Thank you Chair

On behalf of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, we thank the Chair and congratulate him in his election to the presidency, and we thank the outgoing chair, Ambassador Burian for his support and recognition of the importance of civil society participation in the UNTOC.

This conference meets at a crucial time for the convention – with organized crime increasingly threatening safety, security and rights in communities around the world. That is why there is such a large interest from civil society in this convention, and in seeing it implemented fully and effectively, as a cornerstone of the UN response.

More than 1,000 NGO representatives from more than 300 NGOs registered for this conference. More than 1,400 people participated in the Constructive Dialogues in the last two years alone.

Despite the high interest – the avenues for engagement for civil society are regrettably narrow.

We greatly value the Constructive Dialogues that have been instituted under the review mechanism, and the countries that have included civil society in their national review processes. However the Constructive Dialogues need to be brought closer to the rest of the process, and efficiencies and innovations need to be found to make the whole process more valuable, and to avoid repeats of measures such as holding them online only.

For example, it would be more useful for states parties if the working groups took place took place after the Constructive Dialogues, and were therefore able to benefit from its outputs and expertise. It would be more logical and efficient, and in line with the rules and procedures of the conference of parties, for civil society observers to then also attend the meetings of the working group. At the moment, observers are not invited to attend the working groups, something further weakens the value of these exchanges.

The challenges facing the review mechanism are now clearer than ever, unfortunately. And they are in part down to the limited sources of data on which it relies, and the lack of cross sectoral engagement and analysis that is needed.

And it should be a normal part of the process for countries who invite civil society to be included in national reviews, rather than an exception.

We therefore welcome that there are discussions taking place on reforming the UNTOC process – and we hope that new ways of working can be found. The Alliance stands ready to support the incoming Presidency, Secretariat and the Chairs of the Working Groups in developing ideas to this end.

Nonetheless, we are sure that this week's COP will showcase the substantive, technical and constructive inputs of civil society, including perspectives from affected communities and people whose voices are not heard often enough.

Thank you