

## **Stop transnational organized crime: how the international community can cooperate to face “mobsters without borders”**

Speech given at the 13<sup>th</sup> seminar on organized crime in the Asian Region

Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Colleagues and Friends,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a special honour for me to address you today at the 13<sup>th</sup> Seminar on Organized Crime in the Asian Region and on behalf of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) I would like to express my gratitude for the invitation to share with you our vision for a global strategy against transnational organized crime. I am confident that with your collective wisdom and active participation, this Seminar will yield concrete results as we work towards the common goal of combating organized crime.

### **The twentieth century has witnessed a rise in transnational organized crime**

The twentieth century has witnessed a rise in transnational organized crime, which threatens the economic prosperity and stability of the Asian region, and causes immeasurable human suffering. The figures are staggering:

**Illicit drug trade:** it is estimated that global illicit drug trade supplies around 200 million customers and it is worth \$ 400 billion or 8% of the world trade.

**Money Laundering:** money laundering, bank secrecy and off-shores allow for the advent of a new economic power which manages ca. \$ 500 billion, equivalent to ca. 2% to 3% of the world's Gross National Product. This new economic illegal power is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> in the hierarchy of the greatest world powers.

**Human beings in slavery-like conditions:** Approximately 27 million people are currently living under conditions of slavery or slavery-like conditions. A very dark forecast of citizens security is defined when one observes that from the antique slave trade, modern "uncivil society" has now developed slaves for rent, for lease, for sexual exploitation, even available on-line to be charged to credit cards.

**Trafficking in women:** Estimates indicated that about one million women and children are trafficked, of which about 250.000 from South East Asia. This business is worth around \$ 5 - 7 billions a year.

**Fraud:** It is estimated that fraud in the European Union costs such each taxpayer 10 UK sterling per year. In the US, banks lost \$ 53 million as a result of bank robberies in 1993, while bank fraud losses were an unbelievable \$815 million. In the UK, 70% of top companies have been victims of fraud - 60% of it carried out by the companies' own management.

**Corruption:** according to the World Bank, widespread corruption can cause the growth rate of a country to be 1/2 to 1% lower than that of a similar country without corruption. And equally significant widespread corruption slows investment.

**Organised Crime:** at the heart of the above figures is the growing power of organised crime syndicates, estimated to gross \$ 1.5 trillion a year - a major economic power rivalling the multinational corporations.

### **Organized crime is a threat to human rights, national stability, and development in the Asian region**

No nation is safe from crimes such as drug trafficking, money laundering, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants, corruption, trafficking of firearms, terrorism, computer crime, and financial fraud. With globalization, transnational crime is becoming increasingly active and widespread. It is difficult for all countries, especially those nations in transition, to deal with this issue because of the lack of resources, expertise, and sufficient legal framework.

The roots of organized crime are deep. The players frequently have powerful connections with politicians, government officials, and law enforcement officers. Criminals would rather influence and intimidate a government and undermine legitimate businesses rather than overtly destroy them. Once the government is powerless to fight against transnational organized crime, sovereignty is threatened and the national social fabric deteriorates under the growing power of organized criminal groups. The dark side of globalization must be acknowledged and addressed because every nation, irrespective of its geographical, political, or economic situation, is affected.

However, I believe there is a firm commitment among governments, organizations, and civil society to work closely and strengthen our national capacities and reinforce cooperation measures to fight the uncivil society. ODCCP is one UN organization leading this endeavour.

### **ODCCP versus UNDCP**

One of the most frequently asked questions is ‘what is the difference between ODCCP and UNDCP’?

The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) is the umbrella organization that makes up the United Nations Drug Control and the Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP). It also includes the Terrorism Prevention Branch and the Global Programmes against Money Laundering, Corruption, Organized Crime, and Trafficking in Human Beings. All these global programmes are based in Vienna, Austria.

As the regional arm for Asia and Pacific, the ODCCP Regional Centre in Bangkok has received a new mandate for 2001 to support and facilitate new initiatives in crime prevention. It is our firm political will to undertake all possible measures and put

our commitment into practical and effective measures against transnational organized crime. By strengthening the judicial capacity of countries in the region, promoting educational programmes, mobilizing financial resources to provide technical assistance, and raising public awareness by disseminating information on the seriousness and negative consequences, ODCCP will promote and fulfill the will of the international community. We will answer to the global challenge of transnational organized crime with a global response. The above priority areas of our workplace have been determined by the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Seminar on “Building Capacities for Fighting Transnational Organized Crime” held in Bangkok during March 2000.

To demonstrate our commitment, I am proud to announce that the twenty-first century brings two new powerful tools for effective cooperation against transnational organized crime.

### **Turning the tide on transnational organized crime**

The first is the Transnational Organized Crime Convention that was signed by 120 nations, with close to 80 of them also signing the treaty’s two accompanying protocols -- one to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the other against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, this past December in Palermo, Italy. A third Protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition is currently in its final draft stages upon which it will also open for signature.

Put simply, the Convention seeks to strengthen the power of governments in combating serious crimes. The new treaty will provide the basis for stronger common action against money-laundering, greater ease of extradition, measures on the protection of witnesses, and enhanced judicial cooperation. It will also establish a funding mechanism to help countries implement the Convention. An important first step will be to encourage all countries to synchronize their national laws so there will be no uncertainties as to whether a crime in one country is a crime in another. ODCCP is prepared to assist countries in the preparation and implementation of the Convention and its protocols.

I wish to appeal to you that the solution does not lie in the building of higher fences but in the building of common bridges. In the past, our efforts to combat criminal groups have remained fragmented and the Convention provides us a new tool to address the scourge of crime as a global problem. The Convention extends well beyond the sphere of cooperation on drug trafficking where a strong political commitment already exists.

### **Sharing the vision, leading the change**

The second tool I wish to introduce highlights this strong political commitment. The ACCORD (ASEAN and China Cooperative Operation in Response to Dangerous Drugs) Plan of Action was unanimously endorsed by 378 participants from 36 countries and 16

organizations at the International Congress “In Pursuit of a Drug ASEAN 2015: Sharing the vision, leading the change” on October 13, 2000 in Bangkok, Thailand. The dynamic Plan of Action rests on four pillars:

- Proactively advocating civic awareness on dangers of drugs and social response
- Building consensus and sharing best practices on demand reduction
- Strengthening the rule of law by an enhanced network of control measures and improved law enforcement cooperation and legislation review
- Eliminating the supply of illicit drugs by boosting alternative development programmes and community participation in the eradication of illicit crops.

Forced to face the profound challenges emerging from transnational organized crime, the international community is demanding action. It is time for everyone to take a stand and declare that we will not accept a world where we must raise our children in fear of global predators and transnational organized crime.

In closing, I wish to show you a brief animated presentation on the ACCORD Plan of Action.

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by  
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## The threats of uncivil society

Human trafficking & smuggling of migrants

Fraud

Illicit drug trade

Corruption

Bank secrecy, Money laundering, and off-shore banking

Transnational organized crime

Every nation, irrespective of its geographical, political, or economic situation is affected



We must work together!

Commitment must come from civil society, governments and organizations

No one alone can cope with the threat of transnational organized crime

Coordination and cooperation are key!!

## United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP)

### United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

- Educate the world about the dangers of drug abuse;
- Strengthens international action against drug production, trafficking and drug related crime
- Promote efforts to reduce drug abuse, particularly among the young and vulnerable
- Builds local, national and international partnerships to address drug issues; and,
- Provides information, analysis and expertise on the drug issue.

### Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP)

- Promotes international cooperation in crime prevention and control;
- Supports the development of criminal justice systems; and,
- Assists Member States in addressing the challenges and threats posed by the changing nature of transnational organized crime.

## ODDCP Regional Centre in Bangkok will facilitate new initiatives in crime prevention

- Global Programme against Corruption
- Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings
- Global Studies on Organized Crime



**ACCORD** establishes a dynamic **Plan of Action**, which rests on four pillars:

-  Proactively advocating civic awareness on dangers of drugs and social response
-  Building consensus and sharing best practices on demand reduction
-  Strengthening the rule of law by an enhanced network of control measures and improved law enforcement co-operation and legislative review
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The achievement of the Plan will be continually measured through a regional monitoring mechanism owned by all the stakeholders.



**We must take a stand and declare that we will not accept a world where we must raise our children in fear of global predators and transnational organized crime**

**Thank you.**

Enjoy the brief animated presentation on the **ACCORD Plan of Action**

