



**G-77 and China Statement during the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 12<sup>th</sup> session, 14-18 October 2024, delivered by H.E. Ms. Laura Gil, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Colombia**

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, it is my pleasure to express our sincere congratulations, on your election as the President of the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Congratulations that I extend to the members of the Bureau for their election.

2. The Group would like to take this opportunity to thank Iraq, another member of our Group, particularly, H.E. Ambassador Hussien and his team for their leadership and commitment during the Conference for the past two years.

3. The Group wishes to thank the Secretariat as well, for the organization and preparation for this session of the Conference.

Mr. President,

4. The Group expresses deep concern about the negative impact of crime on the rule of law, all human rights, socioeconomic development, public health and security, the environment and cultural heritage.

5. The Group also expresses deep concern that crime is becoming increasingly transnational, organized and complex and that criminals are increasingly exploiting new and emerging technologies including the Internet, to carry out their illicit activities, thus creating unprecedented challenges in preventing and combating existing crimes, as well as new and emerging forms of crime, which require effective and tangible actions at the national, regional and multilateral levels, bearing in mind the common and shared responsibility of all States in preventing and combating these crimes.

6. The Group reaffirms the preeminent role of United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocols, as applicable, as the corner stone of the international legal framework in the fight against transnational organized crime and recalls that since its adoption the Group has focused their efforts in promoting its full, balanced and effective implementation, in line with its principles, goals and spirit.

7. The Group highlights the importance of promoting ratifications of the UNTOC and its Protocols thereto, which will allow Member States to strengthen and facilitate effective international cooperation and technical assistance in preventing and combatting transnational organized crime.

8. The Group also underlines the importance of conducting the mechanism for the review of the implementation of the Convention in a timely manner and in accordance with its Guiding Principles as set out in the Annex of resolution 9/1, underscores the need to address the challenges in that regard identified during the working group meetings and invites the timely nomination of focal points for Parties that have not done so, and their effective engagement, as well as to encourage the participation of women in the review mechanism process.

Mr. President,

9. The Group highlights the significant work of the open-ended intergovernmental Working Groups on Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants, Firearms, Technical Assistance, and International Cooperation, and appreciates their continuous contributions to the Conference. We encourage Member States, in a position to do so, to provide voluntary extra-budgetary financial contributions to ensure funding to enable the participation of experts from developing countries in the working groups.

10. The Group takes note of the contribution of the constructive dialogues conducted after the intergovernmental Working Groups meetings in accordance with the procedures and rules of the functioning of the mechanism for the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto, including that no specific country situation shall be mentioned during the constructive dialogues except by the country under review.

11. The Group considers that efforts to counter all forms of transnational organized crime should be comprehensive and integrated, considering the dimensions of prevention and effective law enforcement, including adequate assistance to the victims, within their means, particularly to women, children, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities, where appropriate, and with full respect for the rule of law and the promotion and protection of all human rights.

12. The Group undertakes to continue mainstreaming a gender perspective into their efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime and effectively implement the Convention.

13. The Group emphasizes that UNODC's research work should be based on clear and prior mandates and policy guidance provided by the governing bodies. The Group would also like to emphasize the importance of transparency, regular dialogue and close consultations between all Member States and UNODC regarding the ongoing and planned publications and research activities at all stages. In this regard, the Group stresses the importance that the publications of UNODC shall be impartial and respect the cultural diversity of Member States.

Mr. President,

14. The Group commends the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, carried out under the Chairmanship of Algeria, welcomes the submission by the Ad Hoc Committee of the "*United Nations Convention against Cybercrime; Strengthening International Cooperation for Combating Certain Crimes Committed by Means of Information and Communications Technology Systems and for the Sharing of Evidence in Electronic Form of Serious Crimes*" to the UNGA for its consideration, and expresses deep appreciation for the able leadership of the Ad Hoc Committee Chair H.E. Ambassador Faouzia Mebarki, as well as for the valuable contribution of the members of the Bureau and the facilitators from the developing countries. In this regard, the Group wishes to highlight its committed engagement during the negotiation as the voice of the Global South.

Mr. President,

15. The Group wishes to express its concern for the illicit trafficking of cultural property and related offences, including the growing involvement of organized criminal groups, and terrorist groups, which continues to inflict increasing damage to the cultural heritage of our nations, and thus, to part of our identities.

16. In this regard, the Group stresses the need to enhance efforts to combat this crime and to implement, in accordance with domestic legal frameworks, the International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to trafficking in cultural property and other related offenses, adopted by the General Assembly.

17. The Group expresses its concern regarding the crimes that affect the environment and underscores the need to address crimes that have a significant impact on protected species of wild fauna and flora such as, illegal mining, illicit trafficking in forest products, biological and natural resources, wildlife, as well as precious metals, in the respective fora.

18. The Group underscores the need to better understand and enhance its efforts, in accordance with each Member's national law, against the smuggling of commercial goods.

19. The Group acknowledges the increasing links between transnational organized crime and other crimes, such as, drug-related crime, corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows, terrorism and its financing. Accordingly, the Group reaffirms the need for enhanced bilateral, regional and international cooperation in the area of exchange of information, extradition and mutual legal assistance, in accordance with domestic legislation.

20. On the particular issue of preventing and combatting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and in order to face this challenge, the Group calls for strengthening international responses, in accordance with national legislation and the implementation and application of the UNTOC, and all applicable regional and international counter-terrorism legal instruments, as well as of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

21. The Group strongly reaffirms that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, civilization, nationality or ethnicity, and reiterates that all efforts to counter it should be in line with international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

22. The Group reiterates its serious concern over any form of ranking of Member States for the purposes of international cooperation in criminal matters. We remain strongly convinced that upholding multilateralism, including supporting an effective United Nations development system and avoid promulgating, maintaining and imposing any unilateral coercive measures and actions, including sanctions and restrictions, on developing countries that are in contravention of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, is essential to improve solidarity, international cooperation framework and reinforce States' capabilities on preventing and combatting transnational organized crime.

23. The Group encourages multidisciplinary efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime through cooperation and coordination between law enforcement and other criminal justice institutions, and other governmental sectors, as well as to support their work, by engaging in and fostering, in accordance with domestic law, partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

24. The Group reaffirms the need of full and effective implementation of the Convention including through international cooperation, particularly in the area of mutual legal assistance, exchange of information, extradition and identification, confiscation, seizure, recovery, unconditional return of assets and repatriation of proceeds of crime to Countries of origin with the aim to contribute to combating the threats posed by transnational organized crime.

25. The Group firmly believes that adequate, long-term, sustainable, effective and demand-driven technical and material assistance, transfer of technology and provision of equipment, are key and crosscutting throughout the Convention and essential for its effective and efficient implementation, and the Group highlights the value of the expertise provided by the countries of the Global South in the international efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime.

26. The Group also highlights the importance of international cooperation, including South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to enhance capabilities of Member States to prevent, detect and combat effectively transnational organized crime.

27. The Group emphasizes the need for enhancing meaningful and result-oriented international cooperation in the area of asset recovery, and the seizure and confiscation of proceeds of crime and their unconditional return to countries of origin, through all available legal mechanisms, including civil and administrative proceedings, non-trial resolutions and settlements that have proceeds of crime for confiscation and return.

28. The Group highlights once more the importance of adequate financial and administrative support for full, efficient and effective implementation of the activities assigned to the UNODC. Additionally, assuring a sufficient, predictable and stable funding to the Conference, the Mechanism of the Review and to UNODC is essential to promote programmes and projects which, at the request of the benefiting country, provides the proper technical assistance to implement the Convention.

29. The Group expresses concern over the increasing dependence of UNODC on extra budgetary resources, and therefore, reiterates that the core activities of the Office should be funded from the regular budget.

30. The Group kindly reiterates its requests to the Executive Director to intensify the efforts to ensure that the principle of equitable geographical distribution, and gender balance are fully incorporated in the recruitment policy of UNODC, both at headquarters, and its Field Offices, particularly at the senior and policy-making levels and for professional posts requiring specific skills.

Mr. President,

31. Finally, the Group acknowledges that sustainable development and the rule of law are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. In this regard, the Group emphasizes the need for a balanced and effective implementation of the 2030 agenda, recognizing its integrated, indivisible, global nature and universal application.

Thank you, Mr. President.