



United Nations

individual Member States have also circulated their statements expressing their respective positions.

1. Strong condemnation was expressed about the recent attacks of terrorist and violent extremists killing hundreds of people in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Lebanon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Belgium, Turkey, Pakistan and many other parts of the world. It was reaffirmed that violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. Violent extremism was recognized as a universal phenomenon that poses a direct assault on the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was also strongly condemned how violent extremism undermines collective efforts to maintain peace and security, foster sustainable development, promote the respect for human rights and deliver much needed humanitarian aid around the world. The United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism's call for concerted international action on an urgent basis to prevent violent extremism was welcomed.

2. The initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General was welcomed as a significant contribution to focusing the attention of the international community on the growing threat posed by violent extremism. The convening of the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism by the United Nations and the Government of Switzerland was welcomed as a valuable forum to give further consideration to the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism within the context of the United Nations General Assembly's consideration of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June 2016 as called for by General Assembly resolution 70/254.

3. It was recognized that there is a need to take a more comprehensive and balanced approach to address violent extremism, which is recommended in the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. It was also recognized that terrorism cannot be tackled by security or military measures alone. The need for a comprehensive and proactive approach was noted, which should also encompass systematic preventive measures that directly address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism as recognized in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the short, medium and long-term.

4. It was also noted that it is essential to address the threat posed by violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism. Definitional aspects of violent extremism were also discussed. It was further noted that the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action takes a practical approach to the prevention of violent extremism in the context of Pillars I and IV of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

5. Recurring local and external factors were noted, which appear in a wide variety of countries and regions and which lead, sometimes in isolation and sometimes in combination with other factors, to radicalization and violent extremism – many of which are laid down in the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. It was also noted that important drivers include the lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalization and discrimination, poor governance, violations of human rights and the rule of law, prolonged and unresolved conflicts as well as individual motivations and processes, collective grievances and victimization stemming from oppression, subjugation or foreign intervention; distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences; and leadership and social networks – all of

which can play a role in transforming ideas and grievances into violent extremist action. Concern was expressed about intolerance, xenophobia and Islamophobia.

6. Experiences in developing national and regional plans to prevent violent extremism were shared and the emphasis placed on the principle of national ownership by the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was welcomed. It was noted that every Member State is best placed to address the national and local drivers of violent extremism, in full compliance with obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. It was also noted that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is an important building block for preventing violent extremism.

7. The more than 70 recommendations put forward by the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism for the consideration by Member States were also noted. In this regard, the importance of the seven priority areas identified in the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was also noted as well as the role of the United Nations system in supporting Member States to prevent violent extremism. The comprehensive approach taken by the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in advocating for an "all-of-government", "all-of-society" and "all-of-UN" approach was further noted.

8. The importance of dialogue and conflict prevention to prevent violent extremism was noted. It was also noted that there is a need to foster inclusive political solutions where communities feel politically, socially or ethnically marginalized. The need for more national and regional early warning mechanisms to identify vulnerabilities and devise timely responses was further noted.

9. It was noted that upholding human rights and the rule of law and promoting good governance creates an environment that will reduce the appeal of violent extremism. All strategies and policies should be firmly grounded in and comply with international human rights law. The significance of engaging civil society and communities in preventing violent extremism was also noted. It was suggested to support confidence-building measures at the community level to reduce tensions and to increase inter and intra-community dialogue.

10. The need to positively engage young people was recognized as well as the need to engage them as partners to make a constructive contribution to the political and economic development of their societies and nations. In this regard, the contribution of Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) was recognized, which among others notes the important role youth plays as role models in preventing and countering violent extremism.

11. The importance of gender equality was also noted and the need to ensure the participation of women in building resilience and preventing violent extremism. The need to ensure that the protection and empowerment of women is a part of strategies devised to prevent violent extremism was further noted.

12. It was noted that better education, skills development and employment facilitation to counter poverty and social marginalization was needed. It was also noted that teaching respect for human rights and diversity, fostering critical thinking, promoting media and digital literacy is important in addressing violent extremism as well as the development of behavioural and socioemotional skills, which can contribute to peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

13. The importance of addressing online radicalization was further noted. It was noted that strategic communications should be enhanced, including through the Internet and social media as well as the tailoring of national communications strategies to local cont