



FRAMING DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS FOR
**THE PREVENTION OF
VIOLENT EXTREMISM**
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High-Level Experts Meeting on Framing Development Solutions for the Prevention of Violent Extremism

Dushanbe, Tajikistan (13-15 June 2016)

Brief Summary of the Meeting

“The High-Level Experts Meeting on Framing Development Solutions for the Prevention of Violent Extremism” took place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on the 13-15 June, 2016. The meeting, co-organized by the Istanbul Regional Hub and the UNDP’s Tajikistan Country Office, was designed to advance understanding of, and effective preventative measures against, radicalization that leads to violent extremism in Central Asia and the broader region, with a particular emphasis on youth and gender.

Opened by UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau of Europe and CIS, Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, UN Resident Coordinator in Tajikistan, Mr. Alexander Zuev, as well as Tajikistan’s Foreign Minister Mr. Aslov Muhridinovich, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Mr. Peter Burian, and UN SRSG and head of the UNRCCA office, Mr. Petko Draganov, the meeting was attended by a diverse group of 120 senior government officials, civil society representatives, academics, religious leaders, diplomats and UN colleagues from across Central Asia as well as from the Arab States and the Western Balkans.

Rather than concentrating solely on the theoretical underpinnings of radicalization that leads to violent extremism, the Dushanbe meeting focused on finding practical, context-specific solutions that balance human rights, development and security considerations. Further the meeting sought to balance the necessity of development responses and security responses existing side-by-side and in a complimentary manner – something that is very often not achieved.

To accomplish these objectives, the meeting:

- Developed a common understanding of radicalization in Central Asia, identifying the groups that are vulnerable to it, and its impact on development objectives;
- Examined current approaches to the prevention of violent extremism discussing about their successes, failures and gaps;

- Identified entry points and opportunities for new/adjusted and rights-based development programming at all levels, which can effectively contribute to addressing the conditions conducive to radicalization;
- Developed further understanding of the gender differentiated roles played by men and women in extremist organizations, and the necessity for a gender-sensitive approach to preventing violent extremism; and
- Focused on the vulnerability of young adults, both men and women, and the need for engagement and opening of economic and social opportunities and voice.

While the primacy of socio-economic conditions, especially for countries in transition, was widely acknowledged, the meetings' conclusions also recognized that identity politics and perceptions of social injustice are also at the heart of the problems we are seeing across the region and across the globe. It was evident throughout the meeting, and especially when formulating the recommendations, that much of what needs to be done to address the conditions conducive to violent extremism already exists as part of UNDP's development portfolio.

As a working meeting, the experts and participants, through the course of diverse sessions and working groups, developed and endorsed a set of 26 clear action-orientated recommendations around research, programming and coordination needs and responses. The following Summary of Recommendations is a reflection of the wide range of knowledge and experience shared throughout the meeting.

Summary of Recommendations

The following recommendations evolved out of the consensus reached by the participants of the Dushanbe meeting; serving both as a record of the meeting and as broad-based commitment for UNDP and partner led work thereafter.

National

1. Develop national Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) policies (including national action plans, donor coordination fora and programming) informed by human rights considerations and contextualized by international best practice;
2. Align national strategies, plans and efforts with the UNSG's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as well as subordinate regional documents;
3. Support national measures and partners that promote political inclusivity; encourage extension of social services to marginalized or at-risk groups and returning migrant populations;
4. Encourage the convening of diverse actors and the appointing of focal points by governments to ensure coherence and complementarity of all PVE work; governments should be also encouraged to intensify their cooperation on PVE issues on a regional level;
5. Ensure, among all partners, that young people are part of the conversations determining their futures – be they political, social or economic;
6. Support, by all partners, research on context-specific drivers of radicalization and recruitment pathways to violent extremism on national and sub-national levels;
7. Address the frustration associated with a lack of economic opportunity or the prospect of a decent future amongst the youth with targeted measures to reach at-risk youth through employment programmes that confer dignity and respect;
8. Prioritize programming which has a direct impact on grievances and frustrations that have been demonstrated to lead to radicalization and violent extremism in specific national and sub-national contexts;
9. Establish and strengthen programmes that measurably increase the levels of social cohesion and nurture trust between individuals, communities and the state;
10. Support civil society organizations, including those reflecting the interests of religious, women and youth communities, to create coalitions for multi-sectorial PVE responses together with governments; recognize the importance of intra-faith and inter-faith dialogue as religion is part of the everyday life of most people and can send a positive or negative powerful message;
11. Ensure the “do no harm” approach informs all aspects of PVE work; further, ensure communities affected by VE are not stigmatized;

UNDP and International Organizations

12. Map the contribution of international organizations to operationalizing the UNSG's Plan of Action at the regional level, including information and evidence on what type of development work is effective and which programmatic interventions work (and which don't);
13. Review current development and crisis response programmes that are not PVE-focused but might have elements related to PVE work, especially in such areas as governance and rule of law, economic development, job creation and livelihood support;
14. Ensure experience-sharing on programme design and implementation across UNDP offices in the ECIS region and facilitate programme-related learning across different UNDP regional hubs and across different institutions and organizations working on PVE issues;
15. Support coordination of UNDP's PVE programming with UN sister agencies whose mandate might be relevant for PVE work (UNICEF, UNODC, IOM, UNW, FAO, OHCHR); coordinate prevention efforts with all partners by sharing, widely and systematically, ongoing interventions and lessons-learnt;
16. Complement security sector/penal reform responses with inclusive development initiatives that are aligned with international human rights standards;
17. Support research necessary to understand, for all partners, how vulnerable people are targeted by propaganda messaging so that effective outreach and support (rather than counter-narratives) can be developed;
18. Generate research-based measures and indicators by UNDP that help evaluate the impact of PVE-related programming (social cohesion measures, vulnerability indicators, etc.);
19. Create at the regional level, a research/analytical platform for sharing knowledge and research on PVE across the ECIS;
20. Provide a peer-to-peer exchange for civil society and research institutes working on PVE;
21. Establish the creation of rosters of experts on religious issues, psycho-social support and PVE programme development at the regional level.