

**Co-Chairs' Summary presented by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,  
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of  
Counter-Terrorism**

**African Regional High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and  
the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism**

**Nairobi, 11 July 2019**

Your Excellency, Dr Fred Matiang'i, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry  
of Interior and Coordination of National Security of National  
Government of the Republic of Kenya,

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like to thank His Excellency President Kenyatta and the  
Government of the Republic of Kenya, the United Nations Secretary-  
General, His Excellency Antonio Guterres, His Excellency Moussa Faki,  
Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the United Nations  
Office at Nairobi and all those who have made this landmark conference  
possible through their leadership, participation and contributions.

I am pleased to acknowledge participation of 1497 delegates from  
Member States, International and Regional Organisations, the United  
Nations' entities and 55 civil society organisations, including women  
organisations and youth groups in the conference and its 13 side events.

I would also like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar and the United Kingdom for their financial contributions and pledges for this conference.

This conference has highlighted the impressive work that you are doing to tackle terrorism and violent extremism across this vast and diverse continent.

It has demonstrated the importance of African-led and African-owned counter-terrorism efforts that are strengthened by the solidarity and collective responsibility of the international community.

And it has generated lots of innovative ideas and practical actions to be implemented at global, regional, national and local levels.

It also highlighted what needs to be done to prevent and counter-terrorism in Africa. The United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres emphasised that for terrorism to be defeated, it is essential that African counter-terrorism is holistic, well-funded, underpinned by respect for human rights, and - most importantly - backed by political will.

These outcomes build on last year's United Nations High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism in New York.

This regional conference is therefore a key part of a broader initiative to give new momentum to multilateral cooperation to address the evolving threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

To share the key points from our discussions over the last two days, the United Nations will work with the Government of the Republic of Kenya to organize a side event during the next High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism in New York in June 2020. We would encourage that all Member States benefit from what we learned here in Nairobi.

This regional conference will also inform the debates at the African Union and lead to a strengthening of the African Peace and Security Architecture's response to terrorism.

There will not be a negotiated outcome from this conference, but I want to set out some key conclusions and a vision for the way forward, on behalf of the two Co-Chairs.

First, Member States have the primary responsibility for tackling terrorism and protecting their citizens.

That is why this conference has focused on learning from African counter-terrorism experiences, challenges and solutions.

Yesterday, during the Opening Session of the conference, President Kenyatta outlined Kenya's comprehensive efforts to devolve prevention work to the local level, utilise education to tackle the threat of radicalization, and strengthen its disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes to address the threat of returning foreign terrorist fighters.

We have heard many other excellent examples of nationally owned African counter-terrorism efforts, which address the specific needs of each region and country.

Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission rightly noted, "the responses of Africa to violent extremism and terrorism are multiple, multi-faceted and multi-dimensional."

To address multiple dimensions of African counter-terrorism efforts, Member States, the United Nations entities and civil society partners organised 13 (thirteen) side events around the conference. These side events were an important complement to the work of the conference and reflected and amplified core themes of the conference.

A key message of these events is the urgent need to build a genuine partnership with African youth; to engage young men and women in leadership roles to counter and prevent extremist violence and conflict across the continent. The discussions also highlighted numerous bottom-up, youth led good practices that are contributing to the Silencing the Guns initiative, from organising sports events, conducting civic education, to innovative art projects.

The side events also focused on links between transnational organised crime and terrorism, disengagement and reintegration, on how to counter Daesh propaganda, cross border approaches to violent extremism, correlation between climate change and violent extremism, and above all gender dimension of countering terrorism and the role of women and girls in and under Al-Shabab.

Second, based on our discussions this morning, we must do more to listen to youth perspectives and engage young people to help shape African counter-terrorism policies and programmes.

It was a privilege to listen to the Youth Envoy of the African Union yesterday. We need the dynamism, creativity and desire for change of young Africans if we are to effectively counter the manipulative messages of terrorists.

We need to make a strategic investment in their futures through quality education and employment opportunities to build resilience to violent extremist narratives that promote hatred and division. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism stands ready to respond to this call.

Third, there is a need to share critical information, good practices and lessons learned in a more proactive way between African countries to build trust, knowledge and institutional capacities.

This includes sharing terrorist threat assessments and intelligence knowledge on a need to know basis.

Our discussions have shown that while terrorist groups can start out in one country, they often cross national boundaries and become regional threats.

All four sessions of this conference have demonstrated that we are often dealing with similar issues and challenges in different contexts. We must learn from each other about what works and what does not and from success stories in and beyond Africa.

This will help build the bold new partnership between African countries to tackle the scourge of terrorism that the United Nations Secretary-General mentioned yesterday morning.

All of us in this room have a role to play to help develop and cement this new partnership.

For example, my Office is creating a United Nations Counter-Terrorism Coordination Portal under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to improve the sharing of information, resources and expertise between Member States and the United Nations.

As part of this initiative, we will produce a comprehensive list of African focal points working on counter-terrorism and violent extremism issues to help promote cooperation between countries.

Fourth, we need to further strengthen African regional and sub-regional counter-terrorism cooperation, based on the structures, objectives, principles and values of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

African regional bodies such as the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa and the newly operationalized African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation are vital frameworks to promote regional counter-terrorism cooperation.

Sub-regional mechanisms, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the African Union Mission in Somalia, the Accra Initiative, and the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin, are also crucial in this regard.

I hope these regional and sub-regional organizations can further support African national counter-terrorism efforts by encouraging more joint cross-border projects, joint training programmes, peer learning initiatives and the sharing of resources, research and expertise between countries.

This cross-border cooperation will help tackle terrorist financing networks in Africa that are often transnational in nature.

Fifth, we need to mobilise the entire international community to support and invest in our partnership with African countries.

To help facilitate this in the context of the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2322 (2016), the United Nations led by UNODC will consider technical assistance to support national and regional platforms to strengthen international cooperation among investigators, prosecutors and judges to prevent, investigate and prosecute terrorist acts.



Sixth, we need to devote even greater attention and resources to addressing the causes as well as the symptoms of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

As His Excellency President Kenyatta observed, principled counter-terrorism operations with clear mandates, appropriate training and predictable funding are indispensable if we are to prevent terrorist groups holding territory in Africa.

But terrorism cannot be defeated by military means alone.

As we heard in Session 2, coordinated, sustained and inclusive preventive steps are critical to address the drivers that push and pull individuals to become radicalized and join terrorist groups, such as protracted conflicts, inequalities, youth unemployment, poverty, inter-ethnic violence and local clashes between farmers and herders.

We also heard innovative ways in which African countries are integrating efforts to tackle terrorism and violent extremism with their wider work to deliver Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We need to focus on enhancing national and community resilience, including by ensuring good governance, tackling corruption and fully respecting human rights and the rule of law.

Seventh, “whole-of-society” and “whole-of-government” approaches are the most effective way to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. I welcome the active engagement of civil society in the work of the conference, and happy to acknowledge that 55 civil society organizations participated in the conference.

This point was made by a number of speakers in each of the sessions. In particular, many of you noted that cooperation with civil society and non-governmental organizations at the grassroots level is vital. We can’t succeed without contributions of civil society.

I want to pay tribute to the valuable work that civil society organizations do in Africa, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances.

This conference has also underlined the crucial role of women throughout Africa in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Women's peace and security networks, such as the G5 Sahel Women's Platform and Kenya's Sisters Without Borders, are doing extraordinarily helpful work.

We must tap into their expertise and experiences and ensure a gender inclusive approach in everything we do, in line with various instruments of the United Nations, African Union and its subregional bodies.

Eighth, as the United Nations Secretary-General Guterres mentioned yesterday morning, we need to increase our support to African victims and survivors of terrorism.

I look forward to discussing practical ways to uphold the rights of victims, and provide them with support and justice, at the first Global Congress of Victims in New York in June next year.

Ninth, we need to promote positive narratives based on peace, respect, tolerance and human rights, as persuasive alternatives to the dangerous propaganda spread by terrorist and violent extremist groups in Africa.

Our discussions have shown that Africa has powerful tools in its diverse culture, rich heritage and long history of fighting for African

freedom and independence that can be used with great effect in this regard.

Lastly, I am more convinced than ever before that the United Nations has a key role to play to support African Member States tackle terrorism and violent extremism.

We must use the framework of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to provide you with coordinated assistance to support your implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

This capacity-building assistance must also address critical gaps identified by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in their assessments.

The UN Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, mentioned in the previous session, is an excellent example of how the United Nations delivers real impact. It supports countries in building their own capacity to detect terrorists and serious crime and establish strong regional cooperation via informal working groups.

The United Nations will continue to prioritise capacity-building support for African Member States on key counter-terrorism issues including promoting South-South cooperation, respecting human rights, countering the financing of terrorism, and offering new opportunities to neglected communities.

We will also continue to support African countries and regional organizations to develop and implement national and regional plans of action to prevent violent extremism upon request.

As we heard in numerous side events, United Nations entities such as the UNODC, UNDP, UN Women, UNESCO, UNEP and others are supporting and delivering innovative capacity-building projects to support African counter-terrorism efforts.

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in my Office, as a Centre of Excellence, and other United Nations entities will adapt our capacity-building programmes to reflect the priorities you have highlighted in this conference.

For example, we will consider establishing an interagency platform in Kenya and other African countries to facilitate coordination of regional counter-terrorism work such as skills development and vocational training, prevention of violent extremism when conducive to terrorism

and the exchange of biometric and other information on foreign terrorist fighters, which can be provided to national watchlists and multilateral screening databases.

I also intend to deploy experts from my Office into African Special Political Missions, Peace Operations and Resident Coordinator's Offices to strengthen United Nations capacity-building support on the ground and enhance counter-terrorism links between the United Nations and African regional and sub-regional bodies.

My Office already has an excellent relationship with the African Union through our joint Memorandum of Understanding.

But I intend to strengthen our partnership further by establishing an annual counter-terrorism dialogue between the United Nations and the African Union, which will also involve African sub-regional bodies. This will help initiate practical steps to address the scourge of terrorism.

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the enormous sacrifices that African countries and their peoples have made in the global fight against terrorism.

We must ensure that these sacrifices are not in vain, but instead drive us forward to help build an Africa free of terrorism and violent extremism, which is essential for global peace and security.

The evolving and transnational terrorist threat in Africa offers a real opportunity to re-think our strategies, align our actions and goals, and pursue an inclusive approach.

This African regional conference has set us on our way and given us a strong foundation on which to build.

Thank you for your participation and I wish you a safe journey home.