

**Deputy Secretary Verma's U.S. National Statement
UN Convention against Corruption
Conference of the States Parties
Atlanta, Georgia**

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of the United States delegation, it is a great pleasure to congratulate you on your election to this important role. It is an honor for the United States to be entrusted with presiding over the 10th session of the Conference of the States Parties for the next two years.

We thank all States Parties to the Convention for putting their trust in our stewardship.

The United States thanks in particular former COSP President Adel Hosny and the Government of Egypt for their cooperation in preparing for this event and congratulate Egypt on the significant achievements of its presidency.

The United States also thanks the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for its outstanding work and partnership in organizing this week's events.

Before addressing the topic at hand, I would like to comment on the current crisis in the Middle East. The position of the United States has been clear on recent events in Gaza and the actions of Hamas.

As has been the case since October 7, day one of the crisis, the United States will continue to use all its influence to encourage the reunification of hostages with their loved ones and the further expansion of aid to Palestinian civilians in Gaza who have suffered tremendous losses.

We will continue pressing for the protection of civilians as Israel pursues legitimate military objectives. And we will not give up on a future where Hamas does not control Gaza, which is untenable for Israel's and the region's security and the well-being of the Palestinian people.

Turning back to today's agenda, I want to start by recognizing UNODC's critical role in leading global efforts against corruption for more than two

decades, including acting as Secretariat to the UN Convention against Corruption.

As the UN's leading entity in the fight against corruption, UNODC is an essential partner in our efforts to implement the UNCAC and drive positive change worldwide.

To achieve this change, countries must work together. This is why the United States echoes calls deploring Russia's brutal war against Ukraine. We will continue to stand by Ukraine as it confronts Russia's aggression, and we will continue to support the people of Ukraine. Even as they defend their nation, our Ukrainian partners recognize that fighting corruption is essential to winning the peace, and we stand with and support their anti-corruption efforts.

This week's Conference has an ambitious agenda and a very full calendar of events. There are over 80 formal side events and over a dozen resolutions being negotiated, all on critical anti-corruption topics. This work, along with the unprecedented participation of civil society and the private sector, demonstrates the value and relevance of this Conference in fighting corruption. I would like to briefly review the United States' key goals for the next two years of our Presidency.

First, in honor of the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention against Corruption's adoption, the United States is committed to leading efforts to implement the UNCAC to its fullest potential. We will do this by example – by ensuring its obligations are reflected in our domestic laws and practices, and by supporting other States Parties to do the same.

We will also continue to provide technical assistance to help partners enhance UNCAC implementation. The UNCAC is the world's benchmark for preventing and combating corruption – providing countries with a blueprint on the necessary steps to take. In this regard, we are proud to support the UNODC's regional anti-corruption hubs in Mexico, Colombia, Kenya, and Bangkok, and integrate implementation of UNCAC across our programming.

Second, as this weekend's events show, the United States is also committed to ensuring that its COSP Presidency promotes and facilitates robust engagement from non-governmental stakeholders, including civil society.

We are off to a rousing start. Over 1,400 individuals took part in U.S.-hosted pre-events held on Saturday and Sunday, including the Academic Symposium, the Young Changemakers Event, and the Civil Society Forum. Civil society and private sector engagement is critical to success in this field, and these stakeholders are making incredible contributions to preventing and addressing corruption. We look forward to celebrating their contributions during our Presidency.

Third, the United States will work to promote financial transparency and integrity, including domestically, by enacting new requirements on beneficial ownership reporting. We will encourage similar reforms as part of our Presidency.

Fourth, the United States will continue to ensure that proceeds of crime are recovered and whenever appropriate returned to the benefit of those harmed by corruption. Tomorrow, during the Global Forum on Asset Recovery (GFAR) Action Series, many of our senior law enforcement practitioners will gather to discuss important ongoing work in this field, including the conclusion of several asset return agreements. We will also begin negotiations for additional returns based on the work by the U.S. Department of Justice under its Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative. During our presidency, we will seek to build on the international collaboration which made these successes possible.

Fifth and finally, the United States will maintain a focus on accountability, including by hosting an event later today showcasing measures we have deployed to promote accountability.

We will look to memorialize these measures and many other commitments in the Atlanta Declaration. We anticipate this will be a forward-looking declaration that commits us to pursuing creative and innovative solutions against these urgent challenges.

With the “Spirit of Vienna” guiding us, even as we gather here in Atlanta, we welcome the collaboration of all States Parties and encourage constructive engagement as negotiations continue on this important declaration. It was this sense of common purpose that resulted in the Convention’s adoption twenty years ago, and the key to its near universal ratification today.

In closing, on behalf of the United States, I wish to thank all States Parties and all participants in this COSP for your cooperation and collaboration in ensuring a successful week together.