

## **Statement under Agenda item 1 (b) general discussion**

### **Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Alliance is the umbrella body, with over 100 members, for civil society engagement with the UN's crime and justice mandates, especially the UNTOC Conference of Parties and the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

I would like to thank the Secretariat, the host government and the UNCAC Coalition for all the arrangements that have been made to engage meaningfully with civil society before and during this Conference of States Parties.

We are grateful that the host government has prioritized civil society engagement for this COSP, and has ensured the delivery of a CSO Forum as well as the other pre-session events that were organized. These can serve as a model for future Conferences of this treaty body, as well as other related fora across the UNODC's mandate and more broadly.

In efforts to prevent and counter corruption, including in effectively implementing this convention, the role of civil society is fundamental. Whether in conducting comprehensive research and analysis, in assessing compliance of state's obligations, and monitoring the effectiveness of implementation of policies and legislation.

We see the same role for civil society in the implementation of the UNTOC and in engaging on the broad range of criminal justice standards and norms developed by the UN.

It is therefore a weakness of both this Conference and Review Mechanism, and of the UNTOC Conference and its review mechanism, that civil society's role is so restricted, to the extent that NGOs are not invited to attend to any of the Conference subsidiary bodies.

The meetings held in the margins – whether the NGO Briefing for the UNCAC, or the Constructive Dialogues for the UNTOC, include broad restrictions on what civil society can say, with opportunities for states to block access to these already restricted processes.

We congratulate the UNCAC Coalition for everything they have done to strive to open every opportunity for engagement, and to empower local civil society groups to monitor and assess UNCAC implementation. The lessons learned from their efforts are already informing approaches and civil society engagement on the UNTOC review process.

We hope that as this COSP and the UNTOC COP continue their journeys, more avenues for engagement will be opened up. More engagement and more dialogue can only enhance and accelerate the implementation and impact of the two conventions, which are complementary and essential tools in the fight against the interlinked phenomena of organized crime and corruption.

In this context, the Alliance is beginning work to deliver a civil society declaration to next year's UNTOC Conference of Parties, as our contribution to inform enhanced and more effective implementation.

Thank you

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