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**STATEMENT BY
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**DURING THE 10TH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE
PREVENTION OF CRIME AND TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS
10 TO 17 APRIL 2000, VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

***INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN COMBATTING
TRANSNATIONAL CRIME: NEW CHALLENGES IN THE TWENTY
FIRST CENTURY***

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the High Level Segment of this important Congress. I also wish to extend our congratulations and appreciation to The Hon. Dr. Penuell Maduna, Minister-of Justice and Constitutional Development of the Republic of South Africa, who had ably presided over the Congress during the first four days.

2. I am certain that your wise stewardship will lead this 10th UN Crime Congress to a successful conclusion. It is also our hope that the Congress will help us to attain a new level of understanding and cooperation on issues related to transnational crime which, as we are all aware, has grown to become a global concern.

3. The end of the Cold War has given us hopes that we will be able to focus our minds and resources towards attaining economic and social progress. But as we have seen in the last decade, peace and security are not to be taken for granted. The international community is challenged by the undesirable aspects of globalization, in particular the increase in transnational organized crime.

4. The UN Deputy Secretary General, Madam Louise Frechette in her opening address to this Congress, said that, globalization, the one word which best describe the current state of world affairs is about free-flow, particularly the flow of goods, capital, services, ideas, people, data, wealth and so on.

5. Indeed globalization is an omnibus concept. Its political, economic and social impact on countries and people is tremendous and irreversible. Hastened by rapid development in transportation, communication and information technology, today this new phenomenon affects practically all of us.

6. Transnational crime was once organized with relative simplicity. It involved a limited number of activities and many were narcotics related. Globalization brought new opportunities for those with the means to benefit from it. Obviously, the well organized criminal groups were one of those beneficiaries, as shown by the rapid rise of transnational crime. Today we are confronted with types of crimes, which are not only diversified, but more complex and more extensive in their collaboration.

7. Economic crimes for example, is one area attributed to the extensive use of new technologies. In the world of finance, the unregulated movement of short-term capital and laxity of controls in the global financial system has encouraged transnational crime to spread with impunity. The international community has yet to seriously address this international loophole that helps to perpetuate the strength of organized crime syndicates.

8. Even the other common but serious crimes such as illicit migration, illicit trafficking in human body parts, drugs and arms trafficking, corruption, counterfeiting, money laundering, human and children trafficking for sexual purposes are today committed with greater ease benefiting from modern technologies.

9. It is clear that current efforts are inadequate to meet the new challenges posed by the new operational methods of the criminal groups. Despite the cooperation undertaken at the various international levels, the ability by the crime perpetrators to evade the reaches of the law has baffled, even the best-equipped enforcement agencies.

10. Malaysia recognizes the urgent need to strengthen existing cooperation and to seek new ways to collaborate collectively so as to address these new challenges. In the development and expansion of further efforts between governments, international organizations and members of civil society to combat transnational organized crime, we welcome mutual cooperation and assistance.

11. Effective communication and exchange of intelligence, we believe, are the essence of sound cooperation and assistance. Treaties and agreements are no doubt indispensable but cooperation among law enforcement officials based on mutual assistance is prerequisite to the successful prevention and investigation of many types of crime.

12. At the national level, laws not only need to be in place to combat crime, but to be regularly reviewed to make them current. Enforcement measures have to be stringent to be an effective deterrence. National initiatives to institute legislation and enforcement measures to combat crime are rendered ineffective when attempts to bring the perpetrators of transnational crime are delayed or hindered by the diversity of laws and regulations and equally diverse interpretation between countries.

13. The lack of financial resources and expertise has also hindered some countries from formulating and implementing concrete measures to contain crime. Due to the low economic and social development of these countries, the resources needed for effective action against criminals often have to give way to other competing priorities.

14. Small but legitimate businesses are easily overwhelmed by illegal enterprise, which offer huge and swift profits. Proceeds of illegal transactions in drugs and firearms especially those involving big

criminal groups, were at times higher than the income of certain countries. It is therefore imperative for the international community to bear these factors in mind when addressing the problem of transnational organized crime.

Mr. President,

15. A global will to address the global cancer of crime that threatens to destroy the very fabric of the societies needs to be reaffirmed if we are to effectively prevent its spread. People everywhere do not deserve to live in fear or intimidation by criminal elements. At the heart of sustainable economic and social development is the commitment and ability of governments to ensure a conducive and enabling environment to promote equitable growth and social integration. This also entails respect for the rule of law by all. Deliberations on the promotion of the rule of law and the strengthening of the criminal justice system during this Congress is timely.

16. My delegation is pleased to note that four workshops on specific and relevant issues related to crime are being conducted during this Congress. Indeed while ensuring that crime offenders are brought to justice, victims of crime should not be further victimized by the very system they seek justice from. Corruption is a scourge we cannot afford to ignore due to its deleterious effects on our societies and also its tendency to act as linkages for committing more serious crimes. Corruption costs governments untold millions of dollars while

criminal groups exploit these weakness to execute their illegal activities.

17. Governments cannot effectively counter criminal activities on their own. In many instances, members of the civil society are already complementing and supplementing their government's efforts to bring the perpetrators of crime to justice through their assistance centers and networks.

18. We encourage and look forward to closer cooperation between enforcement agencies and members of civil society to create greater awareness among people of their legal rights. The public should also be constantly sensitized to the plight of victims of crimes, particularly women and children. This vulnerable group is often victimized through sexual exploitation, domestic violence as well as workplace abuse and exploitation. Likewise, we need to be alert of computer related crimes. Practical preventive measures in this area require close cooperation between both the governments and private enterprises.

19. Combating crimes that transcend borders and societies calls for cooperation from all levels and must involve all related national agencies, international agencies, non-governmental organizations as well as the private sector. We also believe that regular sharing of information and close intelligence networking among the authorities would complement concerted efforts.

20. Transnational crime could not be effectively countered if countries are not forthcoming in responding to inquiries. Latest informations on crime activities and accurate analysis of their trend are important tool in devising new strategies. Efforts by the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in this respect are commendable and Malaysia continues to support them.

21. ASEAN members have agreed to a Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime. This regional initiative represents an important building block for greater cooperation with countries outside the region in addressing transnational crime. Malaysia also welcomes the offer by Thailand to host the next UN Crime Congress.

22. Finally Mr. President, allow me on behalf of my delegation to express my support towards the elaboration on the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime undertaken by the CICP. The Convention and its additional protocols represent the most comprehensive and tangible effort towards developing international instruments to combat transnational organized crime. To be effective, it is important that the Convention receives the widest support possible from the international community.

23. The focus in combating transnational organized crime should be on prevention and enforcement at the national level, and technical cooperation; specifically the pooling of resources at the international level. In pursuing these objectives, respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of states

must be observed in conformity with the principles as enshrined in Charter of the United Nations.

24. The task before us therefore is colossal, but it should not diminish our determination to join hands to combat crime globally. The fact that this Congress is among the first major UN conferences since we celebrated the new millennium is a clear reflection of that determination. Let us all ensure that we are making a good start.

Thank you, Mr. President.