

Draft Statement on behalf of the African Group to the 30th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)

Delivered by H.E. Ms. **Teodolinda Coelho**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola

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Mr. Chair,

1. On behalf of the African Group, let me convey my congratulations on your election as Chair of the 30th Session of the CCPCJ, as well as to the other members of the Bureau. You can count on the full support of the Group for the successful conclusion of this meeting.
2. The Group also extends its thanks to the Secretariat for the excellent work done in preparation of this session.
3. The Group would like also to thank the outgoing Chair of the commission for the work well done.
4. The Group fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Group of 77 and China.
5. As we note our concern with the rapid rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, we reiterate the need for global solidarity in access to vaccines and unity in addressing its socio-economic impact on crime prevention and criminal justice in order to build back better and leave no one behind.
6. Transnational organized crime remains a serious challenge to the international community. Our efforts to fight this challenge should not only focus on its effects, but also its root causes, with a view to enhance the sustainable development of our countries in accordance with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063.
7. The Africa Group would like to highlight the importance of the UNCAC and UNTOC and its Protocols in the fight against transnational organized crime and corruption and reiterate our strong commitment to their implementation by the States Parties.
8. The Group believes that the fight against transnational organized crime, is a common and shared responsibility. In this regard, we call upon UNODC to continue the provision of adequate and sustainable technical assistance, including equipment, as well as capacity-building programs, based on the specific needs of requesting countries.

Mr Chair,

9. The Group takes note of this year's thematic discussion. In this regard, the Group calls upon Member States to enhance cooperation to develop effective measures to prevent the smuggling of migrants while ensuring the protection of their rights, including access to justice regardless of their immigration status, without discrimination,
10. The Group attaches great importance to the phenomenon of migration which continues to pose problems at various level, first and foremost to Africa. In that regard, and in order to address the real and pressing need for Africa to generate knowledge and better understand the migration phenomenon, an African Migration Observatory has been inaugurated by African union, on December 2020, as an AU organ, to develop, through reliable and accurate data on migration and mobility, clear, effective and realistic migration policies and programs
11. The Group recalls that the theme of the African Union for 2020 was "Silencing the guns and creating conducive conditions for Africa's development", we reiterate the importance of strengthening international cooperation for the purpose of preventing and countering the spread of illicit firearms, which remains one of the major challenges undermining peace and security in the Continent."
12. We reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasize that it should not be associated with any religion, civilization or nationality. The Group stresses the need to develop effective responses to this phenomenon and to tackle its root causes.
13. The Group endorses the Statement of the African Union strongly condemning violent attacks in the Al-Aqsa mosque and the bombardments in the Gaza Strip committed by Israeli Army against Palestinian People.
14. The Group reiterates its deep concern at the increase in incidents of kidnapping and hostage-taking committed by terrorists groups and stresses the need to enhance international cooperation to combat and dry up all sources of financing of terrorism, and call on Member States to take all necessary measures to prevent terrorists from benefiting from ransom payments, including by establishing the payment of ransom as a crime within their domestic legislation.
15. Additionally, the Group reiterates the need to enhance international cooperation to address the increasing links between terrorist activities and transnational organized crime, in particular, corruption, drug trafficking, trafficking in firearms, and trafficking in persons, money-laundering, and illicit financial flows as well as cybercrime and the use of the internet for terrorist purposes.

16. We deeply regret that despite the very explicit articles of the UNCAC, there appears to be an increase in the barriers and challenges in the asset recovery process and their return to countries of origin, and in cases that make use of settlements, and in this regard, reminds that States Parties shall afford one another the widest measures of international cooperation, and furthermore emphasizes that the management, administration and utilization of returned assets is the responsibility of the requesting State and that recovered assets, shall be returned without conditionalities and in full respect of the sovereign rights of the States of origin. We further invite State Parties to address gaps within the international anticorruption framework particularly on asset recovery, and to consider the need of an additional protocol on asset recovery and the return as part of UNCAC.
17. To this end, Member States are urged to develop modalities to improve mutual legal assistance to speed up asset recovery proceedings and render them more successful, while also drawing on the experience and knowledge built through the implementation of the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative as well as other initiatives.
18. The group welcomes the Report of the FACTI Panel and urges Member States to implement its recommendations with a view to supporting the Implementation of the Agenda 2030.
19. The African Group calls on all Member States to strengthen international cooperation at all levels to combat the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and their return to countries of origin, including information sharing, logistical support and capacity-building activities.
20. The Group reserves a special attention on the international efforts towards the establishment of a new legally-binding international instrument on cybercrime, welcomes the holding of the organizational session of the Ad-Hoc committee on cybercrime and in this regard, the Group welcomes the election of Algeria as the chair and Egypt and Nigeria as vice-chairs of the committee and assure them of our full support and requests the provision of technical assistance to enhance the capacity of member states, in particular, developing countries to investigate and combat cybercrime.
21. The Group acknowledges the progress made since the launch of the Group of Friends of Nelson Mandela Rules and commends the Secretariat for the technical assistance provided to Member States in accelerating the practical implementation, as appropriate, of the Standard Minimum Rules.
22. The Group stresses the need to enhance international cooperation to combat trafficking in cultural property and in this regard, recalls the importance of the international guidelines for crime prevention and criminal justice responses with respect to trafficking in cultural property and other related offences.

23. The Group underscores the need to address crimes that have a significant impact on protected species of wild fauna and flora such as, illegal mining, illicit trafficking in forest products, biological and natural resources, wildlife, including endangered species, as well as precious metals, in the respective fora.
24. The Group congratulates the Government of Japan for the excellent organization of the 14th UN Crime Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. We must take the necessary steps to make the Kyoto Political Declaration operational.
25. Finally, Mr. Chair, the Group would like to stress the need for all of the programmes and initiatives conducted by UNODC to be implemented in close consultation with Member States and in line with existing mandates.

I thank you.