

**OPENING STATEMENT FOR
H.E. MS. RAIMONDA MURMOKAITĖ
CHAIR OF THE COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE**

“The Counter Terrorism Committee has a quite broad mandate, in comparison with other Security Council bodies: our focus is the suppression and prevention of terrorism worldwide. Our guideposts in exercising our mandate are Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005), each of which address many issue areas which are relevant to countering terrorism.

Today we are to hear about the approach of the Kingdom of Morocco to preventing the abuse of religion to justify and incite terrorist violence, while strengthening Morocco’s religious identity and promoting tolerance and moderation. The Committee, via its Executive Directorate, visited the Kingdom of Morocco in early 2013, and identified the strategy developed by the Moroccan Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs as a good practice to be shared among other Member States.

We shall also hear today about the experience of the Republic of Mali and the Republic of Guinea, as well as from religious leaders from the Republic of Cote d’Ivoire and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, in liaising with the Kingdom of Morocco to, among other initiatives, facilitate training for their religious leaders, as well as in developing their own approaches to countering incitement and violent extremism.

With murderous extremist groups such as ISIL seeking to extend their sway, countering radical extremism and abuse of the name of religion for deadly aims is as pertinent as can ever be. For many people around the world, religious convictions, community-related ceremonies and other religious norms and practices constitute the backbone of their individual and communitarian identities. In countries around the world, whether developed or developing, religious leaders can play a pivotal role in increasing the resilience of sectors of society that are vulnerable to the voices of those who incite terrorist acts.

Governments that undertake a constructive role in empowering religious leaders by way of promoting intra and inter-religious reflection and dialogue, premised on respect for freedom of religion, belief, expression and opinion, contribute to building trust within societies and in public institutions.

Resolution 1624 (2005) targets, in particular, the threat of terrorism incitement. It calls upon States to counter terrorist incitement and to prevent the subversion of religious institutions by terrorist and their supporters.

Resolution 2178 (2014) emphatically states that countering violent extremism is essential to addressing the threat to international peace and security posed by foreign terrorist fighters. It encourages Member States to empower religious leaders in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts.

The presentations we shall hear today will speak directly about religious leaders’ empowerment, and will feature experiences of different African countries in fully engaging religious leaders in fostering a tolerant and inclusive society. In this respect, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is an important partner to the work of our Committee in our

common efforts to combat and prevent hatred and extremism and counter the spread of terrorism.

Let me close by noting that our Committee and its Executive Directorate will continue to assess the implementation of resolution 1624 (2005) by Member States, and also now of resolution 2178 (2014) in connection with strategies and tools developed by States to counter violent extremism that sustains and feeds the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

The Committee will continue to compile good practices and make recommendations to States to strengthen their counter terrorism programs in accordance with the relevant resolutions, and will continue to count upon key partners in its endeavour, chief among them the members of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and the CTITF itself, whose chairperson, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, we are pleased to have with us this afternoon.”