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Joint Statement on the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS Africa Focus Group Meeting

MEDIA NOTE

OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON

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The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of the United States of America and the Italian Republic, the Kingdom of Morocco, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS Africa Focus Group

Begin Text:

Upon invitation of the Republic of Benin, the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS Africa Focus Group, co-chaired by Italy, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and the United States, met on November 15 in Cotonou, Benin.

The Africa Focus Group serves as a collaborative mechanism to coordinate civilian-focused counterterrorism assistance in order to enhance the counterterrorism capacity of African members of the Defeat-Daesh/ISIS Coalition.

In Cotonou, 28 Coalition members and observers participated in an Africa Focus Group meeting that focused on regional security and counterterrorism challenges from ISIS affiliates in the Coastal West Africa region.

The Coalition recognized that ISIS affiliates present a persistent threat to the people of West Africa.

The D-ISIS Coalition Africa Focus Group agenda included coordination with other multilateral initiatives and heard from Coalition partners who are engaged with or leading the Accra Initiative, the G-5, the Coalition for the Sahel, and the Aqaba Process. Coalition observer UNOCT also briefed on the planned Africa summit in the spring of 2024 that should complement international efforts to counter ISIS affiliates in Africa.

The Africa Focus Group recognizes there are many contributing factors to the current security challenges in the region. To have the most impact, the focus group is concentrating efforts on the four pillars of its action plan:

- Strengthening and enhancing border security, biometric collection, and battlefield evidence capabilities;

- Countering ISIS propaganda, recruitment efforts, and building community resilience;

- Improving Coalition member capabilities to reduce ISIS's use of illicit finance; and

- Countering malign influences that diminish CT efforts.

Participants in the Cotonou meeting reaffirmed both the importance of ongoing frank and open exchanges and that Africa Focus Group members would continue to share and develop best practices to build partner capacity and assist those countries seeking assistance in countering terrorism.

Finally, the Africa Focus Group Co-Chairs underscored that the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS remains committed to confronting and defeating Daesh/ISIS in West Africa and elsewhere in the world, wherever it operates.

End Text

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