



# ELEVENTH UN CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

*Bangkok, Thailand 18-25 April 2005*



20 April 2005

## DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

In Committee II of the 11<sup>th</sup> UN Crime Congress today, delegates stressed the need for better coordination of national and international efforts against corruption, and added that special attention must be given to the provision related to asset recovery.

The representative of the United States said that one only needed to turn the pages of the UN Convention against Corruption to see the impressive list of commitments agreed to in the past years. He called for the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC) Secretariat to play an active role in developing a coordinated strategy for promoting the Convention's implementation.

On the subject of money-laundering and its links with corruption, Morocco said that public sector reform meant that public sector officials were required to declare their revenues so as to ensure transparency and identify active, as well as passive corruption. He said the media must also work to raise awareness of the need to fight corruption.

A representative of the NGO Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace felt that the capacity for ethical action, and an aversion to corruption could, in fact, be developed and nurtured. He called upon Member States to recall the importance of families, religions, educational institutions and ethical and faith-based NGOs, as they made significant contributions to the moral and ethical development of society.

Summarizing the discussion, the chairman of Committee II said combating corruption was something societies must do in the 21st century. He said a global effort against corruption was needed.

Committee I discussed standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice. Among other things, the discussions explored the influence of UN standards and norms in formulating national policies and domestic legislation. The Canadian representative said UN standards had laid a strong foundation for countries who wanted to reform their criminal justice systems. Norms and standards reflected the essence of justice, he said.

As an example of how criminal laws could be changed, given modern circumstances, the representative of Turkey said short-term imprisonment could be commuted to alternative sanctions such as fines, restoration of damages suffered by the victims, and attending educational programmes.

Later in the day, experts from the UNODC held a press briefing to discuss corruption, terrorism, economic and financial crime and money-laundering. Dimitri Vlassis, Substantive Coordinator for the Congress, UNODC, said Hungary had deposited its instrument of ratification for the UN Convention against Corruption, bringing the tally to 20. Only 10 more ratifications are required for the Convention to enter into force.

(more)

Also at the briefing, Timothy Lemay, Chief, Rule of Law Section, said that there had been some discussions on a new UN convention against money-laundering. On economic and financial crimes, he emphasized the need to keep legislation up-to-date, and to train the police and judiciary.

Walter Gehr, Project Coordinator, Terrorism Prevention Branch, UNODC, said discussions at the Congress aimed at confirming and exploring the legal norms laid out by the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. He said Member States needed to facilitate extradition and mutual legal assistance. When questioned on what progress could be made, given that there was no agreed-upon definition of terrorism, Mr. Gehr said that the lack of a definition was no impediment in countering terrorism. He said the Convention penalized certain acts, like hijacking aeroplanes, without entering into the issue of defining terrorism.

Other events that took place today include a plenary session on international cooperation against terrorism and links between terrorism and other criminal activities in the context of the work of UNODC. Informal consultations on the draft Bangkok declaration also began today. Five ancillary meetings dealing with how to restore the justice system in conflict-torn nations, restorative justice in UN peacebuilding efforts, trafficking in children, urban security worldwide, and crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of natural disasters, also took place.

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