



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**High-Level Inter-Regional Conference on ‘Whole-of-Society-Approach’
to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization
that Lead to Terrorism (P/CVERLT)**

Ulaanbaatar, 20-21 June 2019

Welcome Address

OSCE Secretary General Thomas Greminger

Thank you Madam Chairperson,
Minister Tsogtbaatar,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank the Government of Mongolia for hosting this important conference and for offering us this welcome opportunity to exchange views on the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT).

I take this opportunity also to thank Mongolia for its strong commitment to the OSCE, for its active role in our security dialogue in Vienna and in our activities across the OSCE area.

Mongolia is a country rich in history and tradition as we have just heard from you, Minister Tsogtbaatar. At the same time, it is open to the world, eager to embrace new ideas and to contribute to peaceful relations with its neighbours, and internationally.

Over the past thirty years, Mongolia's multilateral engagement has continued to expand. Joining the OSCE in 2012 was a significant step both for Mongolia and the OSCE – you know, I was the Swiss Permanent Representative to the OSCE in 2012 and had the privilege to witness this historic event. Since then, Mongolia has shown keen interest and determination to implement the extensive body of OSCE political commitments.

The OSCE Secretariat and the OSCE institutions have supported this engagement across a continuously diversifying portfolio of programmatic activities. From election observation and the delivery of legal expertise on electoral reform to human rights related assessment visits, from capacity-building on corruption prevention, anti-money laundering and countering terrorism financing to wildfire management. These activities and others more, reflect the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and illustrate the breadth of an expanding relationship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OSCE's approach to countering VERLT reflects the global consensus that law enforcement alone cannot solve the problem. Yes, law enforcement is important but in addition, we need to invest in prevention and a “whole of society” approach”. A “whole of society” approach” that harnesses government resources but also the influence and efforts of various segments of civil society - families, women, youth, educators, and religious and community leaders.

Prevention of violent extremism often starts with families. Many OSCE field operations are actively engaged in projects that work with families, youth, religious and community leaders in the prevention of VERLT. Of note is our OSCE-wide multi-year initiative called “*Leaders against Intolerance and*

Violent Extremism” – or LIVE in short – that works to build the capacity of these critical actors.

Since 2012, the OSCE has organized seminars in various participating States that have highlighted the importance of community engagement, police-public co-operation and trust-building as critical elements of a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach. One of these seminars took place here in Mongolia only two years ago.

Over the past decade, the OSCE has assisted participating States in developing and implementing comprehensive national strategies and action plans. In this context, I am pleased to learn that the Government of Mongolia is working on their national strategy to prevent and counter violent extremism. In this sense also, the conference is very timely and might well be the catalyst for further co-operation on this critical topic.

The OSCE is also publishing a series of guidelines on specific aspects of P/CVERLT, guidelines to equip relevant policy makers and their civil society partners with more concrete tools.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Societies that embrace diversity and give people a say in their future are more resilient to VERLT.

Women and youth are of paramount importance for fostering sustainable intercultural dialogue and peaceful relations between different segments of society. Their needs and particular insights need to inform our policies and

action. I am therefore very pleased to see women-led organizations participate in our discussions.

A better understanding of cultural, religious and other identities is essential to breaking down stereotypes and prejudices. Once this is achieved, the next step is to recognise diversity as a source of strength rather than conflict.

In many parts of the OSCE area, these simple facts are not fully understood and everywhere, even in the most peaceful of our societies, further efforts are needed to foster respectful dialogue rather than allow speechlessness, work towards inclusion rather than exclusion.

This high-level conference offers an excellent opportunity for Mongolia, and all of us present here, to reinforce the message that preventing and countering VERLT requires the active involvement of all members of society. This is a matter of respect for human dignity. It is also the best way to achieving peaceful co-existence within societies and to strengthening security in our region.

Thank you.