



The Republic of the Philippines signs MoU with UNOCT for capacity-building to detect the travel of terrorists and serious criminals

NEW YORK, 7 July 2021 - The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today signifying partnership under the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel (CT Travel) Programme. The MoU will allow the United Nations to assist the country to enhance its capabilities to detect the travel of terrorists and serious criminals by collecting and analyzing passenger data, in compliance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, international standards and human rights principles.

Through an 'All-of-UN' partnership with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT), and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the UNOCT-led Programme provides comprehensive, yet tailored assistance to beneficiary Member States.

The Republic of the Philippines is one of 42 beneficiary Member States that have joined the CT Travel Programme since its launch in May 2019.

The signing of the MoU took place during a virtual ceremony between the Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations, Ambassador Enrique Austria Manalo. The ceremony was also attended by representatives from Australia and the European Union.

"Today's Memorandum of Understanding is a symbol of the solid partnership and mutual commitment between the Republic of the Philippines and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for the implementation of the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme in the Philippines. Implemented together with our programming partners, CTED, UNODC, ICAO, OICT and INTERPOL, our flagship Countering Terrorist Travel Programme will help enhance the capabilities of the Philippines to detect and interdict known and suspected terrorists using passenger data, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2396 and 2482, international standards, and human rights principles. Critically, this will allow the United Nations to assist the Philippines to identify and address evolving terrorist and criminal threats within both the air and maritime environments," Mr. Voronkov said.

"With the establishment of this strategic partnership between the United Nations and the Philippines through this Memorandum of Understanding, setting the framework for closer cooperation and regular consultations among Philippine authorities and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and the support of our key partners, the Philippines will be in a better position to implement its roadmap to build its detection capacities and to contribute to the global effort to counter terrorist travel," Ambassador Manalo stated.

Building stronger partnerships to support Member States' efforts to prevent and counter terrorism is one of the top priorities of UNOCT. The CT Travel Programme, a flagship global initiative of UNOCT, aims to assist beneficiary Member States in building such capabilities to detect and intercept terrorists and serious criminals by using both advance passenger information (API) and passenger name record (PNR) data within the air and maritime domains, and cross-checking that data against INTERPOL and other international and national databases of known and suspected terrorists and criminals. The Programme also enhances international information exchange, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017) and 2482 (2019), international standards, relevant privacy laws, and human rights principles.

As a beneficiary of the CT Travel Programme, the Republic of the Philippines is being supported across four key pillars of work, namely:

1. The development of necessary legislative frameworks regulating the collection, transmission, use, retention and sharing of passenger data, in compliance with internationally recognized standards and human rights principles;
2. The institutional set-up and development of operational capacity of The Philippines's detection centre, also known as a Passenger Information Unit;
3. Engagement and cooperation with the transport industry to ensure technical connectivity; and
4. Technical support, including the licensing and deployment of the United Nations' specialized 'goTravel' software system.

The CT Travel Programme is funded by generous contributions from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the European Union, the United States of America, the State of Qatar, Australia, Germany, Japan, the Republic of India, and with in-kind support from Hungary.

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