



**Statement by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General,
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**International Conference on Nuclear Security: Sustaining and
Strengthening Efforts**

International Atomic Energy Agency
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**High-Level Panel Session 3: International Legally and Non-legally Binding
Instruments for Nuclear Security**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for organizing this important Conference.

It is very timely to jointly take account of our efforts to sustain and strengthen nuclear security. The high-level representation of Member States at the ministerial segment of this Conference clearly shows that nuclear security continues to be one of their top priorities.

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), which I lead, is increasing its efforts to support Member States at the global, regional and national levels to prevent and counter chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism. We are committed to helping Member States build and strengthen their capacities to prevent, detect and respond to this serious threat.

Any probability of terrorists gaining access to nuclear and radiological materials is a serious threat to international peace and security.

Given the devastating physical and psychological impact of radiological and nuclear weapons, their potential use by terrorists is of serious concern and merits our utmost attention. The development of robust legal frameworks is crucial to ensure that adequate prevention, preparedness and response measures are in place to effectively address incidents of this nature.

In June 2018, it was reported that ISIL had seized 40kg of low enriched uranium from scientific institutions at the Mosul University in Iraq. This shows that the possibility of such materials falling into the hands of non-State actors or terrorist groups is real.

The IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database lists 3497 incidents involving illicit trafficking and other unauthorized activities involving nuclear and radioactive materials reported between 1993 and 2018. This is worrying.

At the same time, in recent years the dark web has increasingly become an important illegal marketplace, one which ISIL and other non-State actors have exploited, including for fundraising purposes. The dark web has also been used to buy and sell radioactive materials.

In 2018, during the latest review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly called upon all Member States to “prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD and their means of delivery... and (encouraged) cooperation among and between Member States and relevant regional and international organizations for strengthening national capacities.”

The United Nations Security Council has also made similar calls. Its foundational resolution 1540 (2004), obliges Member States to refrain from supporting by any means non-State actors from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using CBRN weapons and their means of delivery.

More recently, the Security Council called again on Member States in its resolution 2325 (2016) to strengthen their national anti-proliferation regimes in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

As you know, in 2005, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) was adopted by consensus by General Assembly. A legally binding instrument, this Convention obliges Member States to extradite or prosecute alleged offenders and calls for cooperation among Member States in preventing terrorist attacks by sharing information and assisting each other with criminal investigations and extradition.

ICSANT, together with the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment, serves as a primary tool to ensure that there is no haven for those who commit or seek to commit acts of terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNOCT is working with other UN entities, Member States, international and regional organizations to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts across the globe.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, launched by the Secretary-General in December 2018, provides an excellent platform to further strengthen coordination and coherence in the counter-terrorism activities of the UN system.

A total of 42 UN and non-UN entities with peace and security, human rights, development, and humanitarian mandates have signed the Compact as members, or observers, including INTERPOL and the World Customs Organizations.

The Coordination Committee that I chair oversees the work of the Global Compact Taskforce, which is operationalized through eight interagency thematic working groups focused

on key priorities for Member States across the four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In the field of preventing and responding to nuclear and radiological terrorism, the Working Group of Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure coordinates the efforts of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), INTERPOL, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Security Council 1540 Committee Group of Experts and others.

At the moment the IAEA is an observer to this Working Group but considering the Agency's key role on nuclear and radiological security it would be a significant contribution to the Compact if it became a permanent member. It is, indeed, my sincere hope that the IAEA could formally join the Global Counter-Terrorism Compact as a member.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre within UNOCT is expanding its programme on weapons of mass destruction to new areas including border and export control; the prevention of the misuse of science and technology; incident response and crisis management, as well as the protection of materials, facilities, critical infrastructure and sensitive information.

In the area of nuclear security, we are working closely with the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. In 2019, as a result of this partnership we carried out two regional table-top exercises for African countries and the Middle East and North Africa region in Nigeria and Morocco respectively.

Similarly, since 2019, we are working with UNODC with the support of the European Union, in a multiyear project to promote the universalization and effective implementation of ICSANT. This includes, inter alia, trainings of the judiciary, law enforcement and customs officials, as well as awareness-raising activities conducted with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I had the pleasure to launch this project in New York in April last year, together with my fellow panelist Mr. Masood Karimipour.

My Office also regularly attends the IAEA Information Exchange Meetings and follows closely the developments of the Nuclear Security Contact Group, the Nuclear Threat Initiative and the PIR Centre.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by highlighting that UNOCT remains committed to assisting Member States to prevent terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction.

We will continue to work with Member States and other relevant partners to ensure that prevention, detection, preparedness and response capabilities are firmly in place.

Thank you.