

**Statement on behalf of The African Group during the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the  
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)  
Delivered By H.E. Ambassador Philbert Johnson  
Chair of the Africa Group and Permanent Representative of the Republic of  
Ghana to the United Nations in Vienna  
Vienna, 22 May 2023**

Madam Chair,

1. On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the CCPCJ, as well as the other members of the Bureau. The Group is also grateful to the Secretariat for the excellent work done in preparing for this session.
2. The Africa Group fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Group of 77 and China.
3. We support the full and effective implementation of the Kyoto Declaration at 14<sup>th</sup> UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and welcome the preparations for the 15<sup>th</sup> UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. In this regard, we wish to extend our appreciation to the Chair, Ambassador Mary Mugwanja of Kenya, for her efforts in preparing for the 15<sup>th</sup> Crime Congress.
4. We welcome the thematic discussion on “Enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system to ensure access to justice and to realize a safe and secure society” in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Principles and Guidelines for Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems. **We recognize that legal aid is key to enabling access to justice for all and remains a practical tool for criminal justice reform.**
5. 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 enhancing the sustainable development

of our countries in accordance with **Agenda 2030** for Sustainable Development as well as the African Union's **Agenda 2063**.

6. We 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.
7. The Group believes that the fight against transnational organized crime, is a common and shared responsibility which requires the enhancement of bilateral, regional, sub-regional and international cooperation. 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.
8. We attach great importance to the phenomenon of migration which continues to pose challenges at various level, especially to Africa. In this 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 was inaugurated by the African Union in December 2020, as an AU organ, to develop, clear, effective and realistic migration policies and programmes through reliable and accurate data on migration and mobility,.
9. The Group reiterates the African Union's aspiration to "Silencing the Guns by 2030", as reiterated by the decision of the African Union 14th Extraordinary Session on "Silencing the Guns" to achieve the objectives of the African Union Agenda 2063.
10. We also reaffirm 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 further stresses the need to develop effective responses to this phenomenon and to tackle its root causes.
11. The Group underscores 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, trafficking in cultural property, and illicit financial flows as well as cybercrime and the use of the internet for terrorist purposes.

12. We recognize the complex nature of cybercrime and welcome the successful holding of all previous sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee and commend the able leadership of the Chair, Ambassador Mebarki of Algeria and the assistance of the Secretariat. In this regard, we urge all Member States to continue working diligently to achieve consensus and to enable the Ad Hoc Committee to fulfil its mandate, taking into account, inter alia, the concerns and interests of all Member States, in particular developing countries.
13. The Group reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration and other commitments during the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption which was held in December 2021.
14. We emphasize 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.
15. The African 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 of the Standard Minimum Rules.
16. We stress the need to enhance international cooperation to combat trafficking in cultural property and in this regard, recall the importance of the international guidelines for crime prevention and criminal justice responses with respect to

trafficking in cultural property and other related offences.

17. The African Group underlines 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.
18. Finally, Chair, the Group stresses the need for the implementation of initiatives by the UNODC in consultation with Member States and in line with existing mandates.

I thank you Chair.