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Letter dated 15 December 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, I have the honour to submit to the Security Council the conclusions of the Committee's special meeting with Member States and relevant international and regional organizations on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, held in Madrid on 27 and 28 July 2015, and the guiding principles on foreign terrorist fighters, adopted following the meeting (see annexes I and II). The declaration of the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior, held on the occasion of the special meeting, is also attached herewith (see annex III).

The Committee would appreciate it if the present letter and its annexes were brought to the attention of the members of the Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Raimonda **Murmokaitė**
Chair

Security Council Committee established pursuant to
resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism



Annex I

Special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters

Madrid, 27 and 28 July 2015

Conclusion

The Counter-Terrorism Committee,

Reaffirms that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomsoever committed; that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or ethnic group; and that terrorism should be unequivocally condemned universally;

Recalls that the Security Council, acting pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, adopted resolution 2178 (2014) on countering threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters, on 24 September 2014;

Recalls also the statement by the President of the Security Council of 19 November 2014 ([S/PRST/2014/23](#)), in which the Council reaffirmed that the increasing threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters was part of the emerging issues, trends and developments related to Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) and encouraged the Counter-Terrorism Committee to hold special meetings in 2015 with the participation of Member States and relevant international and regional organizations to discuss ways to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and in this regard expresses its gratitude to the Government of Spain for its generosity in hosting the special meeting of the Committee in Madrid and for ensuring the meeting's successful organization and outcome;

Underscores the need to implement all aspects of resolution 2178 (2014), to intensify those efforts and to identify and undertake priority actions aimed at stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, in particular those mentioned in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 29 May 2015 ([S/PRST/2015/11](#));

Reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law;

Underlines that the United Nations, specialized international and regional organizations, civil society, research institutes and academia have an important role to play in building an understanding of the threat posed by the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and in facilitating international cooperation in this field;

Notes and welcomes the conclusions of the technical discussions conducted with the members of the Committee, other participating Member States and other relevant international and regional actors, in Madrid on 27 July 2015, and the briefings given to the Committee thereon by the rapporteurs for each of the three subtopics identified and outlined below:

Group I: detection of and intervention against the incitement, recruitment and facilitation of foreign terrorist fighters

(a) Member States are encouraged to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters through a comprehensive approach, in accordance with resolution 2178 (2014);

(b) Member States are encouraged to prevent radicalization to terrorism; stem recruitment; counter violent extremism, which can lead to terrorism; counter incitement to terrorist acts motivated by extremism or intolerance; and promote political and religious tolerance, economic development and social cohesion and inclusiveness;

(c) Member States are encouraged to engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narrative that can incite terrorist acts and address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, which can lead to terrorism, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders and all other concerned groups in civil society;

(d) Member States, international organizations and civil society are undertaking important initiatives in a number of relevant areas, including creating avenues for the voices of women and youth, strengthening the role of civil society while respecting its independence, supporting families in crisis, creating opportunities for victims to contribute to countering violent extremism, seeking a more prominent role for religious leaders, reinforcing community policing programmes, monitoring the Internet and social media, while respecting human rights and the rule of law and developing education programmes to promote critical thinking and understanding of other cultures;

(e) There is a need to provide greater political and financial support for such initiatives and to provide for the security needs of civil society actors and others speaking out against terrorism and violent extremism;

(f) There is a need for further, in-depth global, regional and thematic research and analysis, both to better understand the factors contributing to radicalization and to measure the impact of policies and projects aimed at addressing the threat;

Group II: prevention of travel by foreign terrorist fighters

(a) Member States affected by the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon have been strengthening their border-related controls to detect and prevent the cross-border movement of such fighters more effectively;

(b) Because some of the required measures and practices have not yet been put in place fully, there is a need to raise awareness at the border of the implications of the actions of foreign terrorist fighters;

(c) Member States should consider increasing the availability of information needed for decisive action;

(d) Member States should consider strengthening coordination and inter-agency information exchange, both nationally and with counterparts in other Member States;

(e) Member States should consider providing dedicated resources and automated tools, including advance passenger information, access to watch lists and centralized databases;

(f) Member States should consider introducing measures and practices to enhance the capacities of competent border authorities, including with respect to the type of information required at the border, the sources of information and the methodologies for its processing in order to detect potential foreign terrorist fighters, and consider sharing this information with competent authorities;

(g) Advance passenger information is an essential source of information about passengers, both prior to their departure and prior to their arrival;

(h) Member States should consider standardizing the data transmitted and the means of transmittal, establishing a single point of collection of the information, the use of interactive advance passenger information and the importance of providing support for Member States to implement advance passenger information systems;

(i) Member States should consider coordinated border management as an effective way to strengthen controls and delivery of service, achieve economies of scale, streamline operations and enhance strategic management;

Group III: criminalization, prosecution, international cooperation and the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees

(a) Member States have already implemented a number of good practices related to the criminalization, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as in the area of international legal cooperation;

(b) Member States should consider reviewing the compliance of existing legislation with the requirements of resolution 2178 (2014) and updating national legislation frameworks accordingly;

(c) Member States should consider adopting legislation that is clear and comprehensive and that upholds fundamental rule of law and human rights principles, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions;

(d) In order to ensure the effective investigation and prosecution of offences related to foreign terrorist fighters, Member States should consider adopting criminal procedural and evidentiary rules that would permit the collection and use of evidence against such fighters;

(e) Member States should consider ensuring that criminal justice responses are complementary to existing comprehensive counter-terrorism strategies, as well as adopting a case-by-case approach to returnees;

(f) Member States should consider implementing administrative measures and/or rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in cases where it would not be appropriate to bring terrorism-related charges against returnees;

(g) Member States should consider engaging in effective international legal cooperation in handling cases related to foreign terrorist fighters, which are transnational in nature, and ensuring that their legislation is complementary by criminalizing the full range of offences contained in resolution 2178 (2014);

(h) Member States should consider updating their mutual legal assistance laws and mechanisms, softening formal mutual legal assistance requirements wherever possible, strengthening national mutual legal assistance procedures and establishing mutual legal assistance central authorities endowed with adequate resources, training and legal authority;

Resolves to develop, with the assistance of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, a detailed outcome document containing a set of guiding principles, taking into consideration the above, with a view to assisting efforts of Member States to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, including by compiling good practices and principles and promoting a unified approach for implementing resolution 2178 (2014);

Encourages the Executive Directorate to step up its efforts, in close cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and other relevant Task Force entities, as well as other international specialized agencies, to facilitate technical assistance to Member States most affected by the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon;

Resolves to continue to monitor and assist Member States, with the support of the Executive Directorate, in the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, and also resolves to continue to focus on ways and means to identify principal gaps in the capacities of Member States to implement resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) that may hinder their abilities to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, identify good practices and facilitate the delivery of related technical assistance, and in this regard looks forward to receiving, in September 2015, the third analytical report of the Executive Directorate on the critical gaps for the most affected Member States in countering foreign terrorist fighters and, by October 2015, the capacity-building implementation plan of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force on countering foreign terrorist fighters.

Annex II

Guiding principles on foreign terrorist fighters

Introduction

Foreign terrorist fighters pose an acute and growing threat to international peace and security. Their activities can increase the intensity, duration, intractability and unpredictability of conflicts and pose a serious threat to their States of origin, the States through which they transit and the States to which they travel, as well as to States neighbouring zones of armed conflict in which those fighters are active. Over the past decade, the regions in which foreign terrorist fighters are active have witnessed a significant increase in violence, insecurity and instability. These fighters may be engaged in terrorism, war crimes, crimes against humanity and gender-related crimes.

Another significant risk derives from the activities of foreign terrorist fighters upon their return to their own States or upon their arrival in third States. Many fighters leave their homes with no intention of returning, and instead do so with the intention of starting a new life, building a new “State” or dying as martyrs. Not all return as terrorists, and many return precisely because they have become disillusioned and no longer wish to participate in armed conflict.

However, those who do return may have been exposed to extreme violence, sophisticated training and battlefield experience. A small number of returning foreign terrorist fighters therefore pose a very significant threat to international peace and security.

Terrorist groups also increasingly exploit information and communications technology (ICT) for the purpose of incitement, recruitment and the facilitation of terrorist activities. They use ICT to recruit not only traditional combatants but also businessmen, engineers and other professionals. This growing ICT expertise is a significant element of the foreign terrorist fighter threat.

The Security Council, in its resolution 2178 (2014), adopted on 24 September 2014 pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, acknowledges the increasing threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and requires Member States to prevent and suppress, consistent with their obligations under international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, the recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of foreign terrorist fighters, stop individuals believed to be foreign terrorist fighters from entering or transiting through their territory and ensure that their domestic laws and regulations establish serious criminal offences enabling them to prosecute and penalize prohibited conduct related to foreign terrorist fighters. The resolution represents a significant milestone in the international response to the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

In the statement by the President of the Security Council of 19 November 2014 (S/PRST/2014/23), the Council encouraged the Committee to hold open meetings, with the participation of Member States and relevant international and regional organizations, and to share national and regional experiences in addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremism. Furthermore, in the statement by the President of 29 May 2015 (S/PRST/2015/11), the Council “recognizes that addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters requires

comprehensively addressing underlying factors, including by preventing radicalization to terrorism, stemming recruitment, inhibiting foreign terrorist fighter travel, disrupting financial support to foreign terrorist fighters, countering violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism, countering incitement to terrorist acts motivated by extremism or intolerance, promoting political and religious tolerance, economic development and social cohesion and inclusiveness, ending and resolving armed conflicts, and facilitating reintegration and rehabilitation”.

Accordingly, on 28 July 2015, the Committee held a special meeting on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, which was preceded by a series of technical sessions organized by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. The meeting and technical sessions were hosted by the Government of Spain in Madrid and were attended by approximately 400 participants from Member States representing every region of the world, including those most affected by the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, relevant international and regional organizations, academia and civil society. In accordance with resolution 2178 (2014), the participants discussed the principal gaps in the capacities of Member States to implement resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) that may hinder the abilities of Member States to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

The participants also shared effective practices and approaches to stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, focusing on: (a) the detection of, intervention against and prevention of the incitement, recruitment and facilitation of foreign terrorist fighters; (b) the prevention of travel by foreign terrorist fighters; and (c) criminalization, prosecution, including prosecution strategies for returnees, international cooperation and the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees.

The main outcomes of the special meeting and technical sessions, including specific effective practices and approaches, have been incorporated into the present set of guiding principles in an effort to assist Member States in their efforts to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. The principles are intended to complement the other materials prepared by the Executive Directorate to help States to strengthen their implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014).¹

The participants reaffirmed the need for States to ensure that all measures taken to counter the threat of foreign terrorist fighters were fully compliant with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, and noted that efforts to do so involved numerous and significant challenges.

In order to develop an effective global response to the constantly evolving threat of foreign terrorist fighters and to ensure the effective implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2178 (2014), Member States, international and regional organizations, academia and civil society organizations should continue to share experiences and good practices, conduct related research and analysis and assist one another with capacity-building. It will also be necessary to strengthen the resources of Member States to implement the resolution. The challenges in implementing it are complex, and the Committee and Executive Directorate will continue to work closely with all actors concerned to help States to meet the considerable challenges involved.

¹ See the website of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (<http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/resources/index.html>).

The following guiding principles for the implementation of resolution 2178 (2014) were identified by the participants in the special meeting and endorsed by the Committee. Many of the guiding principles set forth in this document build upon existing good practices and the work of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, in particular its adopted comprehensive set of good practices to address foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, and the Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations.

I. Detection of, intervention against and prevention of the incitement, recruitment and facilitation of foreign terrorist fighters

The discussions on this topic focused on preventing the travel of aspiring foreign terrorist fighters through the creation of strategic partnerships between governmental and non-governmental actors. The participants considered the origins and nature of the problem of foreign terrorist fighters, the threat posed by the incitement and recruitment of such fighters and effective and practical tactics at the community level for stemming their flow, including with the support of youth, families, women, religious, cultural and educational leaders and other civil society groups. The participants stressed the value of adopting a comprehensive approach that combined effective law-enforcement and intelligence strategies with cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors. Local communities can provide valuable insights into the factors that make the individuals targets of incitement and recruitment commit terrorist acts and can play a key role in preventing their travel. It is also essential to respect the independent roles of the various actors concerned and to avoid using civil society for law-enforcement purposes. Member States must ensure compliance with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. Member States are urged to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism that can lead to terrorism, including by countering incitement to commit terrorist acts, creating counternarratives and other appropriate interventions and building their capacity to do so effectively, and to address, including by the empowerment of women, youth, religious and cultural leaders, the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism that can lead to terrorism.

A. Understanding the threat and creating strategic partnerships

An effective approach to stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters requires the involvement of many different stakeholders, all of which should strive to build a climate of trust and to understand the issues affecting different communities. Efforts to detect and prevent the activities of foreign terrorist fighters should involve not only law-enforcement agencies but also a wide variety of community stakeholders. It is essential to identify grievances and other social or personal factors that may lead individuals to consider travel for the purpose of engaging in terrorist acts.

Guiding principle 1. Governments should recognize that terrorism and violent extremism are complex and context-specific. While religion is sometimes cited as a

driving factor, other factors, including ideological, social or psychological factors, can also be decisive. States should devote greater resources to supporting social services and funding relevant research in order to strengthen their understanding of the reasons why individuals become aspiring foreign terrorist fighters. In many cases, individualized intervention may be the only effective way to address radicalization to violence.

Guiding principle 2. Because local stakeholders often have the best understanding of the nature and sources of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, States should create space for civil society and develop innovative mechanisms for dialogue between the Government and local communities, youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders and all other concerned groups in civil society. Constructive dialogue between the Government and communities is a crucial factor in building community resilience, identifying and addressing grievances and identifying persons targeted for recruitment by terrorists. Possible forms of dialogue include community-awareness briefings, town halls, the creation of an independent ombudsman's office, platforms for communities to express grievances and other gatherings to discuss community concerns and the creation of policy committees to counter violent extremism involving governmental and non-governmental actors. It is important that such mechanisms be put in place at the local and national levels.

Guiding principle 3. More focus should be placed on working with families, which will have a natural interest in preventing the departure of their relatives. States should strengthen communication with families, while ensuring that such interaction is voluntary and not imposed. The establishment of national or regional "hotlines" may also be an effective practice. Governments should provide support to services that engage with families; however, such services should be kept separate from security agencies. Efforts should be made to provide assistance and counselling in multiple disciplines, including psychological, social, religious and ideological counselling.

Guiding principle 4. States should devote resources to educational programmes that develop critical thinking skills and build awareness and understanding of different cultures. Critical thinking and raised awareness can be crucial to reducing the susceptibility of young people to the messages of terrorist groups and violent extremists. One area in which education is especially crucial is refugee camps, where young people are vulnerable to violent extremist messaging and terrorist recruitment.

Guiding principle 5. States should protect the right to freedom of religion or belief. Local communities are often best placed to engage with religious institutions in order to prevent their subversion by terrorists and their supporters. Consideration should also be given to promoting the greater engagement of women in this regard.

Guiding principle 6. Maintaining the memory of victims of terrorism or amplifying survivors' voices can play an important role in countering the messages of terrorists and violent extremists. States should therefore make a special effort to establish partnerships with victims and victim associations as part of their overall strategies to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Victims should have the opportunity to play a decisive role in efforts to counter violent extremism by making their voices heard if they wish to do so.

B. Community engagement and empowerment of local communities and civil society

Terrorism will not be defeated by military force, law-enforcement measures and intelligence operations alone. There is also a need to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, in accordance with pillar I of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In this respect, participants in the special meeting welcomed the provisions of resolution 2178 (2014) encouraging Member States to engage with relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter the violent extremist narratives that can incite terrorist acts, including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders and all other concerned civil society groups. Greater efforts in this area can lead to increased success in stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters at the community level.

Guiding principle 7. Effective community engagement to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters requires action in a number of different fields. States should consider developing comprehensive strategies to counter and prevent violent extremism that include significant roles for youth, families, women, religious, cultural and educational leaders and other concerned civil society groups. Independent actors give actions to counter violent extremism a level of credibility and effectiveness that Governments generally cannot achieve alone. However, care should be exercised in delineating the respective roles of Governments and civil society actors.

Guiding principle 8. Women, especially mothers, can play a crucial role as community leaders and role models in preventing radicalization and the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. States should make greater efforts to involve women in programmes and strategies to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters because their participation can have a major impact, in particular where their family members are concerned. Such efforts could involve promoting the greater inclusion of women in policymaking and law-enforcement bodies to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and increasing opportunities for women's civil society groups to participate in dialogue on effective approaches. States should pay close attention to the security risks encountered by women engaged in these efforts.

Guiding principle 9. Youth are often best able to recognize trends by terrorists and violent extremists in their communities to identify individuals at risk and influence their cohorts. States should therefore create mechanisms enabling young people to play a role in policymaking discussions that may be relevant to stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. The engagement of young people can be facilitated through youth mentorship and skills development programmes, community service projects and enhanced educational opportunities that increase their sense of belonging. In all cases in which young people are given the opportunity to become engaged, States must take full account of their security needs.

Guiding principle 10. Engagement between government and non-governmental actors should be based on a foundation of trust and respect. There should be recognition of the leading role to be played by Governments in taking effective action to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as an acknowledgement of the risks faced by security forces. Governments also have an obligation to uphold their international legal obligations in all their counter-terrorism efforts. In the case of civil society and human rights defenders, this includes safeguarding the ability of non-governmental actors to operate in a secure environment and fully respecting

human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of thought, conscience, expression, religion, peaceful assembly and association.

C. Community-policing and Internet-related law-enforcement initiatives

Law-enforcement measures are essential to stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. There is therefore a need to promote dialogue through methods that include engagement with communities and a commitment to transparency. One innovative approach adopted by an increasing number of States is the use of community-policing techniques. States should also pay close attention to communication related to foreign terrorist fighters, whether at public gatherings or through the Internet and other communications technologies, while ensuring respect for human rights, including freedom of expression, and recalling that any restrictions thereon shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary on the grounds set out in article 19, paragraph 3, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and for privacy.

Guiding principle 11. States should consider promoting greater reliance on community-policing techniques as part of their overall approach to stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Community policing is based on the development of mutual trust between law-enforcement entities and the communities they serve. States need to reduce the corrosive effect of excessive force, arbitrary detention and impunity on community relations and legitimacy. The objective should not be simply the short-term acquisition of intelligence, but rather the creation of long-term relationships that can enhance the capacity to detect and prevent the possible departure of aspiring foreign terrorist fighters. Successful community policing should not focus exclusively on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, but should instead address the full range of community concerns, thereby building trust.

Guiding principle 12. States should, as appropriate, include effective and swift measures to prevent and counter incitement to commit terrorist acts as part of a comprehensive strategy to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, while upholding their international human rights obligations.

Guiding principle 13. States, regional organizations, the private sector and civil society should establish effective partnerships, with a view to developing improved methods for monitoring and studying terrorist content transmitted over the Internet and other communications technologies and countering incitement to commit terrorist acts, utilizing it for intelligence work and referring it, where appropriate, to relevant law-enforcement agencies. Countermessaging can also be an effective measure. All actors should enhance dialogue concerning terrorist content transmitted over the Internet and other modern communications technologies in order to ensure that the most appropriate and useful action is taken with respect to such content.

Guiding principle 14. The Internet and other modern communications technologies are a vital means to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. States must ensure that any measures, including enforcement actions taken to restrict freedom of expression, comply with their obligations under international human rights law.

II. Prevention of travel by foreign terrorist fighters, including through operational measures, the use of advance passenger information and measures to strengthen border security

In its resolution 2178 (2014), the Council reaffirmed that all States shall prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls. The Council also encouraged States to employ evidence-based traveller risk-assessment and screening procedures in their existing authorities, including the collection and analysis of travel data, and to intensify and accelerate the exchange of operational information regarding actions or movements of terrorists or terrorist networks, including foreign terrorist fighters, and called upon States to require that airlines operating in their territories provide advance passenger information to the appropriate national authorities in order to detect the departure from their territories, or attempted entry into or transit through their territories, by means of civil aircraft, of individuals designated by the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011). The discussions during the special meeting resulted in the identification of a number of elements that would strengthen operational and practical measures aimed at stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

A. Operational measures to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters

1. Collection of information related to foreign terrorist fighters from various sources

In order to effectively address the cross-border flow of foreign terrorist fighters, appropriate information about the identity of existing or potential fighters, upon which border authorities can make informed decisions, should be made available in a timely manner to border posts and other relevant agencies for further action. Information on foreign terrorist fighters may be either specific or general in nature. Specific information includes information obtained from sources such as law-enforcement and intelligence agencies; advance passenger information; biometrics; national and international watch lists; notices of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL); databases, including the one of foreign terrorist fighters; diffusion notices; and analytical products; and informants. General information includes, passenger name record data and the results of trends analysis and risk assessments.

Guiding principle 15. In order to obtain information to help to identify existing or potential foreign terrorist fighters:

(a) States should consult national, regional and international sources of information on foreign terrorist fighters;

(b) National law-enforcement and security agencies should actively transmit relevant information that may be of use in identifying existing or potential foreign terrorist fighters;

(c) Relevant regional and international organizations should provide the tools and the means, such as a database of foreign terrorist fighters, for the collection and dissemination of specific and general forms of information related to foreign terrorist fighters, with a focus on utilizing already existing, widely used and proven mechanisms, such as I-24/7, the secure global police-to-police communication system of INTERPOL;

(d) Information should be transmitted to officials at land, air and maritime ports of entry or to a centralized location for processing, prior to the arrival or departure of travellers, through established mechanisms;

(e) The collection, storage and sharing of information should be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner consistent with international human rights law.

2. Reliance on analysis to make general information on foreign terrorist fighters actionable

Information received must be processed and analysed in order to exploit its full potential to identify existing or potential foreign terrorist fighters through informed decisions. In many cases, the specific information received should be analysed for comparison against known profiles of foreign terrorist fighters and the development of new profiles to better inform future analyses, with the ultimate aim of facilitating their timely dissemination to front-line officials. A specific challenge associated with the analysis of the activities of foreign terrorist fighters is their use of evasive travel patterns, or “broken travel”, which is the deliberate use of techniques to break long-distance travel into multiple segments so that it becomes difficult to ascertain travel history and travel origin and prevent border authorities and counter-terrorism officials from accurately determining where they were prior to their arrival in a particular State. An associated challenge is distinguishing “broken travel” intended to evade counter-terrorism authorities from benign travel patterns that appear broken, but which have an innocuous purpose, such as cost savings or the redemption of frequent flyer miles.

Guiding principle 16. In order to exploit the full potential of information on the identity of existing or potential foreign terrorist fighters, States should consider:

(a) Establishing a dedicated analytical team and providing it with the tools and resources required to derive meaningful and actionable results;

(b) Ensuring that information collected about existing or potential foreign terrorist fighters is made available to the analytical team in a timely manner in order to facilitate the necessary analysis;

(c) Ensuring that risk analysis and indicator development are employed as tools to help to identify specific risks;

(d) Developing risk indicators that are gender-sensitive;

(e) Undertaking, with the assistance of relevant international organizations and other experts, specific measures to improve understanding of the use of broken travel patterns by foreign terrorist fighters.

3. Transmitting analysis and information on foreign terrorist fighters nationally and internationally

Information and related analyses on existing and potential foreign terrorist fighters should be shared across the security hierarchy nationally and with competent border authorities internationally through coordination and mechanisms for information exchange.

Guiding principle 17. In order to ensure the availability of relevant information to front-line officers nationally and internationally, and thus enhance efforts to detect

and prevent the cross-border movement of foreign terrorist fighters, States should consider:

- (a) Enacting legislation, if necessary, and implementing procedures to gather traveller information and use known traveller information, including advance passenger information, complemented by passenger name record data, if appropriate, to inform decisions about potential travel by foreign terrorist fighters;
- (b) Ensure that procedures are in place to make certain that information on known or suspected foreign terrorist fighters is transmitted to front-line border officials for their action prior to the departure or arrival of the traveller;
- (c) Establishing mechanisms for the provision of feedback on the validity and usability of the information, as well as on the results achieved;
- (d) Encouraging the bilateral and multilateral sharing of information and analysis related to foreign terrorist fighters;
- (e) Expanding access to, and the utilization of, the global information-sharing tools and resources of INTERPOL among the national law-enforcement, immigration and border security authorities of member countries.

4. Effective utilization of information related to foreign terrorist fighters at border points

It is essential to provide appropriate training and updated instructions to front-line officers on the risks posed by terrorism, in particular by foreign terrorist fighters, and the manner in which available information and tools can be fully and effectively utilized to identify existing or potential fighters at border entry and departure points. Appropriate training and instructions can ensure the effective utilization of information analysis related to foreign terrorist fighters at border points.

Guiding principle 18. In order to effectively utilize information and analysis related to foreign terrorist fighters at border entry and departure points, States should consider:

- (a) Establishing at all border locations mechanisms, including technology such as I-24/7, to ensure the prompt receipt of potential travel information related to foreign terrorist fighters;
- (b) Providing at border locations the appropriate tools to produce risk assessments aimed at preventing the travel of foreign terrorist fighters;
- (c) Ensuring that relevant security and border-control officials are sufficiently trained in the practices and procedures of risk analysis and risk indicator development, and in their application, in the identification of existing or potential foreign terrorist fighters;
- (d) Facilitating greater working-level cooperation and coordination by all agencies, including those operating at the border;
- (e) Ensuring that border-control officials are adequately trained in counter-terrorism issues and that counter-terrorism agents are adequately trained in border security issues;

(f) Raising awareness among border-control officials of the specific challenges associated with detecting female foreign terrorist fighters, including the fact that they are younger and less likely to be known to intelligence and law-enforcement officials;

(g) Employing traveller risk assessment and screening procedures, including the collection and analysis of travel data, without resorting to profiling based on stereotypes founded on grounds of discrimination prohibited by international law.

5. Addressing gaps in the use of advance passenger information and expanding its use to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters

An advance passenger information system enables border authorities to determine passenger risk before flights arrive on their territories, before passengers are approved for boarding in order to detect the departure from their territories or before the attempted entry into or transit of suspected foreign terrorist fighters through their territories. The use of passenger name record systems, if permissible under national law, can complement advance passenger information data and help to inform decisions on potential foreign terrorist fighters. However, advance passenger information systems are complex and require a high degree of technical capacity and skill and adequate resources.

Guiding principle 19. In order to facilitate the broader and more comprehensive use of advance passenger information, States should consider:

(a) Implementing an advance passenger information system that complies with annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and the guidelines on advance passenger information of the World Customs Organization, the International Air Transport Association and the International Civil Aviation Organization;

(b) Implementing interactive advance passenger information, which analyses and responds to passenger data in real time and can prevent passengers from accessing aircraft or secure airport areas;

(c) Using a “single window” that serves the needs of all agencies and appointing a single agency to be the primary receiver of advance passenger information data;

(d) Ensuring the alignment and standardization of advance passenger information programme specifications and communication protocols with the standards and best practices agreed and adopted in the guidelines on advance passenger information;

(e) Ensuring adherence to the prescribed set of data outlined in the guidelines;

(f) Implementing a passenger name record system to complement advance passenger information in conducting risk assessment and respecting human rights in the collection, analysis, sharing, storage and use of passenger name record data;

(g) Ensuring the availability of adequate resources to implement effective advance passenger information systems;

(h) Integrating advance passenger information with the global indices and capabilities of INTERPOL, which include its Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database and Travel Documents Associated with Notices system.

B. Practical measures to strengthen the overall security of borders**1. Coordinated border management**

Many States have turned to coordinated border management to effectively manage their borders. Participants in the special meeting noted the need for cooperation and coordination by all security institutions, where border security cannot be secured by one agency alone, as a means of strengthening the overall security of borders to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. A coordinated border management approach can enable States to:

- (a) Strengthen the control and delivery of service;
- (b) Clarify responsibilities and lines of work;
- (c) Streamline operations;
- (d) Reduce redundancies;
- (e) Strengthen communication flows and information exchange;
- (f) Rationalize the use of human and financial resources;
- (g) Provide a more comprehensive and rapid response to emerging threats;
- (h) Respond more rapidly and effectively to emerging threats.

Guiding principle 20. In order to strengthen coordination among the competent authorities at border locations and thereby enhance the overall security of their borders and stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, States should consider:

(a) Incorporating coordinated border management principles, as appropriate, to enhance the effectiveness of border controls aimed at stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters;

(b) Implementing a coordinated border management approach by establishing appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks and institutional structures, developing the required procedures and acquiring the necessary human resources, training, infrastructure and equipment.

2. Addressing spaces between official border crossings

Spaces between official border crossings are difficult to control because they often include long and porous borders, open spaces and difficult terrain. They therefore present risks and vulnerabilities for the potential crossing by foreign terrorist fighters.

Guiding principle 21. In order to strengthen the overall security of their borders and thereby stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, States should consider:

(a) Identifying the most vulnerable border stretches and implementing mitigation measures;

(b) Establishing controls at vulnerable locations;

(c) Establishing mobile border-processing units and/or roving patrols on the basis of risk assessment and assessed needs, and supporting them with transportable screening systems such as the Mobile INTERPOL Network Database;

(d) Extending areas of control adjacent to official border checkpoints;

- (e) Establishing, strengthening and acting upon bilateral agreements on cross-border matters;
- (f) Increasing cooperation, coordination and information exchange with neighbouring and other States;
- (g) Introducing appropriate legal measures to deter the unauthorized crossing of borders that are compliant with all relevant obligations under international law;
- (h) Making available adequate and trained human resources to conduct border operations;
- (i) Developing and deploying cost-effective detection technologies and infrastructure, such as integrated fixed towers and mobile technologies, as appropriate;
- (j) Actively implementing bilateral and multilateral joint approaches to border-control operations;
- (k) Designating a lead coordinating and implementing agency to operationalize border-management measures related to foreign terrorist fighters.

III. Criminalization, prosecution, including prosecution strategies for returnees, international cooperation and the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees

The five technical sessions held on this theme enabled Member States, international and regional organizations, civil society stakeholders and practitioners to share information on the analysis of gaps in all areas of the criminal justice process, as well as on effective strategies and techniques to overcome them. Many of the challenges involved in bringing foreign terrorist fighters to justice are addressed in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate report entitled “Bringing terrorists to justice: challenges in prosecution related to foreign terrorist fighters” (S/2015/123, annex).

A. Criminalization of acts aimed at stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters

Reliance on existing laws, including laws that do not deal directly with terrorist offences, has enabled many States to mount an immediate solution to the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. However, doing so also presents a number of risks and challenges, including the reluctance of courts to apply such legislation, the potential use of disproportionate penalties and difficulties in obtaining international cooperation.

Guiding principle 22. Member States should actively review the compliance of their existing legislation with resolution 2178 (2014) and update national legislation frameworks, as needed, in order to criminalize the full range of conduct related to foreign terrorist fighters, including preparatory acts and preventive offences, required by resolutions 1373 (2001) and 2178 (2014). In criminalizing such conduct, States should ensure that these criminal offences are defined clearly in their legal systems and that such criminalization is in accordance with their obligations under the applicable international law. Member States should consider taking steps to encourage the engagement of parliamentarians, civil society, relevant

international and regional organizations and policymakers in the legislative process, as appropriate.

Guiding principle 23. Member States that have already begun the process of reviewing and updating their legislation should continue to share their experiences and good practices with other Member States and should seek guidance and advice from United Nations bodies and other relevant international and regional organizations. They should strive to compile and distribute new legislation in a way that is accessible to other Member States who may benefit from or require it.

Guiding principle 24. Member States and international and regional organizations may wish to consider adopting a regional approach to addressing the criminalization of acts related to foreign terrorist fighters. The Council of Europe adopted such an approach in the form of the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism. A regional approach may enhance implementation, harmonization and international cooperation.

B. Investigation and prosecution of criminal offences to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters

Generating admissible evidence and converting intelligence into admissible evidence against foreign terrorist fighters are complex and multifaceted tasks. Specific challenges in the investigation and prosecution of cases involving foreign terrorist fighters include:

- (a) Collecting evidence from countries of destination or areas where the military may play a role;
- (b) Using intelligence or the products of special investigative techniques in court without exposing sources or methods;
- (c) Generating admissible evidence from or converting intelligence into admissible evidence information obtained through ICT, including social media;
- (d) Handling cases involving incitement to commit terrorist acts and terrorist recruitment, especially when those offences are committed through the Internet;
- (e) Proving the purpose of travel and the intent behind preparatory acts committed prior to travel.

Guiding principle 25. Member States should consider reviewing national legislation to ensure that evidence collected through special investigative techniques or from countries of destination or evidence collected through ICT and social media, including through electronic surveillance, can be admitted as evidence in cases related to foreign terrorist fighters, while respecting international human rights law, including freedom of expression, and recalling that any restrictions thereon shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary on the grounds set out in paragraph 3 of article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and should not be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy. Member States should take steps to ensure that lawfully gathered intelligence that may not be used in court can serve as a basis for a criminal investigation, including the use of special investigative techniques, which could, in turn, generate admissible evidence. Member States should consider implementing the relevant good practices and work of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, as well as other organizations that may develop similar products, such as OSCE, the European Union, the African

Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism and the Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Agencies.²

Guiding principle 26. Member States should build ICT and forensic capacities and expertise within national law-enforcement agencies and strengthen the capacity of law-enforcement agencies to monitor social media content related to terrorism in order to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters in a manner that is compliant with the international human rights obligations of States. Member States should build and strengthen public-private partnerships, in particular with social media service providers, while respecting international obligations and commitments regarding human rights, including freedom of expression, and recalling that any restrictions thereon shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary on the grounds set out in paragraph 3 of article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In this regard, Member States should encourage the ICT industry to voluntarily develop terms of service that target content aimed at recruitment for terrorism and recruiting or inciting others to commit terrorist acts, while respecting international obligations and commitments regarding human rights.

Guiding principle 27. Member States should consider taking steps to ensure effective inter-agency coordination, including by developing multi-agency task forces and liaison officers in order to ensure a collective response.

Guiding principle 28. Member States should consider involving their financial authorities in investigations related to foreign terrorist fighters at the earliest opportunity. Financial investigations into transactions and financial crimes conducted and committed prior to departure can provide valuable information against foreign terrorist fighters and assist in proving the purpose of the travel.

Guiding principle 29. Member States should consider developing a proactive approach to the investigation of offences related to foreign terrorist fighters and involving other officials, including prosecutors, in the early stages of investigation. Member States should consider developing, as early as possible, ways to collect evidence regarding the purpose of travel that is consistent with their obligations under international human rights law. Collecting and preserving evidence, such as evidence from friends, family members, social media and the communications of foreign terrorist fighters, prior to or during travel or while the fighter is in the country of destination, facilitates timely prosecutorial decisions upon the fighter's return.

C. Prosecution and rehabilitation strategies aimed at stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters

The employment of rigid prosecution policies and practices against foreign terrorist fighters can be counterproductive to the implementation of comprehensive strategies to combat such fighters and violent extremism. Member States should also consider alternatives to incarceration, as well as the reintegration and possible

² See the Rabat memorandum on good practices for effective counter-terrorism practice in the criminal justice sector of the Criminal Justice Sector and Rule of Law Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, available at www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/38299/Rabat+Memorandum-English, and the recommendations of the Working Group for using and protecting intelligence information in rule of law-based, criminal justice sector-led investigations and prosecutions, available at www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/159887/14Sept19_GCTF+Rabat+GP+6+Recommendations.pdf.

rehabilitation of returnees, prisoners and detainees. The adoption of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach that involves all branches of Government, as well as community and civil society stakeholders, can be a more effective way to bring terrorists to justice and can represent an effective long-term response to the risks posed by foreign terrorist fighters. Many Member States find it difficult to determine how to respond to the potential threat posed by specific categories of travellers, including minors, family members and other potentially vulnerable individuals, providers of medical services and other humanitarian needs and disillusioned returnees who have committed less serious offences. More research and sharing of experiences is needed in order to develop effective, context-specific criminal justice responses to foreign terrorist fighters and enable the effective assessment of the risks posed by various categories of returnees. In combating the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, it is important to address the full range of serious crimes committed during travel, in particular war crimes, crimes against humanity and gender-related crimes. Moreover, it is important to conduct an initial assessment of the foreign terrorist fighter to determine the level of culpability and thereby determine the appropriate way to handle each individual.

Guiding principle 30. Member States should ensure that their competent authorities are able to apply a case-by-case approach to returnees, on the basis of risk assessment, the availability of evidence and related factors. Member States should develop and implement strategies for dealing with specific categories of returnees, in particular minors, women, family members and other potentially vulnerable individuals, providers of medical services and other humanitarian needs and disillusioned returnees who have committed less serious offences. Prosecution strategies should correspond to national counter-terrorism strategies, including effective strategies to counter violent extremism.

Guiding principle 31. Member States should consider appropriate administrative measures and/or rehabilitation and reintegration programmes as alternatives to prosecution in appropriate cases. Such measures should be used in a manner compliant with applicable international human rights law and national legislation and should be subject to effective review.

Guiding principle 32. Member States should ensure that their criminal justice systems are capable of dealing with all serious crimes committed by foreign terrorist fighters, in particular war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes related to gender.

D. International judicial cooperation in stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters

There are numerous challenges associated with effective international cooperation in stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, including delays in the provision of mutual legal assistance, the rigidity of procedures and lack of capacity.

Guiding principle 33. Member States should consider reviewing national mutual legal assistance laws and mechanisms and updating them as necessary in order to strengthen their effectiveness, especially in the light of the substantial increase in the volume of requests for digital data. Member States, consistent with their national law and legal framework, should also consider establishing appropriate laws and mechanisms that allow for the broadest possible international cooperation, including effective joint investigations, the appointment of liaison officers, police-

to-police cooperation, the establishment of 24/7 networks for cooperation, the transfer of criminal proceedings and the transfer of sentences.

Guiding principle 34. Member States should consider designating mutual legal assistance central authorities and ensuring that such authorities have adequate resources, training and legal authority. Member States should also consider developing and participating in regional mutual legal assistance cooperation platforms, such as the Sahel Judicial Platform and the Regional Judicial Platform of the Sahel Countries.³ They should also consider developing and enhancing arrangements for expeditious cross-regional cooperation.

Guiding principle 35. Member States should consider developing and implementing effective mechanisms for police-to-police cooperation and creative solutions to specific international cooperation challenges. Member States should consider increasing their use of electronic communication and universal templates, relying on police channels of communication or public information wherever possible. In doing so, they should ensure full respect for the fair trial rights of the accused.

³ See www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Leaflets/14-06860_A5_leaflet_E_ebook.pdf.

Annex III**Declaration of the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior, held in Madrid on 28 July 2015, on the occasion of the special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council**

The States and organizations participating in the high-level meeting on the occasion of the special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council have agreed as follows:

1. We reiterate our condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, which constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and reaffirm our solidarity with the countries facing the plague of terrorism and pledge our continued cooperation and support for their efforts.
2. We reaffirm our determination to continue to combat terrorism, complying fully with the Charter of the United Nations and with all our obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, and resolve to counter this threat through a global comprehensive strategy that implements and develops the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions of the Security Council.
3. We express concern that foreign terrorist fighters increase the intensity, duration and intractability of conflicts and may pose a serious threat to their States of origin, the States through which they transit and the States to which they travel, as well as States neighbouring zones of armed conflict in which such fighters are active and that are affected by serious security burdens; note that the threat of such fighters may affect all regions and States, even those far from conflict zones; and express grave concern that such fighters are using their extremist ideology to promote terrorism.

We reaffirm the principles of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) and relevant presidential statements, which call upon Member States to develop legislative, judicial, law-enforcement and other relevant measures to establish efficient and effective international cooperation efforts against the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

We reaffirm the principles contained in Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) regarding criminal investigation, prosecution and international cooperation on procedural matters regarding the financing and support of terrorist groups.

We call upon States to propose creative ideas and new approaches for developing legal tools to counter terrorism further, including the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, in line with obligations under international law.

4. We call upon the international community to implement and reinforce the measures contained in resolution 2178 (2014).

We underscore the importance for all the States of the international community to develop, as a matter of priority and without delay, adequate, swift and effective measures to fight the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. We encourage all States to keep up the momentum in strengthening their national legislation against foreign terrorist fighters, speeding up the prosecution of such fighters and other individuals who cooperate in their recruitment, the organization and financing of travel and

related activities, and strengthening the mechanisms for international assistance in the area of criminal justice.

5. We call upon States to take effective measures to prevent individuals from travelling to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning or preparation of terrorist acts, including by increased international cooperation through timely information exchange, including through multilateral forums and through the implementation of good practices agreed upon, as appropriate, as well as through measures to increase the use of advance passenger information data, improve security at border crossings and ensure effective coordination between national border, police and intelligence authorities, as well as with private sector organizations, to address the travel of foreign terrorist fighters.

6. We also call upon the international community, in the framework of combating terrorism financing, to pay specific attention to the financing, facilitation, and travel methods used by foreign terrorist fighters.

7. We urge all States to consider listing, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2161 (2014), individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida who are financing, arming, planning or recruiting for them, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Boko Haram, the al-Nusrah Front and Ansar al-Sharia.

8. The international community must also continue to carry out efficiently coordinated actions more effectively in order to prevent the spread of violent extremism by promoting, among other things, interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

We note with concern that terrorist groups, in particular the ISIL/Da'esh, the al-Nusrah Front, Ansar al-Sharia, Boko Haram, all the other cells, affiliates, splinter groups or derivatives of Al-Qaida, and groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIL/Da'esh, are exploiting information and communications technology to spread their violent ideology, to conduct incitement to violence and to attempt to attract our citizens, especially youth. We are determined to counter radicalization to violence and violent extremism by spreading the values of peaceful coexistence and pluralism upon which international society is based and supporting relevant local communities and civil society leaders, notably by paying special attention to women and youth in schools and prisons.

Together with the promotion of universal values, we underline the need to stop the criminal propaganda of the terrorist groups, the spread of the messages of incitement to violence and recruitment in social media networks and the Internet, including the glorification of their cruel acts, which causes tremendous suffering to victims, and highlight that a closer dialogue with Internet service providers is crucial in this regard.

9. We pay tribute to all the victims of terrorism. Victims who have survived terrorist attacks and relatives of victims are among the most powerful and persuasive voices to delegitimize terrorism and to reveal its radical inhumanity. We call upon States to promote and highlight credible voices who can speak powerfully against the destructive propaganda of terrorist groups, including those who have chosen to leave or who have been rehabilitated.

10. We strongly urge States, if they are able to do so, to assist in the delivery of effective capacity-building and other technical assistance needed by the most affected States, especially those burdened with the need to commit extraordinary

resources to counter the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, including States neighbouring zones of armed conflict in which such fighters are active.

11. While we value the progress achieved by States in taking the measures necessary to counter foreign terrorist fighters since the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), there is an urgent need to redouble efforts. We urge all States to significantly increase coordinated international action to create more obstacles in order to reduce the travel of foreign terrorist fighters and dramatically reduce the pace of their arrival to conflict zones, in particular Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic.

In this context, we note the fact that various international regional and subregional organizations have decided to include in their activities and plans of action measures to counter violent extremism and to fight the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

12. We welcome recent developments and initiatives at the international, regional and subregional levels to prevent and suppress the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, note the work of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, in particular its adoption of a comprehensive set of good practices to address the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and the establishment of its Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, and the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, the Meeting of the Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations, the League of Arab States and the International Criminal Police Organization.

13. We fully support the central role that the United Nations plays in combating terrorism and in the preparation and implementation of measures to counter the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. The Counter-Terrorism Committee, established under resolution 1373 (2001), and its supporting body, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office have played an important role in strengthening global actions against foreign terrorist fighters.

We specifically commend and appreciate the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate for their commitment to implementing pertinent Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2178 (2014) and relevant presidential statements. We underline the importance of their analysis of emerging trends and challenges, as well as their identification of good practices in the implementation of resolutions related to the fight against terrorism, and we welcome their cooperation with civil society and academic institutions, including the recent launching of a global research network.

14. We welcome the conclusions of the Counter-Terrorism Committee at its special meeting on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, which was held on 27 and 28 July 2015, on the basis of the work carried out by experts during the Executive Directorate-led technical sessions on 27 July. We believe that these conclusions will enable States to implement relevant Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism more effectively, in particular resolution 2178 (2014), to counter the threat of foreign terrorist fighters.

15. We congratulate Spain for its leadership on counter-terrorism and its successful hosting of the special meeting on stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and express our gratitude for its generous hospitality.