

## **ECOSOC INTEGRATION SEGMENT**

**“Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

**Shared Responsibility to Recover Better from COVID-19”**

**6 July 2020**

**Panel discussion**

**“Leaving no one behind in the context of COVID-19 and the decade of action and delivery”**

**16:50-17:50**

**H.E. Ambassador Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel**

**Vice-Chair of the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to participate in the integration segment of the Economic and Social Council today, in my capacity as Second Vice-Chair of the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), and to contribute the perspective of the Vienna-based Commission.

Let me first extend my sincere appreciation to H.E. Mr. Mher Margaryan, who joined, in his capacity as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, the high-level discussion in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, held jointly by the CCPCJ and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on 12 June.

Work on crime prevention and criminal justice plays a crucial role in ensuring peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Effective crime prevention and

strong criminal justice institutions are key to strengthening the rule of law and human rights and serve as a prerequisite for the effective and sustainable fight against organized crime, corruption and terrorism. Furthermore, tackling crime is integral to foster development, peace, stability and security, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Tipping in 2020 into the “decade of delivery” to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the global community faced the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis that has further demonstrated that measures to ensure public safety and security are interconnected and require a comprehensive and systematic approach. The so much needed integrated perspective to combat this crisis is offered by the sustainable development goals, which bring the global economic, environmental and development agendas together. To get back on track for achieving the SDGs, collective action needs to be taken to address the negative impact of the pandemic on all spheres of life, including in relation to crime prevention and criminal justice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is no secret that COVID-19 exacerbated the socio-economic vulnerabilities exploited by criminal networks to scale up their activities. It also placed a heavy burden on Member States’ ongoing efforts to prevent crime, strengthen criminal justice institutions and promote the rule of law. To illustrate the magnitude of the problem, let me briefly touch upon some of the thematic areas that are under the purview of the Commission.

There is, for example, a high risk of criminal networks taking advantage of the increased use, due to the COVID-19 crisis, of online technology, to diversify their disruptive tools and methods. It is therefore important to find innovative solutions to prevent and counter cybercrime, in cooperation with all relevant

stakeholders, including the private sector, while placing a particular focus on children and youth as most vulnerable targets.

The global community also needs to review and enhance the efforts to identify victims of trafficking in persons, including among migrant populations, and to ensure access to readily available and appropriate assistance and support for victims, with due consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In relation to trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, reinstating the basic principles for equal access to services, including healthcare, and protection without discrimination is essential during the crisis.

There is a need to also prevent and counter corruption and fraud occurring more extensively in the absence of adequate oversight measures in rapid and largescale disbursement of resources during the COVID-19. In addition, measures should be enforced to prevent and combat organized crime affiliated with production and distribution of substandard or falsified personal protection and hygiene products.

It is also crucial for Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure that criminal justice systems mitigate the negative implications of COVID-19, particularly in the context of imprisonment. Furthermore, action needs to be taken to tackle the specific impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and girls, including with a view to addressing and tackling the rise in domestic violence against women, occurring during the lockdown period.

It goes without saying that collecting and sharing data is key for better understanding the impact of COVID-19 on crime and the array of implications it has on society. Let me also highlight the importance of strengthened international cooperation, based on the principle of shared responsibility, to detect, prevent, prosecute and combat all types of transnational crime, to provide access to justice

for all and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, while tackling the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

To conclude, let me stress that in a time of this global unprecedented crisis, we should be guided first and foremost by the principle of “leaving no one behind”. We should make sure that the real and concrete risks posed by COVID-19 on vulnerable members of society are not overlooked. Recovering from the pandemic offers a unique opportunity to revisit the existing inequalities in the current development model that feed marginalization, gender-based violence and trafficking in persons – and we should most certainly make full use of this opportunity.

Let me reassure you that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice will continue making an effective contribution to addressing crime in a broader development context, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Thank you.