



**WORKSHOP ON
IMPLEMENTING THE UN GLOBAL COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY
IN NORTH AFRICA
24-25 MAY 2010
ISESCO Headquarters, Rabat**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ISESCO and Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation Co-Host Conference on Improving Counterterrorism Cooperation in North Africa

On 24-25 May 2010, the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), with the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosted a two-day workshop at ISESCO's headquarters in Rabat on "Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in North Africa." The meeting focused on enhancing counterterrorism-related cooperation within North Africa and between the region and external partners such as the United Nations. Participants included representatives from states in the region, the United Nations, and relevant regional and non-governmental organizations.

The meeting is part of a broader effort by the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation to support implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and help stimulate more effective regional and subregional counterterrorism cooperation. It builds on recommendations made at a November 2007 conference held by ISESCO, the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Tunisian government in Tunisia on "Terrorism: Dimensions, Threats and Countermeasures."

The meeting began with a discussion of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly in September 2006, and marked the first time that all UN member states agreed on a common strategic framework for addressing the terrorist threat. Participants welcomed the UN Strategy because it broadened political support for global counterterrorism efforts and includes not only emphasis on law enforcement and other security measures, but also measures to address both real and perceived grievances and underlying social, economic, and political conditions that can contribute to the spread of terrorism. Alistair Millar, the Director of the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, noted that, "the Strategy offers a practical holistic plan of action for preventing and combating terrorism." He added, that terrorism in North Africa is increasingly transnational in nature and therefore requires a coherent a cooperative approach transcending national borders; this workshop provides an opportunity to get local input and examine how to further that cooperation across Northern Africa."

The participants also considered the regional and subregional counterterrorism frameworks, their relation to the UN Strategy, and the role of regional and subregional bodies in implementing the international framework in the regional context. Participants discussed in particular the relevant efforts of the League of Arab States, its Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and Expert Group on Terrorism, and other regional and subregional bodies. While acknowledging the significant contributions of those bodies, it was noted that tensions and lack of trust between countries in the region have been a barrier to deeper cooperation against terrorism and transnational crime – and to regional security cooperation and integration more generally.

Those discussions were informed by presentations by relevant experts on the immediate threat in and to the region, some of the regional dimensions of the threat, and the relationship between terrorist activity in the region and broader transnational crime. The participants also discussed some of the broader conditions within the region that may be conducive to the spread of terrorism, such as prolonged unresolved conflicts, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization, and deficiencies in good governance.

In that regard, participants highlighted the important work of multilateral bodies such as ISESCO and civil society in addressing such conditions, including by promoting inter-cultural and religious dialogue, education, public awareness, realization of the Millennium Development Goals, promoting and protecting human rights, and conflict prevention and resolution. As noted by Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director General of ISESCO, the “cooperative action with the Centre on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, and other international organizations such as UNESCO, we at ISESCO start from our Charter, particularly its second objective relating to the promotion of understanding among peoples inside and outside the Member States, and contribution to the achievement of world peace and security by various means, especially education, science, culture and communication,” which are the principles that guide ISESCO’s efforts to counter violent extremism through its education and cultural programs.

The participants also considered the role of the United Nations, its Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime’s Terrorism Prevention Branch as well as nontraditional counterterrorism actors such as the UN Development Programme and UNESCO. It was noted that the United Nations had much it could learn from the experiences of North African states but also much it could contribute, including by providing a neutral forum for facilitating deeper regional cooperation on counterterrorism.

The meeting concluded with consideration of what concrete steps should be taken to enhance inter-state counterterrorism cooperation in North Africa, including specific recommendations for the African Union, League of Arab States, and external partners such as the United Nations, European Union, and other partners.

Those recommendations will be incorporated into a final report that will be issued in advance of the September 2010 review by the General Assembly of implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

ISESCO is the specialized organ within the OIC system dealing with education, science, and culture. Its mandate focuses on the promotion of peace, tolerance and dialogue among cultures and civilizations. With its 50 member states, and as an intergovernmental organization, it is linked with large programs and partnerships with international institutions in fields of common interest.

The Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation is an independent nonprofit research and policy institute that works to improve coordination of the international community's response to terrorism by providing governments and international and regional organizations with timely, policy-relevant research, analysis, and recommendations.

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