

Slide 1

Salutations

Slide 2

When UN Sec Gen Ban Ki Moon introduced the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in 2016, we saw a new focus on prevention that leverages a whole-of-UN approach to tackle the drivers of violent extremism;

It covers a remarkable number of priority areas, including engaging communities, empowering youth, as well as strategic communications;

The Digital Strategic Communications Division (DSCD), my division, at the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, had been set up in 2016 to better understand and tackle radicalization in the form of dangerously persuasive violent extremist narratives that can be easily disseminated online and through social media. It is a problem duly recognized by the international community, as the UN Security Council Resolution 2354 was adopted in 2017 specifically to develop a comprehensive international framework for countering terrorist narratives.

When we first started the division, we went at it alone. We developed a number of media campaigns to counter the deluge of

whether our messages were having their intended effect.

But in 2017, we decided to try a new approach, and organised a youth workshop. Within that workshop, we ran a hackathon, just to see how well young people would do in disseminating PVE material online, and we incentivized them by making it a little competitive. We thought that maybe we can use what we learned here to help us tweak our approaches.

Well, our approaches, as it turns out, tweaked, they needed to be overhauled. The undergraduate students taking part in the hackathon had managed to outperform our results by, and I am not exaggerating when I say this, a factor of thousands.

To give you an idea, we were getting 200 or 300 impressions a month, that is, the number of times our media products appeared

ran the hackathon, our hashtag tracking revealed that our 30 students had managed to get over 440,000 impressions in the span of *one day*.

It was a hard pill to swallow, but we learnt the greatest lesson we had to learn about preventing violent extremism: HUMILITY. We had to acknowledge that we, working from the public sector, cannot go it alone if we were to be serious about it.

Slide 3

We need to work with those that understand how technology, how communities, how people, how certain demographics, how certain narratives, actually work with on the ground realities, and that the effort really needs a multidisciplinary, multi stakeholder approach, and the best way to achieve this is a whole-of-society approach.

been young people. They are increasingly recognized as being an important piece of the PVE puzzle, as affirmed by UNSCR 2250, 2419 and 2535, which brought us to better understand not to look at them only as beneficiaries, but also as credible, worthwhile partners

There are many reasons why this is the case, and one of them is that they are in a better position to develop more authentic and resonant messaging that really speaks to their peers. Speaking to our children, for example, can be really challenging, with all the new terms, new ideas, new passions, and If we are having such difficulties at home, how are we expected to successfully connect

This initiative could not have been possible without collaboration

We hope to develop better capacities that can help us analyse trending violent extremist narratives and how they are being disseminated;

And we also look forward to further enhancing public, private and community participation in PVE efforts.

I would just like to end my presentation with a paraphrase of the traditional African proverb that it takes a whole village to raise a child, it also takes a whole of society approach to prevent violent extremism.