

AGENDA ITEM ON THE BRIEFING ON THE DEVELOPMENTS AND OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

AGENDA ITEM II

STATEMENT

GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

Constructive Dialogue on Trafficking in Persons Vienna, 4 October 2023

I am making this statement on behalf of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, a global, independent civil society organization headquartered in Geneva, focussed on analysis and improved responses to all forms of transnational organized crime.

I would like to thank the Chair, UNODC and the NGO Alliance for all the preparations that have gone into today's Constructive Dialogue and yesterday's multistakeholder preparatory day. It is welcome and that a broad cross section of civil society has been invited and is participating.

Since the Convention and the Protocol were adopted at the beginning of the millennium, a lot has changed, and we must be honest that the nature of organized crime has evolved. And as we speak – the harms of illicit markets, in terms of violence and instability, are clearer to see than ever. The GI-TOC's Global Organized Crime Index 2023 showcases how high rates of criminality are the norm – 83% of the world's population live in countries with high levels of criminality, up from 79% in 2021, and human trafficking has still increased since 2020. 'Besides its close relationship with human smuggling, globally speaking, human trafficking correlates moderately with half of all the other criminal markets, including the new markets added for this second Index iteration, barring cyber-dependent crimes' according to the Index. Our latest iteration of the Index was published last month and shows how things have evolved since 2021.

On the review process, we have seen from the Secretariat's presentation and background documents – the implementation review mechanism of the UNTOC is only just starting. As

we speak, no country has completed its first period of review, meaning we are very far from 70% threshold needed for countries to move closer to the review phase on prevention, technical assistance, protection measures and other measures including article 6, 7 and 9 of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. This leaves the working groups, the Conference, and the wider public with as yet no reviewed information on the implementation of the Protocol and the Convention in countries. It is unclear when countries will indeed complete their reviews.

Whatever the reasons for the delays, this leaves us with a big data gap on how the widespread ratification of the Protocol should be understood in terms of evaluating its performance or impact on criminal markets, including on how effective the Trafficking in Persons Protocol efforts have been.

Data and expertise from civil society plays a vital role in filling this gap, which is why multisectoral engagement is so important, but unfortunately the working group takes place behind closed doors, and avenues for engagement in the review mechanism are restricted.

Civil society can help push the review mechanism forward and produce data and evidence that helps states and societies better understand the harms and dynamics of organized crime, and how we can improve on our existing responses, including through the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.