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## **Are improvements in law enforcement and other citizen security networks meeting the threat posed by organized crime?**

**by Mr. Sandro Calvani  
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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

To the question “whether improvements in law enforcement and other citizen security networks are meeting the threat posed by organized crime” my simple answer is a bold “no”. Furthermore the question is crucial to the way we deal with such international issues in the future.

The increase in transnational organized crime has severely threatened the economic and social security of communities in recent years.

Criminal organizations appear to be increasing both in quantity as well as quality. With the rise of globalization, opportunities for criminals to operate transnationally have increased. Therefore, the natural progression has been for criminal organizations to move from national activity to transnational operations. They also became much more intersectoral and creative. In general, the global criminal product grows faster than the better studied GNP.

We all know – but better to remind that –the Palermo Convention, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, is a legally binding treaty established to fight transnational criminal activity. The convention requires Member States to take action to increase their capacities through effective coordination and cooperation.

However, measures taken under this convention by Member States are not fully meeting the threat posed. Why? I suggest looking into three sets of reasons.

The **first** is that the international community in a large part of the world lacks a strong sense of urgency. In my twenty years experience as an International Civil Servant in four continents, I have observed national and international responses to organized crime in four continents of the world. Where these responses have been weak and ineffective, this has been a direct result of an insufficient sense of urgency.

The threats posed by transnational crime are not somewhere in the distant future. They are here, they are now. The threats of transnational organized crime must be a driving force for change.

The **second set of reasons** for the limited efficacy of measures taken against transnational crime is the persistently fragmented nature of international cooperation. The practical applications of the provisions contained in international counter-crime treaties are not known well enough by many governments and civil society organizations, and are thus not applied in a homogenous and de-centralized way.

The **third set of reasons** relates to the fact that there is not enough action-oriented research which is readily available to help improve the quality of life of those it wishes to address. Research is often carried out **without** a view to its applicability in the field. The question must be asked, how can this research help its subjects? UNICRI aims to fill this gap by carrying out *action-oriented research* with people at the center of its vision - research that can be utilized efficiently to ameliorate the situation of those suffering the effects of transnational crime.

These questions are strongly linked to another key issue: How important is international cooperation?

**International cooperation** is paramount when it comes to fighting against transnational organized crime. Governments must work *together* to counter this ever-increasing threat. Mr Kofi Annan said “The world must advance the causes of security, development and human rights *together*, otherwise none will succeed”. The past century has seen the development of the greatest cooperative organization humanity has known. Driven by a shared understanding of global challenges, the United Nations has worked to increase the human security of society, i.e. the millennium development goals the human rights.

As for the question of whether governments are managing to fill gaps in legislation which lead to ‘**ungoverned space**’. I think that a wide search for good practices has been initiated since 2000. Surely, some of these will be mentioned by this panel.

It is important to remember here that regional laws are just as important for international cooperation as international treaties and conventions. Thus the work of governments in this area is crucial. We can see improvements in this field in the fact that visibility of this issue has greatly increased. Where we once had very little information at our disposal, we can now access a wide range of documentation. This is a very useful development. Furthermore, the establishment of the Palermo Convention in 2000 has been a milestone for multilateral agreements in this area.

Transnational organized crime is a problem, which not only affects those people directly involved, but all members of society in one way or another.

Improvements in law enforcement and other defenses must be driven by the sense of urgency this problem requires. People power in the prevention and response to organized crime could represent a very important catalyst of such a process. We can only meet the threat of this illicit activity through effective, consolidated international cooperation.