

**Opening Remarks: Mr John Brandolino, DIR-DTA, UNODC**

***Online regional workshop on the universalization and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) for English-speaking African countries not party to ICSANT***

**20 September 2023**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

On behalf of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, I am pleased to welcome you all to the online regional workshop on the universalization and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) for English-speaking African countries that are not yet party to this Convention.

Today's event builds upon the success of the 2020 online workshop for English-speaking African countries.

Let me begin with expressing our appreciation to the European Union for funding this important activity and for continuously supporting our efforts to promote ICSANT, and to Mr Stefan Tressing, Deputy Head of the Disarmament and Non-proliferation Division at the European External Action Service for being with us today.

And many thanks to the representatives of Member States and the international experts present here today for taking time from their busy schedules to tune into and contribute to this event.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is no secret that terrorists and other criminals are actively seeking nuclear and other radioactive material.

While only a few dozen States operate nuclear power plants or are developing nuclear power programmes, radioactive sources and other radioactive material have long been in use virtually everywhere, including hundreds of them employed in

your countries for medical, agricultural and industrial purposes.

The risk of theft and sabotage, as well as the risk of smuggling is high.

The transnational nature of this threat requires a dedicated and coordinated response from the international community and Member States.

ICSANT is an essential tool for preventing and suppressing terrorist and other criminal conduct involving nuclear or other radioactive material and for improving nuclear security worldwide.

ICSANT can benefit all States Parties by facilitating international cooperation, including on exchange of information, prosecution and extradition.

Today, you will hear from international and UNODC experts about the main features of this instrument and its importance in preventing and combatting criminal acts involving nuclear or other radioactive material.

Together, we will discuss the challenges associated with related criminal acts and the subsequent proceedings involving nuclear or other radioactive material.

You will also hear about UNODC assistance related to ICSANT, which is one of the 19 international counter-terrorism treaties that we promote in UNODC, in accordance with the mandate conferred to us by the United Nations General Assembly.

UNODC's promotion of ICSANT is multi-faceted and includes country visits, national, regional and international workshops as well as development of useful tools.

One example is our ICSANT website, funded by the EU, which will be presented to you today and where you can find a myriad of information on the Convention.

Over 15,000 practitioners have benefitted from the content of this website, which is available in all UN official languages.

In carrying out activities, UNODC relies on its extensive network of regional and country offices, for example, the Regional Offices for West and Central Africa (in Senegal), for Eastern Africa (in Kenya), and for Southern Africa (in South Africa).

UNODC also works in close partnership with specialized international and regional organizations and entities, such as the African Union, AFRICISIS, INTERPOL, UNOCT and the International Atomic Energy Agency, among others.

To conclude, I would like to mention that the Convention currently has 121 States parties.

In fact, today we mark the entry into force of the Convention for its latest party, Albania.

Of the ICSANT State parties, 24 are African countries, representing less than a half of the 54 States on the continent.

Although there is a long way towards ICSANT universalization, I am glad to mention that, since the 2020 online workshop and following our engagement across the continent, one African country has joined ICSANT while another one is expected to become party quite soon.

I trust that this workshop will reinforce this trend towards the universalisation of ICSANT and better protection of your countries, Africa and the globe against terrorist and other criminal acts involving nuclear or other radioactive material.

I thank you for your time and commitment and I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you.