QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice?
The Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is hosted by the Government of Qatar and will take place in Doha from 12 to 19 April 2015. United Nations Crime Prevention Congresses have been held every five years since 1955 in different parts of the world, dealing with a vast array of topics. They have made a considerable impact on the field of international crime prevention and criminal justice and influenced national policies and professional practices. As a global forum, the Congresses enable the exchange of information and best practices among States and professionals working in this field. Their overall goal is to promote more effective crime prevention policies and criminal justice measures all over the world.

What is the theme of this year’s Congress?
The theme of the Thirteenth Congress is “Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation”, as decided by the United Nations General Assembly (GA Resolution 67/184).

What will be discussed at the Congress?
There are four substantive items on the agenda covering the following issues:

- Successes and challenges in implementing comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice policies and strategies to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and to support sustainable development;
- International cooperation, including at the regional level, to combat transnational organized crime;
- Comprehensive and balanced approaches to prevent and adequately respond to new and emerging forms of transnational crime;
- National approaches to public participation in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice.

The Congress will also be the venue of four workshops on: the role of the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice; trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants; strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to evolving forms of crime such as cybercrime and trafficking in cultural property; and public contribution to crime prevention and raising awareness of criminal justice. A high-level segment will be held during the first two days of the Congress, where Heads of State or Government and Ministers and other high-level government representatives will address the main agenda items of the Congress. There will also be numerous other side meetings organized by non-governmental organizations, covering subjects relating to crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law.

Who will participate?
The Crime Congress is a global forum that brings together the largest and most diverse gathering of policymakers and practitioners in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice, as well as individual experts from academia, representatives of inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies and other United Nations entities, and the media.

What is the expected outcome of the Congress?
The Congress will adopt a single political declaration, which will contain recommendations based on discussions at the various parts of the Congress including the high-level segment and the workshops. The declaration
will be submitted to the next session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice from 18 to 22 May 2015 for appropriate consideration and action. The Congress will also provide a platform for increased cooperation between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on the whole spectrum of crime prevention and criminal justice issues, thus promoting more effective international action in this field.

What happens in the run-up to the Congress?
To provide a regional perspective on the topics to be discussed at the Congress, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime organized a series of regional preparatory meetings in 2014, held in Bangkok, Thailand; Doha, Qatar; San José, Costa Rica; and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A special Governmental Expert Group Meeting was also held in Qatar from 27 to 29 September 2014. The idea was for participants to highlight their special concerns and share their “lessons learned”.

How can I follow proceedings if I am not able to come to Doha, Qatar?
A website will provide live and on-demand webcast coverage of the Congress in English and the original (floor) language, as well as statements (speeches) in text format. The website is: http://www.un.org/en/events/crimecongress2015/webcast

How do I get involved?
Participate in the “What does Rule of Law mean to you?” photo and video campaign, and learn more about various forms of transnational crime at: http://www.un.org/en/events/crimecongress2015/get_involved.shtml

For further information, visit:

Media:

Documents:
People living in low-income countries suffer the biggest threats to their security and well-being, according to the Secretary-General’s 2015 report on the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide. The report gives an overview of the major global and regional trends for different types of crime and includes an analysis on intentional homicide, gender-based killings of women and girls, bribery, human trafficking and wildlife crime.

The report provides further compelling evidence that crime and criminal justice have a strong link to development. Corruption, in particular, has a negative effect on development through misuse of public funds, unfair competition and additional costs on service users, reduction in public trust and weakening of the rule of law.

**International crime trends**

There has been a global trend of stability or a slight decrease in some forms of violent crime (homicide, robbery and rape) with differences across regions and levels of economic development.

However, the killing of women by intimate partners is prevalent at similar levels in all regions of the world, irrespective of levels of other types of lethal violence.

Globally, property crimes have decreased, with motor vehicle theft almost halved and burglary reduced by more than a quarter. Criminal offences related to drug trafficking remained relatively stable while drug possession offences have increased markedly since 2003.

Low-income countries are disproportionately affected by corruption while illicit trafficking of people or endangered species typically originates in developing countries and is destined for richer countries.

Regional trends are mostly consistent with the global picture. In Europe over the decade 2003-2013, the decline of various forms of crime has been more pronounced, with the exception of the increase of offences related to drug possession and rape. In Asia and Oceania, drug trafficking offences have increased in recent years.

**Intentional homicide**

Global rates of intentional homicide have decreased, but they still fluctuate regionally. The highest rates were consistently found in the Americas and the lowest in Europe, Asia and Oceania. Based on data for 219 countries and territories, The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that in 2012 around 437,000 people across the world were victims of intentional homicide, corresponding to a global homicide rate of 6.2 per 100,000 people, significantly less than in 2004, when the rate was estimated to be 7.6 per 100,000 people.

The relationship between homicidal violence and levels of social and economic development has long been emphasized by criminological research, which shows that inequality, poverty and weak rule of law, among other things, are linked to conflict and non-conflict violence. Recent trends show homicide in high-income countries low and decreasing while it has steadily increased in low and lower-middle income countries.

**Gender-related killings**

Most homicide victims are male but female victims make up almost a third of all homicide victims in Asia, Europe and Oceania, regions with mostly low homicide rates. Gender-related killing of women and girls such as so-called “honour killings” or dowry-related murders, are all poorly documented. UNODC estimates that 43,600 women were killed by their intimate partner or a family member in 2012, which is 47 per cent of all women killed that year.
Lack of data
It is extremely difficult to measure the extent of some crimes, notably human trafficking and wildlife crime, because of the lack of data. The same problem makes it difficult to assess the performance of criminal justice systems, such as the ability of the criminal justice system to detect crime, and fairly investigate, prosecute and rehabilitate convicted offenders.

Prison populations
Globally, prison population rates have been stable over the last decade, with 148 prisoners per 100,000 people, which is 10.2 million people in the period 2011-2013. Trends diverge regionally. While prison population rates are declining in all African subregions, North America, Western and Eastern Europe, they are increasing in Central and South America and the Caribbean, in South Eastern and Western Asia and in Northern and Southern Europe.

Thirty-four per cent of the prisoners were serving sentences for violent offences (including intentional homicides), less than 30 per cent for property crimes, 20 per cent for drug law offences, 3 per cent for financial crimes or corruption and 14 per cent for other types of crime.

In the Americas, Europe and Oceania, most prisoners were incarcerated for violent crime, while in Asia the majority were serving a sentence for property or drug-related offences.

The number of children in detention is one measure of fairness in a criminal justice system. In line with international standards children should only be arrested and imprisoned as a last resort and for the shortest period of time. Globally between 2004-2006 and 2011-2013 the rate of children in prison fell from 12 to 10 per 100,000 children.

Pre-trial detention and prison overcrowding
According to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Measures, all efforts should be made to reduce to the minimum the length of stay of people awaiting trial, while alternatives to pre-trial detention should be found as early as possible. Globally, more than a quarter of people in prison have not received a sentence or are awaiting trial. From 2011 to 2013, the highest rates were observed in Asia (approximately 40 per cent) and in Africa (35 per cent), but both have decreasing trends.

Pre-trial detention contributes to prison overcrowding, which is challenging in most regions of the world. Overcrowding seriously affects prison conditions, limiting the possibility for prisoners to have access to basic services including health care and for rehabilitation.

Conclusion
Several challenges remain in ensuring that all citizens in the world can live safely and in societies where the rule of law is respected and promoted. It is important to note the global progress in reducing certain types of crime (such as property crime), while homicidal violence remains higher and is increasing in certain regions and in countries with lower levels of income.

Gaps still remain in data quality and availability, and further work is needed to analyse the links between crime, criminal justice and development. Regular monitoring and analysis of crime trends and the operations of criminal justice systems is important for measuring progress in strengthening the rule of law and advancing towards sustainable development.

For further information visit: www.un.org/en/events/crimecongress2015/
Effective crime prevention and well-functioning justice institutions are critical to building peace and consolidating development gains. In short, the rule of law is indispensable for sustainable development. The intimate connection between the rule of law and human rights is also widely recognized, with reforms targeting access to justice, corruption, freedom of the press and the independence of the judiciary.

The Secretary-General underlined, in his report on advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, that “peace and stability, human rights and effective governance based on the rule of law and transparent institutions are outcomes and enablers of development. There can be no peace without development and no development without peace. Lasting peace and sustainable development cannot be fully realized without respect for human rights and the rule of law”. These sentiments were echoed in the regional preparatory meetings for the Thirteenth Crime Congress and have been underscored in discussions in the General Assembly.

Establishing legal frameworks, ensuring enforcement of rules and procedures and reducing corruption have enabled effective delivery of health, education and other social services. Their absence, on the other hand, has been cited as a factor in countries failing to meet targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Appropriate laws and credible enforcement mechanisms have contributed to expanding opportunities, including for women and disadvantaged groups, to participate in economic and political life.

UNCAC also addresses asset recovery—retrieving plundered national wealth—as a fundamental principle with positive development impacts.

The Protocol to the Transnational Organized Crime Convention on human trafficking requires the adoption of measures intended to alleviate factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity. Similarly, the Protocol on smuggling of migrants gives high priority to preventive measures targeting potential migrants, to combat the root socioeconomic causes of this phenomenon. The Protocol on trafficking of firearms is also concerned with social and economic development and the right of people to live in peace.

The United Nations Crime Congresses have focused, notably over the last fifteen years, on the links between the rule of law and development. As a result, Member States have recognized the positive influence on each other of a functioning, efficient, effective and humane criminal justice system and long-term sustainable economic and social development.

Necessity of data collection
The collection of data and analysis of crime and criminal justice systems is vital for developing and implementing comprehensive crime prevention policies and programmes. Such collection and analysis can be a challenge, particularly for low and middle-income countries.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime supports Member States to strengthen their collection of official statistics and makes relevant information available through the Crime Trends Survey. The results of surveys can help to formulate effective crime prevention policies and increase knowledge about the driving forces behind offending behaviour.
Overcoming the challenges to reform
The reform of criminal justice systems is a sensitive and challenging endeavour. It is inherently political, as it relates to resources and vested interests, and it often touches on delicate areas, such as corruption. Furthermore, corrupt officials are likely to resist changes to the status quo.

Supporting reform processes in countries in transition or emerging from conflict presents particular challenges. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, various United Nations organizations have developed a joint justice support programme based on national priorities and needs. In Somalia and Burundi, United Nations rule of law strategies have been developed to prevent fragmentation and duplication of effort.

To effectively address all forms of crime, including organized crime, corruption and terrorism, a coordinated approach is required. Strengthening one sector of the criminal justice system is not enough. For example, strengthening only the police has typically led to further delays in courts and increased the use of pre-trial detention and thus prison overcrowding. Police, prosecution, courts and prisons function more effectively when they interact and integrate their efforts with the important work done by other sectors and civil society.

In a human rights-based approach to criminal justice reform, those with rights and those with responsibilities can be clearly identified and the specific needs of women, children and people who may be subjected to marginalization and discrimination can be addressed.

Conclusion
Improving governance, strengthening institutions and reducing vulnerability to corruption are core development challenges. The Crime Congress will consider the crucial role of the rule of law as an enabler of development as well as an outcome of it, and as an integral part of sustainable and equitable growth. It will also discuss the importance of including the rule of law, particularly crime prevention and the strengthening of the criminal justice system, in the sustainable development goals.
The globalization of criminal activities has created a need for strengthened forms of international cooperation. The investigation, prosecution and control of crime cannot be confined within national boundaries. To keep pace with contemporary forms of crime, including transnational organized crime, corruption and terrorism, we need improved and streamlined mechanisms.

More concerted efforts are needed in extradition, mutual legal assistance, transfer of sentenced persons, transfer of criminal proceedings, international cooperation for purposes of confiscation, including asset recovery, and international law enforcement cooperation.

The role of United Nations conventions

United Nations multilateral instruments help in harmonizing international cooperation standards. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its additional Protocols and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) were adopted following the precedent of the 1988 Drug Trafficking Convention (the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances), to establish rules, institutions and shared responsibility to combat transnational crime. They play a key role in harmonizing obligations and addressing legal gaps in international cooperation in criminal matters. For example, these instruments provide a basis for extradition and mutual legal assistance.

There is almost universal adherence to the three crime-related conventions. As of 5 December 2014, the 1988 Drug Trafficking Convention had 189 parties, the UNTOC 183 and the UNCAC 174 parties.

United Nations multilateral instruments as catalysts for further international cooperation

The universal crime-related conventions encourage States parties to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements to increase the effectiveness of international cooperation.

The ultimate objective is to enhance international cooperation through broadening the range of legal bases on which States can rely through a combined use of multilateral and bilateral agreements.

The model treaties developed through the United Nations Crime Congresses have offered guidance towards convergence of related treaty provisions. The Model Treaty on Extradition and the Model Treaty on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, in particular, are valuable tools for the development of bilateral and multilateral arrangements in the area of judicial cooperation.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has also developed tools that promote and support international cooperation in criminal matters, including the Directory of Competent Authorities, the Mutual Legal Assistance Request Writer Tool and, most recently, the knowledge management portal known as SHERLOC (Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws against Crime). UNODC also runs the Counter-Terrorism Online Learning Platform, which provides a gateway to practitioners (mostly criminal justice and law enforcement) for networking, exchanging information and sharing best practices.

The regional perspective

The second half of the 20th century witnessed the advent of regional agreements and schemes, often among
States of the same region or those sharing common legal traditions. For example, the European Union Member States have agreed, subject to specified grounds for refusal, to recognize and execute European evidence and arrest warrants without any further formalities. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) also has an arrest warrant treaty.

Central and competent national authorities
The ability to promptly request and respond to international cooperation requests is particularly important, given the serious nature of the offences and their transnational nature. Under the crime-related conventions, States parties designate central and competent authorities to facilitate international cooperation in criminal matters.

These authorities coordinate the sending, receiving and processing of requests. The most commonly designated central authorities for mutual legal assistance are ministries of justice, offices of the attorney-general and ministries of foreign affairs.

States have extensively shared their experiences of effective central authorities, such as the importance of around-the-clock availability, their competence for mutual legal assistance purposes under different treaties and quality control of requests.

The extent to which central authorities are able to perform an effective coordination role is also dependent upon the availability of infrastructure, staffing and training opportunities. UNODC has provided technical assistance to Member States to enhance their capacity to deal quickly and efficiently with mutual legal assistance requests and facilitate international cooperation.

Regional cooperation networks
Regional networks can also enhance international cooperation. UNODC supports Member States in setting up networks of prosecutors and central authorities, such as the Central American Network of Prosecutors against Organized Crime (REFCO) and the Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organized Crime (WACAP).

Enhancing international cooperation
The Thirteenth Crime Congress will consider further opportunities to broaden the range of legal bases on which Member States can rely for international cooperation in criminal matters, to build on the existing framework of international conventions and regional treaties.
The speed of technological advancement, increasing globalization, and the exponential growth of global markets have created opportunities for criminal activities, often with a low risk of detection and using new forms of anonymity. Preventing and combating new and emerging crimes is a challenging task.

Crime is continually evolving and adapting. While organized crime, illicit drug trafficking and terrorism have been of major concern for the past two decades, other forms of criminal activity are now coming to the fore, such as cybercrime, sexual exploitation of children, environmental crime and trafficking in cultural property along with piracy, an old form of crime which has re-emerged.

These crimes may not necessarily affect all countries at the same rate or with equal severity. What they have in common, however, is that by the time they are recognized as a transnational threat, they may already be too extensive to tackle.

Factors in the emergence of these crimes include globalization, the proximity of poverty, conflict and weak rule of law to high value markets, and the rapid appearance of new forms of modern technology and global connectivity.

Today, local problems can easily become global. The free movement of people, goods and finance around the world has progressed faster than the abilities of States to keep track and regulate such movements. Criminals have exploited fragmented regulatory regimes and the reduction of trade barriers. In some regions, the high demand for basic medicines combined with struggling health-care systems and national control mechanisms contributes to the significant transnational market for fraudulent medicines.

The proximity of high-value shipping routes to areas of conflict with weak governance has been a major factor behind the modern-day piracy off the Horn of Africa. The large illicit financial flows foster other kinds of organized crime and contribute to destabilization, with funds diverted to groups engaged in internal armed conflict. Efforts have been successful in curbing the piracy business model in that region, but there has been a recent increase in piracy attacks in the Gulf of Guinea off West Africa.

**Modern vs. traditional**

Almost one billion people use the Internet; it allows connections between individuals across a wide geographic area, bringing many socioeconomic benefits. However, that global reach is also being used effectively for criminal activities.

New criminal trends have emerged, with people committing crimes in cyberspace that they would not otherwise commit: the anonymity of the Internet and the possibility of adopting flexible identities can be incentives for criminal behaviour.

Criminals can gain access to large numbers of targets through online services such as banking, shopping and social networking. Global connectivity also means criminals can learn from each other, even if they never meet. Online criminal “social networking” can provide forms of criminal “outreach” and links between criminal groups. A false impression of social acceptability of criminal acts such as child sexual exploitation can be created by online communities.

There are many ways information and communication technologies are driving new and emerging crimes. Consumer financial fraud has become transnational with the now-commonplace use of online payments. Global incitement to violence and terrorism through social media has widened the reach and influence of
previously localized radical and terrorist groups. Illicit drugs and other products can be bought online, paid for with anonymous virtual currencies.

Criminal groups operate in new ways, hiring specialists to perform tasks not covered by their existing knowledge and skills. This trend of a more transient and less structured organization may be how serious crime will be perpetrated in the future.

Use of modern technology in criminal activity is doubtless increasing, but established methods such as bribery and corruption continue to be important in the way these new crimes are carried out, particularly for illicit cross-border trafficking and movement.

Turning the tables: using technology for law enforcement
Technological advances can help investigators too. For example, there is a wealth of information available publicly from social networking sites and chat forums as well as stored on electronic devices such as smartphones, which can be seized during law enforcement operations. This information is often a crucial starting point for criminal investigations.

Prevention
Raising awareness among potential victims is a vital part of preventing these emerging crimes. For example, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are warning international travellers to recognize possible trafficking in people, wildlife, cultural artefacts, illicit drugs and counterfeit goods, and urging them to make responsible consumer choices.

Equally important is the need to address the vulnerabilities of people at risk of becoming involved in new forms of crime. In Somalia, for example, prevention initiatives have reached out to youth to dissuade them from becoming involved in piracy, with the support of community leaders, politicians and religious leaders, alongside efforts to develop sustainable alternative livelihoods.

The next generation of emerging crimes
The level of sophistication of emerging crimes challenges well-equipped States, let alone developing countries with limited resources. Globally harmonizing legislation will help to prevent and combat emerging crimes and there may be a need to devise innovative ways of increasing global electronic connectivity for investigative purposes.

Globalization and new technological developments will drive criminal innovation forward. Meeting this challenge will require consistent efforts to prevent and reduce corruption, to provide sustainable livelihoods, and to address poverty and inequality.
To tackle crime effectively, communities need to be consulted on the problems they face and how to tackle them. Involving the public presents challenges as well as opportunities, but can lead to greater trust in the criminal justice system.

An increasing number of States have been adopting evidence-based, consultative and participatory approaches to preventing and reducing crime. They involve all sectors of society, including non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector.

Key participants in crime prevention
The police in particular have a key role to play in working with the public and communities to prevent and control crime, through community-oriented policing and similar approaches that encourage consultative and collaborative arrangements between police and citizens. Furthermore, courts play an important role through restorative justice. Prosecutors contribute to the prevention of crime by considering alternatives to prosecution, and legal aid providers, pro-bono lawyers and volunteers all assist with access to justice for those without the means to pay for a defence lawyer.

The role of social media and communication technology
Social media tools are increasingly being used to engage the public in crime prevention and criminal justice activities and are likely to be even more predominant in the future. They offer enormous potential for positive change, but also present challenges to security and justice.

Rapidly developing information and communication technology has radically affected the way people live, work and interact. Law enforcement agencies around the world have joined the dialogue, using social media platforms to strengthen relationships with communities and to communicate with the public for investigative purposes. It has become common for law enforcement to use public social media posts about a crime that has occurred or is occurring to obtain direct, first-hand information for an investigation.

National and local public participation
Community participation in crime prevention and criminal justice involves the active cooperation of local residents and organizations and has a long history of accomplishments in many countries around the world. Governments are increasingly partnering with communities and civil society organizations to prevent crime and violence because of their knowledge of local problems and capacity to reach out to vulnerable, at-risk segments of society. In fact, community involvement has become an essential component of crime prevention in all kinds of partnerships involving municipalities, the police, schools, health and social services, and the private sector.

Communities can get involved in the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders through programmes under which offenders are conditionally released or after they re-enter society. Prison overcrowding is a problem for many countries and there are high reoffending rates worldwide, so policies and measures for the social reintegration and rehabilitation of offenders are crucial. Partnerships and cooperation with communities, the business sector and non-governmental organizations to employ ex-prisoners are critical for reducing reoffending and for assisting with their social reintegration.
Community policing seeks to change the relationship between police and the community through dialogue. To be effective, it needs to respond to the specific needs of the most at-risk groups, such as women, young people, elderly people, ethnic minorities, migrants, displaced people and refugees. Approaches include foot patrols, neighbourhood police, consultative councils, police lectures at schools and universities, and specialized activities bringing together the police and the community, especially young people. Women’s police stations or gender desks have been set up in some countries to improve the police response to the unique needs of women victims and witnesses of crime.

The provision of legal services is also of utmost importance as an essential element in a fair, humane and efficient criminal justice system based on the rule of law. In many countries, the growing number of community-based groups providing different types of legal services has helped to extend the reach of legal aid. In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the role of paralegals, especially where the number of lawyers is not sufficient for the population. They inform suspects and prisoners of their rights and help them navigate the criminal justice system, making it more accessible to the general public.

Public information through the media
Media professionals can contribute to a better understanding of the economic and social roots of crime, educating the public on crime prevention strategies and on how to recognize and address risk factors. However, the media may also negatively influence perceptions of crime. Biased or inaccurate reporting may not explain the underlying causes. If the media over-represents violent behaviour in a community, this may contribute to citizens demanding tougher measures.

The role of victims in crime prevention
Lastly, victims of crime can hold offenders accountable for their actions, be involved in determining appropriate responses to crime, help to strengthen the rule of law and the accountability of criminal justice systems, and ultimately achieve reconciliation. Communicating the experiences of victims through channels such as victimization surveys, victim impact panels and restorative justice mechanisms can also strengthen crime prevention and criminal justice.

The protection of victims and witnesses of crime is vital, too. They are often intimidated, physically threatened and on occasion killed. To have more effective criminal justice systems, victims and witness protection programmes need to be strengthened.

Need for United Nations guidelines
With many factors working against broad-based public participation in crime prevention and criminal justice, such as lack of knowledge of participatory processes and public mistrust of the government, the development of United Nations guidelines would be a useful tool to assist States and others in this area.