

**IMPLEMENTING THE UN GLOBAL COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY
IN EAST AFRICA
15-16 JANUARY 2008
HOTEL PHOENIX, COPENHAGEN**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

1. On 15 and 16 January 2008 in Copenhagen, the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (Center) hosted a workshop financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark on implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (Strategy) in East Africa. Experts from the UN, regional and sub-regional bodies, and academic and research institutions participated in discussions held under the Chatham House Rule.
2. The workshop was intended as a brainstorming session to help plan for a meeting the Center will be co-hosting in March 2008 in Addis Ababa with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's Capacity Building Programme against Terrorism (ICPAT). It is part of a Danish-funded Center project focused on implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in East Africa. The Center will be publishing a project report in May, which will include an analysis of the Strategy-related counterterrorism efforts of stakeholders in the sub-region, identify gaps in those efforts, and enumerate a series of recommendations directed at different parts of the UN, regional and sub-regional bodies, national governments and civil society. The recommendations will identify ways in which those different stakeholders can contribute to implementation of the Strategy in East Africa.
3. Gathering experts from and on East Africa, the workshop looked at ways to enhance the sub-region's counterterrorism efforts through the lens of the Strategy, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2006. With all 192 member states of the UN calling for a holistic, inclusive, and non-military-focused approach to counterterrorism, the Strategy represents a political milestone for the global body and the fight against terrorism. By elaborating a broad range of counterterrorism measures, underpinned by the commitment to uphold the rule of law and human rights, the Strategy reinforces what many terrorism experts have long felt, namely that an effective counterterrorism strategy must combine preventive measures with efforts to address both real and perceived grievances and underlying social, economic, and political conditions.
4. The participants considered how the Strategy may be used as a guide for governments, the UN, regional and sub-regional bodies, and civil society to contribute more effectively to addressing the terrorist threat and as a basis for improving the overall coordination and cooperation in the sub-region in combating terrorism.
5. The following summary of the highlights and themes identified during the meeting is not an official or complete record of the proceedings and does not necessarily reflect the views of the participants.

I. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force

6. The participants welcomed the General Assembly's unanimous adoption of the UN Strategy, recognizing its significance as an instrument of consensus on an issue which has historically been difficult to achieve at the global level. According to some participants, its importance also lies in the fact that for the first time member states agreed that conditions exist which can be conducive to the spread of terrorism and that those conditions must be addressed in order to combat terrorism effectively. The view was expressed, however, that more empirical research is needed before one can conclude that there is any direct correlation between any of these conditions and the commission of terrorist acts.

7. The Strategy includes both the "hard" (i.e., law enforcement and other security-related measures that have been the focus of much of the UN's pre-Strategy effort) and "soft" (conditions conducive such as poor governance, unresolved political conflicts, poverty and political, social and economic marginalization) side of counterterrorism. Thus, it was noted that this offers states and other stakeholders in the sub-region a framework through which to promote a more holistic response to the threat than the military and security-focused-one that, according to some participants, has been the dominant approach in East Africa to date and which may have helped to exacerbate rather than diminish the threat.

8. It was acknowledged that there was a lack of awareness of the Strategy among stakeholders in East Africa. It was further pointed out that in some countries, those government agencies where most national counterterrorism practitioners work (i.e., outside of the ministry of foreign affairs), were unaware of the Strategy's adoption, let alone its potential political and operational significance. The point was also made that one should not assume that even all relevant parts of the ministries of foreign affairs were aware of the Strategy.

9. Participants recognized that given the breadth of the Strategy and the somewhat vague nature of its individual provisions, there was a risk that stakeholders might view it as too broad and unwieldy to have any real value to them. Considerable efforts are thus needed not only to raise awareness of the Strategy among those that will need to become engaged in promoting its implementation such as national governments, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society, but to identify concrete steps that these stakeholders might wish to take to implement the framework. The UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (Task Force), it was asserted, can play an important role in both of these areas.

10. By bringing together representatives from 24 UN system entities, the creation of the Task Force is a step forward towards improving the coordination and cooperation among these entities, which has traditionally been lacking and has limited the coherence of UN counterterrorism activities over the years. However, some questioned whether, even with the Task Force in place, there was the level of information sharing and other forms of cooperation among the different UN entities needed. The view was expressed that such cooperation is still personality-driven and there remains a tendency of some entities to rigidly interpret often narrow mandates, which limits rather than allows for cooperation.

11. It was noted that the working groups the Task Force established to advance activities to help member states implement priority areas of the Strategy have succeeded in raising the necessary funds (all from European countries and the United States) to allow the groups to begin work on discrete projects. Participants encouraged the Task Force to enhance its efforts to reach out to states, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society, cautioning it from becoming too

insular in its approach. The Task Force, it was suggested, needs to raise awareness about the Strategy and explain to a wide swath of stakeholders how it is going to work with them to implement the framework. To this end, the Task Force was encouraged to consider:

- a) identifying country-specific projects aimed at promoting Strategy implementation, which donors could then fund;
- b) promoting partnerships between the Task Force and/or its component parts and regional and sub-regional bodies and civil society; and
- c) articulating clearly what roles these stakeholders might play in contributing to implementation, outlining a division of labor among the different stakeholders in both the “hard” and “soft” areas of the Strategy.

It was also suggested that there would be value in having an independent organization such as the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation identify which UN, regional and sub-regional, and civil society actors were contributing to the implementation of the different parts of the Strategy in East Africa, where gaps remain, and which stakeholder is best placed to fill the particular gap. The Center offered to undertake this task as part of its project on “Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in East Africa.”

12. Participants also highlighted the importance of improving UN system-wide efforts to provide technical support to its member states and regional and sub-regional bodies in promoting Strategy implementation. It was noted that stakeholders in East Africa have so far not benefited from UN technical support in implementing UN counterterrorism mandates apart from the legislative drafting and criminal justice training delivered by UNODC’s Terrorism Prevention Branch. In fact, some participants reported that states in East Africa complain that they are being asked by UN Security Council counterterrorism bodies to prepare reports and fill out forms detailing their efforts to implement these mandates but have yet to receive anything tangible in return.

13. Participants applauded the human rights-based approach to combating terrorism that is enshrined in the Strategy and expressed hope that it might rub off on a sub-region where serious concerns have been voiced regarding the failure of counterterrorism activities to safeguard human rights. The importance of ensuring that human rights is effectively integrated into all UN counterterrorism programs was highlighted, with some participants expressing doubt that this was currently the case. Some questioned whether the UN had the necessary programs in place aimed at promoting this approach. Participants encouraged the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to become more active in this area, including in East Africa through its office in Addis Ababa and presence in Nairobi, while recognizing the limited resources and competing priorities within the Geneva-based body. In addition, the challenge of getting states that lack many of the fundamental elements of an effective rule of law-based criminal justice system to respect human rights while countering terrorism was highlighted. It was suggested that this dilemma should not lead to downsizing the technical assistance to the “hard” security area but that this should be appropriately balanced by strengthening the human rights components and the “soft” elements of the Strategy.

14. In addition, while noting the remarkable success the Task Force has had raising money, participants indicated that it would be important to secure regular UN budget funds for the Task Force in the future, which the EU is trying to do, to ensure that all UN member states retain the sense of ownership over the Strategy that they felt when it was adopted. Continuing with the current funding approach, whereby all of the support comes from the US and Europe, might undercut the positive impact of the Strategy as an instrument of consensus and, over time, lead states in the Global South to see it merely as yet another instrument of the “West’s”

counterterrorism agenda.

II. The Terrorist Threat and Counterterrorism Capacity in East Africa

15. The second session started by examining the nature of the threat in East Africa, and the extent to which it has been exacerbated or mitigated by the response of external actors, including the UN. It was noted that attacks occurred in the sub region before 9/11 (such as the US Embassy bombings) and after 9/11 (including Mombassa in 2002). Some participants pointed out that most international terrorist attacks have targeted Western assets, leading many local residents to view international terrorism as a predominantly Western concern and as a consequence made it difficult for governments in the sub-region to support international counterterrorism efforts without being seen as pushing external interests. Some argued that regardless of the target, when sovereign territory is violated and a majority of the victims are a country's nationals, as they have been in each al-Qaida-related attack in East Africa to date, the state that was attacked has an obligation to its citizens to take action. Governments in the sub-region and other stakeholders, including the UN, regional and sub-regional bodies and civil society, it was argued, should seek to frame the threat in the context of what is clearly a local concern, pervasive criminality in East Africa and the inability of the governments across the sub-region to combat it effectively.

16. Concern was expressed that the Western response, particularly the US-led "Global War on Terror" as well as Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia, has exacerbated rather than mitigated the threat, by exaggerating its size, the popularity of radical ideology in Muslim communities and the connections between local operatives and international networks such as al-Qaida. The point was made that if one actually looks at the number of victims from terrorist attacks over the past decade or so, the number is quite low. In addition, it was asserted that the assumption that the terrorism that exists in the sub-region is "Islamist" terrorism has no basis in fact as the majority of terrorist incidents during this period have been politically rather than religiously motivated. Most casualties from terrorism in the sub-region, it was noted, are not linked with the international terrorism represented by al-Qaida and related groups, but with insurgencies in different countries in the sub-region.

17. Participants discussed the situation in Somalia and the extent of the terrorist threat emanating from that territory. Many noted that the absence of a functioning national government in Somalia does not make it the most fertile area for terrorism in the sub-region as the lack of governance across much of the country makes it a difficult environment for terrorist to operate. Rather than a "failed" state like Somalia, terrorists are more likely to gain traction and prosper in a "weak" state where there are higher levels of governance and normalcy, but little state vigilance. Nevertheless, some participants cautioned against downplaying the threat emanating from Somalia, stating that regardless of how we got there, Somalia is now a Taliban-like state, providing radical Islamist groups a base of operations attracting an influx of funding and foreign fighters as well as technical expertise.

18. Discussion also focused on the need for states in East Africa to help define the threat in the sub-region, rather than on allowing the views of external actors such as the US to dominate the analysis. Among the benefits of ensuring that states in the sub-region are given a greater voice in developing the threat assessment might be increased political will for implementing UN counterterrorism measures including the Security Council's Al-Qaida/Taliban Sanctions regime. The point was made that this highlights the importance of ensuring that the Security Council's Al-Qaida/Taliban Committee's Consolidated List is updated to ensure that it accurately reflects the evolving threat in East Africa, as perceived by countries in the sub-region.

19. Some participants explained that many East Africans feel like they are caught in the middle as victims of an invasive and costly battle between two groups of unwanted guests on their soil. The first group is the terrorists, who exploit vulnerabilities (such as porous borders, close proximity to the Middle East and the corrosive affects of prolonged civil conflicts in the sub-region); and the second group consists of "counterterrorists," who devote resources to "hard-edged" security programs that can help to strengthen state law enforcement and other security services that are already seen by many of the citizens as corrupt and abusive towards the population. Several participants, therefore, voiced the hope that the Strategy's holistic approach, which embraces development initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals can offer a more constructive and inclusive approach for addressing the threat of terrorism in the sub-region.

20. Caution against using the term "counterterrorism" when implementing the Strategy on the ground in the sub-region was also sounded during the discussion. Many thought that the framework outlined in the Strategy would be more acceptable, and thus more likely to get implemented, if it sought to address what are locally perceived to be less controversial and more pressing security threats such as the pervasive problems of violent crime and corruption.

21. The participants discussed the sub-region's numerous capacity gaps and how the implementation of the Strategy in the sub-region could help to fill them. Aside from the need for more support for border security, strengthening democratic institutions and the ability to address serious criminality, and stamping out corruption, several participants underlined the need for enhancing fundamental research capacities to assess threats from a local perspective.

III. Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations – Capacity and Prospects for Contributing to Strategy Implementation in East Africa

22. Participants acknowledged the critical role that the African Union (AU) and its Algiers Centre on the Study and Research on Terrorism Discussion (ACSRT) and sub-regional bodies, in particular the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's Capacity Building Programme against Terrorism (ICPAT), the East African Community (EAC), and the Eastern and Southern African Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) have to play in promoting the Strategy in East Africa. Since they have at their disposal knowledge of cultural and contextual issues, they can help transport and explain the global framework enshrined in the Strategy to local actors. In doing so, they can help develop the sense of local ownership that will be fundamental to ensuring its implementation in the sub-region.

23. Participants detailed some of the ongoing counterterrorism activities of many of these bodies. It was noted that most of the initiatives are focusing on law enforcement and other security-related aspects of counterterrorism (for example, ICPAT is working to promote greater inter-agency coordination on counterterrorism within individual IGAD member states and the EAC is seeking to establish a regional forensic center). Although much of this activity is related to the Strategy, participants asserted that this was largely by coincidence as few in the sub-region were aware of the new UN framework and what role stakeholders there could be playing in furthering its implementation. As was repeated throughout the workshop, it was suggested much more needs to be done by the Task Force and member states to raise awareness of the Strategy in East Africa at all levels. It was pointed out that in some instances even the state representatives in the various sub-regional bodies were unaware of the Strategy, let alone its potential political significance for the sub-region

24. While emphasizing the importance of awareness raising, some participants highlighted some other issues that would need to be addressed to enhance the ability of regional and sub-regional

bodies active in East Africa to contribute to Strategy implementation. For example, with respect to the EAC it was noted that it had limited funds available for implementing its counterterrorism program due to the fact that most of the organization's budget is allocated to the priority issue of economic integration. Some participants noted the difficulties the ACSRT has had in working with different AU member state and regional economic community (REC) focal points, given its limited capacity and broad mandate. It was therefore suggested that the centre develop a mechanism for dealing with the REC's more effectively and make that, rather than engagement with AU states, a priority. In addition, the point was made that while that AU has developed a robust peace and security architecture, it is in need of harmonization. Further, the AU has devoted much of its attention and resources towards implementing the "hard" side of its mandate, largely in trying to contribute to resolving the military and political conflicts on the continent. It was recommended that more attention be devoted to the "soft" side of its mandate, which includes much of its counterterrorism plan of action, and reinforcing those AU institutions responsible for implementing this mandate such as the ACSRT.

25. Participants also stressed the importance of enhancing coordination and cooperation among regional and sub-regional bodies active in East Africa to help ensure that the different actors do not develop programs in areas already being covered by others. This is particularly important, it was noted, as Strategy implementation efforts are ramped up in the sub-region. To this end, some urged the establishment of a sub-regional task force which could be chaired by ICPAT and linked up with the Task Force in New York and could help identify what each stakeholder is currently doing to implement the Strategy, where there are duplicative programs, what each body is best at and where additional effort should be directed. In this vein, a number of participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that these bodies, as well as other stakeholders in East Africa, and the donor community, are not only promoting programs aimed at strengthening the capacity of the state to combat terrorism, but are also focused on addressing the causes of insecurity in the sub-region. In addition, such a sub-regional task force, it was argued, could help ensure that human rights are integrated into all Strategy-related initiatives going forward. An important step in the right direction could be inviting the UN Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism to attend the first meeting of the task force.

26. In discussing the role of the European Union, the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNODC, and other technical assistance providers and donors active in East Africa, participants emphasized the need for strengthening and expanding the partnerships with sub-regional bodies in East Africa and developing an international diary to help inform donors/providers what activities have taken place and what are planned for the sub-region. This will help reduce the duplication and overlap of technical assistance projects, which will be particularly important if donors and assistance providers use the Strategy as a vehicle for broadening their activities in East Africa. With this in mind, it was suggested that EU representation (either by the Council, Secretariat or Presidency) at the Addis workshop in March 2008 would be useful.

27. In conclusion, the view was expressed that one of the concrete outcomes of the UN General Assembly's formal review of the Strategy in September 2008 should be clear and concrete suggestions as to what specific tasks regional and sub-regional bodies can perform in furthering Strategy implementation in general. It was also suggested that this should be complemented by a stocktaking of relevant bodies in each region and sub-region, their respective mandates and capacities and what Strategy-related programs they have undertaken or are currently undertaking.

IV. The Role of the UN System in Promoting Strategy Implementation in East Africa

28. Participants discussed the work of a number of different UN bodies and programs during the course of the workshop, including the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate (CTC/CTED), the Monitoring Team of the Council's Al-Qaida/Taliban Sanctions Committee, UNODC, OHCHR and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). It was recognized that while each has an important contribution to make to Strategy implementation efforts, political and/or resource issues, lack of coordination and cooperation among these actors, and lack of awareness in the sub-region as to what each body can offer, have so far limited the impact of the overall UN effort in East Africa. Local actors, it was asserted, need to have a clearer understanding of what one receives in return for cooperating with the different UN counterterrorism bodies, in particular those in New York. In addition, it was proposed that the impact of the UN's counterterrorism efforts in East Africa, which have been ratcheted up following September 2001, be assessed to determine their overall impact. Depending on the outcome of such an assessment, it was argued, the UN might consider adjusting the way in which it engages with stakeholders in the sub-region and the substantive issues on which it focuses.

29. Some participants highlighted the importance of ensuring that sub-regional perspectives are incorporated into all UN activities aimed at furthering implementation of the global framework in East Africa. For example, experts from the sub-region cautioned that UN efforts to ensure that states in East Africa respect human rights as they implement the Strategy need to take into account the importance placed on not only the rights of terrorist suspects but on the victims of terrorism. Otherwise, it was suggested, UN entreaties in this area will have little traction

30. Attention was given to a Danish-funded UNDP project in Kenya, which UNDP is currently carrying out in cooperation with UNODC and the Kenyan National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) under the Office of the President. The project was designed to help, *inter alia*, promote the adoption and effective implementation of national counterterrorism legislation that safeguards human rights and raise awareness of the general public of the reasons why such a law is needed. UNDP has conducted public awareness raising workshops in different parts of the country, focusing mainly on police chiefs and sub-chiefs. However, because many of the other project activities were contingent upon the passage of the counterterrorism bill, which remains stalled in parliament due to strong objections from civil society that the draft targets Muslims and gives too much authority to the police, much of the work has yet to take place. The continuing political sensitivities surrounding this issue have not allowed UNDP to bring together officials from the NCTC and civil society to discuss the difficult issues surrounding the legislation as was planned. Despite the current difficulties in Kenya, some participants expressed optimism that UNDP in Kenya, because of its strong relationship with both the Kenyan counterterrorism officials and civil society, can play an important role in promoting Strategy implementation in Kenya.

31. Despite the ongoing UNDP counterterrorism-related project in Kenya, the participants recognized the political challenges in getting UNDP headquarters in New York to associate itself more closely with the Strategy and counterterrorism efforts more broadly. Of the four pillars of the Strategy, participants recognized that Pillar I, which focuses on addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and explicitly links attaining the MDGs with Strategy implementation, needs more emphasis in East Africa. It was thus suggested that there is a need for the UN Secretary-General and member states (including those from East Africa) to call on UNDP to become more engaged. It was noted that these calls were currently limited to European countries seemingly motivated by a desire for guidance on dealing with the nexus between security and development in their aid programs. Further, it was suggested that efforts be made to include counterterrorism within the mandate of the UN's rule of law and security coordination

resource group, in which UNDP, but apparently no representative from a traditional UN counterterrorism body, is involved. In addition, it was stressed that UNDP is not the only part of the UN system with a role to play in Pillar I activities that needs to be pushed to accept ownership over the Strategy. Others include the UN Children's Fund, the UN Development Fund for Women, the UN Population Fund and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Affairs.

V. Role of Civil Society in Promoting Strategy Implementation in East Africa

32. In discussing the role of civil society in implementing the UN Strategy, participants highlighted a number of inter-related functions including lobbying and otherwise influencing government action (e.g. promoting good governance and human rights); helping to formulate and implement national legislation; conducting research; disseminating information, public education and other awareness raising; documenting best practices; promoting institutional memory; ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law; monitoring government legislation and action; more broadly contributing to building inclusive societies; and perhaps most importantly acting as on-the-ground "drivers" for local action.

33. The involvement of the Institute for Security Studies in the development and management of ICPAT and the role of civil society in the formulation of the Nairobi declaration on small arms and light weapons that ultimately became the basis for the establishment of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) were discussed as models for civil society engagement on the Strategy. It was noted, however, that unlike in the area of SALWs where the initiative largely came from the grassroots and was driven by civil society, the Strategy is being imposed from the "top down". Although the UN provides the broad umbrella for Strategy implementation, specific strategies need to be devised at the regional, sub-regional, and local levels where a clearer articulation of the necessary steps and the roles for government and civil society can be made. It was suggested that a focal point for civil society could be appointed and included on the above mentioned sub-regional task force and/or a network of civil society organizations devoted to Strategy implementation could be formed perhaps along the lines of the Africa Security Network.

34. Although civil society is ascribed a role in the Strategy implementation, there was the sense among some of the participants that there is little incentive for civil society groups operating in the sub-region to engage on issues of terrorism and counterterrorism. Focusing on terrorism and government responses may open up local civil society groups to retaliation by governments in the sub-region while focusing on counterterrorism potentially undermines the support for and credibility of groups among local populations. Participants noted therefore that it may be more fruitful to encourage engagement by civil society on related issues such as crime prevention, good governance, or peace and security more generally.

35. Given these challenges, it was suggested that the UN cannot passively sit back and expect civil society engagement on Strategy related issues but that the UN Task Force, including representatives from both its traditional and non-tradition counterterrorism entities, needs to reach out to civil society and encourage its engagement on these issues and that donors for their part need to prioritize funding for such groups and projects. The Danish Peace, Security and Development Programme which funds a number of local civil society organizations working among the Muslim communities along Kenya's coast doing what is described euphemistically as "peace, security and development" is an example of a potential model in this regard.

36. It was acknowledged that the Strategy is already being implemented by many actors, but they are often not conscious that their efforts are contributing in the long-term to combating terrorism.

It was suggested that it is not necessary to coral all of these groups together, but simply to recognize that a diversity of activity is moving us toward the goal of combating terrorism (and thus implementing the Strategy). Labeling the activities of, for example, groups working to empower young people as “counterterrorism”, is unnecessary and potentially counterproductive.

37. Some participants noted that the capacity of civil society to engage is largely tied to the availability/freedom of information and the freedom of association, which varies considerably among the different countries in East Africa. It was suggested that perhaps the UN Task Force could play a role in identifying and promoting best practices related to these key principles to promote civil society engagement.

38. Participants discussed how strengthening law enforcement/counterterrorism authorities has in some instances lead to increased violations of human rights and the repression of civil society. In some instances, counterterrorism legislation has been misused by governments to crack down on certain groups and more generally expanded the space for repression in East Africa. It was pointed out that governments in the sub-region which have not passed counterterrorism legislation have simply relied on informal administrative procedures to pursue their counterterrorism objects unrestrained by formal procedures. In other instances it was noted that a state with anti-terrorism legislation was choosing not to apply the law in its efforts to investigate and prosecute suspected terrorists. It was emphasized that the counterterrorism measures, e.g. detentions, extraditions, etc., should be conducted within formal procedures and structures. It was also emphasized that donors and other providers of technical assistance need to be sure to balance capacity building assistance to law enforcement and security services with human rights training, perhaps even involving civil society groups in such training, and where possible reinforce oversight mechanisms such as national human rights commissions.

VI. Priorities and Challenges for East Africa in Implementing the Strategy

39. One of the challenges most often cited by participants relates to the political sensitivity surrounding the issue of counterterrorism and the difficulties in garnering support in East Africa. Several participants described the international counterterrorism rhetoric as too muscular and polarizing for a sub-region where the concept of counterterrorism is frequently seen as great if not a greater threat than terrorism itself. It was emphasized again that framing Strategy implementation efforts in the context of more appealing notions, such as promoting good governance and combating transnational crime, would resonate much more with states and other stakeholders in the sub-region.

40. The Strategy was described as particularly relevant to East Africa as it represents a conceptual shift away from law enforcement/military approach to a “softer,” more holistic one that emphasizes what one participant described as a human security approach to counterterrorism. At the same time, however, it was pointed out that the Strategy’s breadth risks rendering it “everything and nothing” at the same time.

41. If this conceptual shift is going to succeed, it was pointed out that major donors need to reflect this change of emphasis in their policies. Donors and the UN need to emphasize the development pillar and in particular target disaffected and marginalized groups which are potential breeding grounds for terrorism. Working to help strengthen the capacity of governments to provide basic services and otherwise serve people can help reduce the appeal and operating space for Islamic charities, which are currently providing these services in many areas where the state cannot/does not reach, and some of which are also providing support for terrorist activities. The UN, it was suggested, also needs to focus more attention here.

42. Finally, one of the most significant challenges to Strategy implementation is overcoming the serious intra-sub-regional rivalries in East Africa. It was suggested that perhaps given the contentious state of relations between states in East Africa, the sub-regional level is not the most promising avenue through which to pursue counterterrorism cooperation. Others, however, argued that it is essential to stimulate efforts at the regional and sub-regional level precisely because those underlying regional tensions and conflicts are some of the main drivers of terrorism in East Africa.