

Oral Statement for CCPCJ Vienna 10th -12th November 2021

Addressing Pillar 1 Advancing Crime Prevention

Thematic session 2: Addressing the economic dimension of crime; (11 November 2021)

The pandemic has brought unprecedented disruption that will scar the global, social and employment landscape for years to come. Challenges including high levels of economic insecurity, persistent poverty, and rising inequality have been exacerbated by COVID-19. The crisis exposed the vulnerability of billions of people. Families and businesses struggled while organised crime preyed on people's fears, defrauding them in new ways, and taking advantage of vulnerable women and girls.

Organized Crime quickly adapted, targeting a growing number of people unable to mitigate or adapt to the worsening economic and social conditions. It has become more difficult to identify and protect vulnerable victims who are confined to their homes or workplaces and in need of financial support, such as domestic workers and workers in the informal sector.

Criminals have become more sophisticated, using technology to make their approaches more convincing and to evade law enforcement. They impersonate trusted organisations while evading their advanced security systems through scams that target people directly. People are tricked into giving away their money, personal or financial information. Scammers attack individuals of all backgrounds, in every corner of the world with changing techniques including romance and sweepstakes fraud.

Currently, large tech corporations are not being held accountable for fraudulent content promoted on their platforms. Criminals using online platforms are profiting from scams while the rest of society pays the price. Corporations must address the vulnerabilities in their systems to stop consumers from being exploited by criminals.

Soroptimist International believes education is critical in preventing many of these crimes. Education empowers people, providing them with knowledge, helping them to identify fraud.

Soroptimist International urges Member States in partnership with civil society organisations to:

- Provide financial literacy education and training for communities to prevent people from being victims of fraud.
- Coordinate a joint response to economic crime and share intelligence on emerging threats with law enforcement, government departments and regulators, ensuring that legal and regulatory frameworks are updated to keep pace with the rapid growth in new forms of financial fraud.