

Statement

by

Ms. Maria Eugenia Rettori

Head of Unit

Preventing and Responding to WMD/CBRN Terrorism

Countering Terrorism Section

UN Counter-Terrorism Centre

UN Office of Counter-Terrorism

**Seventh session of the open-ended intergovernmental Working Group
on Firearms**

**VIC, Vienna,
16-17 July 2020**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), I would like to thank the Secretariat of the Conference for having invited us to join this important event as an observer. The problem of illicit trafficking and manufacturing of firearms is directly related to terrorism as, unfortunately, firearms are the weapon of choice of many terrorists around the world.

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General has made countering terrorism one of his top priorities. As a result of his first major institutional reform UNOCT was established in June 2017 through the UN General Assembly resolution 71/291.

The main priorities of the Office are to promote coordination and coherence in UN Counter-Terrorism efforts and strengthen the delivery of capacity-building assistance to Member States to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The Strategy highlights the connection between terrorism and the illicit trafficking of small arms, light weapons, conventional ammunitions and explosives and calls upon Member States to strengthen coordination and cooperation and to step up national, regional and international efforts to improve border and customs controls in order to prevent and detect their illicit trafficking.

To address this challenge, UNOCT through its UN Counter-Terrorism Centre has joined forces with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and developed a project for Central Asian countries

on Addressing the nexus between terrorism, arms and crime. by preventing and combatting the illicit trafficking of small-arms and light weapons and their illicit supply to terrorists.

The objectives of the project are to enhance the national legislative, strategic and operational capacities to prevent, detect and counter firearms trafficking and other illegal activities related to terrorism and organized crime. This project is fully aligned with, *inter alia*, the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the UN Security Council resolution 2370 (2017), the Firearms Protocol to the UN Convention Against Transnational Crime and the Madrid Guiding Principles, which is a tool for Member States to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

We believe that through the implementation of these kinds of projects we will be able to bring concrete results that will support Member States in becoming more secure and free from illicit weapons and terrorism.

Allow me to conclude by thanking once again the organizers of the event and express hope that, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting will achieve its goal in facilitating implementation of the Firearms Protocol and will make valuable recommendations to the Conference.

Thank you.