



**Remarks by Mr. Raffi Gregorian
Deputy Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

Kick-off meeting of CT TECH Project

**10 February 2022, 09.00 a.m.
Virtual**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the kick-off of the UNOCT-INTERPOL “CT TECH” project.

I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Greg Hinds and our partners at INTERPOL – and Ms. Natalie Pauwels of the Service of Foreign Policy Instruments of the European Commission for their support to this joint initiative.

CT TECH is an innovative capacity building project which will assist Member States in strengthening their law enforcement and criminal justice capacities to respond to terrorist exploitation of new technologies while upholding the rule of law and human rights.

This project is especially relevant in today’s era of transformative technologies and when COVID-19 abatement measures have accelerated the movement of people’s lives online.

In fact, the United Nations Secretary-General’s 2020 *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation* warned about increasing cybercrime, exploitation of the Internet by terrorists and violent extremists, attacks against critical infrastructure, as well as growing capabilities of state and non-state actors to conduct cyber-operations, including disinformation targeting elections and political systems.

The General Assembly Declaration for the 75th anniversary of the United Nations points to the unprecedented opportunities and new challenges presented by digital technologies, including their malicious use.

Terrorists use the Internet and social media to spread their hateful ideologies, radicalize people, and incite and plan terrorist attacks; they use virtual assets, mobile payment systems and crowdfunding for terrorism financing; and they use cryptography and the Dark Web to hide.

The use of digital technologies for terrorist purposes is constantly evolving and taking new forms. Developments in the field of artificial intelligence, machine learning, 5G telecommunications and the “Internet of things”, robotics, big data, algorithmic filters, self-driving cars and drones may suggest that as these technologies become commercially available, affordable, and convenient to use, they could also be abused by terrorists to expand the range and lethality of their attacks.

But new technologies also open new opportunities for us in our common efforts to defeat terrorists. We see how Member States, United Nations’ entities, and international and regional organizations have made innovative use of modern technologies to share and use information, detect and prevent acts of terrorism, bring perpetrators to justice, and support the victims of terrorism.

Maximizing the benefits and mitigating the risks of digital transformation is a key component of the Secretary-General’s report on *Our Common Agenda*.

Building on his *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation*, the Secretary-General called for collective action to reclaim the digital commons, protect the online space and strengthen its governance.

The General Assembly, in its seventh review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy this past June, requested that UNOCT support innovative measures and approaches to build the capacity of Member States for the challenges and opportunities that new technologies provide in preventing and countering terrorism.

These efforts are spear-headed by the Global Programme on Cybersecurity and New Technologies of UNOCT’s United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, working in partnership with Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities such as INTERPOL.

By launching the CT TECH project today, which was made possible by a generous contribution of the European Union, we have expanded our effective partnership with INTERPOL in order to offer relevant and much anticipated assistance to Member States.

CT TECH is a two-and-an-half-year project developed to strengthen Member States' law enforcement and criminal justice capacities to counter the exploitation of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes and support the leveraging of new and emerging technologies in the fight against terrorism as part of this effort.

CT TECH has two streams of work.

First, it will support Member States in developing effective counter-terrorism *policy* responses towards the challenges and opportunities of new technologies.

And second, CT TECH will strengthen law enforcement and criminal justice operational *capacities* to counter the exploitation of new technologies and digital platforms such as the Internet, social media, virtual assets and the dark net used for terrorist purposes.

Dear Colleagues,

Terrorism has devastating consequences for the enjoyment of the rights to life, liberty, and physical integrity of victims.

Terrorism also destabilizes governments, undermines civil society, jeopardizes peace and security, and threatens social and economic development. All of these elements directly impact on the enjoyment of human rights.

But indiscriminate use of new technologies to counter terrorism, on the other hand, is likely to alienate population, which can in turn lead to radicalization and violence.

The CT TECH project will address these challenges and assist Member States in building their capacities to counter terrorists' use of new technologies and using new technologies to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorists, while upholding the rule of law and human rights.

CT TECH is our instrument to respond to the capacity building needs of Member States.

It is an instrument to support implementation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee's recommendations to Member States on policy frameworks, special investigative techniques, public-private partnerships, digital battlefield evidence and human rights aspects of counter-terrorism measures relating to the use of new technologies.

Furthermore, CT TECH is a response to the need for more joint efforts towards development of global knowledge and good practices on new technologies in counter-terrorism.

Last but not least, CT TECH is a response to the need for practical guidance to law enforcement and criminal justice organizations on how to harness new technologies to counter terrorism and for more capacity building in this regard.

I am sure that UNOCT and INTERPOL collaboration on new technologies in countering terrorism under CT TECH will leverage relevant expertise, optimize resources, reduce duplicative efforts, foster synergies and maximize deliverables to Member States.

We look forward to continuing working with INTERPOL, CTED and our other partners and generous supporters like the European Union, to support Member States in adopting innovative measures and approaches to new technologies in countering terrorism and in assisting requesting Member States in this endeavor.

Let me conclude by thanking everyone today for their support, contributions and commitment to this project. I wish you a very fruitful discussion and looking forward to our future engagements.

Thank you.