

**Programme on "Strengthening the Rule of Law in the Arab States –
Project on the Modernization of Public Prosecution Offices"
Organized and Transnational Crimes Conference
28-29 March 2007 at the Nile Hilton Hotel in Cairo
Statement of Mr. Mounir Tabet – UNDP Egypt Country Director**

Your Excellency, Counselor Mamdouh Mar3ee, Minister of Justice in Egypt
Your Excellency, Counselor Abdel Meguid Mahmoud, Public Prosecutor in Egypt
Dr. Wassim Harb, Senior Advisor for the Rule of Law Pillar, UNDP Programme
on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,

Having arrived only 8 weeks ago in Egypt, I now consider Cairo my home and can therefore allow myself with confidence to welcome you here. So it is my pleasure to welcome you today to this important regional conference on Organised and Transnational Crime. Welcome to all the participants from the Arab Countries and to all the experts from this region an abroad and many thanks to the Government and people of Egypt for continuing the long tradition of generous hospitality and hosting this conference.

Given the myriad of development challenges that the world faces today including poverty, unemployment, inequity, illiteracy, access to quality health services, environmental degradation and the list can go on, I consider it brave of UNDP, primarily a development organization, to have invested time and effort in addressing the issue of transnational and organised crime. But there is no doubt in our mind that the rule of law is an important element of sustainable human development – a state of development that UNDP is promoting across the world. The sate is the primary responsible party in providing safety and security to citizens without which the fruit of development cannot be enjoyed. The

application of the rule of law in a reliable, objective and timely manner are the hallmarks of good governance-hence the importance of your conference today.

We all recognise that state actors alone can no longer deal with the complexity of modern development challenges including the rule of law. Civil society and the private sector are important partners in this endeavour. I am very much encouraged that this conference is cognisant of this and is ensuring that partnership between public prosecutors and civil society is strengthened.

As globalisation and technology deepen their penetration in the world, their positive impact is being felt in many quarters. Their challenges too are becoming clearer. As goods and capital find it easy to cross borders so have drugs and funds aimed at criminal activities. Unfortunately human trafficking still marks a dark spot on humanities record despite our claim to have eradicated slavery. And most lately the scourge of terrorism has entered the fray as an additional serious challenge that those who uphold national and international security have to grapple with. I applaud all the efforts of national security systems in trying to tackle organised crime and equally applaud their efforts to cooperate among each other to face up to the increasingly international dimension of this crime.

The United Nations too is doing its share. It has prepared the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime which was adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 on 15 November 2000. The Convention is one of the main international instruments in the fight against transnational organized crime. It has been further supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific areas and manifestations of organized crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms. The Convention represents a major step forward in the fight against transnational organized crime and signifies the

recognition by Member States of the seriousness of the problems posed by it, as well as the need to foster and enhance close international cooperation in order to tackle those problems.

In support of this convention UNDP is assisting many countries in addressing this challenge through its work on good governance. It also carries this work at the global and regional levels. It does what it can to do its share and today's conference is but a small sample. While there are other international organisations, even UN organisation that might be equally, if not more qualified than UNDP to address such a complex and highly specialised issue, it is important that UNDP continues to remind us that the fight against organised crime local and transnational is about giving the citizen the safety and security he or she needs to enjoy a decent life. As the state works hard to offer such safety and security, UNDP is reminding us to think of the rule of law dimension and citizens rights. In such contexts, it is important to remember that the rule of law must not infringe on citizens rights. As we work to protect a citizen and ensuring his security we must double our efforts to ensure that enthusiastic state actors continue to respect the rights of citizens for which humanity has fought hard and that are now enshrined in the UN convention on human rights.

I wish you the very best of success in your deliberations and hope that you have a comfortable and enjoyable stay in Egypt.

Thank you