deliberations with the Advisory Board to improve the Centre's delivery of capacity-building assistance and addresses all of the 12 audit recommendations issued by the OIOS.

As a key decision in this regard, I have organized the work of the Centre by the four Pillars of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy. This will also help ensure a balanced implementation of the Global Strategy.

We did present this new org chart to Member States many times and that is why there is no need to make the next presentation today.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude my remarks by highlighting a number of strategic priorities for the future work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.

First and foremost, I want to express my strong commitment to ensuring that UNCCT is further developed into a Centre of Excellence, as envisaged in the Vision Statement of the Secretary-General in 2014 on the future role of the Centre.

In defining the Centre of Excellence, the Vision Statement points to a Centre equipped with subject matter expertise on issues that are not covered by other parts of the United Nations and with sufficient capacity to ensure that the Centre is able to meet the demands for capacity-building.

We have made important progress towards realizing this Vision, with an expanded portfolio of capacity-building programmes and activities reaching over 70 Member States. Our common priorities are prevention of violent extremism, supporting victims of terrorism, countering financing of terrorism, border security and management, foreign terrorist fighters and returnees, CBRN terrorism, human rights, strategic communications, countering terrorist narratives and so on.

And we will continue to raise the profile of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre as a Centre of Excellence, equipping the Centre with specialized and state-of-the-art counter-terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism expertise, optimizing its performance, and promoting its visibility.

In this context, a strategic priority for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in 2019 is to step up the implementation of existing programmes and projects that have tangible and sustainable impact. I have set a target to increase the implementation volume by at least 25% compared to 2018.

Another strategic priority is to enhance the visibility of the Centre's capacity-building projects and activities, including through the active use of promotional materials and communication tools.

We will also strengthen the guidelines and processes for carrying out monitoring and evaluation across all programmes and projects to ensure accountability and oversight of programme performance.

And last but not least, we will continue our close collaboration with Global Compact entities through the revitalized Working Groups and implementation of joint projects.

We will also expand our cooperation with Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations, civil society, the research community and the private sector.

All of this will need to be reflected as we review and update the 5-Year Programme, as recommended by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and I look forward to working with you on this important endeavour in 2019.

As we work towards these strategic priorities, we will continue to rely on the support of donors contributing to the United Nations Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism and other partner countries, including by earmarking funding for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and its programmes and projects. I would therefore like to express my deepest appreciation to all of you and look forward to continuing our close cooperation.

In closing, I would like to praise and thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the continued financial, organizational and intellectual support of UNCCT's activities as a United Nations Centre of Excellence.

Thank you.