



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**

**20th Meeting of the UNCCT Advisory Board
19 June 2020, 10:00-12:00**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this first virtual UNCCT Advisory Board meeting. I will brief you in a moment about how UNCCT has responded to the challenges of COVID-19. I very much hope that this meeting will be another success story about our adaptability.

I hope you are all safe and healthy and extend my best wishes to you, your staff and families in these especially challenging times.

Let me start by thanking the distinguished Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi, for his continued strong support and able leadership of the Advisory Board.

I also want to thank all of you for taking the time in this busy period to discuss UNCCT's achievements of the past year, our current work, and the development of our vision for the future.

When we met last time on 20 January, we had just completed a successful 2019 and were on track to make 2020 even more impactful.

I briefed you at that time about the preliminary results of 2019. Dr. Khan will provide today further details, which are also included in the Annual Report for 2019 which has already been circulated to all of you.

This is a very comprehensive and detailed report of almost 200 pages.

Let me highlight some of the key elements of the Annual Report:

1. The UNCCT 2019 Annual Report structure is similar to the 2018 report, which I understand was well appreciated by the Advisory Board and Member States.
2. In terms of results, the Centre organized 95 capacity-building workshops and expert level meetings, engaging over 5,000 individuals in 2019. This represents a 90 percent increase in the number of individuals engaged, compared to 2018. UNCCT also organized 32 outreach and awareness raising events in 2019. This represents an almost 150% increase in the number of outreach events organized, compared to 2018, and has helped us continue to increase the efficiency and visibility of UNCCT.
3. Responding to Member State demands, and both Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and CTED recommendations, the Center also launched new programmes and expanded existing ones in such priority areas as countering the financing of terrorism, youth engagement, cybersecurity, victims of terrorism, upholding human rights while countering terrorism, mainstreaming gender, and countering terrorist use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material.
4. Throughout 2019, as part of the change management process to address General Assembly resolution A/Res/72/284, the Centre aligned its work more clearly and balanced with the four Pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, established a new Programme Management Unit, attracted new staff with world class experience in key technical counter-terrorism areas, and enhanced its processes, including monitoring and reporting.
5. As part of the improvements in our reporting to Member States, this report now has UNCCT specific financial information, something that you have asked for in the past.

I hope that you, like I, find the report well crafted, informative and comprehensive. I read it as Executive Director of UNCCT with a feeling of satisfaction. Together, we have created a very solid Counter-Terrorism Centre with global coverage, world- class capacity building, and effective communications.

In my humble understanding, UNCCT is showing itself as a real global Centre of Excellence. I am very grateful to the Advisory Board and to the many donors, including first of all the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for helping us to make this happen.

Excellencies,

We have now entered the last year of the 5-Year Programme, and we have also shared with you the Quarterly Report for the first quarter of 2020.

In this period, UNCCT programmes and projects delivered 25 workshops, engaging 550 participants. We organized 7 expert and coordination meetings, and 3 technical scoping missions. The Centre also held five UNCCT outreach events, including side events, panels, seminars, and briefings.

Dr. Khan will provide further information about these events in a short while.

As you can imagine, the outbreak of COVID-19 has impacted our normal working environment tremendously. Especially being a New York centric Office.

I am happy to report that while a few of our colleagues have been sick and one was diagnosed with COVID-19, all have recovered well. In line with the guidance of the Secretary-General, staff welfare has been, and continues to be, our top priority in this difficult period.

At the same time, we are committed to continue delivery of our work. The first days of our new telecommuting reality were focused on rapidly adjusting to remote working and new working methods, and assessing the impact on our planned activities.

With restrictions on travel and the postponement or cancellation of planned events, the Centre quickly shifted focus to: 1) desk reviews or on-line trainings and exchanges with interlocutors; 2) the development of training tools, materials, and curricula; 3) knowledge management, including systematizing

lessons learned and best practices and ensuring appropriate reporting to donors; and 4) pursuing innovative solutions for policy and programme delivery and collaboration.

More recently, our focus has been on delivery and we have been able to carry out a number of remote trainings, for example a training for over 100 Bahraini officials on countering the financing of terrorism, and an 8-days training programme for Kazakh officials on the rehabilitation of violent extremist prisoners.

We have also undertaken significant research on the best options for expanded remote learning, including the development of a web-based Learning Management System (LMS) that will not only allow us to reach beneficiaries in these challenging times, but also improve our engagement once travel restrictions ease. I look forward to updating you on progress in this regard.

We have made progress in the development of new programmes and partnerships with Compact entities for the delivery of ‘All-of-UN’ capacity-building under the Centre’s lead to address key issues in the fight against terrorism.

Ms. Saule Mektepbayeva, one of our UNCCT Programme Officers, will shortly provide a brief presentation on one of these programmes, which aims to support Member States to improve the Screening, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of terrorists, including in particular Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their associated family members.

Excellencies,

Lastly, let me turn to the plans for the development of a new multi-year Strategic Programme Framework for UNCCT, which we hope to start in January 2021, once the 5-Year Programme comes to an end.

We have shared a draft non-paper on this subject which I hope you have had a chance to study.

The Strategic Programme Framework will need to build on the considerable achievements of UNCCT since its establishment, and in particular the expansion and consolidation we have ensured since it was moved to UNOCT.

We have developed larger and more impactful thematic programmes in key priority areas that respond to CTED recommendations and requests from Member States.

We have also managed to diversify our funding, leveraging the fundamental contribution from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as a result of which 25% of all contributions to UNCCT budget now come from donors other than Saudi Arabia.

I would like to mention that a significant number of Member States are providing highly qualified Junior Professional Officers to the Centre. I highly appreciate this kind of support to the Office and to multilateralism as a whole.

With regard to the non-paper on the new Strategic Programme Framework, I should stress that we are still very early in the development phase and that the continued work on it will be impacted by the results of the KPMG evaluation, which will be finalized later this month.

I do, however, want to share with you our thoughts as early as possible to allow for a productive discussion on our way forward.

I want to reiterate my appreciation to the Chairman, His Excellency Ambassador Al-Mouallimi for taking the initiative to have this evaluation done. I believe it will add significant value to our common objective of continuing to strengthen UNCCT.

I am also grateful to those of you who have taken the time to speak with the KPMG consultants in this connection.

As indicated in the non-paper, we need to do better in terms of developing a culture of reporting on and delivering results. We have already taken steps in this direction, such as the creation of a Programme Management Unit, which we will build on in the coming months.

This will require that we get better in recording and measuring impact and results.

I need the support of the Advisory Board in this regard. We cannot effectively measure impact at the outcome level without assessments on the ground. We should, however, be able to undertake impact assessments while fully respecting the mandates of the counter-terrorism bodies, including in terms of assessments.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

As I have highlighted in earlier meetings, UNCCT is significantly expanding its efforts to increase visibility.

I am excited to announce that we will launch a Virtual UNCCT Expo during the upcoming virtual Counter-Terrorism Week. I had hoped to welcome you all to an actual exposition in the General Assembly Building's visitors' area, but due to COVID-19 we have moved the Expo online.

His Excellency the Chairman of the Advisory Board and I will be launching the Expo on 7 July at 11:30 and I invite you all to attend. I also encourage you all to help us bring awareness about the UNCCT Expo through your Mission channels.

The coming months will be very busy for UNCCT as we receive the KPMG evaluation and continue with the development of the new Strategic Programme Framework. I look forward to a close engagement with the Chairman and the Advisory Board on these important issues, whether virtually or finally soon back at Headquarters.

I will now ask the Director of UNCCT, Dr. Khan, to provide a more detailed briefing on the work of the Centre in 2019 and the first quarter of 2020.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, dear colleagues, for your attention. Over to you, Mr. Chairman.