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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
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UNTOC REVIEW MECHANISM

Constructive dialogue on the review process following the conclusion of the ninth session of the Working Group on Firearms

Friday, 6 May 2022

By: Christian Ponti

(on behalf of CROSS)

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Distinguish delegates, dear representatives of civil society,

I am very honored to take the floor at this very first session of the “Constructive dialogue” on the UNTOC Implementation Review Mechanism.

At the outset of my statement let me express my deep gratitude to the Italian mission in Vienna and Italian government, for offering me the opportunity to participate in the Italian delegation, as an expert, in the last three sessions of the working group on firearms.

I believe that the open attitude shown by the Italian delegation by involving a representative of the academia such as myself in the activities of the working group set an outstanding precedent to the purpose to promote concretely fruitful engagement of States parties with civil society stakeholders in the implementation process of the Firearms Protocol. I do hope that many other states parties will follow this good practice in the future.

In any case, I would like to clear that my remarks today do not reflect in any way the position of the Italian delegation. Rather, I will express a few observations on behalf of the Observatory on Organized Crime (CROSS), a Research Center based in the University of Milan (Italy) which I am pleased to represent on this occasion.

I want to profit of this meeting to also thank the Secretariat and UNODC civil society Unit for their extraordinary efforts, and for the possibility they offer to engage CROSS in several fruitful initiatives launched in the last years (such as the SE4U project, including the hub “WhatsOn”). These endeavours contribute concretely to support the involvement of civil society stakeholders more effectively in the review process of the implementation of UNTOC and the Firearms Protocol.

The constructive dialogue is a further step in that direction. In order to make this meeting as effective as possible I would like to suggest briefly three hints.

The first deals with the substance of the constructive dialogue. According to paragraph 53 of the rules establishing the Review Mechanism, the constructive dialogues may play an important role to collect input and suggestions from civil society actors, including their substantial contributions on ways to improve the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto. To that purpose, I kindly suggest that, once we will move into the substance of the process, future agenda item of the CD would closely reflect the on-going work plan of the Review Mechanism on different cluster of provisions of the Firearms Protocol under examination. To that effect it is highly

desirable (hopefully also realistic) that the preparatory material as well as the time allocated for the discussion in the CD will be adequate.

Turning to my second point, I want to express the hope that this dialogue could be as broad and inclusive as possible, in accordance with one of the guiding principles of the review mechanism. To this purpose it is quite promising the high number of NGOs participating today in this meeting. However, with the purpose to achieve full participation, I do hope that in the future the so-called “spirit of Vienna” and mutual trust between states parties and civil society will always inspire and guide all us, and prevail over any other consideration or miscommunication. In this regard, I think that the decision to post-pone the other two constructive dialogues already planned, with the aim to overcome the problem dealing with the participation of Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, is truly welcome and goes in the right direction.

Mr Chairman, my last remark is to invite you kindly, as chair of the working group on firearms, and the secretariat, to keep the momentum on the discussion that is taking place today. To this effect, it would be desirable if you might explore if it feasible that the written summary that you are expected to prepare after this meeting, will be made available not only to the working group on firearms at its next session, but also the whole audience of the next COP. This, in order to take stock of this dialogue before all states parties.

Thank you.