

Joint special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee with Member States, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and other relevant international and regional organizations

“Depriving Terrorist Groups from Accessing, Raising, and Moving Funds: Practices and Lessons Learned”

United Nations Headquarters, New York, 12 December 2016

Opening remarks of

**H.E. Mr. Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta
Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee**

Excellencies, members of the Committees, Mr. Juan Manuel Vega-Serrano, President of the Financial Action Task Force, ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome you all to this joint special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the ISIL (Da'esh) and the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee with Member States, FATF and other relevant international and regional organizations on “Depriving Terrorist Groups from Accessing, Raising, and Moving Funds: Practices and Lessons Learned”.

I wish to begin by expressing my gratitude to the FATF President for joining us here today and by paying tribute to the work of FATF in the international fight against terrorism financing.

I would also like to thank the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee for co-facilitating this meeting.

Combatting terrorism financing continues to be a priority for the international community, as notably demonstrated by last December’s historic Security Council meeting of Finance Ministers.

In adopting its resolution 2253, the Council reaffirmed its determination to address the threat posed to international peace and security by Al-Qaida, ISIL, and their affiliates.

Even though the number and nature of terrorist groups and threats change over time, the basic need for terrorists to raise, move and use funds remains the same.

Over the past few years, we have witnessed a significant evolution in the structure and modus operandi of terrorist organizations.

Nowadays, they vary considerably in structure, ranging from large, well-structured, pyramidal organizations to small, decentralized, self-directed networks.

These differences have a significant impact on the way terrorists secure financial resources.

As highlighted by the Secretary-General's first report on ISIL, prepared pursuant to resolution 2253, ISIL generates funds through, inter alia, the exploitation of the natural and economic resources of territories under its control, bank robbery, taxation, and trafficking.

This presents a significant challenge to the international community and to existing systems for countering terrorism financing, which were designed primarily to disrupt the flow of funds to terrorists hiding in remote areas.

Other groups operating for instance in West and Central Africa tend more to rely on local funding sources, such as cattle rustling and other criminal activities such as arms or drug trafficking or kidnapping for ransom.

The impact of international efforts to counter ISIL have also led to a shift in foreign terrorist fighter flows.

Individuals worldwide continue to travel in an attempt to join ISIL, but a large number of foreign fighters are returning to their States of origin with combat training, intent on planning terrorist acts.

This represents a genuine threat to Member States.

Monitoring and intercepting the flow of funds to these individuals must remain a priority.

Terrorists have also demonstrated a facility to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and to exploit new technologies — particularly the Internet and information and communications technology — not only to disseminate their hateful messages and recruit individuals, but also to raise, mobilize and transfer funds.

And I would note that, tomorrow, CTED and the Permanent Mission of Spain will host a discussion of this issue, involving representatives of academia and the private sector.

Over the past two decades, we have developed a number of international instruments and standards to address the vulnerability of key sectors to terrorist financing.

Those instruments notably include the 1999 Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999), the relevant resolutions of the Council and, of course, the FATF standards

Member States have adopted mechanisms to detect illicit funds and prevent and disrupt the terrorist financing activity, hence depriving the terrorists from acquiring and using the means to carry out attacks and, more importantly, to sustain terrorist activity.

Let us not forget, however, that terrorists have demonstrated the facility to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

The exploitation of new technologies particularly the Internet and information and ICT — not only to disseminate hateful messages and recruit individuals, but also to raise, mobilize and transfer funds — is an area of significant concern.

Member States must remain alert and must work to identify both their overall risk and sectoral vulnerabilities.

Our meeting today provides an opportunity for us to hear about specific national or regional risk assessments that have identified sources of terrorist financing.

These assessments are essential in developing policy responses that can be integrated into national and regional counter-terrorism strategies.

And we must continue to strengthen our cooperation and to identify innovative and proactive approaches.

Today's joint meeting will also provide Member States with an opportunity to share national and regional best practices that are effectively addressing existing and new terrorist financing threats.

It is my hope that today's discussions will help Member States strengthen their implementation of the relevant UN resolutions, particularly resolutions 1373 and 2253, both of which were adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter.

I look forward to an interesting and fruitful discussion.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gerard van Bohemen, Chair of the ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

Thank you.