

Speech: Reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Mr President, I'd like to begin by aligning the United Kingdom with the statement to be delivered by the European Union. And I'd like to thank the Ambassadors of Finland and Jordan and their experts for their tireless efforts over the past month. The United Kingdom is pleased that we, the Member States of the UN General Assembly, have achieved international consensus while reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is important that as the global terrorism threat evolves the strategy reflects the progress that we Member States have made and continues to build on it. The journey to reaching consensus has been fraught with contentious debate. It has not been easy but it is important that in this forum, we all have an opportunity to share our views and perspectives but we come together in the end to face a common and global threat.

The UK is particularly pleased to see the reaffirmation of the importance of preventing violent extremism and of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Prevention is a core component of our counter-terrorism approach and we see an important role for the United Nations in furthering national and international efforts in this regard. For the United Kingdom, preventing violent extremism is fundamentally about safeguarding people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by reducing their intent to act. The UK champions a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to prevention which is reflected in the UK's newly refreshed CT strategy CONTEST.

We recognise that national and local buy-in for programming and measures are critical ingredients for effectiveness and sustainability. Preventing violent extremism must be owned by a state national or local authorities. It cannot be imposed from the outside. That would be wrong. It would be ineffective. So let us end our disagreement over labels and get on with action.

Mr President, as the global threat from terrorism evolves and spans across political borders, the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and those returning or relocating from conflict zones is of serious concern to many of us and we were pleased to see that international commitments to address this, including through tools such as API and PNR are reflected in the Resolution. We recognise that many states have called for technical assistance in meeting these obligations and we support the efforts of the United Nations system and partners to provide the requested technical assistance. But we would also stress that Member States have the responsibility to meet all obligations under Security Council Resolutions including 2396 and 2309.

We welcome the strengthened cooperation between the Office for Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate as embodied by Under Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx and we welcome their joint report which we shared with all Member States. The unique assessments and analyses provided by CTED provide an important basis

for the capacity building support provided by the Global Compact entities.

These recommendations reflect the prioritisation and approval of the Member State and the support of the Council through the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The UK is therefore keen that the General Assembly bodies work closely with those of the Security Council to ensure that the UN counter-terrorism architecture remains fit for purpose and positioned to respond in a rapidly evolving threat landscape.

Mr President, conversations between Member States will, and rightfully should, continue in the month to come to build on what we have achieved during the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review and to discuss frankly and openly those topics on which we may disagree. The UK wants to move forwards. As we look ahead to the high level conference this week, we hope it will provide an opportunity for constructive exchange and insight. The UK hopes that through the full contribution and involvement of both government and civil society organisations, we, the international community, can build on the consensus achieved on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review in order to make progress as a unified voice in our fight against global terrorism. Because that fight is too important for us to be divided. That is the goal of the terrorists. So let us stand together.

Thank you, Mr President.