



STATEMENT BY MR. VINCENT McCLEAN, REPRESENTATIVE
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME TO
THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,
29 APRIL 2004

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Commission to two United Nations Conventions which will help Member States defend their economic and sustainable development agendas from the ravages of organised crime and corruption.

Criminal activities such as drug trafficking, bribery, the misappropriation of funds intended for investment and social services, and the trafficking of women and children present serious challenges to good governance, the rule of law and sustainable, economic and social development. The burdens these challenges impose bear hardest on the poorest sections of societies. It follows that addressing them effectively is critical to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, which entered into force on 29 September 2003, places a legal obligation on state parties to take specific measures to cooperate with each another against offences such as participation in an organised criminal group, money laundering and obstruction of justice. That convention's Protocol on Trafficking in Human Beings requires action to make trafficking a criminal offence, to prosecute offenders and to protect victims.

The Convention against Corruption, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 31 October 2003 and which has been signed by over 100 Member States, is the first global legally binding instrument on corruption. It breaks new ground with its provisions on the prevention of corruption and on asset recovery.

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Adoption and ratification of these instruments is a beginning, but only a beginning. It is vital that Member States ensure that their criminal justice institutions are sufficiently robust to deal with the challenges they face. Tackling organised crime means having effective criminal intelligence systems, machinery to trace and seize the proceeds of crime and programmes to protect witnesses. Tackling corruption means having effective counter-corruption strategies and institutions, transparent national accounts, comprehensive asset disclosure by Ministers and senior officials when they take up and relinquish office, and adequate remuneration for public servants.

These very desirable objectives will not be achieved without effective political leadership at national level and the involvement and support of civil society, together with co-operation across borders in the form of exchange of criminal intelligence, extradition arrangements, provisions for repatriation of assets and joint operations against traffickers in drugs, weapons and human beings.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is committed to supporting Member States in their efforts to implement the provisions of these conventions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

UNODC New York Office
April 2004