

*A healthy planet*



*For future generations*

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## **NGO Committee on Sustainable Development VIENNA**

### **Statement**

to be delivered to

2022 CCPCJ Expert Discussions on Crimes that Affect the Environment

Thematic session 3: Strengthening international cooperation to address crimes that affect the environment (16 February 2022)

Preventing environmental crimes calls for the implementation of legislation and enforcement by United Nations Member States, as well as major involvement on the part of civil society. Cooperation at all levels is essential to advancing crime prevention, strengthening criminal justice, and assuring the rule of law.

In October 2020 the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime adopted a resolution on *Preventing and Combating Crimes that affect the Environment falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*.

In paragraph 16 of that resolution, secretariats of United Nations Conventions were requested to enter into cooperation with the aim of achieving the goal of reducing environmental crime.

In 2021, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) drew up a draft resolution (E/CN.15/2021/L.4/Rev.1) in which Member States were strongly encouraged "*to increase the exchange of information and knowledge on crimes that affect the environment among national authorities, as well as with other Member States and relevant international and regional organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), in accordance with domestic legislation and their respective international legal obligations.*"

The undersigned NGOs in consultative status with the UN support that draft resolution and urge the representatives of United Nations Member States to consider that:

- a) this goal can only be achieved when all people, regardless of age and ethnicity
  - in particular women and girls, who do not always have access to information
  - are informed in a transparent manner and appropriately involved;
- b) since information and participation of stakeholders is a key element in fighting crime and corruption, the United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (aka the Aarhus Convention), as well as the Escazú Agreement should be overarching instruments that encourage people to cooperate;
- c) officers and police organisations should be trained in substantive matters and methods to involve civil society thereby increasing cooperation and transparency;
- d) fully transparent action plans are of critical importance;
- e) tangible steps have to be taken to secure the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, with due consideration being given to shadow reports published by local, regional and international NGOs;
- f) special attention should be given to sustainable development goal 17 and the key importance of genuine partnership in combating transnational environmental crime;
- g) transparency and consistency of procedures, as well as full accountability, should be guaranteed, and public hearings and procedures encouraged;
- h) close cooperation should be initiated at all levels, both local and international;
- i) evaluation of all activities and measures should be published;
- j) progress reports should be on the agenda of relevant United Nations meetings and conferences; and
- k) a dedicated United Nations Unit should be established so as to monitor progress and publish annual reports.