Special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes

29, October 2022, 9.00 a.m. EDT

Opening remarks of

Mr. Weixiong Chen,
Acting Executive Director, CTED

Your Excellency Mr./Ms. xxxx [Gov. of India official], Excellencies, distinguished participants,

I wish to sincerely thank the Government of India for hosting the Committee's special meeting.

I also wish to commend India for its leadership role and significant contribution as a member of the Security Council and as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The special meeting comes at the right time and for the right topics.

Twenty years ago, the Security Council decided that all States should deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts, or provide safe haven.

However, we have witnessed a shift in the nature of terrorist attacks over the years.

Today, terrorists consider the digital sphere as a safe haven.

Terrorists are skilled at using new platforms and systems for many purposes, including to incite, recruit, finance, plan and execute terrorist attacks.

Terrorists are also increasingly exploiting chat, gaming, and audio-visual platforms.

They understand cyber security and take measures to shield their illegal activities.

The dark web serves as a marketplace for materials, weapons and fake documents.

In this context, how we develop and deploy technology will determine how effectively we shall be able to tackle new and emerging threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

Member States are increasingly deploying technological developments in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI) and big data to prevent terrorist acts and to bring terrorists to justice.

Both public and private sectors are experimenting with new technologies to improve the traceability of financial transactions.

And small and large technology companies are investing in, and deploying, AI to detect terrorist content on their platforms.

The CTED-led initiative Tech against Terrorism has also identified over 200 platforms actively used by terrorist groups.

Unmanned aircraft systems are one of those technologies.

As the UAS industry continues to innovate, it is lowering terrorists' barrier to entry into the aerial sphere.

The rapid improvements in UAS technology and its increasing capabilities will provide terrorist groups with multiple new targets.

Critical infrastructure, open public spaces and other so-called "soft" targets are uniquely vulnerable to attack.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

The global financial technology sector is another growing concern at the exploitation of new financial technology for terrorist purposes.

Terrorists and terrorist groups fundraise through crowdfunding platforms and appeals on social media, move and store funds through mobile payment systems, online exchanges and wallets, or privacy coins.

Virtual assets, along with other emerging financial technologies, may be vulnerable to abuse by terrorist financiers.

These risks are compounded by the increase in the number and types of virtual asset service providers and persisting gaps in their regulation and supervision.

These platforms and techniques are creating considerable legal, regulatory and investigative challenges.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

The threat posed to international peace and security by terrorist groups and cells remains grave and continues to grows.

How could the international community respond most effectively?

***First,* our understanding, capabilities and responses must keep pace with the identified threats.**

CTED remains committed to stay ahead of the technology curve. We have – and will continue to:

-Support the Security Council and the Counter-Terrorism Committee in addressing emerging ICT challenges in the context of maintaining international peace and security and in counter-terrorism;

-Strengthen our own assessment work, analysis and technical expertise and guidance. The Launch of the CTED-UNODC *"Practical Guide on Obtaining Electronic Data Across Borders"* in 2019 is one such example.

-Enhance partnership with other UN entities and international and regional organizations and arrangements in raising the awareness of the threat by the misuse of ICT for terrorism purposes, and facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to States in need;

-Contribute to the innovative initiatives such as the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) and Tech Against Terrorism, as well as the work the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), as evidenced by CTED's contributions to the *Berlin Memorandum on Good Practices for Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems*.

***Second,* regulations and innovation are complementary and mutually reinforcing.**

As social media, UAS and new payment technologies continue their rapid development, our legislation and regulations will need to keep pace.

Third, **we must continue to identify, share and build expertise and technical resources and capacity.**

Law enforcement agencies have made great strides in their ability to investigate, detect and disrupt the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

Further targeted training and capacity-building will be required to ensure that criminal justice officials can effectively investigate, and, as appropriate, prosecute, and adjudicate technology-related terrorist crimes.

Fourth, **a multi-stakeholder approach is essential.**

The Security Council has long noted the importance of developing public-private partnership in efforts to counter acts of terrorism.

Today's special meeting provides an ideal opportunity to harness the knowledge, expertise and support of international and regional organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

Fifth, **we must remember that new technologies are not a panacea.**

They must be deployed responsibly, with respect for human rights, privacy, and ethical standards.

And they must also be grounded in transparency and robust accountability.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

As we consider the challenges and opportunities posed by new and emerging technologies, it is essential that we remain committed to further enhancing our coordination, collaboration and cooperation, in order to mount an effective global response.

CTED stands ready to assist Member States, the Security Council, the Committee, other UN entities and international and regional partners towards that end.

Thank you and I look forward to our discussions.