



**13TH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS
ON CRIME PREVENTION AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**
Doha, 12–19 April 2015



MEETINGS COVERAGE

Plenary
8th Meeting (AM)

DOHA/DPI/MC/4
SOC/CP/363
15 April 2015

‘LEGAL ARSENAL’ BEST WEAPON TO CRUSH CRIME, TERROR, DELEGATES HEAR AS UN CONGRESS WEIGHS RULE OF LAW, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES

Investing in modernizing laws to tackle new threats, improving the protection of citizens and borders, and guaranteeing a fair, impartial judiciary were among the tools needed to crush the vicious cycle of poverty and illicit activities damaging communities around the world, delegates said as the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice concluded its plenary debate on successes and challenges in implementing ways to promote the rule of law along with sustainable development.

Representatives of Governments and civil society organizations considered new ways to ramp up the chances of success for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda during its morning-long debate on “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”, which started the previous day. (See Press Release [SOC/CP/362](#).)

To “hit the ground running” in the post-2015 era, Switzerland’s representative said, the rule of law must be strongly embedded throughout the new agenda and in the Doha Declaration (document [A/CONF.222/L.6](#)). Of equal importance was to “concretely” prepare to implement the post-2015 proposed “sustainable development goals”, particularly goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, in order to make significant progress. Indeed, the rule of law provided the necessary framework that underwrote a social contract between people and their Government, guaranteeing access to justice and preventing impunity so that a country’s resources could be channelled towards shared prosperity. But the implication of the rule of law went beyond goal 16, he continued, emphasizing that it should be promoted in all aspects of the new agenda.

For that agenda to be truly transformative, the representative of the United States said, its “impractical and unachievable” 169 targets needed improvement. Providing several suggestions on how to do that, he said the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) could serve as a technical resource on indicators that could support proposed objectives, including goal 5 on achieving gender equality and goal 16. It was critical to any broader reform attempts that Governments ensured the ability of the justice system to monitor and report transparently on crime trends and the performance of law enforcement and legal, judicial and corrections sectors, in addition to promoting members of vulnerable populations as criminal justice professionals to better serve the public, he said.

Indeed, with the increasing dimensions of global crime, Germany’s speaker said, “what we need is an integrated, global response by the world community” that involved all relevant actors. The international community must also combat the deeper underlying political causes of crime, including terrorism, by addressing the roots of conflict and violence. That included eliminating the “hollowing out” of State structures through corruption, disadvantages suffered by women and illegal wildlife trade.

Several speakers from terrorism-afflicted States shared their perspective on how to address the causes of that scourge. To halt the spread of groups like Al-Qaida and Da’esh, and their crimes against humanity, Iraq’s

representative said, a strategy must include Security Council action and a guarantee of the implementation of that body's resolutions. It would also require stepping up international cooperation, particularly on freezing flows of funds and foreign fighters, and promoting the battle against organized crime groups operating behind "shell" companies. Libya's representative appealed for international assistance to recover its plundered assets, bolster border control and support his Government's endeavours to simultaneously promote stability while fighting against the presence of Da'esh. As Libya was a gateway to Europe, he said, what was happening in his country would have an impact on States around the world.

In fact, no country could claim to combat terrorism on its own, Morocco's representative said, emphasizing that international cooperation was essential. His country had introduced several reforms with the aim of creating a "legal arsenal" to tackle various forms of crime, including terrorism, smuggling of migrants and money-laundering, as well as to address the unique challenge of foreign fighters. The best addition to that arsenal was regional and international cooperation, he said, noting that UNODC had the potential to help track down States that harboured terrorists and criminals or contributed to their activities.

Continuing, he highlighted that success in crime prevention and criminal justice did not depend on the number of security forces, but on the adoption of effective means to respond to multifaceted threats in a way that respected human rights. As such, Morocco had adopted a multi-pronged approach in its public policy to combat terrorist groups by "drying up" their funding through strong mandatory measures and protecting the country's religious environment from excesses.

A number of speakers also called on for action to make similar processes easier. Kenya's delegate described several new measures, including reforms of its judiciary and halting the spread of radicalism by reaching out to youth through community and religious leaders, and called for a simplification of mutual legal assistance, particularly in light of cybercrime and urgent threats. Meanwhile, Sudan's representative asked for the creation of a plan to bolster capacity in developing countries to ensure adequate security and police protection of citizens and borders. Representing another view, a speaker for Amnesty International called on the Congress to address human rights violations that resulted from "overzealous" policing, as well as the punishment of women, marginalized individuals, the poor and those transgressing social norms.

During the debate, representatives of Burundi, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Nicaragua, Sudan and Venezuela provided examples of their national efforts. Indonesia's representative, while noting the view of upholding a human rights-based approach to support crime prevention and criminal justice, said every State had a sovereign right to implement national measures. For its part, Indonesia had taken steps to address corruption, terrorism and human trafficking through legislation, and creating special agencies and task forces.

Investments in those types of initiatives made sense, said a representative of the International Organization for Victim Assistance. Investing 0.1 per cent of the global gross domestic product in planning, training, developing, implementing and evaluating actions to prevent crime and bolster criminal justice systems would free up \$1 trillion by 2030 and would save hundreds of thousands of lives while fostering sustainable development.

A representative of the International Drug Policy Consortium also participated in the discussion.

The Congress will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 16 April, to begin a plenary debate on agenda item 4 on "International cooperation, including at the regional level, to combat transnational organized crime".