

**Remarks Delivered by Ambassador Lukens
at the opening of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum's
Sahel Capacity-Building Working Group
Border Security Workshop**

**March 26, 2014
Radisson Blu Hotel, Dakar**

(As prepared)

Thank you, [name of GOS official], for launching the important work we will do together over the next two days. I would also like to thank the Government of Senegal for hosting this event. The United States and the other members of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum greatly value Senegal's partnership.

Many of you traveled from far and wide to participate in this meeting. Together with our Senegalese hosts, I can say that we are pleased to see you in Dakar. There are also quite a few distinguished individuals with us today, including senior government officials and ambassadors. To them and to everyone else, let me just say, "Welcome, friends."

The GCTF was founded in 2011. Since then, the member countries have worked on an impressive range of practical activities. We have also seen a large number of Forum members step forward to lead these activities. Many non-member countries have contributed to and benefited from the GCTF's work so far. This highlights the importance of the Forum's work to a diverse community. This community includes governments, the United Nations, regional bodies, and non-governmental organizations.

Evidence of the GCTF's impact abounds. The GCTF has developed practical guidance on a range of civilian counter-terrorism issues. Dozens of experts from around the world contributed to the development of these framework documents. The framework gives practical guidance to practitioners and policy makers. These are the people who strive to make counter-terrorism practices more effective and consistent with our common commitment to protect human rights. Through workshops sponsored by the GCTF and others, scores of practitioners and experts benefit from the information and skills gained.

The GCTF framework documents are available globally to any interested state. They are now a major factor in building civilian counter-terrorism capacity. In this way, the GCTF helps sustain political will in support of good practices. This helps governments to make good use of technical assistance programs implemented by individual GCTF members, the UN, regional bodies, and non-governmental organizations.

Today and tomorrow, each of you will have the opportunity to mobilize new resources to support implementation of the GCTF framework. Of special importance is regional collaboration on principles and practices. These underpin standard operating procedures for "hot pursuit," the focus of this workshop.

Over these two days, we should concentrate on bringing strategic coherence to our bilateral and multilateral engagements. We need to ensure these engagements are compatible with each other. They should also address the needs of participating countries. Many of us face shrinking budgets for civilian-focused counter-terrorism work. The platform the GCTF has built helps all of us make the best use of the resources available to us.

The Forum has an ambitious agenda. The pace of its activities is brisk. I hope to see more activities organized in collaboration with international and regional organizations. This is especially helpful when we are committed to the GCTF's principles of inclusion and informality and prepared to set aside divisive issues in order to develop practical responses to terrorism and violent extremism.

As the Forum broadens and deepens its partnerships, we should continue to acknowledge the vital role that the UN plays in the struggle against terrorism. The role of the UN in this work highlights the multi-lateral nature of the counter-terrorism architecture we are building together. This will bring security dividends for all of us in future.

I will close my remarks now by saying that Secretary of State Kerry and President Obama greatly appreciate your continued commitment to the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and its strategic vision. As we approach the Forum's third anniversary, let us work to ensure that the foundations we are building for common efforts remain strong.