



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM**

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

**The Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme
Regional Policy Dialogue Event for South and Southeast Asia**

12 October 2022

Pre-recorded Message

Excellencies,
Distinguished Experts,
Colleagues,
Dear Young Leaders,

It is a pleasure to address you today on the last day of our Regional Policy Dialogue, the culmination of the Regional Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme for South and Southeast Asia.

The main goal of this Programme is to enable young people to rise as leaders within their communities to prevent violent extremism. It is to leverage their potential as we work to advance international peace and security.

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to Ms. Pa Arul Malar, from Malaysia's Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCCT). My words of gratitude to you and your

colleagues at the Centre and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for excellent partnership in our joint endeavour.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome the senior participating officials from Malaysia, the Maldives, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Bangladesh. Thank you also to the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting this event.

I also extend a warm welcome to the United Nations agencies present here today, UNDP, UN Women, UNESCO, UNODC, and representatives from the Resident Coordinators' Offices in Thailand and Bangladesh.

Finally, to our incredible young leaders from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, East Timor, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives: we thank you for your dedication to this project over the last six months. We look forward to continuing to work with you on future opportunities as part of our Youth Network on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

Dear Colleagues,

We are living in unprecedented times. Despite the challenges we are facing, there has never been a time more conducive to affect change. Our individual actions reverberate in ways that we cannot always predict, particularly through increasing digitalisation.

It is in this way that each one of us has the power to create waves of change. This is the reason behind UNOCT's continued efforts to build an alliance with young people, and to work with governments and communities to ensure the inclusion of young people in our fight against violent extremism.

In the last fifteen years, we have seen the UN system take a more comprehensive, whole-of-UN and whole-of-society approach to addressing the threat of violent extremism and terrorism. Today's event is an important contribution to this whole-of-society approach. It brings

decisionmakers, regional and global institutions and other stakeholders together with young people to find opportunities for joint action.

Dear Colleagues,

The Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme was launched in 2020 with a vision to empower young people to contribute to the United Nation's efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism. Since then, our programme has reached over 800 youth from over 60 countries with its Peer-to-Peer Model. This has been achieved through workshops, training, webinars, coaching and mentoring sessions, and interactions between youth and policymakers.

Through this programme, we aim to engage young leaders from across the globe to realise the objectives of the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the Youth 2030 Strategy, and the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

We are very proud to call these young leaders our partners. Today we will hear from South Asian and Southeast Asian young leaders who will share with us their recommendations on how best to include youth in the development and implementation of PCVE policy frameworks.

We believe that young people are critical to building resilient societies, and ensuring lasting solidarity. My Office is therefore committed to enhancing the capacities of young women and men to adapt and grow, including through events like this Regional Policy Dialogue.

I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you.