Statement by Turkey on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and International Drug Control Items 108 and 109

Thank you Mr. Chair,

International organized crime, narcotics trade and human trafficking are serious and interconnected challenges that threaten human rights, democratic values, sustainable development and international peace. There is a clear linkage between organized crime networks and the financing of international terrorism, particularly through drug trade.

The fight against these scourges should be carried out in close cooperation among States, relevant regional and international organizations in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, as well as the UN Convention against Corruption has a key role in this respect. While we note with satisfaction that a significant number of countries across the globe have already become party to these instruments, there is still much to be done for their implementation.

Mr. Chair,

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery and a crime against humanity. Human trafficking, at the same time, is the third most lucrative form of organized crime, together with drugs and arms trade. The key findings outlined in the latest Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, published by UNODC, are alarming: While victims are predominantly women and girls, they are trafficked across borders by criminal groups mainly for sexual exploitation or forced labor. The international efforts against this particular crime should continue vigorously while focusing on the protection of victims and upholding their human rights. From this perspective, the organization of the High Level Meeting on the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons held this year in the General Assembly has been very welcome.

Mr. Chair,

The transnational organized crime with its multi-faceted nature, innovates integral links between money laundering, human and drug trafficking. With this in mind, Turkey plays an active role in global and regional initiatives in the fight against counter-
narcotics. Advocating the principle of collective responsibility, Turkey is a member of the international drug control system based on the relevant UN Treaties. Within the framework of the UN and in cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, it sponsors a variety of UNODC projects, ranging from the Paris Pact Initiative to Global Afghan Opiate Trade and to the Regional Program for South Eastern Europe. Turkey has been constantly contributing financial support both to the Crime Fund and the Drug Fund to implement various UNODC programs.

We should also remain vigilant about newly emerging forms of international organized crime, such as cybercrime, identity-related crime, piracy and other forms of crimes at sea, environment-related crimes, production and trafficking of fraudulent medicines. Turkey has made significant contributions with respect to the international fight against piracy off the coast of Somalia and cooperated with the countries in the region to eliminate the conditions conducive to criminal activities.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to stress the serious nature of crimes involving cultural property. We believe that an effective legal instrument needs to be prepared in this respect, and welcome the adoption of the resolution titled “Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin” last year by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chair,

Although the UNTOC and its Protocols provide the basic legal framework in this field, there is a need to supplement these instruments with an effective review mechanism. Despite States Parties were unable to reach consensus on this issue last year, we should continue our work to set up a review mechanism based on the principles of efficacy and transparency. On a different note, we commend the implementation mechanism operating under the UNCAC structure. While there is room for further improvements, it has become an integral part of the Convention system.

Mr. Chair,

Much needs to be done to put an end to the security and financial threats and grave human costs caused by organized crime, narcotics trade and human trafficking. As the international community, we must employ sustained efforts towards this end.

Thank you.