



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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

**Quarterly Briefing to Member States by United Nations Global Counter-
Terrorism Coordination Compact Entities**

25 July 2019

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to thank you for attending this Quarterly Briefing to Member States. I am also grateful to my colleagues from the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities for joining me.

I would like to begin by briefing you on several key developments in UNOCT.

First, I will update you on the regional high-level conferences that have taken place and those that are planned for the coming months.

Second, I will set out our initial thoughts for next year's "Counter-Terrorism Week" based on useful feedback received from many Member States.

Third, I will update you on progress made within the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact framework.

First, Regional Conferences.

As you know, the decision was made at last year's High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States to hold regional conferences to maintain momentum in the lead-up to the next High-level Conference, to be held here in New York in June 2020.

UNOCT has been working closely with Member States on these conferences, which help promote national and regional ownership of the Global Strategy and provide new impetus to multilateral cooperation.

We have now held three regional conferences - in Tajikistan, Mongolia, and Kenya.

In May, we partnered with the Government of Tajikistan to provide a platform for Member States in Central Asia to discuss how to counter the financing of terrorism. Through the adoption by consensus of the "Dushanbe Declaration," now an official document of the General Assembly, we reinforced counter-terrorism cooperation in Central Asia.

In June, in partnership with the Government of Mongolia and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, we held a conference in Ulaanbaatar on a 'whole-of-society-approach' to preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation to terrorism, bringing together a wide range of actors from Europe and Asia.

And from 10 to 11 July, in partnership with the Government of Kenya, we held in Nairobi our biggest regional conference yet on counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

Almost 1,500 delegates from close to 100 Member States, international, regional and sub-regional organizations, United Nations entities and 55 civil society organizations, including women organizations and youth groups, attended the conference. This made it the largest ever meeting of African states on counter-terrorism issues.

I have invited the Kenyan delegation to also make a few remarks on the Conference today, following my statement.

The President of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta and Secretary-General Guterres opened this regional conference. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Moussa Faki and the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Her Excellency Gabriela Barron also attended the event.

The main appeal of the Conference on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism in Africa, and I think it is very important in the current context, was to strengthen African-led and African-owned counter-terrorism efforts. It helped to mobilise the entire international community to enhance its political commitment and provide resources and expertise to support African States. And it served to strengthen the African Peace and Security Architecture's response to terrorism.

As a follow-up to the Conference, we are considering establishing an inter-agency platform in Kenya to facilitate the coordination of regional counter-terrorism capacity building work such as professional support for counter-terrorism national institutes for skills development and vocational training, and the exchange of biometric and other information on foreign terrorist fighters in the context of implementation of the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme. Full respect of human rights is a crucial aspect of these efforts.

I am ready to deploy experts, when requested, from my Office into Africa-based Special Political Missions, Peace Keeping 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.

We will be also doing this job with the African Union through our joint Memorandum of Understanding. To strengthen our partnership, we are considering establishing an annual counter-terrorism dialogue between the United Nations and the African Union, which will also involve African sub-regional bodies. This Dialogue will complement other UN-AU initiatives to address in practical terms the scourge of terrorism.

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

Looking ahead, we are working with the Government of Belarus to organise a conference in Minsk on 3-4 September focused on cyber-security and countering terrorism through the use of new and emerging technologies.

In October, we will help organise a conference in the Caribbean focusing on specialised technical assistance to CARICOM Member States to support the implementation of the CARICOM Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

A regional conference in Budapest on 7-8 November in partnership with the Government of Hungary will focus on the prevention of radicalization to terrorism through regional policy responses and risk mitigation, while a regional conference with the United Arab Emirates in late December will focus on youth, tolerance and preventing radicalization to terrorism.

In January 2020, we will once again partner with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and with the generous sponsorship of Switzerland, to hold a conference in Vienna on Foreign Terrorist Fighters.

Second point, the UN Counter-Terrorism Week

The outcomes of these regional conferences will feed into the second United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week in June 2020.

There will be three elements to next year's Counter-Terrorism Week: the biennial review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; the second High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States; and the first-ever Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism, which is a very important component of our activities.

All these events are important examples of the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation. Hence, the Counter-Terrorism Week is a component of next year's commemoration of the United Nations' 75th Anniversary.

As you would know, next year's Review process is the seventh review of the Global Strategy. As requested by the last review resolution, the Secretary-General's report on Ways to Assess the Impact and Progress made in the Implementation of the Strategy was issued in May as document number A/73/866. Next year, ahead of the Review itself, we will also produce a report on the progress made in implementing the strategy.

We have started preparations for next year's High-Level Conference. I am grateful for the constructive suggestions that UNOCT has received, in response to my letter of 22 May on how to ensure the Conference adds real value and meets the needs of Member States.

We have not yet finalized the programme for the conference, but I wanted to inform you of our way of thinking on certain aspects.

I agree with many of you that we should make the conference more interactive to facilitate genuine dialogue. So the programme will include panels and breakout sessions, and I encourage Member States to take the lead in convening, as last year, a number of innovative side events throughout the week.

In addition, I am proceeding from the understanding, expressed by a number of Member States, that civil society organisations will be invited to participate in all sessions of the conference. They make a valuable contribution to tackling terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in communities around the world and their views need to be heard.

Finally, on the third key element of the Counter-Terrorism Week, the first-ever Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism. This proposal has come about from the strong interest expressed by many of you for the United Nations to address this issue more systematically.

I welcome the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 73/305 last month. The recent establishment of a Group of countries Friends of Victims of Terrorism, led by Afghanistan and Spain, is another key milestone in our work on this issue.. I hope that this group, together with UNOCT, will take a lead both in the conceptualization and organization of the Congress, and will consider financial support for the implementation of this initiative.

The Victims Congress will be a landmark global gathering of victims, Member States, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders to build on these recent achievements to support victims and survivors of terrorism.

In this context, I would also like to remind you that next month, on 21 August, we will again commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism. UNOCT will be organizing a number of events, including screening of a documentary and a photographic exhibition. I hope that you will all be able to attend this event

Third, the Global Compact.

I would now like to update you on the work of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

The Coordination Committee of the Global Compact has already agreed a new structure for the Compact's inter-agency working groups, aligned with overarching thematic priorities across the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The working groups have all developed terms of reference and work plans to guide their efforts, under the supervision of the Coordination Committee, to put the Global Compact into practice. These Working Groups, of which there are eight, work on key counter-terrorism priorities such as Preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism; Border management and law enforcement; Emerging threats and critical infrastructure protection; Criminal justice, legal responses and countering the financing of terrorism; Resource mobilization and monitoring and evaluation; National and regional counter-terrorism strategies; Promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law and supporting victims of terrorism, as well as adopting a gender sensitive approach to preventing and countering violent extremism.

The working groups meet regularly to share information on their latest activities, pursue joint projects and explore further cooperation. I have decided to offer fresh catalytic seed-funding to all the working groups to incentivize joint initiatives.

The Coordination Committee will meet for the third time tomorrow where I hope we will approve a Joint Programme of Work for 2019-2020, which is based on the work plans of the working groups, identifying specific objectives and concrete deliverables to operationalize an all-of-UN approach.

Tomorrow, we will also welcome to the Compact a new member - the United Nations System Staff College, and two new observers - the United Nations Children's Fund, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. This brings us now to a total of 41 entities taking part in the Global Compact Taskforce.

As part of the overall efforts to improve UN coordination both internally and externally, UNOCT is also working closely with entities such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), as well as civil society organizations and the private sector to identify good practices and new areas of cooperation.

Finally, I hope that I will also have the opportunity to meet with your High-Level Representatives during the High-Level Week in September and discuss our common counter-terrorism priorities.

My colleagues Ms. Sevil Alirzayeva, Mr. Steven Siqueira, and Mr. Mauro Miedico will shortly brief you about our change management and capacity building work, but let me first invite Her Excellency Ms. Koki Muli Grignon, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya to say a few words on the recent African Regional High-Level Conference in Nairobi.