I. Introduction

1. Terrorist groups perceive attacks against international civil aviation as an effective way to cause substantial loss of life, economic damage and disruption. Because of the global and interconnected nature of the international civil aviation industry, Member States of all regions are potentially vulnerable to such attacks.

2. In its resolution 2309 (2016), the Security Council identified a number of steps to be taken by Member States to strengthen their implementation of the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The Council expressed concern that civil aviation might be used as a means of transportation by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and noted in this regard that Annex 9 — Facilitation and Annex 17 — Security to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (“Chicago Convention”) contained SARPs relevant to the detection and prevention of terrorist threats involving civil aviation and to safeguarding international civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference.

3. The Council has expressed particular concern that terrorist groups may be actively seeking ways to defeat or circumvent international civil aviation security measures and to identify and exploit perceived gaps or weaknesses, and stressed the need for States to introduce appropriate countermeasures. Recent attacks against airports in Belgium, Turkey and the United States, the explosion of a terrorist bomb aboard Daallo Airlines flight 159, and other recent terrorist attacks are stark reminders that landside attacks, the threat posed by insiders and airport staff, and the use of increasingly sophisticated improvised explosive devices are all significant concerns. The international aviation sector also faces a number of new and emerging security risks and threats. The use of information technology (IT) for malicious purposes is a global threat. The global civil-aviation community depends on IT systems for its daily operations, and as that dependence continues to grow, critical civil-aviation infrastructures will become increasingly vulnerable to malicious IT-based attacks.

4. In its resolution 2341 (2017), the Council recognizes the urgent need to ensure reliability and resilience of critical infrastructure and to protect it from terrorist attacks, whether for reasons of national security or public safety, or to prevent economic harm. The Council has also noted the growing cross-border critical infrastructure interdependencies of Member States. Those interdependencies affect infrastructure used for, inter alia, generation, transmission and distribution of energy; air, land and maritime transport; banking and financial services; water supply; food distribution; and public health.

5. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) requires States to prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on the issuance of identity papers and travel documents. In its resolution 1624 (2005), the Council calls on all States to cooperate to strengthen the security of their international borders, including by combating fraudulent documents and enhancing screening measures and passenger security.
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procedures. Effective border management is particularly important in the context of States’ efforts to stem the flow of FTFs pursuant to Security Council resolution 2178 (2014).

6. In its presidential statement of 19 November 2014 (S/PRST/2014/23), the Council reiterates, its call (contained in its resolutions 2161 (2014) and 2178 (2014)) for Member States to make use of the databases of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), including the Stolen and lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database, and to require that airlines under their jurisdiction provide advance passenger information (API) to detect the departure from, entry into, or transit through their territories of individuals on the Al-Qaida sanctions list. The Council also encourages States to provide Passenger Name Records (PNR), where appropriate, to the appropriate national authorities, and requests the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to prepare an analysis of the gaps in the use of API by Member States and to make recommendations to expand its use.

7. The analysis prepared by CTED (S/2015/377) includes 12 recommendations for addressing the challenges and gaps that it has identified with respect to expanding the use of API by Member States. The recommendations are intended to increase the overall number of States using API, in accordance with Council resolution 2178 (2014); to maximize the value of API (with respect both to aviation security and travel facilitation) for those States that currently use it; to strengthen the use of API as a tool to stem the flow of FTFs; and to promote the sharing of good practices in the use of API.

8. The ICAO Council is expected to approve API as an international standard that would require all ICAO member States to establish national API programmes. ICAO, in cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), also provides States and the airline industry with guidelines for the implementation of API programmes.

9. In its resolution 2309 (2016), the Council requests the Counter-Terrorism Committee to hold a special meeting, in cooperation with ICAO, on “Terrorist Threats to Civil Aviation”.

II. Objective

10. The objective of the proposed special meeting would be to enable the Committee to engage with Member States and relevant international and regional organizations on the terrorist threat to international civil aviation, as well as to identify ways to strengthen and promote the implementation of international aviation-security standards and international cooperation in that regard.

III. Format of discussions

11. In order to encourage interactive discussion, it is proposed that the plenary sessions consist of presentations, followed by question-and-answer sessions. The discussions would focus on the following aspects of the threat and risk to civil aviation:

i. The threat: identifying gaps and vulnerabilities relevant to aviation security;
ii. Promoting implementation of the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) relevant to safeguarding civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference;
iii. Inter-agency cooperation in strengthening Member States’ capacity to implement Security Council resolution 2309 (2016).

12. The special meeting would be preceded by a series of CTED-organized technical sessions. The rapporteurs of the technical sessions would report to the special meeting on the conclusions and recommendations arising from the technical discussions.

13. The Committee Chair and Vice-Chairs would act as meeting Chairs and/or moderators.

14. Participants in the special meeting would be requested to raise issues and questions relating to the above aspects of the threat to civil aviation and to identify ways in which the relevant United Nations bodies, including the Committee, can help strengthen global aviation security. As there would not be sufficient time to hear written statements, participating delegations would be requested to submit written statements to CTED for inclusion on a dedicated event website. CTED would circulate an annotated agenda, meeting documentation, and other logistical information, which would also be posted on the Committee’s website.

IV. Panellists and rapporteurs

15. The proposed panellists are indicated in the attached draft agenda. CTED will submit a more detailed list closer to the event. Representatives of Member States and relevant international and regional organizations would be invited to serve as panellists or otherwise take part in the meeting, as appropriate.

V. Venue and date

16. The proposed special meeting would be held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 7 July 2017, in Conference Room 3, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

VI. Expected outcomes

17. The participants in the special meeting would identify gaps and vulnerabilities relevant to aviation security; address existing policies, instruments and tools developed to establish effective border-control management systems; and consider the responsibilities of ICAO; Member States; and international and regional organizations in promoting effective implementation of resolution 2309 (2016). On the basis of the discussions, the Committee would (i) collect and share good practices for effectively managing risks to civil aviation in compliance with international law; and (ii) propose an approach to its future work and that of CTED, in cooperation with ICAO, to address the terrorist threat to civil aviation. The Committee would submit a report to the Council on the meeting’s outcomes, which would also be taken into account within the framework of the briefing to be subsequently provided to the Council by the Secretary General of ICAO and the Chair of the Committee.

VII. Communications

18. The event would also be highlighted on the Committee’s website.