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Statement by

H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN in New York at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the 68th Session of the UNGA on Agenda item 108: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and Agenda item 109: International Drug Control

New York, 10 October 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Transnational Organized Crimes such as trafficking in persons, money laundering, corruption, drug trafficking and drug abuse are becoming issues of global concern. The negative impacts of such crimes do not remain confined within the territorial boundaries and no country can address these crimes alone, while we all are equally affected by such crimes.

Mr. Chair:

As a state party to several UN Conventions including UN Convention on Transnational Organized crimes, UN Convention Against Corruption, Bangladesh has been making sincere efforts to combat transnational organized crimes. The Government is committed to establish a corruption free society and stands tough against any act of corruption. Our Anti-Corruption Commission, a strong and independent institution investigates and prosecutes offences related to corruption. The present Government has undertaken significant reforms to ensure complete independence of the Commission through the passage of the Anti-Corruption Commission (Amendment) Act, 2012.

Mr. Chair:

Following a “zero tolerance” policy towards terrorism, the government of Bangladesh developed a robust legal framework to combat terrorism through enactment of Money Laundering Prevention Act in 2009, updated in 2012 and ‘Anti-Terrorism Act-2012’ Mutual Legal Assistance Act; 2012. At the regional level, we are closely working with other members of our regions under ‘SAARC Regional Convention on Terrorism including its Protocol’, and BIMSTEC Counter-terrorism Convention. We are party to all UN Conventions on counter-terrorism and support the early conclusion of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, with a comprehensive consensus definition of terrorism and clear distinction between terrorism and the legitimate struggle against colonial domination, foreign occupation, and right to self-determination as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Chair:

Human trafficking continues to feature as the fastest growing organized transnational crime in the world. As a country of origin, transit and destination, Bangladesh has positioned itself at the forefront of global and regional anti-trafficking initiatives. Being a Party to the Palermo Convention Bangladesh remains consistently active within the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking. At the regional level, Bangladesh has spearheaded an initiative to further broaden the scope of the *SAARC Convention on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution*, and remains at the forefronts of the Bali Process Regional Cooperation Framework facilitating greater delivery of capacity building support and global good practices to member states. At the national level, the government has enacted first Human Trafficking Deterrence and Suppression Act, 2012 and adopted the first National Plan of Action or NPA 2012-14 to implement this comprehensive law. Under our NPA, regular monitoring and coordination mechanisms have been operationalized at the national, district and sub-district levels through GO-NGO partnerships. Human Trafficking is, nevertheless, much more than a law and order issue. We can hardly win our battle against it without a holistic approach to address its underlying social, economic, cultural and demographic actors. Absence of inclusiveness, job opportunities, education and public awareness at times aggravate these problems. Here I would also like to draw the attention to the fact that imposition of too much restriction and discriminatory migration regimes by destination countries push people into the hands of traffickers. In this regard, we would appreciate the understanding and cooperation of destination countries in facilitating regular migration so that people are discouraged to go for irregular movements and become victims of unscrupulous manpower business.

Mr. Chair:

Like trafficking in Persons, drug trafficking also poses challenges to our social and economic development. The geographical location of Bangladesh and its long porous border make the country vulnerable to drug trafficking. Youths and slum-dwellers are the major victims of drug trafficking. We are using a three-prong strategies to manage the situation---first, Supply reduction, second, demand reduction and third, harm reduction. Our policy is to limit the use of drugs strictly to legitimate purposes, and prevent any kind of their diversions. The Narcotics Control Act, 1990 is the principal counter-narcotics legislation in Bangladesh. The Tobacco Control and Anti-smoking Act restricts advertisement for tobacco products.

Mr. Chair:

There is no denial of the fact that supply side reduction is the key to fight drug abuse. This can be done by sustained alternative development programs for the cultivators of such crops as well as overall economic development of such regions. On the demand side, awareness raising against drug abuse may be an effective tool. In this regard, we greatly value the role of family.

Faith-based organizations and their leaders and especially media can play an important role. It may be mentioned that adequate financing is imperative to assist the victims and also to correctly prosecute the traffickers. At times, because of lack of financing and correct training, enforcement of laws and regulations are relaxed and such accentuate and promote problems.

To conclude, Transnational nature of the organized crimes and well organized criminal networks call for a strong partnership among all stakeholders; national, regional and global towards combating the menace through a concerted and sustained efforts. Bangladesh stands ready to work with in partnership with international community to combat organized crimes.

I thank you Mr. Chair.