

17 June 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,  
President of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on  
Transnational Crime**

Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet today to discuss the phenomenon of transnational organized crime and to reflect on the best solutions to address it. Indeed, crime has turned into a global business operating in collusion with legitimate activity. It now represents far more than localized violence - it has turned into a pervasive threat to the security of entire States and regions.

Organized crime acts as a plague on the rule of law and legitimate institutions throughout the world; drug cartels are spreading violence in Latin America..... West Africa is under attack from drug traffickers that are gaining profit and political power..... collusion between insurgents and criminal groups threatens the stability of West Asia, the Andes and parts of Africa, fuelling the trade in smuggled weapons, the plunder of natural resources and piracy; .....in many urban centers, authorities have lost control of parts of cities to organized gangs and thugs;.... And finally, human trafficking has spread throughout the world.

This brief outline demonstrates the increasing diversity and the influence of organized crime networks. Indeed, while criminal networks continue to operate in areas such as racketeering and drug trafficking, many now ply their trade in a wide range of activities, such as human trafficking, migrant smuggling, environmental crime, weapons trafficking, trafficking in cultural property, fraud, cybercrime and money laundering. This evolution of organized crime testifies to the capacity of criminal groups to adapt, moving, often with little or no regard to borders, to exploit any opportunity to make money. Older crimes, such as kidnapping and piracy, are also undergoing a period of resurgence. Furthermore, the escalating collusion between previously disconnected criminal networks is also alarming. Heroin traffickers, for example, have made available their infrastructure to facilitate cocaine traffickers at the regional level. In return, cocaine traffickers help heroin traffickers gain new markets at the local level.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has shown in numerous reports how organized crime constitutes a threat to peace and stability. It is also a serious cause of destabilization in fragile countries. The failure to grasp the enormity of this challenge may bear grave consequences, considering

the growing capacity of criminals to subvert government institutions, undermine economic and social structures, and fuel regional crises. Organized crime is also a development issue. In countries ravaged by crime and corruption, development and economic performance cannot take hold.

The General Assembly has pledged its commitment to fighting organized crime in several important resolutions, but efforts need greater coherence. We must take a tougher stand against organized crime. We must mainstream our fight against crime into broader programmes. Today's meeting is an indispensable step in this direction.

Ten years ago the General Assembly adopted the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In the 2005 Summit outcome document, Member States expressed grave concern at the negative effects on development, peace and security and human rights posed by organized crime, and at the increasing vulnerability of States to such conduct. We must prosecute and punish the criminals involved and protect and assist the victims and their families.

We must spur governments – and all members of society – into action: to reduce the vulnerability of victims, increase the risks to criminals, and reduce demand for illegal goods and services.

This High-level meeting presents us with the occasion to revitalize our collective and individual resolve to prevent and combat organized crime. Let us today send a strong signal from this Assembly that transnational organized crime must be stopped before it spreads even more fear, poverty, violence and impunity.

Thank you for your attention.