

Honorable Chair, distinguished delegates and colleagues, it is a great honor for me to take part in the 32nd session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. As the Israeli Ambassador in Vienna, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this important session, and wish to thank the UNODC for hosting it.

Israel attributes the utmost importance to ensuring equal access to justice, as also demonstrated during the discussions on the Kyoto Declaration and throughout its endeavors in the UNODC in general, and the CCPCJ in particular.

In Israel, an independent Public Defender operating in the Ministry of Justice offers free legal representation in criminal proceedings. The Public Defender's Office provides legal representation nationwide throughout the various stages of the criminal justice process. These stages include, but are not limited to, advising suspects detained during police investigations, representing suspects in the detention sessions and preventing wrongful arrests, safeguarding their rights during police investigations, and upholding the rights of the accused throughout the criminal process. In doing so, Israel relentlessly prevents and rectifies wrongful convictions, while ensuring appropriate conditions of detention and imprisonment, and maintaining high standards of legal representation.

Since 2017, victims of severe sexual offences in Israel have been granted the right to legal aid that is universally accessible and not subject to financial means requirements, in criminal proceedings against the perpetrator. The legal aid extends to all related administrative proceedings, including pardon proceedings and prison vacations. Legal representation in these proceedings is provided by the Legal Aid Administration at the Ministry of Justice, by lawyers who underwent multi-disciplinary training. A specialized unit within the Legal Aid is dedicated to representing child victims. The Legal Aid Administration also assists trafficking in persons victims to acquire status in Israel and to file lawsuits related to the offences committed against them. The aid is not subject to financial means requirements, and is provided regardless of whether the State Attorney's Office filed an indictment in the victim's case. Furthermore, the Legal Aid

provides manslaughter victims' family members representation in civil lawsuits against the perpetrator, and representation in criminal proceedings that enable rehabilitation through a therapeutic incorporative criminal proceeding, and rebuilds trust in the legal system.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Israel's full commitment to the Review Mechanism of the Implementation of UNTOC and its protocols, and to share with you that we are at the final stages of our review. Israel perceives this as an opportunity to share our best practices with the reviewing states, the UNTOC secretariat, and ultimately, all participating states. We believe that the review mechanism is a crucial tool for enhancing the implementation of the UNTOC and its Protocols, and facilitating improved international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime, while safeguarding human rights.

Chair, Delegates, although challenges remain - Israel's efforts to promote equal access to justice are evident, and we are honoured to further pursue equal access to justice in this setting as well. I would like to wish everyone a highly productive session.

Thank you.