

Tuesday, 13 October 2020

**Speaking notes for
Mr. Renaud Sorieul (France)
Chair of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Group**

Agenda Item 2 (a): Review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Mr. President, many thanks for this opportunity to introduce the work of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Group (IEG).

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

I had the honour to chair this intergovernmental expert group, which was established in accordance with Conference [resolution 9/1](#), and it is a pleasure for me to report to the Conference on the fulfilment of its mandate by the IEG since it was established in 2018.

Based on [resolution 9/1](#), the IEG was given the task of finalizing and, where necessary, harmonizing, the main texts to be relied upon when putting the review mechanism of the Convention into practice, namely,

- the self-assessment questionnaires;

- the guidelines for conducting the country reviews; and
- blueprints for the lists of observations and the summaries.

The same resolution gave the IEG two years to complete its task, and invited it to submit the outcome of its work to the Conference for consideration at its current session in 2020. During those two years, the IEG met twice in plenary, from 9 to 11 October 2019 and from 13 to 15 July 2020. Equally as important were the multiple informal consultations meetings held in 2019 and 2020 to prepare and facilitate the decision-making process. It should be noted that excellent spirit was displayed throughout those formal and informal meetings, and I am proud to say that the IEG was able to preserve and build upon the remarkably cooperative atmosphere that many of us still remember was a hallmark of the ninth session of the Conference.

To mention briefly the format of our most recent plenary meeting, I would recall that it was experimentally held in a so-called “hybrid/in-person” format in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. This format enabled attendance by a limited number of delegates, together with the secretariat and the Chair being physically present in Vienna, while all other delegates joined the meeting remotely from across the world. The inclusiveness of the meeting was enhanced through broad on-line participation and, although personal inter-action was somewhat curtailed, the meeting was highly successful in that it enabled the emergence of

consensus and the completion of its tasks by the IEG despite challenging circumstances. I should hope this is good omen for the Conference, which is meeting at its tenth session according to the same format.

Let me provide you with a few details about the substance of the work that was conducted by the IEG. At its first plenary meeting, in 2019, the IEG successfully approved the **Guidelines for conducting the country reviews** and the **Blueprints for the lists of observations and the summaries**. At its second plenary meeting, in 2020, it finalized and harmonized all **four self-assessment questionnaires on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, organized per cluster**, for submission to and consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session. Together with the Guidelines for conducting the country reviews and the Blueprints for the list of observations and the summaries, these self-assessment questionnaires form a complete collection of documents, a toolbox which I hope will soon enable the launching of the review process.

I hope you will agree with me that the IEG fulfilled its mandate and brought all of us in sight of the final, and most crucial, milestone, namely the official adoption of these documents by the Conference at this session by means of a dedicated resolution launching the review process.

Let me emphasise once more that the success of the IEG was made possible by the hard work carried out by all States that were actively involved, by the Secretariat in various intergovernmental formal and informal meetings, and by the Working Groups of the Conference that had paved our way, and on whose achievements the IEG heavily relied.

Multiple rounds of negotiations were necessary before the procedures and rules for the Mechanism were adopted and the preparatory phase was launched through resolution 9/1 at the last session of the Conference. To honour the results of this long process, I take the liberty to call upon you all to continue in the spirit of compromise and collaboration, to make the best use of the mechanism once the review phase is launched, and to provide it with the required resources, in a manner that befits the hopes we have raised in the world.

I would close with a personal word of gratitude to the Spanish and the Italian Presidents of the Conference at its ninth session, and to the members of the Extended Bureau who, in the inter-sessional period, constantly supported the process carried out by the IEG and provided essential inspiration to its work.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a productive and successful session.
