

Co-chairs Summary

Joint United Nations UAE Regional Conference for Arab League Countries

**Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Office of Counter-Terrorism**

**19 December 2019
Abu Dhabi, UAE**

Your Excellency, Mr. Omar Ghobash, Assistant Minister for Cultural Affairs of the UAE,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, allow me to express my deep gratitude to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for its warm and gracious hospitality.

I would also like to thank His Excellency, Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh, Minister of State on Cultural Affairs of the UAE; His Excellency Mr. Péter Sztáray, State Secretary for Security Policy of Hungary; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of UNODC; Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake

My words of gratitude to Ivo for the able managing of the Conference.

I would also like to thank the Global Centre for leading and organizing the civil society workshop on 17 December. Jason, thanks a lot for your personal contribution.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we are concluding the sixth Regional High-Level Conference that the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has organized this year in partnership with Member States as part of a broader initiative to invigorate practical and multilateral cooperation among the United Nations, Member States, Civil Society and other partners, to address the evolving threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

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Second, we focused on tolerance as central to building cohesion and solidarity, tightening the social fabric of our societies. This is an essential bulwark against the corrosive spread of violent extremism.

The journey of achieving tolerance must start with social inclusion and not stop till social cohesion.

As we heard over the past two days, we need to start our work at home – good parenting and elimination of violence at home including violence against women, can be our first step to preparing responsible youth.

We need to embrace an attitude of empathy towards our youth and understand the era of uncertainty they live in, where old institutions are increasingly vulnerable to questions. We need to foster the value of empathy in them towards others as a first step to breeding tolerance.

We need to build bridges and understanding to promote resilience and rejection of narratives that demonize and dehumanize the other.

We heard from several participants about excellent programmes to foster and promote dialogue and tolerance in different local communities in this region. Let us continue to implement these good practices and nurture the connections we made during this Conference.

Working together to safeguard religious sites, places of worship and cultural heritage can be instrumental in this regard.

Many speakers underscored the promotion of inclusive and quality education – one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals – as critical to fostering tolerance.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are the engines within the United Nations system on these issues. We stand ready to work closely together in providing support to interested Member States in promoting tolerance and leveraging education to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

Third, based on discussions during the Youth Circle on enhancing partnerships between governments, youth, and communities to strengthen resilience to terrorist narratives through education, we must do more to listen to youth perspectives and engage young people to help shape counter-terrorism policies and programmes.

We need to make young people governance actors in devising national PVE strategies and national action plans.

We can never be complacent about the threat of terrorism.

While Member States have the primary responsibility to prevent and counter terrorism – we all have a vested interest in helping resolute and effective action to prevent terrorist from jeopardizing peace, undermining sustainable development, and destroying human rights.

We need to invest in prevention, in building social and institutional resilience to the scourge of terrorism.

It is in this context that the Second High-Level Conference of Heads of Counterterrorism Agencies of Member States in New York, on 1-2 July, will focus on strengthening social and institutional resilience to prevent and counter terrorism. I look forward to your participation in the Conference.

At the end of this sixth regional conference, let's make a joint commitment. A commitment to build resilient and tolerant societies in our respective areas, step by step, piece by piece!

I once again thank you all for your valuable contributions to this Conference and wish you safe travels.

This is the end of the Conference.

Thank you again for your participation.