Statement
by Mr. Daniil Mokin,
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation
to the International Organizations in Vienna,
on the 2022 UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons,
24 January 2023

Madam Chairperson,

We reject those politicized remarks and accusations, which are contrary to the purpose of this event and undermine the work of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

As for the substance of our meeting, we would like to thank the UNODC for its efforts to compile this useful and informative report.

We have always supported, to the extent possible, also through our written contributions, all UN activities, including UNODC ones, aimed at improving the global understanding of the nature, scope and impact of trafficking in persons and, thus, contributing to the elaboration of more effective counter measures. In this context UNODC and Member States may wish to take closer look at what and why happens in the field of human trafficking on the demand side, and not necessarily in situations of conflicts, and whether sufficient measures are being taken in terms of international cooperation to counter relevant crimes and to combat relevant transnational organized crime groups.

We believe that an important common denominator, on the basis of which we could progress and which should not be eroded by political means or by non consensual terminology etc., is and remains the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

As a matter of principle, the Russian Federation strongly advocates the need to ensure, in our more and more fragmented world, an effective international cooperation in combatting human trafficking in accordance with the above-mentioned UN instruments. It should be conducted in good faith, without
politicization, hidden agendas and any double standards. Considering the transnational nature of crimes related to the trafficking in persons, it is essential to focus on the fostering effective mutual legal assistance and extradition. If it does not work properly, playing political games in this field will only exacerbate the problem.

We reject the approach practiced by some Member States, which instrumentilize the issue of trafficking in persons and try to impose their vision, practices and legislation.

We share the UNODC assessments about the need to promote government regulation of online platforms, including robust obligations for online service providers to prevent and stop trafficking in persons. As for this particular form of crime, we believe it should be properly reflected in a comprehensive convention on countering the use of ICT for criminal purposes, now under consideration by the relevant UN Ad hoc Committee.

We also share the concern expressed by previous speakers with regard to the inclusion in the Report of the terminology which is controversial and does not enjoy consensus. We believe that it should be avoided in the official UN publications.

In the context of conflicts, COVID-19 and many other factors relevant for trafficking in persons, we note that all those situations bring more and more light on the grave issue of a selective approach and double standards practiced by the States and a union of States with regard to migrants and refugees from various regions, to people of different ethnicity, cultural aspects and religion while de facto prioritizing citizens of one European country vis-à-vis immigrants from Afghanistan, the Middle East, North Africa and many other countries and regions of the world.

In the Russian Federation combatting human trafficking is carried out on a comprehensive basis by law enforcement and justice agencies in line with the above-mentioned UN documents as well as with relevant bilateral intergovernmental and interagency agreements that we concluded with more than 60 countries. We closely work with partners within the Commonwealth of Independent States, including on the basis of the Interstate Program of Cooperation in Combatting Trafficking in Persons for 2019-2023. It implies inter alia the organization of joint interagency
preventive and special operations, elaboration of recommendations, improvement of national legislations and harmonization of relevant laws.

We stand ready to continue constructive international cooperation under the UNODC auspices, to provide assistance and voluntary contributions to interested countries, upon their request, in accordance with the UN Rules and Regulations, to help counter human trafficking.

Thank you for your attention.