

Welcoming Remarks
for the Opening Ceremony of the UNOCT Programme Office in Qatar
Secretary General of IPA CIS

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Dear participants!

Please allow me to welcome you from Saint Petersburg, the headquarters of the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), to the opening ceremony of the Programme Office of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office in Qatar.

I thank the event organizers - the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Shura Council of the State of Qatar - for inviting me to deliver welcoming remarks today.

The IPA CIS provides opportunities for parliamentary cooperation on various issues of mutual interest uniting legislative bodies of 10 countries in Eurasia.

The activity of IPA CIS is primarily aimed at improving and harmonizing the legislative systems of CIS Member States, including on counterterrorism.

In the CIS, we have developed and successfully used model laws on "Combating Terrorism", "Countering Organizations and Individuals Whose Activity is Aimed to Conduct Acts of Terrorism in the Territories of Other States", "Countering Terrorist Financing", Recommendations for Improving Legislation of CIS Member States in the area of countering technological terrorism, a model law on "Ensuring Security at Major Sports Events", recommendations to improve and harmonize the national legislation of CIS Member States on the issues of classifying organizations as terrorist and extremist, as well as on conducting research (expertise) of informational materials in order to identify signs of extremist and terrorist crimes. And this is just a small part of our ongoing work in this area.

Harmonization of the legislation of CIS Member States in the area of countering terrorist manifestations is carried out primarily through the implementation of inter-state programmes and strategies.

One of the important activities of IPA CIS - which complements the harmonization of national legislation - is holding international conferences on various aspects of countering international terrorism and violent extremism.

We greatly value the development of dynamic and comprehensive relationships with our partner organizations - not only parliamentary, but also sectoral, including the United Nations entities, such as the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. These relationships are based above all on a long tradition of mutual respect and a desire to seek joint solutions to the most important issues of today's agenda.

Saint Petersburg has repeatedly become a venue for large-scale events with a focus on countering international terrorism. For example, in April 2021, we held the International Parliamentary Conference on "Global Challenges and Threats in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Terrorism and Violent Extremism".

Following the 2017 and 2019 conferences, this year event was hosted by the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States and co-organized with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, PACE, PAM and UNOCT.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has profoundly changed human life, has also had a significant impact on international security. The pandemic has revealed vulnerabilities to new forms of terrorism and violent extremism, such as bioterrorism, digital crimes and cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure.

Given that countering terrorism and extremism is impossible without strengthening international institutions - for which international law is the essential foundation - we believe that the United Nations has a central role in combating terrorism. We appreciate the efforts that have been made to combat this scourge, and we welcome the opening of the UNOCT Programme Office in the State of Qatar. This event once again demonstrates the seriousness of the world community's commitment to countering terrorism in all its manifestations.

The IPA CIS is always open to dialogue, and parliamentarians of CIS countries are committed to cooperate both bilaterally and multilaterally.

Distinguished participants,

I would like to conclude by noting that on 30 June the international parliamentary community will celebrate International Day of Parliamentarism, established by a UN General Assembly resolution on the initiative of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly with the support of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all participants on the upcoming holiday. Look forward to our continued cooperation.

Thank you for your attention!