

**Opening Statement by Mr. Mike Smith, Executive Director,
Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate
at the Special Meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee**

New York, 28 September 2011

Mr Chairman, Mr Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The statements that you have just made Secretary-General, and Ambassador Puri, have eloquently explained why the United Nations is at the centre of international efforts to counter one of the scourges of our age, terrorism. As you have said, this is a phenomenon that can strike anywhere in the world with devastating impact on the lives of ordinary people, and which can only be effectively countered, if there is international cooperation.

You have talked about the UN's role in facilitating that cooperation and spreading best practice in this difficult area, through the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006, and the work of the CTITF. You have also spoken of the increased solidarity between Member States and the intensified dialogue that has come about as a result of the adoption of resolution 1373 10 years ago today.

With that background, I think that it would be most useful for me this morning, by way of setting a context for the panel discussions that are to follow, to focus on CTED's work. I want particularly to note how this has evolved over the 6 years of our existence and what lessons we have learned in that process.

CTED's work and its working methods have changed significantly since we became operational in 2005, for a number of reasons. Firstly, because there is now much broader recognition in the international community of the need to take united action against terrorists. We do not focus as much as we once did, to raise awareness with governments, of the importance of a collective approach to combating terrorism and of their national role in this. On the contrary, we find that States we visit are not only conscious of their role in collective CT efforts, but are actively looking for advice and assistance in this respect, particularly in the field of countering the ideology that is encompassed by resolution 1624. As a result today we spend much

more time facilitating technical assistance and conducting professional workshops than on advocacy efforts with governments.

Secondly since the adoption of the UN Global Strategy on Terrorism in 2006, I think our collective view of how best to implement counter-terrorism has broadened. We now recognize the importance of emphasising, for example, that human rights and counter-terrorism are mutually reinforcing and need not conflict. On the contrary, as the Chair has just mentioned, counter-terrorism programs that ignore the human rights dimension are less effective and can even be counter-productive. As a matter of course these days, at the direction of the Security Council, we include human rights issues in our dialogue with Member States.

Thirdly, today we are more aware of the critical need to address the social and other societal conditions that terrorist recruiters exploit to persuade young people to support their cause. Naturally issues such as education, humanitarian support and good governance are important for their own sake, but they are also relevant to our work and should be taken into account in broader, more comprehensive and integrated strategies to address terrorism. We spend a lot more time these days talking to countries about the value of adopting a comprehensive national strategy to counter terrorism, and of setting up coordination mechanisms that ensure all parts of their governments understand what the over-arching goal is, and where they fit into the counter-terrorism scheme.

Mr Chairman

Beyond those general points, there are several more specific things we have learned that I think are worthwhile mentioning:

Firstly, the value of our relationships with our closest international and regional organization partners. Technical organizations such as Interpol, ICAO, WCO, UNODC and a number of others bring expertise and professional tools to the table that enormously enhance our influence and capability. Regional organizations such as the OAS, the African Union and the Council of Europe have a familiarity with their member states, a strong presence in key countries, and very often important technical expertise. Partnering with them means our recommendations are followed up and better implemented in-country than otherwise we could reasonably expect.

Secondly, we have seen the value of a regional approach to developing strategies and building capacity. Threats and vulnerabilities in each region tend to be similar and very often extend across borders, so it is cost-effective and more efficient to address these collectively. The bonus is that by doing it this way – by bringing professionals from a number of regional states together to work – we are contributing to strengthened networks and improved communication among agencies from different countries. We have conducted such activities so far in East Africa, in West Africa, in Southwest Europe, in South Asia and in South East Asia.

Thirdly, particularly as we consider how countries can more effectively implement resolution 1624 to deal with the problem of incitement, it is clear that counter-terrorism work will have to engage actors going well beyond government. We will need to work with civil society, professional associations, academics, journalists, parliamentarians, the private sector, teachers and religious leaders. How to do this will be a challenge but it is one that all of us will need to take up.

And finally, we have learned the importance of better coordinating our activities and programs with other parts of the UN system. We are a keen and active member of the CTITF and through this mechanism and its working groups, we do our best to ensure that we are not working at cross-purposes with other agencies nor duplicating their work. On the contrary, we seek to ensure that all of us are working to the same goal and are getting the best value possible for every dollar expended in UN funds.

I have spoken a lot about how CTED's work has changed over 6 years. But there are of course areas that have not changed in our working methods. We still conduct a dialogue with every member state. We still undertake assessment missions, which are extraordinarily useful in keeping us up-to-date with how Member States are going in implementing their counter-terrorism programs. We still work to facilitate technical assistance where this is needed, including through building relationships with donors and donor groups. In this context we look forward to working with the newly formed Global Counter-Terrorism Forum to address capacity needs in different parts of the world. And we still prepare the Global Implementation Surveys, the latest of which has just been placed on our website.

Mr Chairman

As you know we at CTED, like all the members of the Counter-Terrorism Committee have been looking at this meeting as an opportunity to hear from the membership of the United Nations, what has worked from their perspective and what more needs to be done in future. I therefore am happy to conclude my remarks here and will listen with great attention and interest to the comments of all of those Member States and organizations that have been able to join us today.