Chair's Statement

Representatives from 35 Countries[1], The United Nations, The European Union, The Council of Europe, The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and The Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund met in Oslo on 5th June 2015 in order to discuss concrete steps to take against violent extremism.

The countries who met in Oslo are deeply concerned about the increased threat from violent extremism of all kinds. They are all determined to implement The United Nation's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Resolution 2178 adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 24th September 2014 on the need to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

The conference was briefed about the results from the civil society conference "Youth Against Violent Extremism", which met at the same venue the preceding day. The youth conference was rich in ideas and truly creative. It produced a wealth of ideas to be considered by us.

We welcome the European youth network against violent extremism that was launched, and encourage the development of similar networks in other regions. When European youth of all faiths stand up for democracy and the rule of law, they take charge of their own destiny and tell us that they want to live in societies free of fear.

At the conference, representatives from European Cities participated in a meeting hosted by the City of Oslo. They welcomed the proposal to launch a global network of cities, determined to work locally in order to prevent radicalization, which can lead to violent extremism, building on the work being done at local level in Europe to build community resilience.

We were all much inspired by the Summit Against Violent Extremism, which took place in Washington in February. Realizing that progress in our endeavours rest on every single government, city and local community engaged with this task, we consider six topics of being of particular importance in our way forward. They are:

1. Strengthening local preventive work to counter violent extremism

A number of European countries have developed frameworks that formalize cooperation between national and local government institutions to build community resilience to violent extremism. There is a need for countries to share experience, good practices and lessons learned from developing collective responses, building multi-agency structures to counter violent extremism at the local level, and forging long-term partnerships with communities and non-governmental actors. There is a need for a broad cooperation on all levels, between national and local authorities, between the local communities as well as

---

[1]Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom The United States, Australia, Canada. **International organizations**: The Council of Europe, Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, The European Union, The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, The United Nations. **Observer countries**: Australia, Canada, The United States

between local authorities and civil society. Governments must provide incentives for safe spaces, both online and offline - but respect the importance of independence of the civil society.

The proposal to launch a global network of Cities against Violent Extremism that would connect municipalities from different regions working to prevent violent radicalization leading to extremism was welcomed. Governments committed to encourage their cities to join this network, with a view to have it launched this fall in New York.

2. Promoting research and information-sharing on the drivers of violent extremism

Although substantial research has been carried out to understand the drivers and mechanisms of radicalization to violent extremism, these dynamics are ultimately local and often individual. There has never been a more pressing need to understand the real reasons why people move into extremist environments. It is thus vital to encourage local and regional research in order to improve our understanding of the drivers of radicalization to violence. It is also important to share best practices and information in this area.

We agreed to continue our efforts in the time until the international CVE research conference, which is being planned in the margins of the CVE leaders' summit in September in New York, and to support the global CVE network that will be launched in September

3. The gender dimension of violent extremism

Ideology and actions of extremist groups are deeply gendered, and relate and appeal to both young men and young women. Furthermore, women and women's rights are specifically targeted by extremist violence. We must therefore include a gender perspective in our policies and programming in order to prevent violent extremism effectively.

We recommend funding for organizations working on CVE actions in a gender perspective, and to projects that empower women to play a preventive role in families and in the society. They can become a force for positive engagement against radicalization. We will promote further research and innovative initiatives on the gender dimensions of CVE. We encourage networking between women's organizations in order to enhance their substantive engagement in the CVE policy debate. As is true in so many aspects of the effort to counter violent extremism, the local and global level must be linked.

4. Disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration

There is a need for a comprehensive approach in rehabilitation, reintegration and disengagement programs. The processes of disengagement and de-radicalisation, and the factors that cause individuals to leave violent extremism behind must be examined. That must include research on individual factors for disengagement and reintegration.

The use of online tools and platforms should be used to amplify credible voices to counter and challenge violent extremist narratives.

5. Weakening the appeal of violent extremists

The Internet can function as an arena for promoting extremist ideologies and hate speech, as well as radicalization, recruitment and mobilization. There is a need for intensified efforts to combat radicalization, recruitment and mobilization through the Internet, as well as active use of the Internet in preventive work.

We need to enhance our understanding of the appeal of extremist propaganda in order to respond to it. That understanding should be used in our response.

Countries and industry should invest in building those partnerships and should draw on support such as that offered by the Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team.

6. Global cooperation to counter violent extremism

Following this meeting in Oslo, we will pursue our goal of preventing violent extremism together. Our leaders will meet again on this topic in New York in conjunction with the General Assembly. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will remain the common platform for our efforts. We highlighted the complex nature of violent extremism, affecting all four pillars, which the United Nations bases its work on. We look forward to the United Nations Secretary General's Action Plan on preventing violent extremism, to be presented in the fall.

We encourage support to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and The Hedayah Center, which both are inspired by the Global Counter Terrorism Forum.

Conclusion

We are determined to achieve tangible results on these six dimensions and demonstrate concrete progress on these at the leaders' summit in New York this fall.

As the challenges related to radicalization and violent extremism are global, it is the responsibility of each and every country to take concrete steps against it. Although the responsibility rests with the individual state, international cooperation is of paramount importance. Informal networks across borders, between youth, organisations and municipalities are indispensable. So is our cooperation in the United Nations as well as in other international organisations.

And finally – let us not forget the powerful messages from the youth voices of yesterday, and their engagement.