



# UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

## **Opening Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter- Terrorism (UNOCT)**

### **High-Level Parliamentary Conference “Understanding the terrorist threat in Africa: new challenges and necessary measures” Doha, State of Qatar**

**30 March 2022**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Members of Parliament,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like at the outset to thank the Shura Council of the State of Qatar for the warm welcome to the wonderful city of Doha. I am grateful for your hospitality.

I am honoured to be speaking today alongside His Excellency Mr. Hassan bin Abdulla Al-Ghanim, Speaker of the Shura Council of the State of Qatar, and His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ali Houmed, President of the Executive Committee of the African Parliamentary Union and Speaker of the Parliament of Djibouti, in this important and timely event.

I would like also to welcome my colleagues Mr. Annadif Khatir Mahamat Saleh, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, and Ms. Cristina Duarte, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Africa.

And my words of appreciation to the distinguished Members of Parliament for their interest and participation in today’s event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Supporting African Member States in their counter-terrorism efforts and responding to their needs has always been among the top priorities of my Office.

The threat posed by the rapidly growing presence and activity of terrorist organizations in parts of Africa in recent years has become one of the most pressing international concerns.

The expansion of Da'esh, Al-Qaida, and their affiliates in Central, Eastern, and Western Africa, will have serious and lasting repercussions well beyond the continent.

In 2017, Da'esh was defeated in Syria and Iraq, however, the international community remained cautiously optimistic, and rightly so.

Following the group's territorial defeat, Da'esh has managed to extend its influence in several African States, where local terrorist groups pledged allegiance to them.

Recently, it has been evident that the threats from Da'esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates have increased in terms of frequency and lethality of attacks, especially in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, Mozambique, Somalia, and other parts of Africa.

In this regard, I want to highlight that more needs to be done to address the threats plaguing the region, especially with regard to enhancing regional cooperation and sharing of information, expertise, and best practices to prevent and counter terrorism.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This high-level parliamentary conference is a key part of a broader initiative to give new momentum to inter-parliamentary cooperation among national parliaments in Africa and relevant parliamentary assemblies to collectively address the evolving threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

Today's conference demonstrates the importance of African-led and African-owned counter-terrorism efforts that are strengthened by the solidarity among African parliaments and the collective responsibility they hold towards their respective peoples.

Dear colleagues,

Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has intensified its support to all Member States and developed a strategy of growing presence in the field.

This includes our staff placed in Burkina Faso, Iraq, Sudan, Central Asia, and the new Programme Office in Nairobi that we just inaugurated, as well as the Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Rabat which functions as a training centre for security, law enforcement and judicial officers for Africa.

We also enhanced the delivery of more impactful, cost-efficient, and sustainable capacity-building support through new global programmes on National Inter-Agency Coordination

Mechanism or Fusion Cells”, Protection of Vulnerable Targets and Youth Engagement and Empowerment, just to mention a few of them.

Most importantly, in June last year, with the generous support of the Shura Council of the State of Qatar, we launched our Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement based here in Doha.

Among several successful events, the Programme Office effectively convened the “First Counter-Terrorism Coordination Meeting of Parliamentary Assemblies”, where parliamentary assemblies worldwide, including the African Parliamentary Union, agreed to a unique, strategic coordination mechanism among parliamentary assemblies to improve collaboration among parliamentarians as well as with the United Nations and parliamentary bodies to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other General Assembly and Security Council resolutions related to terrorism.

Dear colleagues,

We are convinced that parliamentarians play an essential role in supporting governments to fulfil international counter-terrorism obligations with respect for the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

I would like to reiterate that the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and its Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Doha are committed to supporting the global parliamentary community to collectively promote inter-parliamentary dialogue.

Let us take action today to effectively work together in pursuit of a safer world, one without terrorism, for present and future generations.

I thank you.