

## Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women Vienna Alliance of NGOs

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### **Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto Sixth session (15-19 October 2012)**

Agenda item 1(f): General discussion

16 October 2012

Mr President,

The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women and the Vienna Alliance of NGOs welcome the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols.

Transnational organized crime is complex and requires complex strategies in response. There is no one answer. We require comprehensive, multi-sectoral, evidence-based approaches. To find effective solutions, we need to collaborate – to share both successes and challenges, technical assistance needs and good practices. We need to talk and listen to, and learn from each other.

There is still much that we do not know. Data is urgently needed on the impact of the implementation of UNTOC and its Protocols on the people they are intended to benefit. Moreover, research has shown that some of these efforts have impacts, not always positive, on many others who are not part of these target communities.

To find these answers we need to draw on existing expertise – expertise that is not just located in State actors. Independent experts, from academia, NGOs and other civil society bodies, have analyses, original research and direct experience – of crimes covered by the UNTOC and its Protocols, and of the impacts of laws, policies, programmes and initiatives put in place to address these crimes – to contribute meaningfully to our search for solutions to organized crime.

But expertise is also to be found with the survivors of the crimes covered by UNTOC and its Protocols. Empowering and supporting the recovery of survivors to share their insights of their experiences, of the services made available to them, of their recommendations on prevention, will make for more effective response to organized crime and ensure we are better able to provide for future victims of these crimes. We need an inclusive and transparent mechanism with space for survivors to be able to articulate their analyses.

The mechanism for this inclusive approach already exists in the Conference of the Parties Rules of Procedure. Rule 17 on the participation of non-governmental organizations, read in conjunction with Rule 2 that clarifies that the rules apply to any session of the Conference and “mutatis mutandis, to any mechanism that the Conference may establish in accordance with article 32 of the Convention, unless it decides otherwise”. We urge the Conference of the Parties to ensure that the review mechanism adopted at this session honours this rule and good practice.

Mr President,

We welcome the agreement achieved in the negotiations to date to review the implementation of UNTOC and its Protocols as one mechanism on a thematic basis. This approach will reflect and draw out the complexities of the issues and provide a clear picture of the challenges faced and good practices established by States in their implementation of these standards.

However, comprehensive solutions require wide-ranging sources and without a wide range of data sources, any review will face limits to its understanding of the situation and the recommendations it can make.

Another potential source of bias or inconsistency in the review is the source of funding for its different aspects. The review mechanism must ensure the equal treatment of states under review. The process must have adequate dedicated human and financial resources necessary for all aspects of the review mechanism, including full participation of the reviewing experts in the proposed country visits or joint meeting.

The Vienna Alliance of NGOs and the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women urges states to ensure that the final terms of reference for the review mechanism to UNTOC and its Protocols live up to its guiding principles of being “transparent, efficient, non-intrusive, inclusive and impartial”. Civil society organisations can help achieve this. And this is vital to ensure the credibility and authority not just of the review mechanism, but of the UNTOC and its Protocols.

We look forward in working with States to make that a reality.

Thank you Mr President.