Draft Follow-On Action Agenda

The White House Summit
to Counter Violent Extremism
Ministerial Meeting

Thursday, February 19, 2015
U.S. Department of State

Enclosed is a **draft** of an action agenda that seeks to build on the themes of the Summit. Participants are encouraged to provide comments on the text and indicate any commitments or pledges related to the implementation of these or other agenda items raised during the Summit. In addition, delegations are encouraged to indicate in which of the workstreams captured in this draft agenda they are interested in participating. Further, participants should indicate whether they are interested in serving as one of the co-convenors or co-leaders of one or more of these workstreams. Please provide responses to the above to CVESummit@state.gov by March 13.

Draft Action Agenda Item 1: Promoting Local Research and Information-Sharing on the Drivers of Violent Extremism

Over the past decade, much of the research on terrorist radicalization and recruitment has focused on individuals or societies, leaving gaps in our ability to fully understand what drives violent extremism in specific, localized contexts. There is growing recognition that the factors contributing to particular communities' vulnerability or resilience to violent extremism are contextual, and that efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism will be more effective if tailored to those specific factors. Deeper research is therefore needed to understand the factors that enable or prevent the spread of violent extremism at the subnational or even community level. Greater insight into these drivers will allow us to design more effective interventions.

Governments and the broader international community can a) do more to encourage and carry out research that will help us understand what makes communities vulnerable to violent extremism; b) identify locations or communities at the sub-national level and within cities that are at risk of radicalization to violence; c) study the factors that drive violent extremism within these specific communities, along with the potential impact of possible responses; d) share this information broadly with policymakers, practitioners, and the communities themselves; and e) develop better tools with which to monitor and evaluate the results and impact of progress aimed at addressing violent extremism.

This is not simply a matter of creating research capacity from scratch, but about better utilizing, supporting, and connecting the existing knowledge base, particularly among local experts; expanding the pool of local CVE academics and researchers; encouraging inter-disciplinary approaches involving teams of economists, political scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, and others; and ensuring that findings are widely shared.

Hedayah is taking the first step towards this goal through its research unit, which can serve as a resource hub for practitioners and experts. It recently held a major CVE research conference, and it plans to build in-house capacity to conduct long-term research to complement governmental and academic efforts. Through its non-resident fellowship program, *Hedayah* is also starting to develop a small field-based network of local researchers.

To enhance these research efforts, which will also facilitate more effective and targeted interventions against violent extremism, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Encouraging relevant academic and research institutions to focus more attention on studying the drivers of violent extremism and facilitating the wide sharing of this research.
- Mentoring local researchers and providing financial and/or in-kind support for their efforts.
- Supporting small, multi-disciplinary networks of in-country researchers – from local universities, civil society organizations, survey firms, and government agencies – to identify and address gaps in our understanding of the drivers of violent extremism within communities at risk.
- Working with and through *Hedayah*'s nascent research network to identify and address research gaps; catalyze local efforts to identify critical CVE needs; and mobilize the necessary expertise and resources to address such needs.
- Supporting the creation of an online platform for researchers working on drivers of radicalization, which could be used to compile a set of best practices on this extremely localized research, and compile appropriate data-sets on those who have been radicalized to violence, with a central library or website to make these resources available to communities, governments, think tanks, and academic institutions.
- Sponsoring multi-disciplinary research on community-level support of, or resilience to, violent extremism, to enhance our understanding of why some communities resort to violence when faced with pressures to do so; how and why some communities choose to reject violent extremism; what types of targeted interventions could boost such resiliencies; and where opportunities exist to prevent radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.

Draft Action Agenda Item 2: Civil Society: The Role of Women and Youth in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Women's role in propagating and countering violent extremism is understudied, though a vital element to understand in order to effectively address violent extremism. We know that women are not just victims. We know—and must recognize—that women are partners in prevention and response, as well as agents of change. They can play a role in detecting early signs of radicalization and in staving it off. They can help delegitimize narratives.

Unemployed, marginalized, and sometimes impoverished young women and men are more vulnerable to being recruited and re-recruited into violent extremism. Youth radicalization and recruitment is often based on social bonding, rather than ideology. Youth without the opportunity to discuss or constructively act on their needs for identity or a sense of alienation within their homes, communities or countries may turn to violent extremist groups to find recognition, fellowship and identity. Youth may join these groups because they offer economic incentives. Providing youth with opportunities to build positive identities through community engagement, civic participation and livelihoods can provide alternatives to violent extremism.

Building off of complementary initiatives, such as the UN's current leadership in bridging the preventing and countering violent extremism and the Women, Peace, and Security agendas, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Supporting further analytic research and domestic programming on women's roles in preventing and countering violent extremism, including through partnerships between and among government, local or regional civil society and educational institutions, and the private sector.
- Working with stakeholders, including through the UN, Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, *Hedayah,* and the Global Counterterrorism Forum, to continue to develop good practices on integrating women and gender into responses to violent extremism and to develop good practices on the role of youth in addressing violent extremism.
- Designing and implementing programs to engage youth in civic education, community service and local peace building initiatives to help lessen susceptibility to recruitment and radicalization to violence.
- Developing or expanding economic empowerment and livelihood initiatives for youth susceptible to radicalization to violence; such efforts could include mentoring, access to capital, employment search support, and job-matching.

- Convening government officials with women and youth leaders in policy dialogues to develop and execute inclusive strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism among susceptible populations.
- Identifying and sharing successful models of inclusive strategies.
- Amplifying efforts of the many creative young people who are pushing back against extremist ideologies that are taking hold in their communities.
- Building cross- and/or sub-regional networks of youth leaders who are working in their own community to prevent and counter violent extremism; the network would facilitate the sharing of relevant experiences and best practices among young people, and support efforts to expand their impact in the CVE space.

Draft Action Agenda Item 3: Strengthening Community-Police and Community-Security Force Relations as Ingredients for Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism

Security forces—including police and militaries—have the responsibility to provide security and protect the human rights of civilians. When security forces either fail to provide adequate services and protection, or actively violate these rights, they may create or fuel existing grievances, which could be exploited by violent extremists—whether through recruitment and radicalization or through creating the need for civilians to seek protection, justice, and dignity elsewhere. Grievances arising from perceived violations of human rights by security forces may be a driver of radicalization and recruitment. In fact, the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (September 2006) includes the lack of rule of law and violations of human rights as two of the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. A lack of accountability for such abuses, a lack of access to justice for victims, a lack of due process for the accused, and corruption within the security sector also fuel community grievances that may become a factor pushing individuals towards violent extremism.

Thus, ensuring that security forces respect human rights, build strong relations with the communities they protect, and when needed, reorient their organizations to support community-oriented policing, may contribute to prevent the spread of violent extremism, thereby reducing the terrorist threat.

Building on relevant existing efforts, including those of the UN, Global Counterterrorism Forum, and relevant regional organizations, the international community should, *inter alia*, consider:

- Providing technical assistance to governments to improve institutional safeguards for prevention, independent oversight, and accountability for abuses by police and other security forces, including those engaged in counterterrorism activities.
- Ensuring that relevant capacity building efforts balance enhanced prosecutorial and investigative capacity with improvements in access to justice and respect for the rights of the accused.
- Ensuring that communities have a secure, trusted, and accessible mechanism for reporting on the conduct and misconduct of security forces.
- Facilitating open, regular and inclusive dialogue between at-risk communities and security forces to constructively address grievances and

build trust. Platforms for dialogue might include regular community meetings, dialogue with key agents of change in communities, etc., and should include all sectors of society, women and youth.

- Convening a multinational, multi-stakeholder, technical working group comprised of independent experts to systematically explore the relationship between security force-community relations and the prevalence of violent extremism. Through an examination of common practice, empirical research, case study, and through dialogue, the technical group would provide a set of principles and recommendations for practitioners, public officials, civil society, and the development community. This working group would meet independently within the next three months and, resources permitting, on the margins of selected follow-on regional CVE summits and other relevant events prior to UNGA 2015.
- Tailoring police and security force trainings to emphasize and streamline respect for human rights and positive community engagement as part of a standard of professionalization, and undertaking monitoring and evaluation of these trainings to evaluate effectiveness.
- Developing internal investigation units that review enforcement activity and ensure it is in line with established law and procedures, and proper use of force.
- Holding accountable security force officials that are found to be responsible for human rights abuses.
- Building law enforcement skills to engage, build relationships, and work with communities at risk of radicalization.
- Supporting law enforcement collaboration with religious, social service, education and youth ministries on CVE pilot initiatives and programming.
- Enhancing law enforcement's ability to counter violent extremist messaging online and in traditional media.

Draft Action Agenda Item 4: Promoting the Counter-narrative and Weakening the Legitimacy of Violent Extremist Messaging

The international community has recognized that violent extremist recruiters are combining new information technologies and platforms with traditional outreach to connect across borders enabling them to reach younger, more susceptible segments of society. Identifying and scaling up effective strategies and techniques to counter violent extremist messaging and narratives is therefore an essential element of a comprehensive strategy for addressing the violent extremist challenge.

Current counter-narrative messaging approaches and activities should be expanded and improved upon to ensure they are effective in dealing with the evolving violent extremism in areas of conflict and within susceptible populations. Greater emphasis should be put on community-level interventions that are responsive to the needs of specific vulnerable populations and the identification of new, credible and authentic partners in governments, the private sector, and civil society. Lessons learned should be shared so that scarce resources are effectively prioritized and results are measured. To further advance and sharpen our response to this critical challenge, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Supporting credible, diverse local allies and potential partners to develop and disseminate their own counter-messages and alternative narratives, or to amplify existing ones; there are millions around the world who espouse tolerance, pluralism, and peaceful conflict resolution, and who could play roles in pushing back on violent extremist narratives.
- Institutionalizing and scaling up Internet and web-based engagement efforts to help credible religious, community, youth, and women leaders expose the negative aspects of terrorist organizations among key demographics that communicate and network in online spaces; these efforts could be linked with traditional media CVE efforts to create cross-platform campaigns.
- Expanding digital media strategies to more quickly and better target counter violent extremist narratives through SMS or text-messaging to interactively engage with vulnerable youth who communicate through mobile networks.
- Engaging proactively with educational institutions that offer at risk-youth opportunities and provide critical-thinking skills and trainings as alternatives to violent extremist and radicalism.
- Encouraging local and regional media, civil society, and private sector partners to engage women and youth in devising effective counter-narrative campaigns, including through social media, radio and billboards.

- Engaging the entertainment industry to discuss how to support community efforts to counter the narratives of violent extremist groups and develop and distribute their own, positive narratives.
- Engaging philanthropic foundations to identify how they could fund community-led initiatives that build resilience, provide opportunities, and counter terrorist narratives.
- Bringing together technology companies and related industry groups to address their role in addressing terrorists' use of digital media and social networking platforms.
- Working through the Global Counterterrorism Forum's CVE Working Group and other relevant multilateral platforms to develop and disseminate CVE communications good practices.
- Expanding multilateral efforts to counter violent extremist messaging through better coordination among governments, civil society leaders, and private sector partners to promote joint messaging projects and programming.

Draft Action Agenda 5: Promoting Educational Approaches to Build Resilience to Violent Extremism

Educators exert considerable influence by shaping the views and skills of the next generation, as well as helping to set society's broader norms. UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (September 2014), urges governments to adopt comprehensive approaches to countering violent extremism – including "empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders" and highlighting "the role education can play in countering terrorist narratives." Education and youth-based approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism draw on established areas of education – such as civic education, critical thinking and life skills – and adapt these practices for these objectives.

In recent years, a number of countries have implemented education-based reforms to improve overall pedagogy and learning, as well as the specific goal of building children and youth's resilience to violent-extremist ideas and ideology.

Multilaterally, we also have made some progress. The Global Counterterrorism Forum's (GCTF) Ankara Memorandum, for example, underscores the importance of developing a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the violent extremist challenge. It emphasizes the need to work across sectors and highlights the important role of education in this effort. The GCTF's Abu Dhabi Memorandum, approved at the September 2014 GCTF Ministerial meeting, captures specific good practices on the role of education in CVE. At the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly, the OIC-sponsored resolution on combating intolerance, also known as Resolution 16/18, calls for, among other things, the creation of collaborative networks for constructive action on education and conflict prevention.

Building on these and other efforts, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Providing technical assistance to governments interested in developing education and youth-based strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism.
- Strengthening government and civil society cognizance of the deleterious effects of intolerance and the benefits of inter-communal collaboration and mutual support on countering violent extremism and conflict prevention.

- Designing and implementing pilot programs drawing on civic education, critical thinking, life skills and other education approaches to prevent and counter violent extremism.
- Training youth to serve as positive mentors to their peer school groups in geographic areas of radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism.
- Supporting teachers, victims/survivors of terrorism and former violent extremists to collaborate on radicalization awareness and prevention efforts in schools, youth groups and similar settings; this could include sharing information to better understand how violent extremists radicalize and recruit.
- Working with universities to develop curricula and implement training programs for teachers, religious leaders and youth leaders in approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism; universities can serve as institutions where such efforts can be sustained over time.
- Supporting efforts to highlight scholarship and education as clear alternatives to violent extremist ideas and narratives.
- Working with families and social networks to promote respect for the larger community as an enabler of societal harmony and stability.
- Developing and providing educational institutions with curricula that promotes pluralism and counters sectarianism.
- Gathering information on the different ongoing and planned programs and initiatives aimed at empowering and amplifying nonviolent religious voices and making this information more widely accessible.

Draft Action Agenda Item 6: Preventing Radicalization in Prisons and Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Violent Extremists

UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (September 2014), urges governments to adopt comprehensive approaches to countering violent extremism – encouraging them to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF), where possible and appropriate. With many of the thousands of FTFs participating in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria potentially returning home in the years ahead, this charge to broaden our collective efforts beyond military, law enforcement, and intelligence approaches is timely. Of note are also fighters who are disengaging from conflicts in East and West Africa and the Sahel; their successful reintegration into their communities is vital to enhancing peace and security in the region. There is also growing recognition of the need for rehabilitation and reintegration programs for incarcerated violent extremists, many of whom will be released in the next several years. It is also well understood that many prisons serve as hotbeds of radicalization – and that steps need to be taken to address this phenomenon.

The international community has made some progress on these issues in recent years. Multilateral bodies, in particular the UN Inter-Regional Crime Research Institute (UNICRI), the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and, increasingly, governments and civil society are engaged. Communities and governments are testing innovative approaches, including "diversion" programming that intervenes with at-risk individuals before they commit potentially criminal acts. Recognizing that it will not be feasible to prosecute every returning FTF, governments are also developing capabilities to reintegrate FTF into broader society, drawing in part from good practices articulated in GCTF's [Rome Memorandum](). In mid-2014, Australia and Indonesia launched the GCTF Detention and Reintegration Working Group, while the UN and GCTF jointly launched a work-stream at Rome in late 2014 to explore, develop and test new approaches to reintegration. Lessons may potentially also be drawn from experiences with post-conflict disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs.

There are a number of concrete other steps that the international community and governments should consider, *inter alia*:
- Developing domestic programs designed to facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremists, including both in the prison and FTF settings – in accordance with UNSCR 2178 – and sharing lessons learned.

- Sponsoring regional workshops to explore reintegration good practices, drawing on the resources of the full range of governments, as well as civil society, and mapping a way forward.
- Drawing upon successful approaches to raising awareness of the need to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders in order to sensitize stakeholders to their potentially key roles in reintegrating FTFs, perhaps in coordination with *Hedayah* and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule Law.
- Supporting the development of a platform, to be hosted by the UN or an NGO, that would connect disillusioned FTFs willings to share their stories with communities vulnerable to violent extremist messages.
- Providing technical assistance to governments expressing a desire to develop effective reintegration programming.
- Sponsoring, whether domestically or as part of security assistance to another state, programs designed to help FTFs exit terrorist groups.
- Contributing good practices and lessons learned developed at the national level, as well as relevant research, to regional and global workshops.

Draft Action Agenda Item 7: Identifying Political and Economic Opportunities for Communities Vulnerable to Radicalization and Recruitment to Violent Extremism

Political and economic factors can leave certain communities or individuals susceptible to radicalization and recruitment by violent extremists, who in turn often leverage these factors in their efforts. When such groups are economically or socially marginalized, suffer from poor governance, or are denied basic services, the resulting grievances may leave them susceptible to radicalizing and recruiting narratives.

Violent extremist organizations (VEOs) can move in to fill the void—providing services, governance, and, importantly, a sense of belonging, dignity, and identity. VEOs use economic incentives to help recruit unemployed or underemployed individuals from poor and marginalized areas. In addition, VEOs often offer the promise of a political voice to those individuals who feel excluded from formal political processes or face structural discrimination. Yet, poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, and discrimination alone do not necessarily lead to recruitment and radicalization. Other push and pull factors often accompany political and economic drivers to make communities more vulnerable to radical narratives.

Economic and political drivers are context-specific, and vary within and among communities, countries and regions. These drivers can include: limited employment opportunities, lack of access to educational systems, or lack of representation in government. Political and economic drivers may be issues amenable to local solutions, such as increasing input into local decision-making, or expanding the job market, or they may require a more systemic solution, like responding to rampant corruption, ineffective market regulation, lack of government capacity, or a lack of social protection and insufficient educational standards.

To provide appropriate political and economic opportunities that can prevent or counter violent extremism in vulnerable communities, a focused approach must be used. This requires leveraging available research, current best practices, and on-the-ground knowledge to feed into the design of appropriate programming. In addition, pilot interventions can be used to test assumptions and learn lessons on effective opportunities to stem recruitment and radicalization.

With the above in mind, the international community should consider, *inter alia*:

- Providing financial or in-kind contributions to mechanisms like the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) that support indigenous civil society organizations implementing locally-relevant political and economic activities designed to address the drivers of radicalization and recruitment.
- Supporting partners working with at-risk communities to develop approaches to mitigate political and economic drivers tailored to their communities.
- Encouraging partners to consider implications of political and economic policies on the violent extremist phenomena and explore ways to mitigate their negative implications in ways that address these drivers. This might include revising discriminatory laws, policies and practices in order to increase political, economic, and social inclusion of marginalized groups at risk of radicalization and recruitment
- Encouraging partners to focus on equitable service provision.
- Conducting and sharing evaluations of political and economic interventions to refine approaches to ensure these drivers are being addressed.
- Piloting technical and vocational education and training, job matching, and other jobs programming and initiatives that specifically target populations at risk of radicalization and recruitment, including strategies for engaging local business communities, for example in easing school-to-work transitions.
- Encouraging governments to offer skills training and job opportunities to disengaged or disengaging fighters and former violent extremists released from prisons who are a vulnerable population.

Draft Action Agenda Item 8: Development Assistance and Stabilization Efforts to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism

International development donors provide considerable assistance to countries suffering from or witnessing the emergence of violent extremism. This assistance is often in sectors broadly relevant to preventing or countering violent extremism, but is not typically directed to mitigating the specific drivers of or focusing on specific populations or communities susceptible to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism.

At the same time, development's role in supporting international peace and security is widely recognized. The World Bank's World Development Report 2011 emphasized the critical importance of development – supporting access to justice, economic opportunity, service delivery and domestic revenue generation – in consolidating peace and enabling recovery. Fragile, poorly governed, and conflict-affected environments generate conditions favorable to radicalization to violence. There is a growing overlap between conflict- and violent extremism-affected countries. Importantly, many development-based tools are relevant to analyzing and addressing multiple drivers of violent extremism. Yet, while development agencies support conflict prevention and mitigation, peacebuilding, and resilience that ameliorate these broad conditions, their efforts have been insufficient in addressing specific drivers of violent extremism, particularly in demographic and geographic areas affected by violent extremism. Engaging development agencies, better understanding their roles in CVE, and working with them in focused ways is critical to effectively addressing the phenomenon. This is evidenced in the complementarities between international development principles and approaches and international CVE good practices, including those developed by the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF).

Thus, the international community should consider *inter alia*:

- Adapting counterterrorism and broader national security strategies to incorporate development-based, prevention-oriented approaches strategically focused on addressing the drivers of violent extremism.
- Encouraging international development entities within donor governments to contribute to or otherwise support GCERF (the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund in Geneva), *Hedayah* and other multilateral efforts focused on preventing and countering violent extremism.

- Including explicit language in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda acknowledging the linkage between tackling the local drivers of violence and preventing and countering violent extremism.
- Organizing technical exchanges among the international development entities of donor governments, as well as multilateral development organizations, interested in tailoring specific development assistance initiatives and programs to address the drivers of violent extremism.
- Organizing international development and CVE workshops within an existing multilateral forum, such as the GCTF's CVE Working Group or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee, to elaborate an action plan under which interested international development entities could tailor existing - and design new development assistance initiatives and programs aimed at addressing violent extremism.
- Creating a longer-term international development work-stream within the GCTF's CVE Working Group which would include donor governments and recipients of international development assistance. It would also include relevant development-based NGOs in its activities.