

**Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

Twelfth GCTF Ministerial Plenary Meeting

21 September 2022, 09:00 – 13:00 EST
Westin Grand Central Hotel, Grand Central Ballroom (3rd floor), New York

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you in person after three long years. Allow me to convey the warm greetings of Secretary-General António Guterres.

Let me begin by thanking the Global Counter Terrorism Forum Co-Chairs, Canada and the Kingdom of Morocco, for inviting the United Nations to this meeting, and for their leadership and excellent cooperation with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

We congratulate and very much look forward to working with the European Union and Egypt as the incoming co-chairs, who take the helm as the GCTF enters its second decade.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

2021 was a year of milestones in counter-terrorism for both the United Nations and GCTF. Over the last three years, we have improved the way in which we share information and collaborate in capacity-building activities and joint initiatives.

Global efforts against terrorism have seen numerous successes in the past two decades. But many challenges still lie ahead.

Today, the terrorist threat persists and is more diverse and complex than ever.

Al-Qaida, Da'esh and their affiliates remain the top global threats – both in conflict and non-conflict zones. Their expansion in and from the Sahel has continued, making inroads into Central and Southern Africa; the same way Al-Shabaab keeps posing a protracted threat to Somalia and its neighbours. These groups are now taking the shape of terrorist movements aiming to topple governments.

Concerns that Al-Qaida once again has a safe haven in Afghanistan means the prospects that its goal of reconstituting an external operations capability are closer than they were a year ago, while Da'esh Khorasan province has more than doubled in size over the past year, able to strike in Kabul as well as other parts of the country.

Since we last met, we have also witnessed a rise in terrorist attacks on the basis of “xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief”.

To address this issue, the Secretary-General, at the request of the General Assembly, issued a report last month that reflects Member State and civil society perspectives on and information about this phenomenon and its detectable transnational aspects. It calls for more research and data to plug serious information gaps as well as encourages Member States to share information and work together to address the threat. My Office will present the report during a dedicated event in November.

Excellencies,

As the terrorist and violent extremist landscape evolves. We must remain vigilant to address these shifting challenges, by ensuring accountability for international crimes committed by terrorist groups, while continuing to respect human rights and the rule of law.

The United Nations partnership with the GCTF is important for us to succeed.

The importance of strong partnerships was reinforced during the first United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism, organized by my Office in New York two weeks ago.

I was especially touched by the many emotional and warm reactions I received from victims and survivors during the Congress, and their heartfelt appreciation for our efforts towards putting victims first and giving them a voice. I would like to thank those of you who attended the Global Congress for your support and participation.

Excellencies,

Five years since its creation, my Office is running at full speed to deliver on its multifaceted mandate, in collaboration with not only our partners from CTED, UNODC and the Al-Qaida and Da'esh Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team that join me today—but also with the other entities of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact with whom we facilitate information-sharing and coordinate support to Member States.

Four years after its launch by the Secretary-General, the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact has expanded its membership, including by recently welcoming the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by

Da'esh (UNITAD), and the Financial Action Task Force. The Compact now has 45 entities, representatives from 132 Member States and many regional organizations.

We have strengthened our capacity-building model to be more results-driven, integrating priority recommendations and technical assistance needs identified by the Counter-Terrorism Committee as well as CTED's analysis.

As such, we have embraced virtual tools and extended our programme delivery from New York to the field, upon the request by Member States to be more versatile, cost-effective, and operate closer to beneficiaries.

With the generous financial support of your governments, we are running a range of multi-agency capacity-building programmes in priority areas identified by Member States.

Our programmes include the countering terrorist travel programme which already has more than 51 beneficiary states; as well as programmes on prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration; fusion cells; the protection of vulnerable targets; countering the financing of terrorism; and the security of major sporting events.

Overall, UNOCT and our partners are together implementing 17 global programmes on countering terrorism and prevention of violent extremism conducive to terrorism, in support of over 160 countries.

Excellencies,

The GCTF is a key partner in implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

As you may know, UNOCT depends on voluntary contributions for more than 97 percent of its budget, which is not ideal in terms of predictability and sustainability of delivery. While our capacity building programmes are funded by voluntary contributions from 35 donors, including two largest – the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – the institutional functions in support of our political leadership, coordination and coherence mandate still depend on the generous and critical support of one Member State - Qatar. We are grateful to the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – it is real contribution to multilateralism.

To ensure predictable delivery of the UNOCT mandate, increased regular budget funding is critical. For this reason, the Secretary-General in his Programme Budget for 2023 has proposed the conversion of 25 institutional UNOCT posts which are currently funded by voluntary contributions into regular budget-funded posts. If approved by the General Assembly, this conversion would support UNOCT in performing its core non-programmatic functions in areas such as strategic and political leadership, coordination, policy development and evaluation.

I would therefore like to ask for your support for this proposal by the Secretary-General, which would ensure the longer-term future and sustainability of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and allow it to effectively execute its General Assembly mandate you have adopted in 2019.

Excellencies,

As you know, we last year launched the second iteration of the United Nations Multi-Year Appeal for Counter-Terrorism, for the period 2021-2022.

The Appeal coordinates, through an interactive tool, fundraising for 52 counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism projects across 12 Counter-Terrorism Compact entities and the four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

To date, the projects included in the Appeal have reported \$9.5 million in funding from 18 donors.

We are extremely thankful for the support we have received, including from some GCTF Member States.

Excellencies,

The eighth biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy next year will offer another opportunity for the General Assembly to again demonstrate the consensus of all Member States on the balanced, multilateral, human rights and rule of law-based approach the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy calls for in combatting terrorism.

It is also an opportunity to take stock and provide the Global Compact a road map for our collective efforts to help Member States implement the Strategy over the subsequent two years.

As the GCTF enters its second decade of efforts, you can count on the United Nations system as your close partner.

I thank you for your attention.