



VIRTUAL COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

6-10 JULY 2020

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Interactive Closing Discussion

Friday 10 July 2020 (11:30 – 13:30)

Closing Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Edrees

Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations (5 min)

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Your Excellency Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism,
Distinguished speakers,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Vladimir, and the entire UNOCT team, for successfully putting together this Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week. Indeed, it comes at a crucial point of time where we had to come together to reflect on the strategic and practical challenges of countering terrorism in a global pandemic environment. While, we are still looking forward for the Second Counter-Terrorism Week, which has been postponed to next year in tandem with the Seventh Biannual GCTS Review, we believe that this virtual reduced format has been very useful in alerting us to most of the pertinent aspects related to countering terrorism in today's truly exceptional circumstances.

Over the past few days we have held very fruitful discussions, touching upon aspects of multilateral cooperation, responding to the threat of Bio and Cyber Terrorism, the spike in hate speech and extremism in a pandemic environment, the plight of victims, global programs in dealing with FTF travel, rehabilitation and reintegration, human rights aspects, investing in the youth to build



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resilient societies, in addition to the role of civil society and media in this regard. We also toured the UNCCT Virtual Expo, and were shown how the Center is quickly adapting to the COVID-19 new normal while undertaking its vital capacity building tasks.

This all has been extremely useful. I am sure it will provide very important guidance to the Seventh GCTS Review next year, as well as the actual CT week.

In response to the key issues at discussion in this closing session, I would like to make the following THREE brief remarks:

FIRST: Aside from the well-known needs of Member States in counter-terrorism as per the GCTS and its four pillars, the COVID-19 Pandemic has outlined specific new needs, which have to be addressed. Bio, and Cyber Terrorism come at the forefront, as well as countering renewed terrorist narratives, and hate speech including racially and ethnically motivated terrorism. International cooperation and the commitment for multilateralism is more pertinent than ever. Also, UNOCT's leading role as coordinator for the Global Compact of Counter-Terrorism is also pivotal, together with the role of UNCCT as the global center of excellence for building state capacity in responding to the mutating threat of terrorism.

SECOND: Concerning the synergies and complementarities between response and recovery from COVID-19 and the counter-terrorism agenda, we find them to be very intertwined. The Onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the need to update and develop the counter-terrorism agenda to respond to the emerging COVID-19 challenges, proving once again the essentiality of engaging into an extensive substantive discussion during the upcoming Seventh Biannual GCTS Review. As you know, I was privileged to be tasked along with my dear friend Ambassador Augustin Santos, the PR of Spain, to co-facilitate the Seventh GCTS Review before it was postponed to next year. In the course of our preparatory work, we were more than often reminded that Member States might have reached a state of "saturation"



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or “fatigue” when it comes to further developing the Strategy, finding comfort in holding onto previously agreed language to maintain the “fragile consensus” achieved on the Strategy during the past years. COVID-19, as challenging and heart breaking as it has been for the world, provides a genuine opportunity for us to engage into a real substantive discussion in the upcoming GCTS review, to develop and update the Strategy in a meaningful manner, with the aim of making the world a safer place.

Nothing more than a consensual General Assembly resolution bringing together all 194 Member States can create the much needed international political impetus for international counter-terrorism cooperation.

FINALLY, I would like to seize this opportunity to emphasize that it is time more than ever for all Member States to do their part in the fight against terrorism. All stakeholders must focus now on strengthening international cooperation and multilateralism for the good of humanity and to alleviate human suffering. The Pandemic environment should not be further complicated by the continuation of precarious practices such as the transfer of FTFs across international borders from one conflict zone to the other. Such practices must desist and all Member States must act responsibly. Egypt has done and will continue to do its part in supporting all global efforts in countering the scourge of terrorism, and act as a reliable partner for all interested international and regional parties. In this regard, we are currently working with UNOCT on preparing for a High-Level International Conference to be held in Cairo under the title “Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Combat Terrorism and Extremist Narratives Conducive to Terrorism”, which we hope would further contribute to our common goal in enhancing our collective efforts to fight terrorism.

THANK YOU