



Statement by Mr Stefano Manservigi, Chair, Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), to the Eleventh GCTF Ministerial Plenary Meeting

7 October 2021

Excellencies,

This is my first opportunity to address the GCTF Ministerial Plenary Meeting, having become the Chair of GCERF's Governing Board at the start of this year. It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to you, and to meet again many friends and colleagues from my former position as DG of EU DEVCO.

Let me start by congratulating GCTF on its tenth anniversary. You have provided a platform for practical and strategic cooperation between policy-makers and practitioners from Western and Muslim-majority countries. You have increased attention on the capacity of civilian institutions as part of a whole of society approach to counter-terrorism. You have pioneered practitioner-based, rule-of-law based good practices. And of course, you have established three new international institutions, and GCERF is pleased to partner closely with its sister GCTF inspired institutions Hedayah and the IIJ. Congratulations!

While GCTF celebrates its tenth anniversary, GCERF recently celebrated our seventh anniversary. When we were established in 2014, we were joined by three partner countries, Bangladesh, Mali, and Nigeria. I am pleased that GCERF still counts these countries as partners, which is testament to our operating principle of sustainability. Since 2014, they have been joined by a further eleven partner countries, so that GCERF is now issuing grants across critical countries in the Sahel, MENA region, Horn of Africa, Western Balkans, and South and South-East Asia.

As of today, we have received contributions from 19 government donors, amounting to over 100m USD. This is a credible start for a new global fund, but I believe that current contributions to GCERF are not yet commensurate with its potential, and certainly not adequate for the challenge that we are facing as a global community.

We estimate that our grants have directly reached 2.4m at immediate risk of radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremism, and a further 14m people indirectly.

Let me tell you what I think these facts and figures reflect. First, that our work is welcomed by partner countries, and seen by them as a critical asset in their national efforts against violent extremism. Second, that GCERF provides a unique vehicle for donors, to deliver small grants to hard-to-reach communities. Third, that GCERF's grants are having an impact, on the right people, in the right places, at the right time, and in the right way.

As GCERF has become more established, we have also established strong partnerships. With the GCTF CVE Working Group, co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia, we look forward next month to the first in a series of workshops in our 'Joint Initiative on Funding and Enabling Community-Level P and Counter Violent Extremism. With UNOCT, we will be launching a new initiative on strategic communications for local authorities and civil society in Mindanao, in the Philippines. We have also signed an MoU with the G5 Sahel, with whom we are jointly supporting PVE projects for nine community-based organisations in the Liptako Gourma region. I will be a guest of the President in the Ougadougou next week; and look forward in continuing to forge GCERF's high-level political relationship in the region. Ministers from Burkina Faso and Niger are already members of our Governing Board.

The theme for this session for the inspired institutions is 'Looking to the Next Decade', so let me conclude with a few observations on that point.

GCERF has recently published its new Strategy 2025, where we focus on three strategic goals. The first is impact, our second strategic goal is scale. We envisage expanding to a further 10 partner countries over the next three years, including Mozambique. Our third strategic goal is influence. We will share effective practices, expand strategic partnerships, define a policy and advocacy role, and play a greater coordinating role.

The success of our strategy of course depends on support from our donors, and I have personally written to Ministers of donor country members of GCTF encouraging them to join our replenishment campaign. I will insist on this point even today in front of all of you. In the coming year we will also be focusing more on attracting private sector support for GCERF.

We are all committed to building back better, we cannot ignore the imperative to build back better from the pandemic, and I believe that building tolerance and understanding are central to that goal. Equally we cannot ignore recent events in Afghanistan, which have illustrated the principles that GCTF and GCERF have advocated for the last decade: that security responses are necessary but not sufficient, that communities need to be empowered to address root causes, that prevention is essential, and that we need to respect national ownership and engage more widely in dialogue.

I look forward to engaging with Ministers so that the next generation can inherit and maintain a world where violent extremism has no place in politics or society.

Thank you.