

Global Counterterrorism Forum 10th Ministerial Plenary Meeting

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Opening Statement

H.E Minister Nasser BOURITA

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Morocco

(Check against Delivery)

**Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you all to the 10th Ministerial Meeting of the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

We view your participation to this meeting as an important mark of support to the GCTF and the achievement of its objectives; which encourages us, as Co-Chairs, to pursue our efforts to preserve this platform, widen its reach and strengthen its impact.

Today, in addressing this honorable audience, consisting of some of the most dedicated partners to countering terrorism and violent extremism, I would like to **focus on four fundamental messages**:

1. First: “the absolute necessity of maintaining a strong commitment in the fight against terrorism”

There sure has been **undeniable positive progress** during the last two years in countering terrorism.

However, this scourge continues to affect all regions of the world, taking a toll on people’s lives as well as security, stability and development efforts.

Our continuing **collective and unwavering commitment** represents the basis of our resilience and ensures our strength in the face of these threats.

In this context, our action should continue to be directed towards **consolidating our gains and pursuing our efforts against persisting challenges**, such as:

- the **worrying number of militants** remaining in conflict zones who have likely set up sleeper cells to rebuild the so-called “Da’esh caliphate” or spread across the world to join existing terrorist groups or establish new ones;
- the **important financial resources** detained by terrorist groups. According to reports, Da’esh alone still detains **three hundred million US dollars** (300 million \$);
- the persistence of the **fallacious extremist ideologies and violent narratives** disseminated amongst the most vulnerable populations; and
- the **opportunistic ties established between terrorist and criminal groups** in different regions.

We must also continue taking resolute action against the push factors that contributed to the rise of terrorism and violent extremism; for as long as they continue to exist, terrorism will remain a global threat.

Finally, we should take a leap forward and remain ahead of the curve in order to prevent terrorism and violent extremism from **threatening innocent lives in new and more horrific ways**.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

2. My second message is “a particular emphasis should be put on countering terrorism in Africa”

Africa experienced unprecedented levels of violence in 2018. Countries of the Sahel recorded a number of **victims four times higher** in 2018 compared to 2012.

Between November 2018 and March 2019 the increase in number of civilian casualties varied from 300% to up to 7 000% in some Sahel countries, compared to the same period during the previous year.

During the first six months of 2019, the continent has been the theater to **more than two hundred (200) terrorist attacks**, resulting in **more than five thousand (5000) casualties** amongst civilian populations and security forces.

In addition, while in 2010 there was only one terrorist group accounted for in the Sahel, today there is **more than a dozen operating in the region**.

The alarming upsurge of violent extremism in Africa could lead to another **global wave of terror**, seriously jeopardizing not only the future of the continent but also international stability, given that **our security is one and indivisible**.

In order to prevent such occurrence, there is an urgent need to:

- Paying strategic attention to understanding and addressing the factors leading to the proliferation of terrorist groups in Africa; and
- Supporting the development of adequate security capabilities that match the evolution of the threat

The GCTF has a fundamental role to play in **adding value to the efforts already undertaken** at the international and regional level.

3. My third message is “the importance of sustaining the GCTF’s role as a trailblazer and continuing to support the implementation of its deliverables”

Throughout the years, the **GCTF** has succeeded in demonstrating **strong ability to examine multifaceted dimensions** inherent to countering terrorism and violent extremism and to attract strong support from Member States.

We must preserve this asset and build on the Forum’s achievements by continuing to **work cooperatively, constructively and with determination** towards generating interest among

practitioners and policymakers to **identify, discuss and brainstorm ways to successfully and jointly address all remaining challenges** and potential emerging ones while taking into account the importance of protecting human rights.

Today, it is my honor to announce the endorsement of four new deliverables that serve this purpose, namely:

- *The Addendum to the Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism;*
- *The Berlin Memorandum on Good Practices for Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems;*
- *The Glicon Memorandum on the Use of Rule of Law-Based Administrative Measures in a Counterterrorism Context;* and
- *The New York Memorandum on Good Practices for Interdicting Terrorist Travel.*

These documents are aimed as an **additional GCTF contribution** to international efforts in fighting terrorism and violent extremism by detecting, hindering, and repressing their inherent threats, and as the Forum's **constant commitment to upholding human rights and the rule of law** while doing so.

Allow me to seize this opportunity to commend **Australia, Germany, Indonesia, Nigeria, Switzerland, and the United States** for their year-long efforts leading to the development of these four new framework documents.

Our extended thanks also go to the whole GCTF membership for their valuable comments and contributions during the endorsement procedure.

However, Ladies and Gentlemen, **the real value** of these Good Practices and Recommendations is **measured by the impact they have** on the development of national policies. The breadth and depth of this impact, in its turn, heavily depends on the **appropriation and implementation** of these Good Practices at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.

We are grateful for the existing partnerships, initiatives, financial and in-kind contributions aimed at promoting the implementation of the Forum's tools from GCTF members, partner countries and institutions- particularly the GCTF Inspired Institutions the IIJ, *Hedayah* and the GCERF.

Effective implementation requires dedicated sub-regional and regional projects to efficiently respond to specific and contextual needs; thus, we encourage **stronger mobilization** from all GCTF members and partners.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

4. **My last message is the need to build on the legacy of the Dutch-Moroccan Co-Chairmanship and to remain committed to serving the GCTF's goals and objectives**

This year marks the **fourth and final year** of our co-chairmanship alongside the Netherlands. The past four years, our efforts focused on **transformation, mobilization and action** in favor of the realization of our strategic objectives.

Together, we have made it a priority to **advance the Forum's achievements** while preserving the parameters that constitute the essence of its strength, namely **proactivity, nimbleness, dynamism, and inclusiveness**.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the United States and Turkey for initiating the GCTF and their leadership role during the first years after its launch. Together, they have steered the Forum with openness, cooperation and dialogue, which were the core values that Morocco and the Netherlands tried to preserve all through their co-chairmanship.

Since our election in 2015, and with support from all GCTF Members, partner countries, and partner institutions, we have - among other things:

- Addressed numerous issues under the auspices of the Working Groups and the **09 newly launched Initiatives**. During this short span of time, **18 framework documents** were elaborated and adopted, in addition to **01 Training of Trainers Curriculum and 03 Toolkits**;
- We have operated a restructuring **(i)** to **put stronger emphasis** on the thematic Working Groups' role in further developing expertise on emerging topics and **(ii)** to **expand the scope** of the Forum's geographical Working Groups in order to facilitate further inclusiveness;
- We have introduced the **innovative practice** of including an interactive agenda item during the Coordinating Committee Meetings, including in the form of **02 scenario-based discussions** to generate exchanges on the practical application of GCTF Good Practices, **02 panel discussions** to connect the multilateral and local levels and to contribute to balancing the objectives of counterterrorism and the activities of civil society organizations, and **01 National Counterterrorism Coordinators Meeting** to share knowledge and expertise based on domestic CT and CVE successes and challenges;
- We have ensured that participation to all GCTF Working Groups and Initiatives' activities, as well as contribution to the GCTF's body of work, including Good Practice documents and Recommendations, is open to non-member countries and partners. The GCTF worked with **more than 100 non-member countries, international, regional and civil society organizations**; and
- Last but not least, we have started a discussion on the **GCTF's sustainability**, particularly its financial aspect.

We have also dedicated a great deal of efforts to **strengthening and reinforcing our existing partnership with the United Nations System**. We are proud of how far we have come since acceding our position and the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-terrorism.

The GCTF's primary objective is and will remain to **support the UN System** in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant Security Council Resolutions, **the cornerstone of a global multilateral response** to this transnational menace.

A better coordination between the GCTF and the United Nations, the regional organizations and the States is essential to meet our common goal of better preventing and countering terrorism.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

All of this would not have been possible without trust and support from all GCTF members.

Morocco is **humbled and honored** to have been entrusted to Co-Chair the GCTF for two consecutive mandates with the Netherlands and to have been elected, with Canada, for a third two-year term.

We pledge to ensure that Morocco's renewed tenure will guarantee continuity as the Forum goes forward.

We **reiterate our resolve** to strengthen the GCTF's position within the international counterterrorism architecture and to make use of all the tools at our disposal to achieve **better coordination and effective action to tackle the terrorist threat**.

We also **reaffirm our determination** to reinforce the Forum's contribution to the development of **long term and comprehensive approaches** to fight terrorism and violent extremism, as well as to fostering the exchange of counter-terrorism work, expertise and implementation experiences and to building a useful network of counterterrorism practitioners and policymakers across the world.

As our partnership with the Netherlands comes to an end, we would like to **pay a warm tribute** to our Dutch partners for the **fruitful collaboration as well as the pragmatic, transparent and constructive spirit** that prevailed during our two joint mandates.

Throughout the past four years, we have **worked together as a team**, with an **open-mind** as well as **consideration and respect for each other's ideas and opinions**, to end up with an **honorable legacy**.

We consider this day not as one where we lose an exemplary Co-Chair, but one where we win a **committed member, fully aware of the importance and added value of this Forum**; a member which support we can always count on.

As we are bidding farewell to our Dutch colleagues, I would also like to thank them on behalf of us all for the **efforts and resources invested in the success of the GCTF**, including through **the management of the Administrative Unit** which ensures the smooth running of the Forum.

Before concluding, allow me to **congratulate** the United States of America and Jordan, Switzerland and Nigeria, Australia and Indonesia, Egypt and the European Union, as well as Algeria and Germany for **their (renewed) election to the co-chairmanship of the GCTF Working Groups**.

Our effective commitment within the GCTF is the **ultimate demonstration of our faith in collective action and international cooperation** as the key to all Nations' security and stability.

Thank you.