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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
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COUNTERING THE NARRATIVES AND IDEOLOGIES OF TERRORISM

Statement by H.E. Ms Gillian Bird
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Australia to the United Nations

(As delivered)

Mr President

Terrorism is one of the critical challenges of our time. As terrorist groups such as ISIL have expanded their reach and influence, it is evident that many find their narratives and tactics appealing. Countering that appeal and preventing the spread of violent ideology is essential to their long-term defeat and is a priority for Australia.

Australia recognises that pathways to radicalisation are complex and that there is no single pathway. Each individual experiences unique drivers to violent extremism. This challenge means that there is no single solution to combatting violent extremism.

Australia's efforts to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism aim to reduce the reach and appeal of extremist narratives. We do this by limiting access to their extremist propaganda online through content removal and digital advertising; undermining the appeal of extremist messages through community-led counter-narrative activity and; hardening the audience by increasing the digital resilience of youth so that they are less likely to take propaganda at face value.

Governments cannot act alone in meeting this challenge, and Australia collaborates with civil society, industry and creative industries to compete with the 'pace and scale' of violent extremist content dissemination.

Mr President

Australia is committed to a regional and international approach to meet the shared challenges of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Regionally, we are working through programs aimed at marginalising the appeal of extremist thinking and messages and building community resilience to extremist messages by promoting values such as democracy, human rights and tolerance. In line with Australia's national CVE strategy we strongly support the role of civil society organisations in countering violent extremist ideology.

In 2015, Australia hosted a Regional Summit on Countering Violent Extremism. We are pursuing implementation of outcomes from the Summit which include connecting civil society, improving regional partnerships between government and non-government actors, building technical capability of grassroots organisations and developing counter-messaging resources tailored to the South East Asia region.

Working closely with partners and allies in the Anti- ISIL Coalition and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, Australia supports strategies dedicated to disrupting, degrading and destroying the toxic narratives of ISIL and other terrorist groups and to challenging their ideology. And we are seeing results.

Mr President

As the threat from terrorism and violent extremism has evolved, so must the response. The global nature of terrorist narratives, and the need to counter them globally, underlines the critical role of the United Nations.

Australia strongly supports the Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism as a practical approach to preventing violent extremism. There is a pressing need for the international community to come together to combat the threat of terrorism.

The review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June presents Member States the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the strategy and to continue to support efforts to counter terrorism and terrorist ideology. And Australia is committed to doing its part.

Thank you.

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