



PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the Phase IV of the project “Towards a comprehensive implementation of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia”

Dushanbe (Tajikistan), 8 December 2021 – The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT-UNCCT) and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) jointly launched the Phase IV of the project “Towards a comprehensive implementation of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia” during the Eleventh Annual Meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers of the Central Asian States, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan and UNRCCA.

The event was opened by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Ms. Michèle Coninx.

The Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre within the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Dr. Jehangir Khan briefed the delegates on the outputs and outcomes of the previous phases of the project on the Joint Plan of Action (JPoA) for implementing the Strategy in Central Asia and presented the Phase IV of the project.

During the three previous phases (2010 - 2021), UNOCT-UNCCT and UNRCCA have implemented a broad range of UN support to Central Asian countries from assistance in the drafting of national strategies and counter-terrorism legislation to capacity-building trainings at both the national and regional levels in topics such as countering the financing of terrorism (CFT), border security management (BSM) and combating use of the internet in terrorist recruitment. Since the beginning of the project, Central Asian states endorsed its regional strategy and adopted national strategies and action plans to counterterrorism (CT) and prevent/counter violent extremism (PCVE).

Phase IV will contribute to the balanced and integrated implementation of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) in Central Asia. It is designed to provide a coordinated and tailored solution to enhance the capacity of Central Asian States to counter-terrorism and prevent/counter violent extremism, conducive to terrorism, through needs-based capacity-building, technical assistance, expert mentoring by leveraging multi-stakeholders and multi-disciplinary best-practices. It also provides a platform for cooperation and coordination between the Member States, international and regional organizations, as well as civil society organizations in the region in their efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

During the event, the **Member States of Central Asia** have expressed their support to the project and appreciation for the joint work of different UN entities with the Member States in the region. At the discussion session, they confirmed their strong commitment to the continuation of this highly relevant initiative and signaled their clear interest towards a new Joint Plan of Action, which will take into consideration current and emerging challenges in the field of counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, to be endorsed during the high-level event in Tashkent in 2022. In the conclusion part of the event, the Member States underlined the importance of the CT and PCVE in the context of

the evolving situation in Afghanistan. They also appreciated the cooperation within the framework of this initiative and, in particular, the partnership with UNOCT and UNRCCA.

Quotes

Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in his opening statement (recorded) underlined that “For more than a decade, through the joint project, UNOCT-UNCCT and UNRCCA have been working with Central Asian States to support their regional Joint Plan of Action for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. He added that “This new phase of the project is based on lessons learned from a decade of support to the region and takes into account new and emerging security threats and challenges, including the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan”.

Ms. Michèle Coninx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in her address (recorded) noted that “Over the ten years of the JPoA’s existence, CTED has continued to ensure that the counter-terrorism technical assistance provided to Central Asian States under the Plan is fully aligned with the recommendations of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, stemming from its country assessments. CTED has also shared its expertise and made its advice available during the development of Phase IV of the JPoA, as well as in the context of the consultative process on Central Asian States’ national strategies. CTED will continue to remain engaged under the JPoA framework through its ongoing dialogue with States of the region and its assessments of their implementation of the relevant Council resolutions”.

Ms. Natalia Gherman, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Central Asia, Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia mentioned that “we have completed the Phase III of the Project, under which a significant number of activities to strengthen the capacities of countries in the region were carried out as well as meetings were held to analyze and exchange information and best practices in the field of counter-terrorism”

Dr. Jehangir Khan, Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre within the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism underlined that “the Phase IV of the project is continuing to contribute to the balanced and integrated implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia”. Dr. Khan has also noted that the project has already delivered numerous activities, which allowed to strengthen the capacity of thousands of policy-makers and practitioners across state institutions and civil society organizations in the region.

The event featured a discussion with the participants including representatives of the diplomatic missions and followed by the closing remarks by **Ms. Natalia Gherman, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Central Asia, Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.**

For more information, please contact: Ms. Laurence Gerard, at gerardl@un.org, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)