Meeting for the purpose of defining the specific procedures and rules for the functioning of the review mechanism for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto
Vienna, 24-26 April 2017
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Consideration of a first draft of the procedures and rules for a review mechanism based on the elements contained in resolution 8/2

Mechanism for the review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: draft procedures and rules for the functioning of the mechanism

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its resolution 8/2, entitled “Mechanism for the review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto”, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime decided to continue the process of establishing the mechanism for the review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto based on the recommendations contained in the report on the intergovernmental meeting to explore all options regarding an appropriate and effective review mechanism for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, held in Vienna on 6 and 7 June 2016.¹

2. In the same resolution, the Conference decided to elaborate specific procedures and rules for the functioning of the review mechanism for consideration and adoption by the Conference at its ninth session, which was to be guided by the principles and characteristics set out in Conference resolution 5/5, and also decided to include in the specific procedures and rules certain elements, as listed in the resolution.

3. Also in resolution 8/2, the Conference requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to convene, within existing resources from the regular budget and

¹ CTOC/COP/WG.9/2017/1.
² CTOC/COP/WG.8/2016/2.
without prejudice to other mandated activities, at least one open-ended intergovernmental meeting, with interpretation, for the purpose of defining the specific procedures and rules for the functioning of the review mechanism, and invited States parties to remain engaged in the process, including during the intersessional period.

4. The draft procedures and rules for the functioning of the mechanism, annexed to the present note, were prepared by the secretariat pursuant to Conference resolution 8/2 for consideration by the open-ended intergovernmental meeting and with a view to facilitating further discussion.
Annex


Draft procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism

Preamble

1. Pursuant to article 4, paragraph 1, and article 32, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and recalling its resolution 8/2, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime establishes the following mechanism to review implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto (hereinafter referred to as “the Mechanism”).

I. Introduction

2. The Mechanism embodies a review process that shall be guided by the principles and characteristics contained in section II below and be carried out in accordance with the provisions contained in section IV. The Mechanism shall be facilitated by a secretariat as set out in section V.

II. Guiding principles and characteristics of the Mechanism

3. The Mechanism shall:

   (a) Be transparent, efficient, non-intrusive, inclusive and impartial;
   (b) Not produce any form of ranking;
   (c) Provide opportunities to share good practices and challenges;
   (d) Assist States parties in the effective implementation of the Convention and, where applicable, the Protocols thereto;
   (e) Take into account a balanced geographical approach;
   (f) Be non-adversarial and non-punitive and promote universal adherence to the Convention and its Protocols;
   (g) Base its work on clear, established guidelines for the compilation, production and dissemination of information, including addressing issues of confidentiality and the submission of the outcome to the Conference, which is the competent body to take action on such an outcome;
   (h) Identify, at the earliest possible stage, difficulties encountered by States parties in the fulfilment of their obligations under the Convention and its Protocols, as applicable, and good practices adopted in efforts by States parties to implement the Convention and, where applicable, the Protocols thereto;
   (i) Be of a technical nature and promote constructive collaboration, inter alia, on issues concerning international cooperation, prevention, protection of witnesses and assistance and protection for victims;
   (j) Complement existing relevant international and regional review mechanisms so that the Conference may, as appropriate, cooperate with those mechanisms and avoid duplication of efforts;
   (k) Be an intergovernmental process;
(l) Be conducted in conformity with article 4 of the Convention, not serve as an instrument for interfering in the domestic affairs of States parties and be conducted in a non-political and non-selective manner;

(m) Promote the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols by States parties, as applicable, as well as cooperation among States parties;

(n) Provide opportunities to exchange views, ideas and good practices, thus contributing to strengthening cooperation among States parties in preventing and fighting transnational organized crime;

(o) Take into account the levels of development of States parties, as well as the diversity of judicial, legal, political, economic and social systems and differences in legal traditions;

(p) Endeavour to adopt a progressive and comprehensive approach, given that the review of implementation of the Convention is an ongoing and gradual process;

(q) Be cost-effective, concise and user-friendly; and make optimal and efficient use of existing information, tools, resources and technology so that it would not impose undue burdens upon States parties, their central authorities and experts involved in the review process.

III. Relationship of the Mechanism with the Conference of the Parties

4. The review of implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto and the Mechanism shall be under the authority of the Conference, in accordance with article 32 of the Convention.

5. The Conference shall conduct, when appropriate and upon recommendation of its working groups, an evaluation of the organization, functioning and performance of the review process, so as to amend and improve the existing Mechanism.

6. The Conference shall adopt any future amendments to the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism.

IV. Review process

A. Goals

7. Consistent with the Convention, in particular article 32, the review process, inter alia, shall:

(a) Promote the purposes of the Convention and the Protocols thereto, as set out in article 1 of the Convention and article 2 of each of the Protocols;

(b) Improve the capacity of States parties to combat transnational organized crime and to promote and review the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto;

(c) Help States parties to identify and substantiate specific needs for technical assistance and to promote and facilitate the provision of technical assistance;

(d) Provide the Conference with information on successes, good practices and challenges of States parties in implementing and using the Convention and the Protocols thereto.
B. Country review

8. The Mechanism shall be applicable to all States parties. It shall progressively address all the articles of the Convention and the Protocols thereto for each of the instruments that States are a party to. It shall be based on thematic clusters of articles based on their subject matter, as indicated in table 1 of appendix I to the present procedures and rules. The review shall be a gradual process consisting of one preparatory phase (years 1 and 2) and two review phases (years 3-10). Upon recommendation of its working groups, the Conference may decide to make amendments to the thematic clusters if doing so is deemed appropriate in the light of the efficient functioning of the Mechanism.

9. The preparatory phase (years 1 and 2) shall be devoted to the definition of organizational matters and the development and finalization, in accordance with paragraph 16 of the present procedures and rules, of the self-assessment questionnaire within each of the working groups of the Conference. The two review phases shall be held from year 3 to year 10. They shall last four years each. The first review phase shall be held from year 3 to year 6, the second review phase shall be held from year 7 to year 10. The two review phases shall be conducted and concluded in line with the multi-year workplan contained in table 2 of appendix I to the present procedures and rules. Upon the recommendation of its working groups the Conference may decide to make amendments to the multi-year workplan if doing so is deemed appropriate in the light of the efficient functioning of the Mechanism.

10. One half of the States that are parties to the Convention at the start of a given review phase shall finalize their reviews within the first two years of that review phase. The reviews of all States that are parties at the start of the review phase should be completed before a new review phase begins. However, in exceptional cases the Conference may decide to launch a new review phase before the completion of all reviews of the previous phase. No State party shall undergo a review twice in the same review phase, without prejudice to the right of a State party to provide new information.

11. The selection of States parties participating in the review process in a given year of a review phase shall be carried out by the drawing of lots at the beginning of each review phase in accordance with paragraphs 20-22 of the present procedures and rules.

12. Each State party shall appoint a focal point to coordinate its participation in the review. Each State party shall endeavour to appoint, as a focal point, a person or persons with substantive expertise on the provisions of the Convention and the Protocols under review.

13. The secretariat shall, prior to the drawing of lots to select the reviewing States parties, compile, circulate and update, where necessary, a list of focal points of States parties under review entrusted with the task of coordinating their participation in the review.

14. In accordance with paragraph 4 of the present procedures and rules, the country reviews shall be conducted within the Conference and its existing working groups, which shall add the matter to their agendas as an item if consistent with their areas of expertise and without prejudice to their respective existing mandates.

15. The State party under review shall inform the secretariat of any technical assistance need that should be addressed to support its authorities in providing the information requested under the self-assessment questionnaire pursuant to section C of the present procedures and rules. Such technical assistance shall be subject to the availability of voluntary contributions. States parties and other interested donors are encouraged to provide resources for relevant technical assistance as a matter of priority.
C. Information-gathering

16. In order to review each thematic cluster of articles of the Convention or Protocol thereto, the relevant working group shall define, with the assistance of the secretariat, a short, precise and focused self-assessment questionnaire.

17. Each State party under review shall provide the reviewing States parties with the information required by the Conference on its compliance with and implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto. It shall, for that purpose, use the self-assessment questionnaire that shall be available on the knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC). States parties shall provide complete, up-to-date, accurate and timely responses.

D. Conduct of the country review

18. The information gathered for each State party shall be reviewed by two other States that are parties to the relevant instrument, with the active involvement of the State party under review.

19. Each State party shall, for the purposes of the review, appoint up to five governmental experts for each instrument under review. The appointed governmental experts shall have expertise relevant to the issues under evaluation. The secretariat shall, prior to the drawing of lots to select the reviewing States parties, compile and circulate a list of such governmental experts, which shall include information on their professional background, their current positions, relevant offices held and activities carried out and their areas of expertise as required for the review phase in question. States parties shall endeavour to provide information necessary for the secretariat to compile that list and keep it up to date.

20. For each State party under review, the relevant working groups shall draw lots to select as reviewing States one State from the regional group of the State party under review and one State from another regional group. If possible, one of the reviewing States parties shall have a legal system similar to that of the State under review. The State party under review and the reviewing States may request a maximum of two times each that the drawing of lots be repeated. In exceptional circumstances, the drawing of lots may be repeated more than twice.

21. A State party under review may defer serving as a reviewing State party that same year. That same principle, mutatis mutandis, shall apply to the reviewing States parties. By the end of a review phase, each State party must have undergone its own review and performed a minimum of one review and a maximum of three reviews.

22. The working groups shall hold intersessional meetings open to all States parties for the purpose of the drawing of lots referred to in paragraph 20 of the present procedures and rules. In order to ensure coordination between the working groups and consistency in the review of the implementation of the Convention, the Working Group on International Cooperation and the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance shall hold joint intersessional meetings for the drawing of lots.

23. Within three weeks following the drawing of lots, the State party under review shall undertake consultations with the reviewing States parties on the establishment of schedules and the requirements of the country review, including the selection of the working language or languages, in accordance with section VI of the present procedures and rules.

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* Conference resolution 8/2 contains no clear mandate for compiling such lists. However, such lists are needed and resources for this purpose are necessary. See also CTOC/COP/WG.9/2017/3.
24. Governmental experts from the reviewing States parties shall divide tasks and issues among themselves, taking into account their respective fields of competence.

25. Where appropriate, the secretariat shall facilitate the establishment of open lines of communication among the governmental experts involved in the review process.

26. Within three months of the drawing of lots, the State party under review shall provide to the reviewing States parties the information required concerning its compliance with and implementation of the Convention or the relevant Protocol, using for that purpose the appropriate self-assessment questionnaire.

27. The State party under review shall endeavour to prepare its responses to the self-assessment questionnaire through broad consultations at the national level with all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, individuals and groups outside the public sector.

28. Throughout the process, the governmental experts shall give appropriate consideration to the information and material provided by the State party under review. If the State party under review is a member of an international organization or a regional or international mechanism whose mandate covers issues falling within the scope of the review, the reviewing States parties may consider information produced by that organization or mechanism that is relevant to the implementation of the Convention or a Protocol thereto. When seeking additional information and asking for clarification, governmental experts shall bear in mind the non-adversarial, non-intrusive and non-punitive character of the review and the overall goal of assisting the State party under review in reaching full implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto.

29. Within one month following the receipt of the completed self-assessment questionnaire from the State party under review and any supplementary information, the reviewing States parties shall submit to the State party under review the outcome of the desk review of that response. Such desk review shall entail an analysis of the response focused on measures taken to implement the Convention or the relevant Protocol and on successes in and challenges of such implementation. It may also contain, where necessary, requests for clarification or additional information, or supplementary questions to be answered by the State party under review. The ensuing constructive dialogue between the State party under review and the reviewing States parties may be carried out, inter alia, by way of conference calls, videoconferences or e-mail exchanges, as appropriate.

30. States parties shall carry out the desk review and fulfil any request for or provision of supplementary information and clarification by making the largest possible use of all the available technological tools, such as virtual networks, conference calls and videoconferences.

31. If agreed to by the State party under review, the desk review may be complemented with any further means of direct dialogue, such as a country visit. If a country visit is agreed upon, the State party under review is encouraged to facilitate engagement with all relevant national stakeholders in the course of such a visit.

32. The reviewing States parties, and the secretariat as applicable, shall maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of, or used in, the country review process.

E. Outcome of the country review process

33. At the final stage of the country review process and preferably within six months following the drawing of lots, the reviewing States parties shall prepare a short, precise and concise draft country review report, including an executive summary of the report, in close cooperation and coordination with the State party
under review. Governmental experts shall include observations with respect to national implementation of the articles of the Convention or the Protocol under review, as well as with respect to their application in practice. The report shall identify successes, good practices and challenges, and include observations for the implementation of the Convention or the relevant Protocol. Where appropriate, the report shall include the identification of technical assistance needs for the purpose of improving implementation of the Convention or the relevant Protocol.

34. The country review report, including the executive summary, shall be finalized upon agreement between the reviewing States parties and the State party under review and shall be communicated to the secretariat.

35. At the request of the State party under review and as required, governmental experts may provide the State party under review with explanations about ways to address the challenges identified so as to enable the State party under review to fully and effectively implement the relevant articles of the Convention or the relevant Protocol.

36. The executive summaries of all finalized country review reports shall be translated into the six official languages of the United Nations and be made available as documents of the relevant working group of the Conference for information purposes only.

37. The country review reports shall remain confidential.

38. Each State party, after it has been reviewed, is encouraged to exercise its sovereign right to publish its country review report or part thereof.

39. In order to improve and strengthen cooperation and learning among States parties, States parties shall, upon request, endeavour to make country review reports accessible to any other State party. The requesting State party shall fully respect the confidentiality of such reports.

F. Follow-up procedures

40. The Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance shall consider the needs identified by States parties under review further to their country reviews, make recommendations to assist them in their efforts to implement the Convention and the Protocols and inform the Conference of the Parties accordingly. As appropriate, States parties shall also provide information on whether technical assistance needs identified by them in relation to their country review reports have been addressed.b

41. As a follow-up to its country review, each State party shall submit directly to the appropriate working groups information on progress achieved in connection with the observations contained in the country review report and its executive summary.

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*b Paragraph 40 of the procedures and rules was drafted pursuant to paragraph 18 of Conference resolution 8/2, in which the Conference of the Parties directed the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance to consider the needs identified by Member States and make recommendations to assist them in their efforts to implement the Convention and the Protocols and provide the Conference with the information needed to conduct effective reviews. However, technical assistance needs involve more than one thematic area of the Convention and the Protocols, and it seems unrealistic to expect the participants in the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance to have the necessary expertise on all thematic areas and provisions from all four instruments. States parties may wish to give the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance and the Working Group on International Cooperation the mandate to consider technical assistance needs and make recommendations relating to the Convention only, and give the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, the Working Group on Firearms and the Working Group on the Smuggling of Migrants mandates relating to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, the Firearms Protocol and the Migrants Protocol, respectively.
V. Secretariat

42. Pursuant to article 33 of the Convention, the secretariat of the Conference shall serve as the secretariat of the Mechanism and shall perform the tasks assigned to it to ensure the efficient functioning of the Mechanism, including providing to States parties in the course of the functioning of the Mechanism, upon request and subject to the availability of voluntary contributions, technical and substantive support as well as training for governmental experts who participate in the review process.

VI. Languages

43. The working languages of the Mechanism shall be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, subject to the provisions of the present section.

44. The country review process may be conducted in any of the working languages of the Mechanism that may be decided upon by the State party under review and the reviewing States parties.

45. The executive summaries of the country review reports shall, as documents of the Conference, be published in the six working languages of the Mechanism.

46. The secretariat shall, if requested by the State party under review, endeavour to seek voluntary contributions to provide for translation and interpretation of the country reports into any of the other working languages of the Mechanism, as well as into languages other than the six working languages of the Mechanism.

VII. Funding

47. The requirements of the Mechanism and its secretariat shall be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations that is allocated to the Conference of the Parties and its working groups. Where necessary, the regular budget resources shall be complemented by extrabudgetary resources, including voluntary contributions free of conditions and influence and, where appropriate, by the reallocation of existing funding.

48. The requirements relating to the optional country visits referred to in paragraph 31 of the present procedures and rules shall be funded through voluntary contributions, which shall be free of conditions and influence.

49. The secretariat shall be responsible for preparing a proposed biennial budget for the activities of the Mechanism.

50. The Conference shall consider the budget for the Mechanism biennially. The budget shall ensure the efficient, continued and impartial functioning of the Mechanism.

51. Adequate financial and human resources must be provided to the secretariat to enable it to perform the functions assigned to it in the present procedures and rules.

VIII. Participation in the Mechanism of signatories to the Convention or any of the Protocols

52. A State signatory to the Convention or any of the Protocols may participate in the Mechanism on a voluntary basis as a State under review.
IX. Role of civil society in the Mechanism

53. The following shall apply with regard to the role of civil society in the Mechanism:

(a) In order to further promote constructive dialogue with other stakeholders active on issues related to the scope of the work of the Mechanism, including non-governmental organizations and academia, briefings shall be conducted on the outcomes of the review process, including on the technical assistance needs identified. Such briefings shall be convened on the margins of the meetings of the working groups and be conducted by the secretariat in cooperation with a member of the Bureau, at the request of the President of the Conference;

(b) No specific country situation shall be mentioned during briefings;

(c) The secretariat shall invite to the briefings relevant non-governmental organizations having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as other relevant non-governmental organizations, which, in accordance with rule 17, paragraphs 1 and 2, respectively, of the rules of procedure of the Conference, have been admitted to participate as observers in the session of the Conference previous to the briefing;

(d) If there is any objection to the participation of a non-governmental organization, the matter will be referred to the bureau of the Conference for decision, taking into account, mutatis mutandis, rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure;

(e) Non-governmental organizations wishing to attend a briefing shall confirm their attendance no later than 10 days prior to the date of the briefing, at which time they will be allowed to provide comments in writing;

(f) The briefings shall be open to representatives of Member States and intergovernmental organizations;

(g) Summaries of the briefings prepared by the non-governmental organizations shall be submitted to the relevant working groups as conference room papers;

(h) Non-governmental organizations are encouraged to report to the working groups, as appropriate, individually or collectively, on their activities and contributions to the implementation of the recommendations of the working groups, including those related to meeting technical assistance needs and advancing capacity to effectively implement the Convention.

Appendix I

Organization of the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal instrument</th>
<th>Cluster on criminalization and jurisdiction</th>
<th>Cluster on prevention, technical assistance, protection measures and other measures</th>
<th>Cluster on law enforcement and the judicial system</th>
<th>Cluster on international cooperation, mutual legal assistance and confiscation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organized Crime</td>
<td>Articles 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15 and 23b</td>
<td>Articles 24, 25, 29, 30 and 31</td>
<td>Articles 7, 11, 19, 20, 22, 26, 27 and 28</td>
<td>Articles 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trafficking in Persons Protocol</td>
<td>Articles 3 and 5</td>
<td>Articles 6, 7 and 9</td>
<td>Articles 11, 12 and 13</td>
<td>Articles 8 and 10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The thematic clustering was adopted by the Conference in its resolution 8/2.

The review of articles 8 and 9 of the Convention is only for those States parties to the Organized Crime Convention that are not party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

### Table 2
**Multi-year workplan for the functioning of the Mechanism**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smuggling of Migrants Protocol</td>
<td>Articles 3, 5 and 6</td>
<td>Articles 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16</td>
<td>Articles 11, 12 and 13</td>
<td>Articles 7, 10 and 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms Protocol</td>
<td>Articles 3, 5 and 8</td>
<td>Articles 7, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 15</td>
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The multi-year workplan was adopted by the Conference in its resolution 8/2.


### Appendix II

**Organization of the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto**

### Table 1
**Clusters of articles of the Convention and the Protocols thereto for the purpose of the review of implementation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal instrument</th>
<th>Cluster on criminalization</th>
<th>Cluster on prevention, technical assistance and other measures</th>
<th>Cluster on criminal justice and law enforcement</th>
<th>Cluster on international cooperation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organized Crime Convention</td>
<td>Articles 2, 5, 6, 8 and 23&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Articles 7, 9, 28, 29, 30 and 31&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<sup>a</sup> The multi-year workplan was adopted by the Conference in its resolution 8/2.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Definition of organizational matters and questionnaire</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>Criminalization (Convention provisions)</td>
<td>Criminalization (Protocol provisions; Convention provisions, mutatis, with regard to their implementation in Protocol cases)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prevention, technical assistance, and other measures</td>
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<td>Prevention and regulation, technical assistance and other measures (chapter II of the Protocol; Convention provisions, mutatis mutandis, with regard to their implementation in Protocol cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>Criminal justice and law enforcement</td>
<td>Criminal justice and law enforcement</td>
<td>Criminal justice and law enforcement</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International cooperation, including extradition, mutual legal</td>
<td>International cooperation (Protocol provisions; UNTOC)</td>
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* The thematic clustering has been prepared by the secretariat for consideration by the open-ended intergovernmental meeting and with a view to facilitating further discussion.

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<td>assistance, international cooperation for purposes of confiscation and law enforcement cooperation (UNTOC provisions)</td>
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