



Statement by

H.E. Amb. Alya Ahmed Al-Thani
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to the United Nations

At

The High-level session of the
Launch Event of Five Thematic Modules to Protect Vulnerable
Targets against Terrorist Attacks

Tuesday 6 September 2022

10:00 – 11:45 AM

Virtual Meeting

Dear colleagues,

- I am glad to **join** USG Voronkov, Mr. Chen, Ms. De Meo, and Ms. Saad, in opening this event.
- I would also like to express appreciation for the efforts of Mr. **Ibaniez** and his colleagues in the **UN Global Program on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets**, whose numerous activities I have been following since I attended its launch in January 2021. I have also attended **expert meetings** it convened on Protection of Urban Centres and Touristic Venues, Unmanned Aircraft Systems, as well as the **launch of the Global Network** of Experts which the Program established.
- The Vulnerable Targets Program is one of the flagship projects of the partnership between my country and UNOCT, and that it is a beneficiary of **financial support within the framework of that partnership**. Therefore, we are glad to see the Program's numerous **achievements and activities**, and that it is providing capacity-building assistance to help Member States.
- We note that the Program has been working on **innovative projects in cooperation with UNOCT Program Offices** around the world--one of which is of course in my capital Doha, which specializes in behavioural insight to counterterrorism. We also note that the Program has transitioned to the new **UNOCT Program Office in Madrid** to ensure cost-savings, closer cooperation with donors and beneficiary Member States, and higher visibility.
- We also note that the Vulnerable Targets Program assigns priority to improving the tailored technical assistance provided to member states through **innovative knowledge resources**. A significant step in this respect is the production of the **five Thematic Modules being launched today**, which are of course the latest of the Program's achievements.

- These helpful publications collect existing resources, knowledge and good practices, and can therefore help achieve the purpose of the Global Program in providing better understanding of the threats, sharing of best practices, building capacities and facilitation of international cooperation and partnerships.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Unfortunately, the world has been seeing increased **cowardly attacks** that exploit the unique vulnerability of critical infrastructure, open public spaces, religious sites, sporting events, and other so-called “**soft**” targets. Therefore, there is a need for specific measures for **mitigation** of risks to these distinct types of sites and recovery from attacks. This **requires cooperation** and partnerships among a range of actors and **exchange of knowledge** at several levels.
- The Thematic Modules **address this need** by providing good practices and recommended tools along with case studies that **cover protection of different types of soft targets, including:** touristic venues, religious sites and places of worship, urban centers, and the threats posed by unmanned aircraft systems.
- We are confident that these handbooks **will be beneficial** for the efforts of Member States to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from, terrorist attacks against vulnerable targets, and will benefit policy-makers, practitioners and experts strengthen the protection of vulnerable targets.
- We are glad to have **supported the production** of these useful tools, and we **appreciate the effort** put into producing them by all those involved, including UNOCT, CTED, UNICRI, UNAOC or other Global Compact entities.

Finally, dear colleagues,

- Protection of vulnerable targets from terrorist attacks is recognized as an integral part of international and national efforts to counter terrorism. The **State of Qatar** has paid particular attention to this subject and built **expertise and capacities** in this field.
- For example, protection of soft targets in the context of major **sporting events** has been, since 2019, the subject of cooperation between the International Center on Sport Security (ICSS), a non-for-profit based in Qatar, and UNOCT.
- I look forward to the presentations and views on the five Thematic Modules and the value added by them and the rest of the products of the Vulnerable Targets Program.
