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National Initiative against organized Crime (NIOC)-Centre for Governance Research (CGR) Pakistan

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The National Initiative against Organized Crime operates on an independent civil society platform of the Centre for Governance Research in Pakistan. I also am a Board Member of Vienna-based Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

UNTOC Review is a methodical and long-drawn process spanning over more than a decade. Cluster-1 review is under way.

Let me at the outset commend the UNODC Civil Society Unit for effective facilitation of the civil society engagement through Stakeholder Engagement for UNTOC (SE4U) Initiative. In fact, the Guide for civil society community engagement with UNTOC Review Mechanism issued in July 2021, and co-authored with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GITOC), proved extremely helpful in establishing contacts between the government and the civil society.

NIOC reached out to the Government of Pakistan last year as a result of which the National Focal Person on UNTOC Review Process was not only nominated but since inception of review, there has been an active civil society engagement strategy put in place.

For this first Constructive Dialogue on UNTOC, allow me to make the following three proposals:

- 1) Regulation of firearms, especially prohibited and non-prohibited bores, is the need of the hour. Non-state actors and citizens in general should have no access to lethal prohibited-bore weapons. The so-called Kalashnikov culture must be discouraged if we want to meet the SDG-16 on peace and the rule of law in conflict zones, prone to terrorism, insurgencies and violence.
- 2) We need to forge an effective state and society response to transnational organized crime; through national, regional and global strategies under the overarching UN Framework of Security.
- 3) The civil society engagement strategy should be inclusive; especially in the current shrinking space for the civil society, the UN may guard against the tendency to exclude the voices of reason and dissent.

Finally, can I conclude by saying that violence spreads like lava. Let us stem this tide. Together, WE CAN.

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