

UNCTAD Illicit Trade Forum

*3rd to 4th February 2020
Room XXVI, Palais des Nations, Geneva*

Sustainable development and economic crime

Contribution
by

Dominique Lapprand

ALCCI

(Association de lutte contre le commerce illicite)

Sustainable development and economic crime

Economic crime through corruption, frauds, and illicit trade is a major brake for development. This is however understated by the international community that is on the other hand highly committed to develop institutional capacities to address other issues that have a weaker impact on development.

Economic crime and especially illicit trade offers substantial resources to all these who are the enemies of any form of sustainable development. Illicit trades could be based on looting natural resources, and all type of smuggling ranging from drugs to dangerous or counterfeited goods. Whoever they are warlords, militia leaders, corrupted politicians and officials, terrorists, organised criminals these enemies of sustainable development are using the huge benefits of illicit trade they organise or oversee to strengthen their positions, buy weapon, bribe and socially and economically control the local communities.

The international community, either international organisations or individual states, on its side is committed to re-establish peace, stabilise social and economic life and support sustainable development and growth. This commitment is implemented through missions and assistance programmes with a high focus on institutional capacity building. Huge amounts worth of several billions US \$ are yearly budgeted to support this effort. So far these missions and programmes have been oriented on human rights, sex and gender issues. When it goes to the security sector beyond governance the operational capacity is dedicated to community policing public order and terrorism. The fight against organised crime is optional and economic crime is never mentioned except marginally in a few cases. This is not a priority but when saying that and taking into account what has been previously said this means there is a dramatic deficiency in the commitment of the international community.

Therefore it is time to stress that, along the defence of human rights and gender and along the fight against terrorism, the international community has to orient its missions and assistance programme against economic crime, especially illicit trade.

To support such a move it could be useful to assess what the key international players have done in this area over the last fifteen years. This would help to identify flaws that have prevented to go in this direction, to identify however good practices and to elaborate recommendations. This could be a valuable and useful project.

Dominique Lapprand a former French gendarmerie colonel has been working as a EU and UN expert on security sector reform since 1998. He is the founder and general secretary of the French ALCCI association against illicit trade sg.alcci@gmail.com