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UNICRI Report on counterfeiting

Distinguished delegates, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank all of you for your participation to the launch of the first UNICRI Report on counterfeiting.

Counterfeiting is an extremely dangerous criminal activity that for a certain period of time enjoyed a sort of impunity, because it is considered as a victimless crime. This is far from the truth. Counterfeiting entails serious consequences for the entire society. Entrepreneurs lose profits and, with them, they also lose the reward for their creative activity and for the investments made to ameliorate their products. Consumers' health and safety is threatened by the presence on the market of counterfeit products like medicines, toys or spare parts for the automotive sector. Because of counterfeiting, jobs are lost every year and States collect fewer revenues.

But even more worrisome aspects arise when considering who is actually managing this illicit activity. Counterfeiting is the 21st century golden mine for organized criminals. It is, in fact, an immense source of profits ready to be reinvested in other illegal areas. It also serves as a mean to easily launder money deriving from other crimes. We should not be surprised then if counterfeiting is a continuously growing and expanding criminal activity and if criminal transnational networks are fully involved in managing the production and distribution of the so called fakes.

The international community strongly needs a global and integrated strategy to counter the diffusion of this crime. The actions taken by the national competent authorities and the relevant international organizations were often less coordinated, resulting in possible waste of resources and efforts.

UNICRI is committed to support the creation of a new and more comprehensive approach, strongly based on international cooperation and coordination. Our aim is to create and lead a common platform for a constant monitoring of the phenomenon and for the planning and implementation of strategies to progressively reduce the diffusion of this crime.

Coordination and cooperation will constitute the pillars upon which we will build our strategy. But to do this we must also take into due account that all the different sectors affected by counterfeiting must be involved and that we cannot overlook the importance of the private sector, which has been so often left at the margins of the decision process.

We must share our experience and knowledge. We must support the diffusion of good practices which have proven to be successful and their application to different sectors.

And most importantly, we must remember that counterfeiting is too widespread and involves too many different legal and social aspects to believe that it could be stopped by a single country alone or by a single International Organization alone.

I thank you very much for your attention.