



Republic of Kenya



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Press Release

Regional High-level Conference to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation

10 July 2019, Nairobi - The African Regional High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, jointly convened by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Republic of Kenya, started today in the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

The Conference brings together more than 1200 participants from 100 countries, including Ministers, policy-makers, civil society representatives, and heads of security and counter-terrorism agencies, as well as regional and international organisations. It focuses on enhancing cooperation between Member States, the United Nations, the African Union and other regional and international organisations to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

The President of the Republic of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, outlined in his opening remarks Kenya's leading efforts to devolve prevention and counter-radicalisation using the County Action Plans to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism. These plans, recently completed in all 47 counties, are prioritised, measurable and time-lined for implementation. They bring together security, administrators, county governments, civil society, religious and political leaders to come up with locally-relevant solutions. In addition, he called for more utilisation of African heritage and "the proud record of Pan Africanist challenge against anti-African ideas such as Apartheid to be used to craft alternate and counter narratives to the ideologies used by terrorist groups to recruit and justify their existence."

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the vital importance of multilateral cooperation to detect, identify and disrupt violent extremism and to bring terrorists to justice. He emphasised that "for terrorism to be defeated, it is essential that African counter-terrorism is holistic, well-funded, underpinned by respect for human rights, and - most importantly - backed by political will." This conference can help to "mobilise the entire international community to strengthen its political commitment and provide resources and expertise to support African counter-terrorism efforts," he added.

Speakers at the opening ceremony, in addition to President Kenyatta and Secretary-General Guterres, were Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, European Commissioner for Migration, Home affairs and Citizenship, and Ms. Aya Chebbi, African Union Special Envoy on Youth.

The conference will enable African countries to share their experiences, good practices and lessons learned in tackling terrorism and violent extremism, including by adopting comprehensive and inclusive whole-of-society approaches. It will also be an opportunity to discuss new initiatives to enhance counter-terrorism and prevention efforts across the continent, especially in the regions of Africa most challenged by terrorist violence and instability. 13 side-events will be taking place on the



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margins of the conference, bringing together Civil Society Organizations, United Nations agencies, academia and think tanks to discuss innovative ways to strengthen the security capabilities capacities of national and regional authorities, and help remove the root causes of instability and violent extremism.

This conference is the third in a series of regional conferences that follow-up on the first UN High-Level Conference for Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States held in New York in June 2018. These conferences are taking place around the world, at the initiative of Member States, to strengthen regional cooperation on common counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism priorities.

Background information on the Regional Conferences:

On 28-29 June 2018, the Secretary-General convened the first-ever United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States. As a key outcome of the conference, the Secretary-General announced that in the lead-up to 2020 UN Counter-Terrorism Week, the United Nations would liaise with Member States to organize regional events on key thematic issues, in order to address the regional challenges of countering terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. UNOCT has therefore supported interested Member States to organize joint regional conferences. The conferences address particular challenges within the respective regions and provide Member States with forums to share best practices. They also serve to advance regional solutions, as well as to strengthen international cooperation against terrorism. The outcomes of all regional events, including the African Regional conference, will directly contribute to the second UN CT Week to be held in June 2020.

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