



**Conference between the Members of the Global Counterterrorism
Forum and the United Nations as well as Other International, Regional
and Sub-regional Organizations**

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Statement by

Ambassador Jürg Lindenmann

Head of the Swiss Delegation, Coordinator for Counterterrorism,
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues,

Also on behalf of our *Foreign Minister, Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter*, I have the pleasure to welcome you in Interlaken and thank you most sincerely for your participation in the Conference between the Members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the United Nations as well as Other International, Regional and Sub-regional Organizations.

Federal Councillor Burkhalter regrets very much not to be with us in Interlaken. But like many other high-level representatives of the States and Organizations present here today, he is at this very moment in *London* where he participates in the *Conference on the future for a peaceful Somalia*. And like the London Conference on Somalia, our gathering today and tomorrow will dedicate a special focus on the threat that terrorism poses to security in Somalia, the broader Horn of Africa Region and the rest of the world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues,

The *appearance of the GCTF* on the stage of international cooperation to fight terrorism carries weight. It is a result-oriented and nimble body that is decidedly geared to making practical contributions to counterterrorism capacities where needed. In their Political Declaration at the launch of the GCTF, the Members of the Forum have stated that

the GCTF strives for a role that complements and reinforces existing mechanisms in fighting terrorism.

Your attendance at this meeting is proof for the willingness of your Government or Organization to explore ways how to *better link and coordinate national and international counter-terrorism efforts*. As policy-makers, our response to terrorism must be resolute, but I am convinced it must also be smart, composed and balanced.

The *conceptual framework* for such a response is provided by the *UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy*, unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly on 8 September 2006. The four pillars outlined by the Strategy provide for a universally accepted structure of the international fight against terrorism. Those pillars are

- *(one)* measures to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism;
- *(two)* measures to prevent and combat terrorism;
- *(three)* measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the UN system in this regard; and
- *(four)* measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.

This Strategy is *smart* because it underlines the need to address root causes and places special emphasis on prevention alongside repressive

measures. The Strategy is *composed* because the response to terrorism relies wholly on respect for the rule of law and human rights. The Strategy is *balanced* as it calls for a holistic, inclusive approach to counterterrorism. And finally, the Strategy is *resolute* because it provides for its implementation through a multitude of actors.

Let me expand a moment on this last point. All Member States of the United Nations have agreed to a *common strategic and operational framework to fight terrorism*. In so doing, they sent a clear message that terrorism is unacceptable in all its forms and manifestations, and that they are resolved to take practical steps, both individually and collectively, to prevent and combat terrorism. The Strategy is a unique instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts.

The primary responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy lies with the *States*. Implementation rests mainly upon the legal, institutional and operational capacities of each State. Some States have developed strong legislation on counterterrorism, have established well-resourced institutions and agencies and have elaborated comprehensive guidelines in the delivery of results. Other States are, for many reasons, less advanced in their endeavours. They are in need for support and assistance in capacity building and grateful for acquiring the necessary means to fight terrorism more effectively.

Turning from States to the *United Nations*, the Strategy creates a common platform for bringing together the efforts of some 30 entities within the UN family that make up the United Nations Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF). These entities contribute to the counterterrorism effort of the UN in accordance with their own mandates, while simultaneously taking part in various CTITF working groups and initiatives.

Furthermore, effective and sustainable implementation of the Strategy requires the important contributions that *regional and sub-regional bodies* can make. Indeed, the nature and scope of the terrorist threat may vary from region to region. A one-size-fits-all approach to implementation then proves to be ineffective. The approach that regional and sub-regional organizations can make is particularly valuable in this regard.

Fortunately, there is a *multitude of stakeholders* today that are determined to actively contribute to the fight against terrorism, both at the national and at the international levels.

The *Global Counterterrorism Forum* is a promising new force. It intends to build global political will and to mobilize expertise and resources. The Forum provides an informal venue for officials and practitioners to meet with their counterparts from key countries in different regions to share experiences, expertise, strategies, capacity needs, and capacity-building programs.

From the very inception of the Forum, *Switzerland* emphasized the need for a close relationship between the Forum, on the one hand, and the United Nations and regional organizations, on the other. It seems critical for ensuring success that the activities of the Forum be complementary to and closely linked with existing efforts.

With so many actors, *interaction and open channels of communication* are of the essence. It is for this reason that Switzerland has organised the Interlaken Conference with a view to strengthening relations between the various actors, to enhancing coordination and to exploring maximal synergies with existing efforts. For the GCTF to be able to add value to the existing initiatives and for its own success, it has to be integrated in a comprehensive and synchronized manner to the global counterterrorism framework.

Thank you.