

**STATEMENT BY HEAD OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION  
ELIZABETH VERVILLE  
TENTH CRIME CONGRESS  
Saturday, April 15, 2000**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ministers and Representatives, Colleagues,

It is an honor to add my voice to the many other speakers who have underscored the threat to the well being of our countries posed by international crime, and specifically transnational organized crime. Meeting this threat is the top law enforcement challenge and a national security challenge for our governments. Let's face it, organized criminal groups have staggering resources; these groups do not respect borders; they do not respect national sovereignty. They threaten our institutions and our citizens.

In the United States, we have home-grown as well as organized criminal groups from every region of the world operating on our soil. Sometimes they form strategic alliances with each other to get ahead of our national and collective law enforcement efforts. To stay ahead of these criminals we recognize that we have to work together. But no amount of international cooperation can succeed if each partner is not strong at home.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S. political commitment to combat international organized crime comes from the top. In 1995, President Clinton issued the first ever Presidential Decision Directive on international crime. He directed U. S. government departments to intensify their efforts to fight international crime. He directed them to work more closely and effectively together and with other countries to combat international crime.

In 1998, President Clinton issued the first U.S. comprehensive International Crime Control Strategy to combat a wide range of criminal activities including corruption, money laundering, narcotics trafficking, cyber crime, economic espionage, white collar crime and other criminal activities. The Strategy is widely available on the Internet.

In addition, our Vice President launched a major domestic and international initiative to combat global corruption. Vice President Gore's Global Forum on Corruption in February 1999 produced a strong final declaration on promoting effective principles and practices for preventing and detecting corruption. We have given every delegation here a copy of the final report. We look forward to the Second Global Forum on Corruption to be held in the Netherlands in 2001.

Finally, on the practical level at home, we have organized special strike forces that effectively target criminal groups. We attack this problem at the State and Federal level.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps most importantly for our work and reflecting one of my Government's highest priorities is completion this year of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and three related Protocols. This is not an abstract exercise to develop treaties that end up on a dusty shelf. We must keep in mind global realities as we complete these instruments. We must ensure that they provide the right tools, which every country in every region can use. They should enhance our legal arsenals and our ability to cooperate across borders as the criminals do.

I was privileged to participate in the recent Asia - Pacific Ministerial Seminar on Building Capacities for Fighting Transnational Organized Crime co-hosted by the Royal Thai Government and the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. Ministers from that region frankly discussed the problems our countries face from transnational organized crime in all the areas covered by the Convention and Protocols.

They unanimously agreed that the Transnational Organized Crime Convention and its Protocols will assist them in fighting this scourge. They were unified in their determination to

complete our work on the whole package by the end of this year. High Level Representatives at this Congress have echoed the importance of these instruments. I urge the Congress formally to reinforce this determination on a global basis.

Mr. Chairman, I believe it is not too early to start thinking about implementation of the Convention and three protocols. As we do so, the following elements would lay an important foundation.

We need:

- training of law enforcement officials,
- provision of technical assistance,
- expansion of our abilities to carry out extradition, provide mutual assistance,
- enhance our use of technology in the fight against crime.

Mr. Chairman, we have made many of strong statements here about fighting crime. Let us follow them with even stronger concrete actions, both at home and in our cooperation with each other.

Thank you.