



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

Hotel Victoria-Jungfrau, Interlaken (Switzerland), 22-24 February 2012

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### **Chairman's Summary<sup>1</sup>**

From 22 to 24 February 2012, the government of Switzerland hosted a conference between the members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) the United Nations (UN) and regional and sub-regional organizations (RSRs) from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe.<sup>2</sup>

#### **OPENING SESSION**

The meeting was opened with a welcoming address from the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Justice and Police, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga. She noted that as a member of both the UN and the GCTF, Switzerland believes in the importance of a close working relationship between the two organizations as they further their common objective of countering terrorism in a coherent and holistic manner. Furthermore, Ms. Sommaruga said that the promotion and protection of fundamental rights and the rule of law must be at the core of international efforts to counter terrorism. Her remarks reiterated the need to ensure a strong and enduring relationship between UN, the GCTF and regional, as well as sub-regional organizations.

Ms. Sommaruga asserted that effective counterterrorism measures required a multidimensional approach that draws on many different fields, and that there was a need for equal if not greater attention to preventive approaches; the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly in 2006, provided an essential framework for such an approach, she noted. In particular, she highlighted the challenge of failed and weak states and the consequent importance of capacity building efforts to help strengthen vital institutions. Consequently, she argued, a human security approach to terrorism formed the basis for Swiss policy.

The opening session emphasized that the response to terrorism must be resolute, and that the conceptual framework for such a response is provided by the four pillars of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, which provides for an universally accepted framework in the international fight against terrorism. The necessity of complementing and reinforcing existing efforts to prevent and counter terrorism was highlighted, adding that for the GCTF to be able to add value to the existing initiatives and for its own success, it has to be in keeping with the comprehensive framework of the global counterterrorism strategy. It was explained that the concept of the GCTF arose from a feeling that the international community's efforts to build civilian partnerships, networks, and capacities would be strengthened with the creation of a central, dedicated, inter-governmental forum that allows senior counterterrorism policymakers and practitioners from different regions to share best practices,

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<sup>1</sup> The Chairman's Summary recapitulates the key findings and recommendations from the Interlaken Conference. The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation contributed to the preparation of this summary. It is not an official or complete record of the proceedings and does not necessarily reflect all the views of the meeting participants.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the Interlaken Conference please see:  
<http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/topics/peasec/sec/fiter/intcol/gctf.html>

experiences, and challenges in key regions and on key issues, and to explore responses to identified challenges on a sustained basis. In practice the GCTF brings a new dimension of agility that will complement the legitimacy of the UN. The GCTF will also help to further compliment the local approach that RSRs bring to the table. It was stressed, however, that a conscious effort to collaborate and cooperate is required among each actor, that collaboration between various stakeholders should entail information-sharing and listening to others, and that it should also coordinate and share information at an early stage in the planning of events. It was explained cooperation across the various stages of project design will be vital for ensuring that the collective civilian counterterrorism effort at the multilateral level will be greater than the sum of parts, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

In this regard the UN Secretary-General's call for the consideration of a UN counterterrorism coordinator was mentioned as a positive step toward creating a single focal point for interactions with the UN. The GCTF was also commended for its efforts in building close, sustained relationships with the UN and other relevant stakeholders, and for including UN actors in GCTF Working Group meetings and events as a matter of course since the Forum was established. The important role that is played by the private sector and civil society was also highlighted; the potential role of the GCTF in enhancing or scaling up ongoing bilateral initiatives was also mentioned. The five sessions which followed corresponded to the two thematic and three regional areas in which GCTF members have established working groups: criminal justice and the rule of law, countering violent extremism, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia.

## **SESSION 1: CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW**

### *GCTF Background*

The GCTF Working Group on Criminal Justice/Rule of Law (ROLWG), co-chaired by Egypt and the United States, was established to mobilize resources and assistance for countries seeking to adopt robust yet human rights compliant policies that protect both the liberty and security of their citizens. The ROLWG seeks to provide technical assistance, including training and capacity-building support, to develop the necessary legal framework and institutions to implement a rule-of-law based approach to preventing and responding to terrorism.

Among the priorities identified by the ROLWG are 1) to reinforce the critical role the criminal justice sector can play in disrupting, deterring, and preventing terrorist activity; (2) to promote engagement in international and regional legal cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism; (3) to study the links between terrorism and manifestations of organized crime and address the crime/terrorism nexus where it exists; (4) encourage participating countries to develop counterterrorism strategies that promote the rule of law and protect fundamental human rights; and (5) encourage countries to provide appropriate support and assistance to victims of terrorism. The Group met for the first time in November 2011 and has begun elaborating a set of good practices on counterterrorism in the criminal justice system (the so-called "Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector") which was reviewed at its second meeting in Rabat in early February. The ROLWG will then focus on mobilizing resources and existing training platforms to deliver training on these GCTF good practices.

### *Interlaken Session 1 Summary*

Participants underlined the point that rule of law and criminal justice cooperation is essential for counterterrorism at all levels, and that the UN has demonstrated a central role in this area. The work of the UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was cited in this regard. However, it was reiterated that counterterrorism is successful only when human rights are actively respected and therefore mainstreamed into ROL-CJ efforts. Hence the GCTF's decision to establish the Working Group on Criminal Justice and the ROL and to develop a common understanding of good practices reflected member states' interest in reinforcing these efforts and ensuring criminal justice authorities adopt robust human rights-compliant counterterrorism policies.

The importance of ensuring due process and human rights in all international efforts was raised in the context of the work of the 1267/1989 Committee of the Security Council and its sanctions list. States welcomed the appointment of an Ombudsperson to promote due process on listing and delisting procedures, as well as the Committee's review of listed individuals and entities.

On the subject of encouraging and promoting stronger law enforcement cooperation at the international and regional level, it was explained that the UN has demonstrated a positive track record, illustrated by CTED's workshops in South Asia to bring together police officers, prosecutors and judges for training workshops that are also intended to facilitate a platform for regional cooperation. UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) is also playing an important role in providing training and legislative support to states in order promote ratification and implementation of international protocols and obligations according to established and recognized principles, including the protection of human rights.

It was pointed out that terrorism threatens not only security, but also human development. In strengthening institutions of governance and promoting the rule of law, efforts to counter terrorism can also make an important contribution to global efforts to promote development, education and justice, such as those undertaken by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) and the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Initiatives undertaken by UNDP and UNESCO can also contribute to efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and address the "conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism" outlined in the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy; but it was noted that it is better activities should not carry an explicit counterterrorism label. In particular, UNDP's initiatives to prevent violence, control the proliferation and availability of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and promote civilian oversight of the security sector was noted. Additionally, the support of UN partners such as UNODC and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) in providing technical assistance (again, without the counterterrorism label), capacity-building support and policy guidance was recognized as vital to these efforts.

Given the multiplicity of efforts involved in implementing the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy across all four pillars, coordination at the country level was recognized as fundamental. The role of the UN Resident Coordinator was highlighted in this regard.

Regional and sub-regional organizations played an important role as a transmission belt, taking international norms and helping to plant them in local contexts, and ensuring that international efforts are informed by local and regional perspectives. Moreover, their role in trying to harmonize different levels of legislation – international, regional and national – was seen as important in creating common platforms for action among states.

Participants noted that the issues of rule of law and criminal justice lend themselves well to greater cooperation between the UN and the GCTF. The role of UN actors such as CTED and UNODC in convening key stakeholders and identifying capacity-building needs and priorities was noted; once these were identified, GCTF members could provide support to develop and implement projects to meet these gaps. To that end, it was suggested that a common roster of experts in ROL-CJ be developed so that UN entities and GCTF members could draw on their expertise without "reinventing the wheel" each time. It was also suggested that GCTF members might collate information about bilateral efforts to map ongoing projects, which could help to avoid duplication by multilateral and other actors.

## **SESSION 2: COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

### *GCTF Background*

The GCTF Working Group on Countering Violent Extremism (WGCVE), co-chaired by the United Kingdom (UK) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was established to help prevent individuals from joining or supporting terrorist groups that threaten the vital interests of GCTF member states. In order to remain responsive to the evolving threat on the ground, the remit of the Working Group involves all forms of violent extremism. In Fall/Winter 2012, the Working Group will support the establishment of a

CVE Center of Excellence to promote the collection of data, the sharing of lessons learned and best practices and the provision of training on CVE issues.

Among some of the other work-streams proposed for this group are 1) evaluating the impact of CVE activity; 2) understanding the roles of diverse institutions in countering radicalization; 3) engaging communities in CVE activities; 4) developing a deeper understanding of the drivers of radicalization and historical experiences in addressing terrorist and violent extremist groups; and 5) CVE communications. Most recently, the GCTF members met in London for a series of brainstorming sessions in some of these areas as well as the Center of Excellence on CVE. The outcomes of these discussions will feed into the inaugural meeting of the CVE Working Group, which the UAE will host in early April.

#### *Interlaken Session 2 Summary*

Participants reiterated the importance of not only looking at what the GCTF does collectively to counter violent extremism, but how the impact of its initiatives can be enhanced by partnership with UN and RSRs, and also among the different GCTF working groups. It was noted that there are a number of valuable projects being undertaken in different fora and that the GCTF might provide a platform to scale up some of these activities and promote pragmatic cooperation.

Members of the WGCVE are focused on areas of common interest, rather than areas of difference, and reiterated a desire for the group to cover all forms of terrorism. The substantive priorities of the group includes evaluating effectiveness of terrorism prevention efforts; exploring and strengthening the role of institutions in countering violent extremism; developing more strategic communications and in this effort, and undertaking partnerships with relevant experts, governments and civil society representatives in pursuing these aims.

One deliverable highlighted by the WGCVE is the Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (COECVE), to be established in the United Arab Emirates. The structure and programming of the COECVE is currently in the process of being developed. When launched in autumn of 2012, it will serve as “a bedrock” for bringing multiple initiatives together and direct its efforts towards training, research, collaboration and dialogue across a number of cross-cutting themes, including those prioritized by the WGCVE.

The preventive approach reflected in the discussion on CVE efforts forms an important component of the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy and is especially reflected in pillars 1 and 4, which address “conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism” and the promotion and protection of human rights. It was noted that one particular success of the United Nations has been in bringing these issues squarely onto the international agenda and promoting their acceptance by the broader membership. Within the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), there are three CVE-related Working Groups which work on preventing terrorist use of the internet, supporting victims of terrorism and promoting dialogue and understanding to counter the appeal of terrorism. A newly established UN Center on Counter Terrorism within the CTITF, supported for the first three years through a grant from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was also cited for its potential to provide greater opportunities and further develop UN initiatives on these issues.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to indoctrination, noted participants. Therefore, partnerships with development, educational and cultural entities, such as UNESCO and UNDP, were especially important in developing “appropriate” and “dignifying” policies. These could help develop a common global understanding of the counterterrorism and promote a curriculum based on humanism to discourage violence and promote shared values which foster resilience in the face of humiliation and anger that might make individuals vulnerable to violent extremist ideologies and actions. For example, it was noted that providing teachers with suitable curricula was an important means of addressing the challenge of violent extremism before it became a matter for law enforcement officials. The potential role of religious and community leaders in supporting such efforts was also raised.

Prisons were highlighted as a particular environment which can prove conducive to the radicalization of vulnerable detainees. Consequently, there was widespread agreement on the importance of programs to encourage detainees to disavow violent actions and/or ideologies (“disengagement” or “deradicalization” respectively). Prisoners will eventually be released so opportunities to facilitate their rehabilitation were seen as vital. UNICRI’s initiative in setting up a Center on Policies to Counter the Appeal of Terrorism was seen as particularly valuable, and offers a likely partner for the WGCVE and the COECVE, noted several attendees.

The need to be sensitive to concerns about the instrumentalization of the term “extremism” was also raised. It was noted that to be radical or extreme is not illegal, per se; it is the connection to political violence that is the matter of concern for counterterrorism efforts.

### **SESSION 3: SAHEL CAPACITY-BUILDING**

#### *GCTF Background*

The GCTF Working Group on the Sahel (SWG), co-chaired by Canada and Algeria, was established to strengthen state and regional capacity to address the various threat of terrorism in the Sahel. Close relationships between armed groups, transnational criminal actors, and terrorists – such as some Touareg actors, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and those engaged in illegal trafficking activities throughout the Sahel, add complexity to a potential terrorist threat that challenges regional, continental and international security.

A recent UN interagency mission found that the 2011 conflict in Libya exacerbated a number of existing regional challenges and concerns abound regarding the proliferations of weapons, armed returnees and their potential to reignite longstanding conflicts in the region and the potential for militant groups to exploit the vulnerabilities of the Libyan states as it undergoes a democratic transition.

With these security concerns in mind, in June 2011 the co-chairs of the SWG held bilateral meetings and identified five priority areas for cooperation in the 2012-13 timeframe: 1) Border security; 2) Police cooperation; 3) Countering the financing of terrorism; 4) Legislative and judicial cooperation; and 5) outreach and community engagement. The SWG held its first meeting in Algiers and targeted follow-on initiatives in each of these priority areas are expected to take place in the coming year. These initiatives will focus, inter alia, on bringing together the relevant practitioners from the region and GCTF members.

#### *Interlaken Session 3 Summary*

Participants recognized that the Sahel region is beset by a complex mix of political and developmental challenges, including armed conflict and an imminent food shortage crisis, identified recently in the UN Secretary-General’s report following an interagency assessment mission to the region (UN document S/2012/42). Threats posed by chronic under-development, porous borders - which facilitate the trafficking of illicit weapons, drugs and humans - have been exacerbated by armed conflict and the proliferation of weapons. Concerns were expressed regarding the possible proliferation of man-portable air missile weapons (MANPADS), as reflected in Security Council resolution 2017. It was also noted that the relationship between organized criminal groups and terrorist threats was reflected in the recent Presidential Statement issued by the President of the Security Council, Togo, on 21 February (UN document S/PRST/2012/2). The need for a multifaceted response to the cross-cutting nature of these problems was therefore widely acknowledged.

GCTF members around the table noted that the Working Group on the Sahel has undertaken or is planning to focus its efforts in three areas: border management, crime scene management and engaging community leaders.

It was also pointed out that the UN is actively engaged in the region. For example CTED has worked closely with members states in the region to promote enhanced border security to counter terrorism; and the UNODC-TPB has provided criminal justice support to several countries to encourage compliance with international counterterrorism protocols. We also heard that UNESCO is engaging with youth in

Nigeria through a series of “town hall” like interactions and focusing on communities affected by conflict and tension.

Regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), also explained that they taking holistic view of the problem by developing multidimensional strategies. Complementing ECOWAS’ efforts to counter terrorism were a number of efforts to address piracy, a growing concern especially in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the trafficking of drugs, facilitate security sector reform and address religious extremism. Speakers noted the importance of taking into account the different drivers of terrorism and the variation in these across different countries in the region.

The importance of developing early warning mechanisms to help them assess the nature and extent of the threat was raised. It was therefore noted that the GCTF might help RSRs in the region to report not only indicators of insecurity but also to look at how that data could inform efforts to build tailored capacity building on issues such as providing education and training. We heard that until now, some regional organizations have had to adopt a “firefighters” approach in addressing imminent conflict and that they would welcome help to more systematic in their approach on a variety of key issues ranging from improving and strengthening prison systems, to joint operational planning.

Given the scale of needs in the region, it was suggested that duplication was not so much a problem. The lack of an overarching regional body to cover the Sahel was also noted; and in this regard the potential role of the GCTF to help direct multilateral activities and coordinate technical assistance was welcomed.

Given the multiplicity of actors and initiatives in the region - including bilateral and multilateral donors, UNDP, UNESCO, the Joint Military Staff Committee of the Sahel Region (CEMOC) and the African Center for the Study and Research of Terrorism (ACSRT) - participants suggested that the GCTF WGS might play a very positive role in helping to map and track ongoing initiatives by multiple actors so that the GCTF, UN and RSRs can take stock of the challenges and develop initiatives to fill the gaps. As one participant noted, this could help rationalize scarce capacity-building resources and promote coordination to avoid duplication.

#### **SESSION 4: HORN OF AFRICA CAPACITY-BUILDING**

##### *GCTF Background*

The GCTF Working Group on the Horn of Africa (HOAWG), co-chaired by the EU and Turkey, was established to strengthen state and regional capacity to address the various threat of terrorism in the Horn of Africa, with a focus on weak or ungoverned spaces, particularly in Somalia and Yemen. The heightened sense of insecurity in the region, particularly fostered by activities of terrorist and criminal organizations, such Al-Shabaab, has highlighted the weakness of state institutions and compromised states’ abilities to assure their citizens of peace and stability. The subregion’s ability to address the threat is hampered by significant capacity gaps, including porous borders, insufficiently patrolled coastlines and the lack of a sound legislative framework to counter terrorism.

Furthermore, the limited reach of governments across vast tracts of territory has become a growing concern among stakeholders on the ground and outside the subregion. For example, there is growing concern about the potential threat posed by militant elements within diaspora populations in Europe, in the Gulf and in the United States, among other locations, and their possible relationship to terrorist activity in the Horn region. These communities also transfer significant amounts of money through remittances (with scant, albeit difficult to enforce, financial regulation) back to the region – money that is sometimes used to fund terrorist activity.

With these security concerns in mind, in June 2011 the co-chairs held bilateral meetings and identified five priority areas capacity-building activities: 1) Law enforcement, police, investigation; 2) Border management, “outer ring” of security; 3) CVE/counter-radicalization; 4) Criminal justice, rule of law and link to criminal justice working group, training of national prosecutors, judges, strengthening

institutions of rule of law; and 5) Terrorist financing, challenges, work with FATF. The first meeting of the HWG in the region is expected to take place in early February 2012.

#### *Interlaken Session 4 Summary*

Not unlike many of the challenges raised in the Sahel discussed in the prior session, the Horn of Africa region also confronts a multiplicity of threats including piracy, food insecurity, under-development and the illicit movements of money, drugs, weapons and persons. It was therefore vital to “stem illicit flows and facilitate licit flows” and to counter terrorist financing, develop and train financial intelligence units, foster regional networks among counterterrorism practitioners and decrease the vulnerability of the diaspora to recruitment.

It was noted that the key to success for the GCTF Working Group on the Horn of Africa (HOAWG), and for other actors like the UN and RSRs, was regional ownership. Speakers recalled the recent meeting of the HOAWG in Tanzania and suggested that the added value of the GCTF would be to try and coordinate capacity building activities and not only foster trust among the key international and local stakeholders, but also to coordinate programs in a more strategic, systematic fashion, and to be mindful of regional absorption capacities. To achieve success, speakers reiterated, mechanisms were needed to pool resources and avoid duplication. Taking note of the work already being undertaken by the other GCTF Working Groups, the UN and RSRs, the HOAWG has chosen to focus on promoting law enforcement cooperation in and about Somalia, and supporting related capacity-building initiatives. More broadly, the HOAWG also aims to promote a long term commitment to stability and peace in the region, including in Yemen. The UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy also provided a useful umbrella for international interventions in the region, noted one GCTF representative

UN entities such as the Al Qaeda Sanctions Monitoring Team, CTED and the CTITF have been active in working with regional and national partners to promote the development of regionally owned strategies to support implementation of the UN Strategy. UN entities were working to promote broader security cooperation, effective border management, and a more sustained approach to addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Developing plans that were regional in scope but comprehensive in character would create platforms for counterterrorism initiatives addressing issues related to all pillars of the Strategy yet tailored to specific contexts, noted a participant.

One speaker reiterated that there was a need to ensure that interventions in HOA not only deal with immediate realities and needs but that they also ensure there are efforts to address underlying causes of the crises. It was vital, observed one speaker, to prompt the recovery of governance systems and restore the state-society relationship, where fractured, in order to reinvigorate the “social contract.”

The question of illicit financial flows and remittances garnered particular attention from a number of speakers. It was suggested that GCTF could play an important role in empowering regional states to address these critical challenges and support strengthening the capacities of RSRs like the East African Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and FATF-style regional bodies. Speakers pointed that bodies like IGAD and the African Center for the Study and Research of Terrorism (ACSRT) were already providing legal training and political coordination support, research and recommendations to boost political, judicial and law enforcement capacities, and suggested GCTF’s potential role in scaling up these efforts.

It was suggested that regional actors like IGAD could take the lead in developing regional strategies to implement the UN Strategy and promote counterterrorism cooperation, and that such a regional plan could provide a common platform on which UN and GCTF interventions are based.

#### **SESSION 5: SOUTHEAST ASIA CAPACITY-BUILDING**

##### *GCTF Background*

This session explored the key areas of interest and possible workplan of the GCTF’s Southeast Asia Working Group (SEAWG), co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia. This Working Group was established to

(among other things) identify common challenges faced by states and synergies among their counterterrorism approaches. Though Southeast Asia has made great strides in addressing terrorist groups like *Jemaah Islamiyya* and establishing strengthening regional capacities through the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC), the region continues to face potential threats in the form of splinter groups, violent extremist ideologies and also criminal groups.

Piracy poses an added challenge in places like the Straits of Malacca that can add to/exacerbate the challenges posed by terrorist groups. Porous borders, such as the Indonesian archipelago, variable law enforcement capacities and a continued reluctance to be seen as intervening in states' internal affairs pose challenges to regional counterterrorism cooperation.

Moreover, though groups like the Religious Rehabilitation Group in Singapore draw on the experiences and expertise of civil society, there are few opportunities for nongovernmental actors to contribute to national efforts to implement the Global Strategy. With these concerns in mind, the Working Group has identified three priority areas of focus: 1) law enforcement cooperation and training; 2) legal and judicial cooperation 3) management and custody of terrorist suspects in prisons, and is likely to meet for the first time in the first quarter of 2012.

#### *Interlaken Session 5 Summary*

The Southeast Asia Working Group will be meeting in March 2012 and members intend to draw on a number of valuable regional experiences in shaping their interventions. Indonesia's effectiveness in apprehending terrorists was commended, as was the work of the Religious Rehabilitation Group in Singapore. Furthermore, the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation was cited as a possible model for cooperation among counterterrorism practitioners. The SEAWG has not yet met to formalize its workplan but it was noted that WG was likely to focus on strengthening capacities for judicial and law enforcement cooperation in the region. Regional partners have been engaged in providing technical assistance and bilateral support to develop legislative and practical responses to terrorism. The SEAWG hoped to draw on these and promote stronger regional engagement.

It was noted that more work could be done to evaluate the effectiveness of the rich and varied CT interventions made in the region, and that the SEAWG might provide a platform for countries to share the results of such evaluations and develop some common best practices.

One participant reflected on experiences in strengthening capacities to counter terrorism in the region, and listed six key ingredients for success: 1) Dedicated funds which would help elicit new and innovative thinking that was not constrained by international frameworks; 2) strong regional leadership; 3) A dual focus on soft power as well as "classic" counterterrorism; 4) the engagement of bilateral partners; 5) the engagement of regional partners and 6) A combination of both bilateral and regional approaches.

Southeast Asian countries have undertaken a variety of initiatives to promote the "disengagement" or "deradicalization" of detainees. These experiences provide a rich pool of insights and lessons learned, based on which multilateral actors like the UN and GCTF might develop further projects on this topic.

New opportunities for collaboration and cooperation in the region were opened up by partnerships such as the joint declaration of partnership between ASEAN and the UN in November 2011. UN entities had also been active in the region, for example, OHCHR hosted a workshop on the right to fair trial and a workshop to promote cross-border joint investigations was being considered. ASEANPOL also provided a valuable model for regional neighbors in South Asia to consider, according to participants at a UN hosted workshop for counterterrorism practitioners in the region. Following extensive consultation in the region, UNODC had developed the East and Southeast Asia Partnership on Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism and.

Counterterrorism cooperation was also taking place in the context of ASEAN and the Asian Regional Forum and the Asia Pacific Group.



Noting the array of initiatives in the region, one speaker noted that UN entities like CTED, for example, did not need to develop or lead new initiatives but lend assistance and resources to existing initiatives and be a force multiplier. The GCTF, it was noted, could provide an overarching framework for regional, international and multilateral efforts to promote greater understanding of ongoing activities and where needs and gaps were greatest.

In anticipation of the SEAWG meeting in March 2012, it was suggested that members might consider the development of some coordination mechanisms to help collate information from the multiple arenas in which counterterrorism was being addressed. One speaker explained that the Asia Pacific Group had used a monthly call to connect donors and providers and allow for a brief and informal “Round Robbin” of the short-term initiatives being undertaken by participants. Another valuable mechanism for promoting coordination was a “tabletop exercise” bringing together practitioners to train together through simulated crises and situations.

The importance of regional ownership was reiterated as a vital element of success and to that end, the importance of including civil society and nongovernmental partners in these efforts on the ground was highlighted. It was also pointed out that through cooperation, the GCTF Working Groups could promote inter-regional cooperation; as one speaker observed, for example, counterterrorism practitioners in the Sahel could learn from those in Southeast Asia, and proposed greater opportunities for “South-South” capacity-building opportunities.

#### **SESSION 6: COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GCTF AND THE UNITED NATIONS AS WELL AS OTHER INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: WAYS OF INTERACTION AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

The sixth session focused on coordination and communication between the UN, GCTF and other international, regional and sub-regional organizations. Two core objectives were articulated: coordinating a common understanding of the terrorist threat and the collective challenges faced when countering terrorism at the multilateral level and streamlining activities with each other to derive maximum benefit and ensure the sustainability of counterterrorism efforts by aligning them with international law and obligations.

It was noted that the GCTF and the UN bring different comparative advantages to the table, which can help to strengthen their shared objectives. The UN derives unparalleled legitimacy from its universal membership and convening power. However, it was acknowledged that the size of the UN’s membership and its large bureaucracy also limit the speed and agility with which it can respond to crises. By contrast, the GCTF has a limited membership of twenty-nine UN Member States plus the European Union. It is not a formal treaty organization and it does not have breadth of membership and attendant level of legitimacy that the UN enjoys. However, it was pointed out that the GCTF is designed to be flexible, responsive, and informal to effectively address evolving terrorist threats on the ground. It was suggested that the GCTF can play a useful role in engaging relevant stakeholders - beyond the interaction that exists mainly between foreign ministries on many UN related counterterrorism matter - by engaging law enforcement and other technical experts in order to build capacity in holistic manner across all relevant agencies at the national level.

Furthermore it was added that RSRs bring a helpful and necessary local dimension that can help to tailor UN and GCTF engagement to different contexts. Therefore hope was expressed that each of these actors can be greater than the sum of their parts if the UN, GCTF and RSRs coordinate in way that ensures they play to their strengths. Participants were urged to be mindful, however of the uneven capacities that exists in different RSOs, which can limit their ability to absorb assistance and interact with international stakeholders. There was therefore widespread agreement that supporting the development and strengthening of capacities of RSRs to address terrorism and violent extremism, at their request, could be a core function of the UN and the GCTF, in particular, its regional working groups.

The UN Secretary-General's recent decision to appoint a UN Counter-Terrorism Coordinator was again noted in this session. It was hoped that one of the benefits of such a role would be the clarification of a centralized focal point for engagement between the GCTF, the UN and other actors. On this point, it was suggested that the technical details regarding the role, function and appointment of a UN CT Coordinator will be determined to a considerable extent in consultation with those member states that take a proactive role in engaging with the UN to determine the details of the position.

Noting the growing levels of engagement between the UN, GCTF and other relevant organizations, participants indicated that the value of regularizing such interaction going forward. The UN has participated in all of the GCTF activities to date, including all of its Working Group meetings and most of its preparatory discussions. Additionally, the GCTF has convened briefings for UN missions and relevant experts in New York; RSRs have also participated in relevant GCTF activities. However, participants underscored the importance of ensuring the continuity and predictability of such interaction.

Moreover, it was suggested that a continuity of representation from various organizations would help build stronger relationships, promote the development of an institutional memory and prevent institutions and representatives from having to "reinvent the wheel" with each meeting. This would also help strengthen institutional counterterrorism capacities.

There were widespread calls for greater transparency from the GCTF and the UN about their activities. This was seen as essential to avoiding duplication and ensuring the availability of relevant experts and resources for meetings, or the collaborative design of new initiatives, for example. On the GCTF side, it was explained that its forthcoming website, to be launched later this year, will provide more and accessible information regarding the meetings and projects of the GCTF and its Working Groups. UN representatives also indicated that CT-related activities might be reflected in a calendar that can be shared with the GCTF and its administrative unit to avoid scheduling conflicts and a duplication of activities. This would also facilitate greater internal coordination among members of the CTITF and with the CTITF Office.

It was also suggested that the GCTF could develop with the United Nations a communications strategy to counter terrorism which could be disseminated globally through the network of the United Nations actors and partner agencies in the field.

The need for more progress toward and early conclusion of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism was also mentioned. It was suggested that this issue could be put on the agenda of the GCTF's Working Group on the Criminal Justice System/Rule of Law. The GCTF could look at the most efficient way to encourage the conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention.

Acknowledging the strategic ambitions of close coordination between the UN and GCTF, but also taking note of some of the challenges involved, including different timelines, stakeholders, resources and activities, it was suggested that participants continue to "think big but start small." To that end it was suggested that to serve the broader aims of coordination at all levels, incremental pragmatic steps could be taken to facilitate closer engagement. To begin with, it was recommended that the GCTF administrative unit could work with GCTF members and partners like the CTITF Office to produce a shared calendar detailing meetings, major publication dates, relevant conferences and research documents of common interest.

It was also noted that greater efficiencies could be achieved also drawing on existing platforms for collaborative action, such as the UN Centre for Counter-Terrorism (UNCCT) and the GCTF Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism (COECVE) as both of those entities take shape over the coming months. It was suggested that to retain as much flexibility and agility as possible, it might be better not to over-formalize interactions but use tools such as those listed above to maximize the opportunities for flexible, informal and context-driven engagement.

There was widespread agreement that opportunities for all relevant parties to come together and ensure that everyone was “on the same page” were valuable. As GCTF Working Groups and UN entities continued to conduct their own activities, several participants voiced appreciation for the opportunity to exchange views and learn about each other’s plans and initiatives, and suggested that further such opportunities would facilitate greater coordination. To this end, it was also suggested that the CTITIF might offer a briefing to all GCTF members at the next Coordinating Committee meeting, in Turkey in June 2012.

## **CONCLUDING SESSION**

The concluding session of the conference highlighted five key themes reflected the earlier discussions:

### **The Importance of a comprehensive approach**

There was widespread agreement that UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy provides a common framework for international and regional counterterrorism engagement, and that a comprehensive effort to address terrorism that includes a focus on development, human rights and law enforcement is essential to more sustainable international efforts. The Rabat Memorandum on Good Practices for Effective Counterterrorism Practice in the Criminal Justice Sector, a product of the GCTF Working Group on Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law, was noted as a useful contribution in this area. Further, participants recognized that development efforts make a valuable contribution to preventing terrorism and violent extremism – what the Strategy calls “conditions conducive” and that security is also necessary for long term development; however conference attendees were reminded of the importance of ensuring that CT activities do not securitize development efforts

### **Need for transparency and rationalization of activities**

Given the broad range of activities being undertaken by national, regional and multilateral actors, greater transparency about the activities and a clear map of ongoing initiatives is vital. Especially in an era of troubled global finances, it is necessary to ensure that resources are directed where they are most needed and most likely to be effective. It was suggested, for example, that it would be helpful to have a common roster of experts and resource persons who can work with GCTF, UN and regional partners and help provide valuable expertise, particularly by enhancing efforts to counter violent extremism and strengthening criminal justice sectors.

### **Assess and address local and regional needs for assistance**

The work that is being done across the regional working groups illustrates the clear need for coordinated efforts to assess and address capacity needs that will support local implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy across all four pillars. The UN and the GCTF, working with the relevant regional and sub-regional organizations along with other local partners have an important role to play in drawing on the rich and varied ongoing efforts of GCTF members, CTITIF entities and RSRs to map ongoing capacity-building projects, identify gaps and key priorities and facilitate the delivery of assistance. As such, it was noted that the efforts of the GCTF and entities like UNODC and CTED were complementary, and that the former could be a force multiplier for the latter. Moreover, it was acknowledged that local and regional ownership and engagement in capacity-building efforts was integral to their sustainability and success.

### **Promote sustained engagement to enhance coordination**

There has already been a great deal of engagement between the GCTF, UN and other regional and sub-regional organizations. However, it is important to try and ensure a continuity of representation to support and strengthen institutional capacities to address CT concerns. Greater transparency about GCTF activities will also help organizations like the UN and RSRs ensure that relevant experts participate in meetings and promote greater coordination in design of new initiatives

### **Maximize synergies and enhance coordination between the UN, the GCTF and other international organizations, including regional and sub-regional organizations.**

Participants reiterated that it is important for the UN, the GCTF and other relevant organizations to build upon their comparative advantages and regularize their interaction going forward. It was suggested that the GCTF can play a useful role in engaging law enforcement and other technical experts in order to build capacity in holistic manner across all relevant agencies at the national level. Attendee also heard that the UN Secretary-General's announcement of a decision to appoint a UN Counter-Terrorism Coordinator could help provide a centralized focal point for engagement between the GCTF, the UN and other actors.

It was also suggested that a continuation of meetings, like this one in Interlaken, on a regular basis will help to provide a useful opportunity of the UN, the GCTF and relevant regional and sub-regional organizations to share experiences, to keep each other apprised of their work they are doing and to ensure that they coordinating their efforts to support member states by maximizing the impact of international efforts to prevent and combat terrorism consistent with the aims of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

## **ACTION POINTS**

Drawing on the deliberations in Interlaken, some recommendations for action could be elicited for practical actions in the short to medium term that could facilitate closer engagement between the GCTF, UN and other international organizations.

### **Shared roster of experts**

A shared roster of experts would help donors and assistance providers to identify relevant experts and partners without having to search for them at the inception of every project. Such a shared roster between the UN and GCTF would also allow the organizations to draw on each other's collective experiences and expertise. It would also enable some continuity of representation and participation so that experts also develop stronger institutional knowledge and familiarity with each, and can assist in efforts to avoid the duplication of projects.

### **Joint or shared calendars**

Sharing existing institutional calendars or developing a joint calendar would facilitate the planning of meetings, travel for experts and representatives and other activities and help avoid scheduling conflicts, overstretch and duplication. Activities and meetings might also then be planned to minimize absences from capitals and headquarters and avoid saturating regional partners.

### **Mapping ongoing initiatives**

The GCTF's administrative unit might begin mapping ongoing initiatives being undertaken by CTITF members, RSRs and GCTF members, as it has done with its catalogue of capacity building activities in the Horn of Africa, for example, so that new initiatives can be developed to address gaps or unmet priorities.

## **List of participating States, UN entities, international, regional and sub-regional organizations**

### **GCTF MEMBERS**

Algeria  
Australia  
Canada  
China  
Colombia  
Denmark  
Egypt  
EU  
France  
Germany  
India  
Indonesia  
Italy  
Japan  
Jordan  
Morocco  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Nigeria  
Pakistan  
Russia  
Saudi Arabia  
South Africa  
Switzerland  
Turkey  
United Arab Emirates  
UK  
USA

### **UNITED NATIONS**

1267 Monitoring Team  
CTED  
CTITF  
OHCHR  
UNDP  
UNESCO  
UNICRI  
UNODC

### **INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

ASEAN  
AU/ACSRT  
CoE  
ECOWAS  
IGAD  
OAS  
OIC  
OSCE