



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23 March 2015

Excellency,

It is my pleasure to forward herewith the President's Summary of the High-Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on "*Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*", that was held at the UN Headquarters in New York on 25 February 2015.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Sam K. Kutesa

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

High Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

New York, 25 February 2015

President's Summary

The President of the General Assembly convened a High-Level Thematic Debate on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York on 25 February 2015. This debate was organized at the initiative by the Permanent Missions of the State of Qatar, Thailand, Italy and the Kingdom of Morocco, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The purpose of this debate was to discuss the overarching question of how to tackle social and economic challenges and promote sustainable development through strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice systems, norms and standards, while combatting the threats that undermine them, in particular transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and corruption. In addition, the debate sought to contribute to the deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda as well as to provide input to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which will take place in Doha, Qatar, from 12 to 19 April 2015.

Opening Session

During the Opening Session of the Thematic Debate, speakers highlighted that the year 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, whose Charter reaffirms the “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” Speakers observed that, despite this solemn proclamation, many people across the world continue to suffer from the devastating consequences of poverty, crime, terrorism, exclusion, persecution, corruption and deprivation. They stressed that these people demand – and indeed deserve – accountable governance, fair and accessible justice systems, peaceful societies, personal security and lives of dignity. They further stressed that the international community has a duty to help people everywhere to grasp these opportunities, including by formulating an ambitious transformative post-2015 universal agenda, which is inclusive and firmly rooted in human rights and the rule of law.

During the session, speakers underlined that a sustainable development approach requires the formulation of effective, integrated and multidimensional strategies. They emphasized that the global character and complexity of contemporary crime necessitated a collective global response. In this context, they noted that the upcoming Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to be held in April 2015, will avail an important opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to reaffirm a global response to challenges of crime prevention and criminal justice. They further underlined that the outcome of the Congress will provide guidance in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice for the next five years; and will mark a renewed common vision and commitment to the implementation of the rule of law and human rights, as well as the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Speakers pointed out that crime has the greatest impact on the vulnerable, including women, children and persons with disabilities, as well as the marginalized and the discriminated. They noted, for instance, that crimes such as corruption undermine the delivery of basic services for many people across the globe, as it deprives them of economic and social opportunities and further weakens already fragile institutions.

On the rule of law, the speakers noted that the international community has long recognized its importance, particularly in effective crime prevention and for the creation of a strong human rights base. Furthermore, they highlighted that absence or deficit of rule of law is among the factors that impede the realization of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in some instances. They thus stressed that rule of law constitutes crucial means of advancing development activities at all levels and as a factor for strengthening such activities. In this regard, they emphasized the need for the rule of law to be integrated into the development agenda as a fundamental principle.

Panel Discussions

The morning and the afternoon panel discussions were entitled respectively; “*Towards sustainable development: Successes and challenges in implementing comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice policies,*” and “*Shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Fostering international cooperation to promote crime prevention and criminal justice policies*”.

Messages from the participants in both sessions are clustered as follows:

The Legal Framework: Speakers called for adherence to and full implementation of all relevant international instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its protocols, and existing drug conventions. They also called for continued support for the Implementation Review Mechanism of UNCAC as it prepares for the beginning of its Second Cycle. Moreover, they noted that the foregoing international legal frameworks and the criminal justice standards and norms provide a common platform for Member States to counter serious forms of criminal activity, irrespective of differences in legal systems and traditions; and they allow for flexibility in the development and implementation of crime prevention and criminal justice policies and strategies.

National Ownership: Speakers stressed that genuine national ownership and leadership are essential in ensuring that crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and institutions effectively promote the rule of law and sustainable development. They also pointed out to the importance of traditional or customary systems of justice that often operate side-by-side with the formal justice system. Additionally, they underscored the importance of the full independence of judges, the judiciary and prosecutors, as well as of their integrity. Finally, they underlined the need for governments to undertake detailed crime research and analysis, which would enable them to make effective policy choices.

Public Participation: Speakers noted that broad and inclusive public participation in both the development and implementation of crime prevention and criminal justice strategies was critical to their success and effectiveness. They placed special emphasis on the most vulnerable in society, including women, youth, the poor as well as the persons with disabilities, noting that a truly inclusive process marked by meaningful participation increases the ability of people to contribute to the policy choices that are likely to affect them the most and hold governmental institutions accountable. They observed that such public participation can also help develop and foster a culture of lawfulness through education and access to information, which can be a powerful driver of crime prevention. The importance of the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) to enable them hold governments accountable on their commitments, was particularly emphasized.

International Cooperation and Partnerships: Speakers noted that international cooperation among Member States and inter-agency coordination and cooperation is critical in tackling crime, which has become more sophisticated and transnational in nature. In this regard, they stressed that international cooperation in fighting transnational organized crime should go hand in hand with effective access to justice for all; and must also include a focus on strengthening capacity to monitor trafficking in persons, arms, drugs, wildlife and cultural property, as well as illicit financial flows.

Speakers recognized UNODC's global programme to combat wildlife and forest crime and called upon the international community to support its efforts, including those aimed at promoting international cooperation and partnerships to strengthen criminal justice systems regionally. They underscored that effective international cooperation encompasses law enforcement partnerships, including the sharing of information, data and intelligence; mutual legal assistance in its broadest sense and procedures that are streamlined and efficient; and extradition procedures that allow for flexibility and accommodate differences in legal systems. Furthermore, speakers noted that strengthened implementation of relevant conventions, as well as the role of regional and sub-regional organizations and agreements, are critical components to facilitating effective and efficient international cooperation. They called for strengthened partnerships between governments and other donors, private sector experts, non-governmental and civil society organizations, the media, as well as the academia.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building: Speakers underlined the importance of technical assistance for strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and institutions, particularly in developing and post-conflict States. In addition, they stressed the need to transfer technology and equipment necessary for law enforcement to effectively investigate and meet the challenges of an increasingly mobile and sophisticated level of criminal activity. In this regard, they highlighted the importance of strengthening UNODC's capacity, and acknowledged ongoing activities and assistance provided by UNODC, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

Development of Indicators: Speakers noted that the goals and targets to be agreed upon in the post-2015 development agenda, especially those relating to crime prevention and criminal justice as well as the rule of law, will need to be accompanied by appropriate indicators so as to enable States to measure progress in implementation, including on the effectiveness of criminal justice

institutions. It was noted in particular, that there was a meaningful opportunity for UNODC and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) to provide valuable advice on technical indicators and metrics in crime prevention and criminal justice with regard to several goals and targets to be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, speakers pointed out that the CCPCJ could draw on existing resources and tools, including data gathered by UNODC and other agencies on global crime trends and the operation of national justice systems. They further stressed that developing countries and those in post-conflict situations would be in particular need of international support and assistance to strengthen their data collection capacities as well as statistical and analytical departments.

Specific Proposals:

Participants recommended the following:

- a) The thematic reviews of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), should take into consideration the normative work of the CCPCJ, and then channel it to the Executive Boards and Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes for their support to countries in the field of the implementation of policy guidance.
- b) During the current session, the General Assembly should consider a resolution on illegal trade in wildlife, which has adverse impacts on sustainable development, biodiversity and stability in some regions.
- c) The Crime Congress should consider the gaps inherent in the implementation of existing international legal instruments for combating transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism.

Closing Session

In his concluding remarks, the President of the General Assembly stressed that in order to deliver on their promises of sustainable development, Member States must ensure that societies are secure and peaceful, including through the promotion of the rule of law and strengthening of the criminal justice systems that uphold the fundamental principles of justice, fairness and equality.

The President noted that the forthcoming UN Crime Congress provides a historic opportunity to further discuss the importance of integrating the rule of law and criminal justice in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.