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Director-General/Executive Director

Opening of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism

16 June 2021

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to join you today, and I congratulate USG Voronkov and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism on the opening of its new Programme Office.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime is proud to support parliamentary cooperation against terrorism.

As legislators, parliamentarians have the power to put in place comprehensive legal frameworks aligned with international standards, for more effective criminal justice responses to terrorism and violent extremism.

As community and national leaders, they can be important agents of peace and bridge-builders who amplify the voices, needs and concerns of the people they represent.

Parliamentarians therefore represent a key partner of UNODC, and we collaborate closely with legislative bodies, parliamentary associations, and regional organizations as we support Member States to implement the 19 international instruments against terrorism on the national level.

UNODC's activities span all four pillars of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and our Office is a leading provider of technical assistance on terrorism prevention.

We deliver our support through integrated global, regional and country programmes, working from our headquarters in Vienna and through our extensive field network.

As part of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism since 2018, UNODC has been leading an analysis of counter-terrorism legislation in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

Once finalized, the results of this work will be shared with our counterparts in the Ministries of Justice of the three countries, and will constitute the basis for a legislative review.

This is an important dimension of our support to the Sahel region, which faces particularly strong cross-border threats to peace and security.

Based on recommendations by the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, our office is in the process of expanding our legislative analysis activities to Sub-Saharan Africa and the MENA region, as well as Latin America. We count on UNOCT's continued support in this regard.

Together with IPU and OCT, we have also contributed to the drafting of model legislative provisions on victims of terrorism.

Hundreds of parliamentarians, practitioners, experts, representatives of victims' associations, and victims themselves from some 80 countries in the MENA region, the Sahel, Europe and Central Asia were consulted as part of this inclusive process.

The model provisions will be finalized by the end of the year, and we hope they will be a valuable resource for Member States seeking to adopt legislation in line with international norms, and driven by a victim-centred approach.

They also aim to enhance collaboration among parliaments, so that more legislators can draw upon international good practices and successful strategies.

The model provisions focus on the right of victims to compensation, recognition and remembrance; assistance and support for victims of terrorism; protection of privacy and dignity; the role of victims' associations and non-governmental organizations; and the facilitation of victims' access to justice.

They will further help to ensure that victims of sexual violence by terrorist groups are seen and understood as victims of terrorism, and that they receive gender-responsive support.

Alongside this work, UNODC is also making legal knowledge and resources available to legislators through its SHERLOC knowledge management portal,

which contains more than 3,000 pieces of legislation, treaties, national counter-terrorism strategies, and case laws related to terrorism.

Thanks to an application under development by IPU, this database will soon be directly available to thousands of parliamentarians worldwide.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since I started as Executive Director of UNODC last year, one of my main priorities has been strengthening and building partnerships, as well as improving coordination with other UN system entities, to elevate our support to Member States and achieve greater impact.

Partnerships are an essential enabler for the implementation of our five-year strategy, as well as our Strategic Vision for Africa 2030, which includes a particular focus on protecting all Africans from terrorism.

The UNODC-UNOCT joint action plan, which I signed with USG Voronkov last December, has been an important roadmap, allowing us to better focus our interventions, within a framework of strengthened cooperation.

I believe that the opening of the new UNOCT Programme Office can pave the way for further joint initiatives and opportunities to enhance our collaboration in support of parliamentarians worldwide.

UNODC is proud to bring to the table a uniquely integrated approach, drawing on our interlinked mandates on drugs, crime, and corruption, as well as our unique research and field capacities, and legislative expertise.

We look forward to working closely with the new office, to further advance joint counter-terrorism assistance that helps Member States keep people safer, and advance peace and security, development and rights.

Thank you