Morning/or evening session - August 25, 2023
Subject: Human rights and the VIII group

Madam President and all participants, Good evening:

It is true that there are international and regional human rights covenants, some of which are more than seven decades old, but we hope that you will take our concerns as a civil society seriously with regard to this agreement regarding the use of communication technology and the Internet in criminal acts, and pay attention to what the representatives of the various stakeholders have presented since the first session until this session.

Many countries of the world (which have previously ratified the international human rights conventions) have issued national legislation in recent years to combat cyber and communications crimes, but many of those laws contain texts and materials that violate human rights, and open a wide scope for local authorities to obstruct and suppress the activity of organizations. Non-governmental organizations for political or ideological reference purposes, under the pretext of combating cybercrime

Therefore, we have great hope that this international convention will contribute to reducing those violations against humanity and against the legitimate human rights activity of civil society, and we call on the delegations of all participating countries to support the proposals calling for emphasizing human rights and protecting non-governmental organizations in the articles and paragraphs of this convention. We hope that it will not be ignored or omitted in the draft text of the agreement.

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We have some observations on the sixth and seventh group materials, but the time allowed for us does not allow us to present them, (and I have already sent them to the General Secretariat via e-mail). Therefore, I will suffice with presenting observations on the eighth group, which I consider to be more important for the interest of our organization:

- In Article (11), there was a proposal added to the revised document of the fourth session that would allow the State party to adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to criminalize the use of computer data or forged digital information in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article, with knowledge of the forgery.

It is not clear how it was excluded from the draft text of the document, and we believe that the use of forged data and documents is what encourages and contributes to the continuation of forgery crimes, and we suggest returning paragraph 2 bis.

- In Article 12: There is a difference regarding the link between the interests of theft and fraud in the title of the article, and the link between them should have been clarified in the first paragraph by adding “or illegal appropriation of the property of others” after the phrase “causing loss of the property of others.”

- Regarding the nature of fraud crimes, there is a clear shortcoming in this article, and many of the delegations of the participating countries pointed out that, and by comparing the current version of this article compared to what was stated in the revised document of the fourth round, some articles and paragraphs that we believe are necessary have been omitted. There may be a disagreement on Some of them, but it was possible to rephrase them to achieve the greatest possible compatibility, and this is what we suggest to you.

- We also support the proposals regarding the inclusion of fraud crimes using electronic payment methods and digital currencies in this article.

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Thank you and my sincere regards

Mr. Taher AL-Hatef - AWTAD Anti-Corruption Organization