



**THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

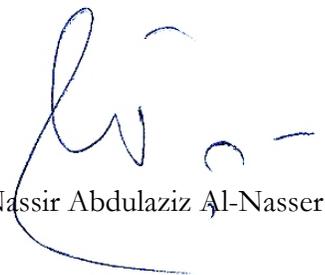
31 May 2012

Excellency,

Today, countering the appeal of terrorism emerges as a priority. Ideological factors, intolerance, unresolved conflicts, exclusion, inequality, social marginalization and lack of integration of local communities usually converge in the enabling environment where terrorism can become appealing to some as an instrument of political activism. In order to nurture the momentum of high level political attention and support to dialogue and understanding, as well as in order to share the good practices that are being developed and applied in various regional and national programmes to counter the appeal of terrorism, I will convene a one day seminar on “Dialogue, Understanding and Countering the Appeal of Terrorism”. This meeting will take place on 27 June 2012, at the UN Headquarters in New York.

I am pleased to share with you the attached concept paper and tentative programme of the seminar for your reference. A detailed programme of the event will follow in due time, and will be available at a later stage on the website of the President of the General Assembly.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

**SEMINAR OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON DIALOGUE, UNDERSTANDING AND COUNTERING THE APPEAL OF TERRORISM
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNICRI AND THE CTITF**

27 June 2012, New York, USA

CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

The terrorist threat remains high in many regions of the world. Several terrorist organizations of diverse ideological inspiration continue to innovate in strategy and tactics; their increasing transnational linkage and the globalization of their regional political agendas, their scope, intent and capability conform a truly global threat picture. One decade since the start of the global commitment to prevent and fight terrorism, and six years after the adoption of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, counter terrorism efforts offer mixed results.

More Member States than ever consider counter-terrorism a priority of national policy. Bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation has increased substantially and effective multilateralism has developed and improved, to include not just the UN and the EU, but also other regional organizations with significant value added. Several good practices have emerged in this process and a community of qualified international experts has flourished.

However, significant gaps remain in evidence-based understanding of the conditions conducive to terrorism and how individuals are exploited by terrorist groups, on empirical measurement of effectiveness of interventions, and on capacity-building to the Member States.

Today, countering the appeal of terrorism emerges as a priority. Ideological factors, intolerance, unresolved conflicts, exclusion, inequality, social marginalization and lack of integration of local communities amongst others usually converge in the enabling environment where terrorism can become appealing to some as an instrument of political activism. Thus, security, law-enforcement and judicial measures alone do not suffice to counter this sociopolitical phenomenon; measures to promote development, dialogue and understanding, upstream prevention and downstream rehabilitation (on a case by case basis) are necessary.

The United Nations, including through the CTITF, is active in the policies and practical implementation of actions through various UN instruments relevant to the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. In the last five years, thematic working groups covering different methods to counter the appeal of terrorism have been set up; regional workshops on the implementation of the UN Global CT Strategy have been held; good practices in upstream prevention have been identified; and cutting edge practical tools to deliver results locally are being developed in the field of disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration. All of this has been developed within a high-level political process enabled by Member States who have involved themselves, their governments and their experts in a long-term multilateral partnership to further the goals of countering terrorism with concrete results.

The Center on Policies to Counter the Appeal of Terrorism has been established by UNICRI on mandate of the CTITF. Many Member States have expressed a desire to learn and share information about each others' experiences, lessons learned and good practices in this respect. The UNICRI action in this field is conceived to meet the need to identify innovative means to prevent and counter the appeal of violent extremism and terrorist recruitment and provide Member States with actionable knowledge to strengthen national capacity.

The UNICRI initiative on Countering the Appeal of Terrorism also aims to address, from a multilateral perspective, the downstream effort to disengage, rehabilitate and reintegrate into society individuals who have been involved in terrorist activities.

Two of the key elements in the UN strategic approach to countering terrorism are dialogue and understanding. Since they enable societal resilience through the furthering of education, openness, and participation in society, they are essential to addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) plays an important role in the enhancement of dialogue and understanding. They promote intercultural educational ethics that help foster coexistence, dialogue, and tolerance through various activities that advance knowledge, skills and values among learners and teachers. UNESCO enhances an innovative approach to building a culture of dialogue and understanding in public policy and cross-cultural domains.

The area of Dialogue and Understanding is particularly valuable when addressing the non-security related aspects of terrorism, but activities related to promoting dialogue and understanding among civilizations have intrinsic value in their own right and are not exclusive to the purpose of countering terrorism.

OBJECTIVE

Following from this ongoing technical process, this one-day seminar is organized with the objective of nurturing the momentum of high level political attention and support to the complex area of dialogue, understanding and countering the appeal of terrorism, and to learn from some of the existing good practices that are being developed and applied in various regional and national programmes to counter the appeal of terrorism.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

The seminar will take place on Wednesday, 27 June 2012 at the UN Headquarters in New York. It will consist of opening and closing sessions, as well as a morning and afternoon panel discussions.

In the opening session, high-level representatives of Member States will introduce the political context of the discussion, highlighting the priority areas where global efforts should develop with regard to the topics of the agenda.

In the morning panel discussion, panelists will share insights into their programmes on policies to counter the appeal of terrorism, the latest developments in effective multilateral counter-terrorism capacity-building cooperation and on select regional challenges and opportunities to counter the appeal of terrorism.

In the afternoon panel discussion, several speakers will share successes and remaining challenges in efforts to enhance intercultural dialogue and understanding, the role of education, and insights into actions to counter terrorist narratives in the media.

Following presentations by the panellists, the floor will be open to delegates and other participants to share their experiences and perspectives in both the morning and afternoon interactive panel discussions. Delegations are encouraged to engage in an open and interactive discussion. There will be no established list of speakers, and delegations are kindly asked to limit their interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes.