

**THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE  
SAHEL AND MEANINGFUL CONSULTATIONS ON GENDER**

*A Side-Event to the 68th Session of the  
Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)*

*Conference Room D, United Nations Headquarters, New York  
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**Opening statement of CTED Executive Director,  
Assistant Secretary-General Natalia Gherman**

*Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,*

**It is a pleasure to co-organise today's side event to the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) together with the Republic of Korea, Mauritania, and our UN partners UNICRI and UN Women.**

**From the outset, I wish to commend UNICRI's report on "*Voices of Resilience: a Gender Needs Analysis on the Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Sahel*," which provides valuable insights into how the lack of essential services and fundamental rights may act as drivers of violence.**

**I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our civil society participants from the region and look forward to hearing from them directly.**

**The evolution of the terrorist threat in the Sahel and other subregions of Africa illustrates the importance of ensuring that the United Nations' counter-terrorism efforts are attuned to local, national and regional dynamics.**

**To that end, in the past five years, CTED conducted assessment visits on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Togo and Uganda. *[CTED also conducted the virtual component of a hybrid visit to the Sudan.]***

**The findings and recommendations from these visits have been made available to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities for the design and programming of capacity-building activities.**

**We are committed to continuing our engagement with Member States of the region to assist them in meeting the challenges they are confronted with as a result of the multifaceted threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.**

**In line with our Security Council mandate, CTED engages with a wide range of stakeholders in and outside of the UN system to promote human rights-compliant and gender-responsive counter terrorism measures that prioritize addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism, including gender inequality.**

**In this regard, we know that civil society has a pivotal role to play, and our engagement with them is integral to our assessment process.**

**Women's organisations, in particular, have been at the forefront of efforts to build community resilience and advocate for peace.**

**I have seen this myself in meetings with women civil society representatives during our visits, most recently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the extraordinary work of women CSOs has left me deeply impressed and appreciative of their efforts, often carried out under very difficult circumstances.**

**Just last week, my office conducted a series of extensive consultations with CSOs, including from Francophone Africa, engaged in advancing survivor-centred approaches to supporting victims of sexual and gender-based violence committed in terrorism contexts.**

**The consultations are part of CTED's ongoing work on strengthening accountability for such crimes.**

*Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,*

**As CTED has highlighted many times in its analysis, terrorist groups themselves understand the importance of gender and are very skilful in exploiting gender inequality to further their own objectives.**

**It is therefore essential that counter-terrorism and CVE efforts integrate gender analysis and gender considerations.**

**Otherwise, they risk being irrelevant to the different lived realities of women, girls, men, and boys, and therefore ineffective or outright counterproductive.**

**CTED remains committed to continuing this work with all our partners and I look forward to today's discussion on how we can further strengthen our collective efforts.**

*Thank you.*