Transparency International's Statement for the CCPCJ Expert Discussions on Crimes that Affect the Environment - February 2022 theme 2

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- Transcript –

Mister Chairman, dear delegates,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share our experience from the Transparency International movement and more specifically from our chapter in Brazil.

The World's tropical rainforests are particularly vulnerable to crimes that affect the environment. Predatory activities including environmental crimes are widely responsible for deforestation and forest degradation.

Against this backdrop, environmental crimes thrive when public institutions are vulnerable to fraud, corruption and money laundering. In a research report that we released last December, we identified twenty-one practices that enable land grabbing, one of the main drivers of illegal deforestation. Similar patterns can be found in crimes such as illegal logging, illegal mining and wildlife trafficking.

Undue practices that enable environmental crimes that affect our forests include frauds in origin certificates and public control systems, bribery of public officials to approve permits and avoid inspections, laundering of the proceeds of crime, as well as political corruption and undue influence in environmental agencies, among other risks.

Given the recurrence of these corrupt practices, the fight against environmental crimes requires addressing these risks. In fact, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering policies can provide innovative and strong solutions. I would like to highlight here 5 key lines of action :

- First, adapting anti-corruption and anti-money laundering preventive and repressive mechanisms to the specific risks of each sector affected by environmental crimes;
- Second, developing better and stronger coordination and exchange of information between law enforcement and environmental agencies at the national and international level;
- Third, guaranteeing beneficial ownership transparency to prevent and detect criminal organizations hidden behind ghost and front companies;

- Fourth, implementing open data policies for timber, wildlife and mining control systems, but also for land registries, among others, to improve detection of criminal activities;
- Fifth, empowering land and environmental defenders that are fighting against environmental crimes through safe whistleblowing channels, better access to information, participation and justice.

Through this roadmap, we could step up the existing policies to fight effectively crimes that affect the environment.

Thank you,