



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)

Opening Statement of Mr. Voronkov
Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism

High-Level Side Event on Cross-Border Peace Initiatives
1 October 2018

Thank you very much, Ambassador. The hall is full. It shows how important is the issue that will be discussed today.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

First of all, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all to the UN Headquarters. Welcome to the delegation of Kenya, composed of His Excellency Eugene Wamalwa, Cabinet Secretary of Devolution; His Excellency Micah Powon, Principal Secretary, Ambassador Martin Kimani, Director of the National Counter Terrorism Center, and His Excellency Mohamed Ali, Governor of Marsabit County; I also welcome His Excellency Mahboub Maalim, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGAD; His Excellency Lazarus Ombai Amayo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya; Her Excellency Mahlet Hailu, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, other high-level dignitaries, delegations and UN colleagues.

I would also like to welcome Michèle Coninsx, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).

We will discuss peace initiatives, and in particular the experiences of Kenya and Ethiopia in implementing joint cross-border programmes to prevent terrorist radicalization, violent extremism and conflict in border regions. The UN Office of Counter Terrorism is pleased to be able to support this event together with the United Nations Development Programme. In this regard, I would like to welcome Mr. Avanesov, Global Programme Manager and Special Advisor on Prevention of Violent Extremism.

This discussion comes at a crucial time for ongoing peace efforts in the region, when a strong “wind of hope” blows through the Horn of Africa.

I would also like to commend Kenya for its commitment to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism. I recently had the opportunity to visit Kenya together with the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Ms.

Michèle Coninsx, where we discussed the remarkable progress of your Government in developing a comprehensive policy framework to counter and prevent violent extremism.

We had the opportunity to visit your well established National Counter-Terrorism Center in Nairobi, and to see, in Kwale County, the improvement of the security situation in the coastal areas. There were numerous tourists, and this is an indication that the situation is stabilizing. We also learnt about successful programmes involving local communities and the local government in promoting tolerance, supporting deradicalization and promoting women and youth empowerment, which have been supported by the UN and in particular by UNDP.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Government of Ethiopia for the recent signing of the historic peace agreement with the Government of Eritrea. The celebrations witnessed at the reopening of the crossing points on your shared border remind us that communities living on each side of the border have more in common than that which divides them.

Finally, I would also like to commend IGAD for its efforts in supporting peace efforts in the region. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is pleased to have started a cooperation with IGAD in the area of strategic communications in the framework of its support to the implementation of IGAD PVE Strategy.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Last June, Member States reaffirmed by consensus the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its four mutually reinforcing pillars.

The General Assembly reiterated the importance of prevention of violent extremism in this context, under the leadership and ownership of national authorities, to address the conditions conducive to terrorism. I would like to stress this point: the importance of ownership of the national authorities, which is critical for the successful implementation of programmes.

Local stakeholders, including civil society, can play an important role given their insights into the political and social dynamics of their communities.

The promotion of inclusive societies, sustainable development, gender equality, and the protection of human rights, are key elements to counter radicalization and the appeal of terrorism.

Likewise, access to employment, education and training opportunities for the youth are also essential to embed PVE in a broader social context.

There is growing demand from Member States for UN support in the field of PVE and the United Nations is stepping its efforts. My Office has mapped over 260 PVE projects implemented by 16 UN entities in 84 countries.

My Office has now launched a global PVE programme in a strategic partnership with UNDP to assist requesting Member States in developing and implementing national and regional plans of action suited to their needs and context, as recommended by the General Assembly.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we discuss cross border challenges and solutions today, it is also critical to recognize the importance of border security and the challenges many countries face in preventing the movements of foreign terrorists across borders.

UNOCT is committed to supporting requesting Member States in this regard as well, and will be launching a new four-year programme to strengthen national capacities for border security.

Today's event is a unique opportunity to learn from an integrated initiative and partnership – the Cross-Border Integrated Programme for Sustainable Peace and Socio-Economic Transformation – jointly launched in 2015 by Kenya and Ethiopia.

The programme was designed with the aim of reducing vulnerability and increasing the resilience of communities affected by conflict in border regions through economic empowerment and the promotion of sustainable development.

The collaboration between Kenya and Ethiopia is a demonstration of the importance of tackling the threat of radicalization, violent extremism and conflict in a collaborative manner. The UN is ready to support these efforts through a “All-of-UN” approach, bringing together the combined expertise of all UN entities involved in the prevention of violent extremism.

I look forward to fruitful discussions and the lessons learned from Kenya and Ethiopia's experiences in building safer and more resilient cross-border communities.

Thank you for your attention.