



ELEVENTH UN CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Bangkok, Thailand 18-25 April 2005



Plenary
High-Level Segment
1st & 2nd Meetings (AM & PM)

BKK/CP/20
23 April 2005

CRIME CONGRESS HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OPENS WITH CHALLENGE TO MEET GROWING THREATS OF TERRORISM, MASS DESTRUCTION WEAPONS, CYBERCRIME

Speakers Also Focus on Need for Action to Counter Organized Crime, Corruption, Poverty

If States failed to confront the growing threats of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and organized crime, and the thorny question of new manifestations of evil, such as cybercrime and money-laundering, international criminal gangs would bring the challenge to them, Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime told the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as it began its high-level ministerial segment today.

Opening the high-level meeting, he said the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime were benchmarks against which States could chart a course to counter crime. Breathing legislative and operational life into them was the responsibility of Member States, he added, saying that the world had changed since the last Crime Congress in Vienna. Past congresses, starting with the first in 1955, had left their mark, producing standards and norms in criminal justice. Reflecting changing times, the Congresses had not relied on old solutions to resolve new dangers.

Turning to the Congress's outcome document -- the "Bangkok Declaration" -- he said he would not want to see something "long on language and short on ideas". There had been agreement that the Declaration should call for the fast track -- universal ratification of the crime and terrorism-related conventions and protocols. The Declaration might also address the uneven implementation of the standards and norms regarding the treatment of prisoners, as well as the still infant legislation to shield the victims of crime. Member States might also wish to affirm their support of the Secretary-General's call for United Nations reform.

Since the last Congress, the world had faced clear criminal threats of great gravity, Luc Frieden, Luxembourg's Minister of Justice said on behalf of the European Union. It was appropriate, therefore, that the Eleventh Congress had included such topics as international cooperation against transnational organized crime and corruption. The gradual development of the Union's powers in the field of justice had increased the quality and number of instruments at its disposal, including the European arrest warrant. Given the internationalization of terrorism, cooperation on a global level was also necessary. He, therefore, called on States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the international instruments against terrorism.

(more)

Outlining African initiatives to address the effects of transnational crime on socio-economic development, Akinlolu Olujinimi, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Nigeria, (on behalf of the African Union) noted that African ministers, in a 2004 Common Position on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, expressed deep concern that crime and armed conflicts constituted major obstacles to development, democracy, the rule of law and the full enjoyment of human rights. The Common Position had also created the African Crime and Criminal Justice Information Network as the core of Pan-African crime prevention and criminal justice activities. Condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, the Common Position supported the conclusion of the draft comprehensive convention in that regard and called for the ratification of all terrorism-related instruments.

Thailand strongly supported the sanctity of criminal justice, Chidchai Vanasatidya, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, said in opening remarks for the high-level segment. As a developing country, Thailand believed that criminal justice should always be put on equal footing with crime prevention. Preventing crime, however, meant that the root cause of the problem – poverty -- would have to be eradicated. Thailand had declared war on narcotic drugs, poverty and corruption. In the area of corruption, he said his country aimed at good governance and a trustworthy security stock market. Thailand was honoured to have commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of United Nations Crime Congresses by hosting the Eleventh Congress.

The representatives of Burkina Faso, Pakistan and Qatar offered to host the Twelfth United Nations Crime Congress in 2010.

Also speaking in the daylong meeting were the representatives of Malta, Equatorial Guinea, Australia, United Kingdom, Azerbaijan, Morocco, Indonesia, Finland, Namibia, South Africa, Kuwait, Cambodia, Slovakia, Iran, Portugal, China, Japan, Oman, Iceland, Lithuania, Gambia, Liechtenstein, Republic of Korea, Yemen, Poland, Spain and the Philippines.

The Congress will meet again tomorrow, 24 April at 10 a.m. to continue its high-level debate.

Opening Remarks

ANTONIO MARIA COSTA, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), said that, during the week, the Crime Congress had turned Bangkok into the world capital in the fight against crime. The commitment to act must be just as strong. Important issues were on the agenda, including the global aspects of and linkages between crime, corruption and terrorism; the ratification of pertinent legal instruments; the role of the UNODC in bringing those instruments to life and the ability of international agreements to adequately address evolving circumstances. The world had changed since the Vienna Congress five years ago. Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and organized crime were recognized as growing threats. There had been increasing emphasis on transnational crime to the point that some believed it had distracted attention from domestic criminal justice issues. He asked whether there was enough determination to address those trends. Quoting from a previous Declaration, he said there came a time when patience lost virtue.

(more)

Giving an overview of the past 10 Congresses, he said they had indeed left a mark, producing standards and norms in criminal justice. They had called for new conventions at an appropriate time, bringing the world closer to a shared vision of freedom and security, and consolidated the international community's stance against terrorism. The agendas of the Crime Congresses mirrored changing times. They had not relied on old solutions to resolve new dangers. The Crime Congress Golden Jubilee coincided with another celebration: a half century of crafting standards that had changed the world's thinking about the treatment of prisoners under detention. Prison conditions might not generate the same headlines that terrorism did, but they did measure they progress of a civil society. Overcrowding, corruption, sexual violence, torture, inadequate food and health conditions -- all begged for continuing attention.

He said he had heard during the Congress calls for protecting the rights of victims. Ensuring victims' recovery could be an effective form of crime prevention. Cultures riddled by violence, poverty, the lack of choice and the absence of hope created only two kinds of human animal -- predatory and prey. It was time to wake up to the plight of the poor, homeless, and street children trafficked for sex and exploited as forced labour. Cultural attitudes that devalued women and encouraged prostitution needed to be rejected. World leaders must be convinced that real power was not only measured by military might or political muscle, but also by the protection and liberties extended to all citizens. In places where women and children were viewed as commodities, conscience had already signalled unconditional surrender.

Legal instruments such as the conventions against corruption and against organized crime, and related protocols represented both an opportunity and a challenge, he continued. They were a benchmark States could use to chart a course against crime, in a concerted manner. The opportunity lay in the consensus and political commitment they manifested. The challenge was to ensure that political will remained strong. In other words, it was the responsibility of Member States to breathe legislative and operational life into the legal instruments they had agreed upon. The world was watching. The United Nations had been established at a moment of moral clarity, when the need to move from war to peace had been real and immediate. The Secretary-General had called for a comprehensive concept of collective security that addressed new threats and the security concerns of all States. If States did not take up the challenge, international criminal gangs might bring the challenge to them.

He said he had been asked what he would want to see in the Declaration. He would not want to see a Bangkok Declaration long on language and short on ideas. All had agreed to the importance of the Declaration calling for the fast track, universal ratification of the crime and terrorism-related conventions and protocols. He supplemented that call with a reference to a strong commitment to make the Conferences of the Parties work, and to disclose each country's progress. The Declaration might also address the rather uneven implementation of the standards and norms regarding the treatment of prisoners, as well as the still infant legislation to shield the victims of crime. The need to strengthen the right of children to be protected from violence and exploitation was another moral imperative. Member States might also wish to affirm their support of the Secretary-General's call for United Nations reform.

There was also the thorny question regarding the new manifestations of evil: the trafficking of human organs, child pornography, cybercrime and new forms of money-laundering. At the very least, he called for a complete assessment as to whether the existing instruments were adequate.

Should there be a decision to launch negotiation on a new computer-related instrument, the UNODC stood ready to assist Member States. Should a decision not be taken because of other priorities and because the basis for such a convention was still not yet clear, he suggested that they include in a Declaration a call to the Crime Commission to build, without delay, a suitable platform of knowledge that would allow for the beginning of negotiations. The gulf separating opposing views was not wide. Halfway to its goal, the Congress could not turn back or tread water indefinitely.

Statements

CHIDCHAI VANASATIDYA, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, said that, in the view of his country, a developing country, crime prevention should be given priority while criminal justice should always be put on equal footing with crime prevention. In order to prevent crime, the root cause of the problem -- poverty -- had to be eradicated. The King of Thailand had successfully translated that concept into action by introducing the idea of a “Sufficiency Economy”. Thailand had declared war on narcotic drugs, poverty and corruption. Regarding drug law enforcement and precursor chemical control, his country had always emphasized prevention through treatment and rehabilitation. “We have turned the battlefield into a market place. Why can we not turn the drug production area into a resource area?” he asked, saying that that would require a lot of regional and subregional cooperation.

In the area of corruption, he said his country aimed at good governance and a trustworthy security stock market. That required enhancing the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement and criminal justice administration. Anti-corruption mechanisms had been strengthened while public administration had to be reformed. However, more needed to be done and international cooperation should be strengthened. Technical assistance, in particular capacity-building, should be provided to developing countries. His country had signed five out of the 12 United Nations conventions relating to terrorism, and the remaining seven were “in the pipeline”. It had reinforced measures to prevent terrorist acts by strictly checking suspicious individuals and financial transactions, as well as enhancing intelligence cooperation and other measures at the national level.

The sanctity of criminal justice was strongly supported by the Government, and several measures had been initiated to protect the rights and liberties of people under the principle of due process. There was also a focus on implementing the proactive concepts of “community justice” and “restorative justice” in order to strengthen civil society in preventing crime, as well as to take care of the victims for the sake of peace in society as a whole.

In conclusion, he said it was an honour for Thailand to commemorate with all United Nations Members the fiftieth anniversary of the Crime Congresses. He reiterated the importance his country attached to the four pillars of the Congress: sustainable development, drug eradication, restorative justice, and trafficking in persons.

AKINLOLU OLUJINMI, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the African Union, said Africa had a Common Position on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which had been adopted at the African Ministerial Conference on Drug Control in Africa in Mauritius in December 2004. That Position expressed deep concern that crime and armed conflicts constituted major obstacles to development, a good quality of life, security of life and property, as

well as to democracy, proper management of public affairs, the rule of law and full enjoyment of human rights. The Union recognized that transnational organized crime severely hampered sustainable socio-economic development. The ratification and implementation of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols was central to combating organized crime.

He said the Common Position had created an African Crime and Criminal Justice Information Network as the core of Pan-African crime prevention and criminal justice activities. It had also established the African Regional Centre for the Prevention and Eradication of Illicit Firearms Trafficking. The Position also welcomed the United Nations Convention against Corruption, in particular the asset recovery provisions. It had established the Advisory Board on Corruption to analyse, among other things, the nature and extent of corruption in Africa and disseminate information and sensitize the public on the negative effects of corruption and related offences.

The Common Position condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and supported the conclusion of the draft comprehensive convention in that regard. It called for the ratification and implementation of all relevant international instruments related to terrorism and requested the international community to provide technical assistance to African countries for the ratification and implementation of those international instruments. The Common Position stressed the need to implement the African Union Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The African Union welcomed the establishment of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism in Algiers, Algeria. In closing, he said that Burkina Faso had expressed interest in hosting the Twelfth Crime Congress.

Speaking in his national capacity, Mr. Olujinmi said that, since 1999, his country had initiated various reform programmes in the field of criminal justice and crime prevention. In spite of its limited resources and capacity, Nigeria had taken concrete steps since the last Congress to respond to the changing patterns of crime and criminality locally and globally, including enacting laws inspired by United Nations standards and norms in the field of human rights and criminal justice, including on economic and financial crime, human trafficking, drug abuse, corruption, cybercrime and terrorism. It had also ratified many of the various United Nations conventions dealing with those threats.

He said the international community must rise to the aid of countries with limited capacity and resources to prosecute organized crime. It should take more seriously the problems of huge foreign debt servicing obligations. When setting up standards, it was necessary to provide technical assistance in implementation of such standards. There was a need for better cooperation and support of the United Nations and the international community for the recovery of national assets stashed away in foreign banks by corrupt politicians. His country fully endorsed the recommendation contained in the report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change that the United Nations should establish a robust capacity-building mechanism for rule of law assistance.

The single best strategy for weakening transnational organized crime gangs was to eliminate their ability to launder proceeds of crime. Organized criminal groups were engaging in more complicated transaction to conceal the origins and trail of proceeds of crime in order to integrate

such illicit funds into the legitimate economy. Arbitrary enforcement of bank secrecy and the multiplicity of financial havens had combined to pose serious obstacles to effectively combating money-laundering. He, therefore, supported a comprehensive international convention on money-laundering that addressed those issues.

LUC FRIEDEN, Minister of Justice of Luxembourg, speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated States, said, since the last Congress in Vienna in 2000, the world had faced clear criminal threats of a great gravity, to which all must respond. The Union regarded it as particularly appropriate that the Eleventh Congress had included the topics of international cooperation against transnational organized crime and corruption. The Union was promoting compliance with recognized international standards, notably in the fight against organized crime, cybercrime, corruption, money-laundering and terrorist financing.

He said that the gradual development of the Union's powers in the field of justice had increased the quality and number of instruments at its disposal. It had adopted the European arrest warrant, established Eurojust -- a unit made up of prosecutors and magistrates from each member State with the task of coordinating between national authorities in the prosecution and investigations of organized crime cases -- and the European Crime Prevention Network had also been created.

The European Union had also adopted a Framework Decision on the standing of victims of crime as well, he said. In the fight against terrorism, the Union was proceeding on the basis of an Action Plan adopted by the European Council in 2004. The internationalization of terrorism showed, however, that cooperation on a global level was also necessary, and he, therefore, called on States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the international instruments against terrorism. Most member countries of the Union had signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

The European Union had also adopted a number of decisions on Internet-related crime and supported the negotiations leading to the Council of Europe convention on cybercrime. He said the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme should make optimum use of the limited resources it had. It should not perform tasks that were successfully dealt with elsewhere in the United Nations system, for instance by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) or United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He stressed the importance the European Union attached to combating economic and financial crime and money-laundering. Fighting those crimes would also enable progress in combating the financing of terrorism.

TONIO BORG, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and Home Affairs of Malta, said a prompt response to international crime was needed in view of the increasingly transnational nature of crime itself. Five years ago, delegates had gathered in Palermo for the signing of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. For the first time, the Convention had not covered any specific crime, but all crimes stemming from an organized criminal structure. It was not by chance that the draft Declaration appealed for further cooperation to improve international cooperation in the fight against crime and terrorism at all levels, specifically mentioning the area of extradition and mutual legal assistance. In reality, there was

room for improvement in cooperation between States, particularly regarding mutual legal assistance, information exchange and extradition of offenders from one country to another.

In spite of several regional instruments regarding extradition, no global instrument had yet been drafted, he said. While it would be a gargantuan task, creating an international legal instrument was by no means impossible. Since the last Congress, the world had witnessed concerted, far-reaching terrorist attacks. The United Nations instruments against terrorism had removed the legal and political obstacles relating to the fight against terrorism, treating all terrorist offences as defined in the Convention as serious crimes irrespective of their political tinge or colour. Since joining the European Union, Malta had strengthened its legal and administrative capacity to fight organized crime, regionally and globally. Freedom and security, however, did not only depend on regional cooperation. The European Union was not an inward-looking institution in matters relating to global crime, but strove to support international and multilateral efforts to combat crime.

RICARDO MANGUE OBAMA NFUBE, Second Vice-Prime Minister of Equatorial Guinea, said his country had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and had begun procedures to accede to the three conventions against drugs and the Convention against Corruption. At the Tenth Congress, Member States had committed themselves to strengthening international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime and for penal reform. Over the last five years, his country had been the target of two attempted mercenary invasions, financed by international businessmen, with a view to taking over the recently discovered oil reserves. A mercenary was someone who sold himself to the highest bidder. Joint international efforts were needed to eliminate the virus of terrorism and use of mercenaries.

He said the seriousness of the situation of transnational organized crime meant that there was a need to make progress on inter-State cooperation to ensure that their territories were not used for training or funding of terrorists or mercenaries. Developing countries were victims of organized criminal groups, which prevented them from attaining the Millennium Development Goals. South-South cooperation was the answer. There was a need for an international alliance against the mercenary market.

He recommended that the Congress urge all States to use their intelligence services to combat terrorism and the use of mercenaries. All countries should unite efforts to work openly, without hypocrisy and double standards, to fight against those scourges.

PHILIP RUDDOCK, Attorney-General of Australia, said governments had a fundamental responsibility to protect national sovereignty and to ensure the safety of their citizens. The devastating terrorist attacks in Bali, the Marriot hotel bombing and the bombing outside the Australian embassy in Jakarta last year, had brought even closer to home the constant threat of terrorism to the region. Fighting terrorism and other forms of crime was an enormous task, requiring the international community to work together. It was the international community's duty to apply the law wisely and to develop practical and mutually reinforcing laws. As part of the process, Australia welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of a thirteenth instrument on terrorism.

Australia had responded by enacting a comprehensive range of counter-terrorism laws, he said. Legislation enabled the Government to list terrorist organizations based on national interest and security needs. Law enforcement agencies had greater powers to use a wider range of surveillance devices, and security-sensitive information could now be protected during criminal proceedings. The nature of the terrorist threat was always changing, however, and it was important to ensure that legal regimes stayed one step ahead. The law provided a powerful weapon against terrorism and the Australian Government had sought to harness that power by giving law enforcement and intelligence authorities the legal powers they needed, while at the same time maintaining a fair and reasonable justice system. The reality was that no country could beat terrorism by acting alone. A global phenomenon, terrorism was not constrained by international borders. Terrorists would target anyone who did not submit to their world view.

Overcoming the terrorist threat required a concerted, coordinated and comprehensive international response, he said. In practical terms, that meant the proper integration of criminal justice systems and intelligence procedures. Considerable progress had been made in the region. One very important body was the Legal Issues Working Group, which reviewed regional counter-terrorism laws. Cooperation had been boosted by the establishment of the Centre for Counter Terrorism Cooperation and Joint Intelligence Training for Australia, South-East Asia and the Pacific. His Government looked forward to building on relations and forging even closer ties. Some believed that the objectives of national security and individual human rights were not compatible. Australia had taken the approach that the protection of national security could also promote human rights. Terrorism threatened all countries that valued peace and freedom, and it threatened all people who valued life and liberty. Terrorism was a common threat requiring a common response.

Baroness SCOTLAND OF ASTHAL, Home Office Minister of Criminal Justice of United Kingdom, said her country was currently chair of the Group of Eight (G-8) and would be the next President of the European Union. It was, therefore, provided with challenges and opportunities to work on international cooperation in the fight against organized crime both through those groups and other regional and international forums. A comprehensive international approach had to be taken to combat organized crime and terrorist groups, with confidence in the legal framework of other countries concerning the enforcement of law and respect for human rights. She welcomed, in that regard, the United Nations conventions that provided the necessary legal framework. Full implementation by Member States of the United Nations conventions on transnational organized crime and against corruption must be a priority.

She said international cooperation was key to fighting terrorism. She was looking forward to working with other European Union States on the delivery of the European Union Action Plan on Terrorism, and the Group of Eight Industrialized Countries had taken the initiative to enhance aviation security and tackle other aspects of terrorism and organized crime. It had been proposed that the European draft convention for the prevention of terrorism would be open to all States. Welcoming the agreement on the Nuclear Terrorism Convention, she urged Member States to reach agreement on the text of the United Nations Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism as soon as possible. One of the strongest weapons in the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism was disruption of the funding for such groups. The Proceeds of Crime Act had provided her country with the robust legislation needed to deny organized criminal gangs the fruits of crime.

The international approach to combating organized crime must fully include the rule of law and sustainable development, underpinned by democracy, good governance and human rights. She looked forward to the entry into force of the Convention against Corruption. Terrorists and organized crime groups should be prevented from finding safe havens by preying on weaker States. Well-organized technical assistance for developing countries was, therefore, of paramount importance. Her Government strongly supported the principle of restorative justice, which could not only address the needs of victims, but was also an effective measure to reduce the rate of re-offending.

FIKRAT F. MAMMADOV (Azerbaijan) said his country viewed with concern the growth in transnational organized crime. International instruments provided a way to combat that scourge. Azerbaijan's transition had been complicated by territorial aggression. Some 20 per cent of his country's land was occupied, and there were about 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons, providing fertile breeding grounds for terrorism. More than 30 terrorist attacks had been carried out. Occupation by Armenia and the fact that the border was not under control had fed the wishes of criminal groups, including drug traffickers. As a State that had experienced terrorism, Azerbaijan attached great significance to the issue. Azerbaijan had acceded to the 12 international instruments in that regard as a demonstration of the priority it attached to the struggle against terrorism. More than 30 terrorists had been extradited since 11 September 2001, he added.

Concerned also at the amount of abductions, he said Azerbaijan had acceded to a number of instruments to combat trafficking in individuals. In that regard, it had also set up a national plan of action and corresponding legislation. A special unit to combat such crimes had also been established. Corruption was another concern, and his country had not been spared. Responding to that challenge Azerbaijan was refining its legislation and had adopted an anti-corruption law. Azerbaijan was also working hard to strengthen its judicial system. International cooperation was crucial to countering the threat of transnational organized crime. He approved of the draft Declaration and hoped the international community would strive to reach the noble objective of combating transnational crime for the benefit of all of mankind.

MOHAMED BOUZOUBAA, Minister of Justice of Morocco, underlined the importance of closer cooperation in the international community to face the new challenges caused by new threats of transnational organized crime. He said transnational organized crime was a global problem, and there were strengthened links between different categories of crimes. For that reason, transnational organized crime had been identified by the High-Level Panel as one of the six threats that humanity would face for the years to come.

He said Morocco had developed a multidimensional strategy to combat organized crime and to strengthen a criminal justice system that was independent and fair. On the legislative front, considerable effort had been undertaken to harmonize national legislation with international commitments, in particular in the fields of drugs and arms trafficking, as well as terrorism. All of those efforts were consistent with the principles of the national Constitution and international objectives his country had subscribed to. Nationally, Morocco had undertaken many efforts to combat terrorism and had strengthened its cooperation at the international level, among other things through agreements with African, Arab and European countries.

A global approach regarding terrorism was necessary that respected human rights and was based on shared responsibilities and the mobilization of the necessary resources, in particular for the benefit of developing countries, he said.

HAMID AWALUDDIN, Minister for Law and Human Rights of Indonesia noted that, in September 2005, world leaders would gather in New York to review progress made in achieving the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. That historic summit demonstrated the central role of multilateralism in responding to the threats and challenges in an increasingly borderless world. Addressing the enormous task required leadership, and the United Nations was the best available tool. The threat of transnational organized crime could not be underestimated. Dealing with new forms of crime required the implementation of new approaches. For its part, Indonesia was ready to engage in future undertakings and would continue to strengthen its national legislation to meet international regulations, including in mutual legal assistance.

Transnational organized crime was mainly motivated by financial gains, and terrorists needed to finance their activities, he said. One important way to prevent and combat transnational organized crime was the ability to counter money-laundering. The Financial Action Task Force had filled the vacuum of the international anti-money-laundering regime. His delegation believed, however, that the General Assembly needed to negotiate and endorse a comprehensive international convention on money-laundering and the United Nations should provide leadership in responding to the threats posed by international crime. Given the Assembly's unique legitimacy in normative terms, the Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism was pivotal in establishing a comprehensive, balanced, inclusive strategy in the prevention of terrorism, a strategy that addressed root causes and strengthened the rule of law. Indonesia supported the Secretary-General's affirmation that, in the struggle against terrorism, human rights must never be compromised.

Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice without technical assistance, capacity-building and international cooperation was mere rhetoric, he said. Capacity-building and international cooperation were key, and the willingness to share national experiences was essential. Resources and action were not mutually exclusive. The Congress should identify better mechanisms for international cooperation through predictable and sustained action and resources to fill the gaps in international cooperation. Indonesia had been successful in the early phases of its transition to a fully democratic country. Strengthening the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance were basic ingredients of building an effective crime prevention and criminal justice system.

JOHANNES KOSKINEN, Minister of Justice of Finland, stressed the crucial importance of the United Nations in the fight against transnational organized crime. The prevention of organized crime -- both domestic and transnational -- had been a long-standing concern of his Government. Corruption severely undermined the rule of law and good governance, but comparatively speaking, the level of corruption in Finland was quite low. Finland drew on a strong legalistic tradition that was upheld by clear qualification requirements, the obligation to provide public justification for decisions, an efficient criminal justice system, up-to-date criminal investigation techniques and modern budgetary practices. His country placed great importance on combating corruption both in the public and private sectors and continued to carry out anti-corruption work, both domestically and internationally. Finland took an active part in the anti-corruption efforts of its long-term development partners.

His Government was deeply concerned about the growing problem of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, he said. While trafficking in persons was not a significant problem in Finland, it was doing everything to fight the global phenomenon. Finland was also involved in on-going cooperation within not only the United Nations but also the Baltic Sea Task Force against Organized Crime, the European Union and the Council of Europe. After a steady decreasing trend in the prison population during the 1980s and 1990s, the number of prisoners had started to increase in Finland in 2000. The Government had tried to control the prison population through a number of initiatives, most importantly by adopting community service in the penal system in 1997. There were also plans to limit the number of prison sentences resulting from unpaid fines.

The new Finnish Constitution, which entered into force in 2000, had created the need for amendments in prison enforcement legislation, he explained. A total reform, including proposals for a new Prison Act, a new Pre-Trial Detention Act and a new Criminal Code chapter on release on parole had been prepared by the Justice Ministry and would enter into force in 2006. The basic idea of the reform of sentence enforcement legislation was to enact regulations of prisoners' rights and obligations and on restrictions of their fundamental rights.

An extremely important principle in sentence enforcement in Finland was the so-called "normality principle", he said. According to that principle, prison conditions were arranged to correspond to societal living conditions. According to new legislation, individual sentence plans would have an important role in sentence enforcement. The National Council for Crime Prevention in Finland had prepared a draft for a National Violence Reduction programme. The draft programme emphasized the prevention of repeat victimization to violence and included several proposals to diminish violence.

AFTAB AHMAD KHAN SHERPAO, Minister for the Interior of Pakistan, said that, as a responsible member of the international community and as a front-line State, his country had played an historic role in the global war against terrorism after 11 September. Nowhere could be seen so much effort being put into curbing terrorism, extremism and sectarianism as in Pakistan. His country was party to almost all international instruments on terrorism and was signatory to the Convention on Corruption and would deposit the instruments of ratification for the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Pakistan's Anti-Terrorist Action of 1997 was one of the most comprehensive laws on the books.

He said Pakistan had taken several steps to bring national criminal justice legislation closer to the United Nations standards and norms. In 2001, the Judiciary had been completely separated from the Executive. The colonial Police Act of 1861 had been replaced in 2002 with a modern police law, which sought to transform the police from a "public-frightening" outfit into a "public-friendly" service organization. The 2002 historic police reforms were regarded as a model by many countries of the region. His Government had embarked on spending billions on several law- and justice-related capacity-building information technology projects.

The globalization of many contemporary crime problems had made international cooperation an urgent priority, he said. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had a leadership role in sensitizing the international community to focus its attention on such critical issues as enhancing human

security and access to justice. As his Government recognized the important role of United Nations Congresses, it formally proposed that the Twelfth Crime Congress in 2010 be held in Pakistan.

ALI BIN FETAIS AL-MARRI (Qatar) said that, following the adoption of a new Constitution, Qatar had both amended and enacted laws to strengthen its legal system. Among the most important provisions of the new Constitution were the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary. Several new laws had been enacted in the last three years, including revisions of the penal and criminal procedure code. Another law had been enacted to establish the office of the public prosecutor as an independent judicial organ. With these new developments, public prosecution had endeavoured to build relationships with public prosecution systems in other parts of the world to face such challenges as corruption, terrorism and transnational organized crime. Another aspect of that cooperation was the need to exchange information and experience.

He conveyed, on behalf of his Government, Qatar's desire to host the Twelfth United Nations Crime Congress in Doha in 2010. He expressed appreciation to the UNODC for its great efforts and support in preparing for the upcoming second world summit on public prosecutors, attorneys-general and ministers of justice.

PENDUKENI IIVULA-ITHANA, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Namibia, said young countries like Namibia were required to join in efforts to combat transnational organized crime, lest they became targets and safe havens, driving away investment and putting their populations at the mercy of criminals. Namibia had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two of its Protocols in 2002. Last year, the Prevention of Organized Crime Act had been passed. It had established a Criminal Assets Recovery Fund. The 1996 Extradition Act and the International Cooperation in Criminal Matters Act of 2000 provided the legal basis for extraditions and mutual legal assistance matters.

She said Namibia, together with other member States of the Eastern and Southern African Money-Laundering Group had signed a Memorandum of Understanding requiring the implementation of anti-money-laundering measures. A Financial Intelligence Centre Bill, encompassing the Financial Action Task Force's 40 recommendations on money-laundering and Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing, would be placed before Parliament this year. In the area of criminal justice, Namibia was introducing community service orders, among other things, as well as a children's justice bill. The 2004 Criminal Procedure Act placed much more emphasis on the victim, permitting victim representations before sentencing, as well as compensation.

The efforts of African and other developing countries required the input and assistance of governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and development partners, she continued. The world was globalized, and with that, a shared responsibility existed in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice, as much as in other areas. "From our major cities to our smallest villages, terrorism is known, and the impact of crime is felt. There is no *terra nullius* for criminals, and this reality binds us together. Let us, therefore, augment our international efforts with national efforts and vice versa", she said in conclusion.

CHARLES NQAKULA, Minister of Safety and Security of South Africa, aligning himself with the statements made on behalf of the African Union and the African Group, called on the

Congress to make positive announcements regarding the drafting and conclusion of: the Convention against Theft of and Trafficking in Cultural Property; the Convention against Cybercrime; the Code of Conduct against Terrorism; and a Comprehensive Convention against Terrorism in all its ramifications. He said that, while it was important to have mechanisms in place to fight crime, one should not lose sight of the underlying causes of crime. Those causes included poverty, unemployment and intolerances having the potential to create a conflict.

Because of the technical and information revolution, organized crime groups were able to communicate with ease and anonymity across boundaries, he said. Organized criminal groups had also used the information systems of many institutions and businesses to generate illegal profit through trafficking in people, drugs, and other things. South Africa's response to the threat of transnational organized crime, terrorism and corruption should be seen against the background of the Government's broader social and economic transformation agenda, of which criminal justice and governance reforms had been key areas of focus. His country had ratified most international instruments covering those areas, and those conventions were supported by a comprehensive legislative framework.

He said mercenary activities were a problem of concern to African States, since that phenomenon was often linked to transnational organized crime, corruption and terrorism. He urged those States that were used as bases, from which those activities were launched, to ensure that a legal framework was developed to criminalize such activities. He urged international partners to extend technical assistance to developing countries to ensure effective implementation of all relevant international instruments. He appreciated the view of the High-Level Panel that the link between crime and poverty should enjoy more attention in United Nations decision-making bodies.

AHMED AL-ABDULLA, Minister of Justice of Kuwait said the Congress had a rich agenda before it. He called on the Congress to include in the Declaration a legal, objective definition that took account of General Assembly decisions regarding terrorism, which, among other things, established a difference between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples against foreign occupation. There was no doubt that the changes that accompanied modern life had also affected the nature of crime, leading to new forms of crime such as computer crime. Reports before the Congress must regularly include developments in that regard. He said he was pleased about Qatar's proposal to hold the second world summit of ministers of justice, public prosecutors and attorneys general in November this year. That meeting would serve as a follow-up to the present Congress.

He also requested that the Congress include in its Declaration the need to take account of the specificities of States, as well as their national sovereignty and the nature of their legal instruments. There was a need to find out more about the various causes of terrorism and the link between that and other criminal activities through international cooperation. He also asked the Congress to study the possibility of strengthening cooperation with a view to avoiding the dissemination of firearms and ammunition, as well as various kinds of trafficking.

VONG VATHANA ANG, Minister of Justice of Cambodia, said the existing laws relating to transnational organized crimes in his country were still inadequate. Over the past few years, the Government had promulgated several laws which included provision for imposing severe criminal penalties against organized crime groups, as well as for protecting victims and witnesses. There

were several draft laws against transnational organized crime, covering terrorism, money-laundering, corruption, and human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Cambodia had ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and two of its Protocols, as well as three United Nations conventions on drugs. It was committed to ratifying all United Nations conventions and protocols relating to the suppression of terrorism.

He said memorandums of understanding had been signed with Thailand, China, Australia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam on such matters as trafficking in people, extradition and mutual assistance in criminal matters. A memorandum of understanding had been established with the Australian Government on cooperation in the fight against international terrorism and crime prevention. The Governments of Australia and the United Kingdom had provided technical and financial assistance for drafting an anti-terrorism law in conformity with the 12 United Nations conventions against terrorism. The only way to prevent international organized crime was through international cooperation.

DANIEL LIPSIC, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice of Slovakia, said the fight against terrorism and organized crime required perfect and faultless domestic legislation and an effective system of international instruments that should ensure: the prevention and elimination of sources of crime; the functioning of an effective law enforcement system and sanction mechanisms; and universal cross-border cooperation of all law enforcement authorities of all democratic States. At the same time, it was important to take into account that the fight against organized crime, including terrorism, must be compatible with fundamental freedoms and human rights. It was those values that terrorist attacks were aimed at. The rights of victims of those crimes should not be forgotten.

He said Slovakia was party to the majority of important universal international treaties in the field of organized crime, terrorism, corruption and economic crime. A Special Prosecution Office and a Special Court had been established with jurisdiction over organized crime, terrorism, corruption and the most severe forms of financial crime. The notion of a cooperating witness and the possibility of using sting operations had been introduced into the Criminal Procedure Code in 2003 and had turned out to be effective tools in the fight against organized crime and corruption. Those capacities were included in the draft Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code being discussed in Parliament at present.

“We consider unacceptable the fact that organized crime and terror would be in a position to influence the democratic choices of human society and its values developed throughout the centuries. It is our responsibility to do the utmost to eliminate these phenomena to the maximum extent possible”, he concluded.

DORRY NAJAF ABADI, Attorney-General of Iran, said that, since the previous Congress, there had been considerable developments concerning his country's criminal justice system, and promotion of the administration of justice and the prevention of crime, including a revision of the Code of Procedure, the establishment of dispute settlement councils, the revival of the prosecutor offices, the administration of alternatives to imprisonment and the provision of more attention to the juvenile justice system. In the second five-year Judicial Development Programme, a progressive, effective and methodological pattern had been designed with the aim of promoting

public participation, improving methods, enhancing public satisfaction, and promoting judicial expertise, speed and quality.

He said illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs was one of the oldest manifestations of transnational organized crime and, due to its geographical situations, his country was severely affected by it. Millions of dollars had been spent each year to fight organized trafficking in narcotic drugs, and more than 4,000 law enforcement forces had been killed in that continuing war. Countries on the front line should not be left alone, but should be given technical and financial assistance. His country was also committed to prevent and fight any manifestation of human trafficking. In 2004, an act against trafficking in human beings had been approved. Iran had further taken a wide range of measures to prevent and combat corruption.

No community was immune from the threats arising from terrorism, he said. Poverty, despair, humiliations, political oppression, extremism, human rights abuses, regional conflicts and foreign occupation were some of its breeding grounds. There was need for a comprehensive strategy that would eradicate those breeding grounds. Promotion of international cooperation for the prevention and suppression of acts of terrorism should constitute an indispensable part of such a strategy. Terrorism was a social human disorder with global dimensions. No religion, culture, ethnicity, ideology or school of thought should be labelled as being associated with or contributing to terrorism. Terrorism violated all values that religions, including Islam, stood for. Such treatment, as well as double standards and selectivity, would only put the highly valued consensus against terrorism at stake.

ALBERTO BERNARDES COSTA, Minister of Justice of Portugal, said a straight reading of the Congress agenda reflected the importance of international cooperation in the face of issues such as terrorism, financial crimes and corruption and trafficking in persons. Such issues must be tackled at the international level, including through the prompt implementation of the various United Nations conventions. The conventions set out a global comprehensive framework for cooperation. Further mechanisms were needed, however, such as contact point networks, including in Portuguese, the third most spoken language in the western hemisphere. Other practical solutions for cooperation could be helpful, including software created by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

He said international cooperation must also address other issues, including matters falling under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. How could one talk about combating crime and not take into account genocide and war crimes? Punishing serious crimes would also have to be based on a rejection of capital punishment. The challenges before the Congress called for further knowledge sharing. Technical assistance was vital in that regard. It was equally important to identify areas in which normative work was needed, including in the area of victim protection and restorative justice. Crime prevention through public awareness programmes must also be encouraged. The acceptance of norms and principles was not an end in and of itself. It was also important to see how they were implemented. When drafting legislation, lawmakers must ultimately ensure the protection of their citizens' interests.

FUSEN ZHANG, Minister of Justice of China, said transnational organized crime had imposed a grave threat to the peace and development of the world and to the stability and progress of societies, harming people from around the globe. The causes of transnational organized crime

were complicated, involving political, economic and social development and other elements of different societies. The international community must further consolidate research on the phenomenon. In line with national conditions, priority should be given to its prevention.

He said his country had always stressed the prevention and combating of crimes. In recent years, China had made major revisions to its criminal legislation. It was formulating a law against money-laundering. His country had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and had signed the Convention on Corruption. It had signed treaties on extradition with 23 countries and had acceded to over 20 multilateral conventions on international judicial cooperation. China had established specialized organs responsible for the investigation and prevention of organized crime. Authorities against embezzlement and bribery had prioritized the fight against corruption and had achieved remarkable results.

The two United Nations Conventions -- against transnational organized crime and against corruption -- represented important legal weapons of the international community to effectively control and prevent transnational organized crime. They should be the basis for States parties to conduct cooperation in extradition and criminal justice. He appealed to all Member States to accelerate their signature and ratification. Relevant national and international organizations should provide technical assistance for developing countries with the purpose of improving their capacities in the implementation of conventions concerning transnational organized crime, including through holding workshops and seminars.

KUNIHICO MATSUO, Prosecutor General of Japan, said transnational organized crime was on the rise, and terrorism was a daily threat. The rapid development of information technology was enhancing living standards, while, at the same time generating new crimes. It was of vital importance to collaborate internationally to effectively address those issues. Regarding organized crime committed beyond national borders, Japan had drawn up relevant legislation and its law enforcement authorities had been carrying out measures against organized crime such as drug trafficking and money-laundering. In 2004, it had adopted an action plan on trafficking in persons.

Since terrorism posed serious challenges to world peace and the rule of law, there was a need for the international community to take a united stance, he said and welcomed the recent adoption of the International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. His country had implemented all 12 international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols. It had adopted an action plan in 2004 and was promoting measures such as the introduction of biometrically enabled passports with embedded chips.

He said the number of attacks on computers through computer viruses and crimes abusing computer networks was on the rise. Since cybercrime could be easily committed beyond national borders, it was essential for countries to deal with them in concert. His Government had submitted a bill to amend substantive and procedural laws in order to conclude the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, and the Diet had authorized its conclusion in April 2004.

HUSSAIN ALI AL-HILALI, Attorney-General of Oman, said that, in the light of the Vienna Declaration, his country had submitted a report to the Congress which explained efforts being made in his country to implement it. Oman was well aware of the need to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime and wished to double

efforts in that regard. It had taken an active part in the drafting of the relevant United Nations convention and was party to it.

He said dealing with crime was among his country's highest priorities. A sound and transparent judicial system had been established, and a number of criminal laws had been promulgated. The Sultanate was making constant efforts to fight criminal activities. It condemned terrorism wherever it occurred and was party to most conventions on terrorism.

Oman was making considerable efforts under international standards to combat money-laundering, but, as of yet, there were no cases in his country. It was also striving to combat corruption, had established standards for good governance and was considering acceding to the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The Sultanate was also fighting drugs and was party to most relevant conventions. Moreover, the Sultanate had successfully ensured that any form of ethnic, racial or lingual discrimination was avoided. It had also acceded to the International Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and there was no discrimination in Oman.

BJÖRN BJARNASON, Minister of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs of Iceland, said the Congress would play a key role in strengthening cooperation for crime prevention. Translating words into deeds was the most important part of the fight against international organized crime. When implementing the relevant international instruments against crime and terrorism, States must comply with international law, in particular human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. States should have clear international guidelines when upgrading their national legislation on terrorism. States were often in a delicate position when preventing crime or executing criminal justice. If the rules of the game were unclear, States risked being accused of restricting people's enjoyment of their human rights. They needed comprehensive guidelines when enforcing national prevention policies.

Civil society also had an important role in the fight against crime, he said, adding that police and law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to communicate with the public. While new technology could be used effectively to improve communications and the flow of information, it could also be used for negative purposes. The police should be enabled, by new legislation or instructions, to keep up with new technological trends. Regarding restorative justice, he said Iceland had taken the first steps towards restorative justice by developing mediation through a project based on an American model. The purpose was to provide children who had committed an offence with an opportunity to learn from their experience and contribute to the safety of their environment, thus making restitution for their conduct. He welcomed attention to juvenile justice in the draft declaration and underlined the importance of reforms based on the active involvement of civil society.

GINTARAS BUZINSKAS, Minister of Justice of Lithuania, aligning himself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, said that, for almost 10 years, the Baltic Sea countries had closely cooperated in dealing with common crime-related issues in a dynamic, effective way and had adapted to modern challenges. That cooperation was mainly focused on narcotics, money-laundering, corruption, trafficking in human beings, trafficking in stolen vehicles, as well as environmental crime. A Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime had been

established, providing for ongoing, daily cooperation. That direct cooperation among joint investigative teams had proved to be an efficient tool in combating organized crime.

In the context of regional activities, he emphasized the importance of protecting witnesses and victims. It was essential for the State to be able to protect those individuals. A clearing house on witness and victim protection had been entrusted to Lithuania. Additional bilateral activities on witness protection were practically carried out in several Baltic Sea region States as well. Training programmes for various professionals were also essential to ensure an effective response to the new challenges arising in the fight against organized crime. The work of the regional structures was coordinated with other States and international organizations, including Europol and Interpol.

He said special emphasis should be devoted to the implementation of the existing legal documents, in particular in the anti-corruption field. The existing political will among key political forces, as well as national legal frameworks and institutional capacities would aid the undertaking of that serious commitment. It was the joint responsibility of the international community to reinforce efforts against various crime phenomena that affected the global economy.

BOUREIMA BADINI, Minister of Justice of Burkina Faso, said the evils of the twenty-first century included transnational organized crime. The United Nations had chosen well in making that item a priority. Criminal groups knew no borders and spared no nation, small or large. Once they had made their money, they projected the proceeds into legitimate activities, thus laundering their dirty money. The African community was seriously affected by the scourge of transnational organized crime, including in the form of modern slavery, corruption, prostitution, tax fraud and the illicit trade of natural and biological resources. The United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime offered a framework for international cooperation to combat the contemporary phenomenon. New interdependencies in criminal networks required greater international cooperation. Training, joint investigations and electronic surveillance were all areas of cooperation. The only way to succeed in combating crime was through international cooperation. Burkina Faso had hosted numerous crime-related seminars and training programmes and had participated in the preparation of the drafting of various legal instruments.

He urged States to modernize their legislation and implement the various legal instruments to combat international terrorism. He requested the dissemination of a training manual on international cooperation in the field of terrorism and he supported measures to eradicate all forms of terrorist financing, including the freezing of assets. He also recommended support for the victims of crime and the holding of a subregional seminar on legal mutual assistance. He declared Burkina Faso's candidacy for the holding the Twelfth United Nations Crime Congress.

BABOUCARR JATTA, Secretary of State for Interior of Gambia, aligning himself with the voices of the African Group and the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, said his country had signed and ratified all relevant United Nations conventions and protocols, including the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It had undertaken recent interventions and initiatives regarding the war on transnational organized crime and corruption and their attendant consequences. Recognizing the close relationship between organized crime, drugs, corruption and terrorism, his country had enacted the Drug Control Act in 2003 and had established a national drug enforcement agency. Gambia also had criminalized money-laundering, given its close relationship with terrorism, organized crime and drugs.

He said some of the provision of the Optional Protocol against Trafficking in Persons had been incorporated into a children's bill. Provisions of the transnational organized crime convention had been incorporated in the Drug Control Act and the Money-Laundering Act. Gambia had also enacted anti-terrorism legislation, which was mainly directed against the financing of terrorism. The Government had set up an Anti-Corruption Commission with a view to investigating the conduct, activities and lifestyles of public officials who might likely abuse or misuse their public offices for personal gains -- 137 public officials had been investigated and significant recoveries had been made. The Commission served as a deterrent against unscrupulous activities by public officials.

ROBERT WALLNER, Prosecutor General of Liechtenstein noted that, in a globalized world, strategic alliances had become a key factor for success. Organized criminal groups had long ago taken advantage of the liberalization of international exchanges in all its forms and joined forces across borders. It was high time, therefore, for the international community of law-abiding States to go further in doing the same and to make better use of the existing legal and political framework to successfully combat organized crime and terrorism. Such a framework did exist, covering a wide range of crimes and including well-established provisions regarding cross-cutting issues such as the fight against organized crime and money-laundering. The international regime embodied a comprehensive framework of conventions and standards.

While he welcomed strategic alliances at a regional level, the overall aim of such initiatives must be to enhance the consistency of measures against money-laundering and terrorist funding worldwide. The United Nations had a crucial role to play, in particular by providing technical assistance to Member States. The capacity-building resources of the UNODC should be strengthened in order to improve the implementation of the various international conventions on crime prevention and criminal justice, including robust mechanisms for rule-of-law assistance. Liechtenstein had been supporting those activities, in particular the work of the Global Programme against Money-Laundering. The active support and involvement of individuals and groups outside the public sector must not be neglected in order to create successful alliances against crime. Any alliance against crime must be built on the rule of law.

SANG-HEE KIM, Vice-Minister of Justice of Republic of Korea, said, despite strenuous efforts and achievements, challenges including corruption, transnational organized crime and terrorism continued to pose serious threats to humanity as the phenomena of globalization and information technology were accelerating faster than ever before. His Government was strongly committed to promoting international cooperation in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice in order to effectively deal with such crimes.

He said the Government had pursued the realization of a "corruption-free society" through its focus on "fairness and transparency" since 2003, and had enacted the Anti-Corruption Act, which provided a framework for defining and punishing official corruption. His Government had also established the "Korea Independent Commission against Corruption", which was responsible for analysing the root causes of corruption. The Government had also come up with a strong legal system to deal with transnational organized crime and had stepped up its counter-terrorism efforts in a multifaceted way. His country had ratified all 12 international conventions in that regard and had taken proper measures to strengthen border security, facilitate information sharing and promote

cooperation among relevant agencies. It had also launched various capacity-building programmes to assist the international community in addressing challenges posed by terrorist activities.

The response of the Government to crime should go hand in hand with human rights protections in the area of criminal procedure, he said. To that end, a fair and effective legal system should be established and carefully maintained. In order to promote innovation within Korea's judicial system, the Presidential Committee on Judicial Reform was taking charge of various activities, including public participation in the judicial process, improvement in criminal procedure and sentencing, protection for victims and the streamlining of criminal justice systems.

MUTAHAR RASHAD AL-MASRI, Vice-Minister of the Interior of Yemen, said the convening of the Congress was proof of the international community's determination to face the challenge of organized crime. Recognizing the importance of international cooperation in combating crime, Yemen had participated in all crime-related conferences and meetings. Terrorism was a threat to the world, depriving people of security and life. The international community must face the phenomenon through an international convention that distinguished terrorism from the legitimate right of people to resist occupation.

He said Yemen had taken measures to implement the Vienna Declaration, including the signing of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention against Corruption and the establishment of special units to combat drug trafficking and terrorism. He supported the Bangkok Declaration, noting that it must provide for increased support for the developing countries; strengthened national capacities to prevent crime; support for justice and crime prevention bodies; and respect for the legitimate rights and freedoms of people. Yemen called on the international community to continue joint action in crime prevention and criminal justice.

SYLWERIUSZ KROLAK, Undersecretary of State of Poland, said law enforcement could only work effectively nowadays if it had the solid support of both modern national legislation and international instruments and arrangements. The legal framework for new-style cooperation had been created by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, developed at Poland's initiative. Poland had also signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as the fight against corruption was one of the main priorities of his Government.

He said legislative work was done in such a way that it met the anti-corruption standards of the international instruments and had amended its Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure in that regard. Poland had criminalized the active and passive bribery of national and foreign public officials, as well as corruption in the private sector. It had further amended its banking laws so that bank security might be disclosed when executing a request of a foreign State authority for mutual legal assistance. His country had paid particular attention to the United Nations standards and norms in the field of administration of justice.

It was beyond doubt that success in the fight against terrorism depended on the anti-terrorist measures undertaken both at national and international levels. The role of the United Nations in creating international mechanisms such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee was extremely important. Poland also supported fully the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

ANA MARIA DE MIGUEL LANGA, Undersecretary of Justice of Spain, said trafficking in persons constituted a threat to international security. Spain had been making an intense effort to prevent and suppress transnational organized crime, especially trafficking in drugs and humans, as new information and communication technologies offered a flexible and virtual platform from which perpetrators could avoid the rules of law. Spain had redoubled its efforts in international cooperation since the events of 11 September 2001. Spain had suffered for decades from the phenomenon of terrorism and had signed and ratified all 12 instruments comprising the universal consensus in the fight against terrorism. She welcomed the Assembly's recent adoption of the recent nuclear terrorism convention. Spain would continue to work to fulfil the terms of the work of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Spain supported the comprehensive and integrated strategy for combating terrorism of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. The comprehensive strategy was comprised of five elements which dovetailed perfectly with Spain's domestic policy. Terrorists must know that the long arm of the law would reach them wherever they were. The 2004 attacks in Madrid had resulted in a renewed anti-terrorism plan, including the creation of a national anti-terrorism centre. The global strategy should include a sixth element -- protection and assistance for the victims of terrorism. One of the most significant challenges in the area of criminal justice related to economic and financial crimes, particularly the fight against money-laundering. The challenge was to ensure that conventions and instruments were truly implemented, turning paper to deed. She trusted that the declaration would continue to support the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

MACABANGKIT LANTO, Undersecretary of Justice of Philippines, said crime prevention was one of the top priorities of his Government. In 2004, the "National Anti-Crime Program of Action" had been launched, which aimed to create an environment where Filipinos and their guests could freely and safely come and go without fear of crimes. The speaker then went on to explain national legislation regarding money-laundering, human trafficking, corruption and law enforcement measures. On terrorism, he said that, while his country still had to enact a definitive law against terrorism, it had made full use of the provision of its Revised Penal Code to prosecute and punish anyone accused of deliberately causing deaths, injury and/or destruction of property. The Government had taken concrete steps to improve the judicial system.

He said the Philippines was party to various multilateral treaties, including the United Nations conventions on drugs and the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It had ratified all 12 international instruments against terrorism and had signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption. He recommended, among other things, that international and regional cooperation and assistance had to be invigorated through treaties in extradition and mutual legal assistance; terrorist financing must be suppressed by tightening regulatory arrangements; a system of incentives must be established by States to avoid corruption; and the mandate of UNODC should be expanded and strengthened, in particular its Terrorism Prevention Branch. Also a system of sharing information and best practices should be established to combat the scourge of terrorism, corruption and transnational organized crime.

In combating the dual scourge of transnational organized crime and terrorism, one must be mindful not only to provide care and assistance to victims, but also take care to heal the wounds inflicted on the social fabric, he said. Action must be taken against criminality and terrorism, not

against any particular creed, culture or ethnicity. Not only should one cooperate more closely on the governmental level; one must also enlist the leaders of faiths and civil society to demonstrate cross-sectional solidarity against those challenges.

* * * * *