



**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR GERT ROSENTHAL, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF GUATEMALA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE SECURITY
COUNCIL DEBATE ON “THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY:
ILLCIT CROSS-BORDER TRAFFICKING AND MOVEMENT”**

(April 25, 2012)

Madam President,

Thank you for organizing this open debate. We have taken note of the concept paper prepared by your delegation to guide our deliberations, for which we also thank you. Furthermore, we wish to recognize the Secretary-General’s thought-provoking introductory remarks.

As you know, while we didn’t object in your initial consultations to having a debate on the general topic of illicit cross-border trafficking and movement, the discussions leading up to today’s meeting turned out to be quite lively. I would like to explain the basis of our own concerns, seen from our national perspective. Part of the problem stems from whether to put the accent on the “securing borders” part, or whether to do so regarding the “illicit trafficking” part. In the first matter, our concern, simply put, is that securing borders against the movement of illicit goods, services, financial flows or movement of persons can be defended on its own right, but always poses the risk of hampering the licit movements, thereby potentially causing more harm than good. In the second case, we ask ourselves how to distinguish illicit from licit movements – and the grey areas in between – and how do we differentiate between various types of movement, taking into account that dealing with, say, narcotics trafficking is quite different to human trafficking or dealing in stolen cultural monuments, not to mention the cross-border movement of persons. Further, not all illicit cross-border activities rise to the level of threatening international peace and security, although some certainly have that potential.

An additional concern that we still harbor is that we would like to think that in addressing illicit trafficking, whether under the purview of the Security Council or, in more general terms, in the context of the United Nation System, should be inspired by the idea of fostering cooperation between Member States to combat these scourges. However, by putting the accent on controls and regulations, we run the risk, perhaps unintentionally, of fomenting a more defensive approach on the part of sovereign countries, with an “each person on his own” mentality, which would be contrary to the purposes and principles of our Organization.

Those are some of the comments of a conceptual nature. But we also have some more specific observations to make, mostly of a more positive nature.

First, we believe that this discussion can contribute to our conflict prevention efforts aimed at the maintenance of international peace and security allowing for improved responses to evolving threats and challenges. Transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking of arms, goods and persons, much as the case of terrorism, are each a common and shared responsibility and we need to work collectively to prevent and combat these phenomena. Moreover, securing borders and combating

illicit trafficking and movement is vital in order to uphold the rule of law at the national and international levels.

Second, a wide range of existing strategies and initiatives on these topics have been developed at the national, regional and international levels making it difficult to determine synergies and similarities. The reason is not only due to the particular nature of each topic, or that each is discussed in separate expert fora, but also because each topic is governed by its own legislative and treaty frameworks. This is an additional justification for strengthening international cooperation and providing technical assistance, particularly in promoting and facilitating the implementation of the relevant international conventions and protocols.

Third, distinct strategies are required to address specific threats posed by different types of illicit trafficking and movement, including appropriate strategies designed to reduce the demand and the supply of illicit drugs. There is, in effect, a need to address the root causes of this phenomenon and take actions designed to shrink the market and reduce profits from illicit drug trafficking. Unless the underlying issues are addressed, the problem will be displaced somewhere else, or simply replaced by another illicit activity. Therefore, governments must strengthen the rule of law in their countries to develop social antibodies against organized crime and to eventually break the cycle of crime and underdevelopment.

Fourth, strengthening the United Nations' capacity to assist Member States to secure their borders against illicit trafficking and movement is only one aspect, albeit an important one, in the wider arsenal of measures to address this issue. While recognizing that the United Nations has a role to play in helping the States concerned, this should be carried out within existing mandates, upon the request of Member States and with full respect for their sovereignty, and under national ownership. Moreover, adequate resources are also necessary for sustained efforts to yield significant results.

Fifth, many parts of the United Nations System are directly or indirectly involved in supporting countries in addressing illicit trafficking of goods, services and people. These prominently include the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the regional commissions. There is a case to be made here for greater coherence and coordination within the System.

Finally, the Security Council should continue to strengthen its mechanisms under resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004), which are specifically concerned with implementing counter-terrorism and non-proliferation obligations; these too relate to cross border control and management.

Thank you.

