



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov

Second International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) High-Level Conference on Aviation Security

Montréal, Canada, 29 November 2018

Mr. Chairperson,
Madame Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address this distinguished audience.

At the outset, I would like to thank the International Civil Aviation Organization for organizing this important event and for inviting me to participate and take the floor.

This Second High-Level Conference is an opportunity to consider progress on the implementation of the Global Aviation Security Plan, including how it supports Member States to address the evolving threat of terrorism.

Terrorists, sadly, continue to see the aviation industry as a primary target. With the ever-growing volume and importance of air travel, even potential attacks on airports and airplanes have a negative impact on all of us.

We continue to learn new lessons and adjust our counter-terrorism efforts. But terrorists also adapt. We know that they seek to develop new explosives and weapons that are difficult to detect. They explore ways to bring down airlines with surface to air missiles, or by using cyber tools to cause disruption either in the cockpit or in the control tower. They try to infiltrate airport staff and attack the land-side.

We need to ensure that we remain vigilant, strengthen the weak links and use new innovations to keep us safe. All of this requires stronger international cooperation.

In October 2016, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a landmark resolution on Aviation Security, which called on all Member States to implement several measures to prevent and counter terrorist threats to civil aviation in accordance with international law.

Its adoption further underscored the important role of ICAO in supporting Member States to implement international aviation security standards.

In December 2017, the Council adopted resolution 2396, which creates new international obligations to strengthen border security and information sharing to address the terrorist threat.

In its adoption, the United Nations Security Council welcomed the approval by ICAO of its new Global Aviation Security Plan.

The Council also called upon all Member States to work within ICAO to ensure that its international security standards and recommended practices as set out in Annex 17 of the Chicago Convention are updated and reviewed, to effectively address the threat posed by terrorists targeting civil aviation.

Expanding on the United Nations Security Council's 2014 decision on Advance Passenger Information (API), resolution 2396 requires Member States to develop the capability to collect, process and analyze Passenger Name Record (PNR) data, and further urges ICAO to work with its Member States to establish a standard for collection, use, processing and protection of such data.

ICAO contributes significantly to the implementation of these resolutions, as well as to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. I am grateful for the very solid cooperation we have established between my Office and ICAO to pursue our common goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the objectives of establishing the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is to strengthen the delivery of counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States.

In this context, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, which is the capacity-building arm of my Office, has continued its cooperation with ICAO and other partners within the UN-system, leveraging their expertise to strengthen our engagement with Member States at the global, regional and national levels as called for in resolution 2309 and 2396.

A key example in this regard is our Aviation Security project in Nigeria, which we completed in December last year, in partnership the Governments of Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

This initiative was instrumental in strengthening the capacity of the Nigerian Government to counter terrorism by delivering screener training to more than 180 airport security officials, who have been deployed to 26 airports across the country. Following deployment, they immediately began to find weapons, ammunition, hidden cash and gold that would all have gone to Boko Haram.

This initiative is closely aligned with the overarching principles and key priority outcomes of the Global Aviation Security Plan, as well as the requirements of resolution 2309.

We are now seeking to expand its reach to other countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and we look forward to working closely with ICAO in this regard, to ensure a coordinated approach to address identified gaps and vulnerabilities.

I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its continued strong financial support for the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.

ICAO is also a key implementing partner in the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism new flag-ship global project aimed at enhancing the capacity of Member States to use Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data to prevent terrorist travel. This new initiative is the largest that the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has ever embarked on, and addresses a key priority identified by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

On the margins of the High-Level Segment of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September, I signed an agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to transfer ownership of the Dutch Travel Information Portal (TRIP) system to the United Nations. In partnership with ICAO and other UN entities, we will provide the TRIP system to interested Member States as a software solution to facilitate the collection, processing and transmission of passenger data.

I would like to thank the Dutch Government for its support of the counter-terrorism activities of the United Nations.

This new initiative is expected to have a significant practical impact on the capabilities of beneficiary Member States and the broader international community to curb the mobility of foreign terrorist fighters, as called for in resolution 2396. It is also an example of how the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is partnering with other entities to develop and implement multi-year initiatives through an “All-of-UN” approach

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To make the United Nations deliver its counter-terrorism assistance “as One”, we are strengthening the internal coordination and coherence inside the UN house through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Compact. The Compact has been signed by the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and 38 heads of UN entities.

During my visit here to Montreal, the Secretary-General of ICAO, Dr. Liu also signed the Compact, formally bringing ICAO into the big family of the Global Compact entities. It is very timely as the first meeting of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Compact Coordination Committee, will be convened by the UN Secretary-General on December 6 in New York.

We are also finalizing an Inter-Agency Arrangement with ICAO, which will streamline and strengthen the good cooperation between our two Organizations in the fields of Aviation Security, Border Security and Management, Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR).

I look forward to signing this important document during Dr. Liu's visit to New York on December 20, at the margins of the Security Council - Counter Terrorism Committee Meeting - Briefing on Aviation Security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to underline the need to step up international cooperation to strengthen global aviation security.

Member States have the primary responsibility for preventing and countering terrorist attacks against civil aviation. But the United Nations has a unique international convening role and can help to find multilateral solutions to complex global problems. We must fight the scourge of terrorism together, with methods that do not compromise our respect for the rule of law and human rights.

I would also like to thank ICAO for gathering us here in Montréal for this exact purpose of finding new solutions, and I wish you a very successful Conference. I am also very grateful for the Government of Canada for its support for this meeting.

Thank you.