



14TH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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Promoting the rule of law

Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and providing access to justice for all is the aim of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Governments, civil society and communities need to work together to achieve peace, justice and inclusion.

A culture of lawfulness embodied in the Doha Declaration

In the Doha Declaration adopted at the 13th UN Crime Congress, Member States expressed their commitment to promoting a culture of lawfulness based on the protection of human rights and the rule of law while respecting cultural identity with particular emphasis on children and youth. The Declaration also recognized the importance of education for promoting a culture of lawfulness.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), under its Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration, has launched two related initiatives – Education for Justice and Line Up, Live Up on youth crime prevention through sport. Line Up, Live Up is focused on using sport as a vehicle to train children and youth in social and life skills and address important risk factors for crime and violence. The Education for Justice initiative is focused on education on the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels.

Access to justice for all

Access to justice refers to the ability of people to seek and obtain a remedy through formal or informal institutions of justice in conformity with rule of law principles and human rights standards. If justice is not accessible, people are unable to exercise their rights, challenge discrimination or hold decision-makers accountable.

The right of equal access to justice for all has been recognized by the international community. Member States have also expressed their commitment to using law to uphold the equal rights of women and secure their empowerment and full access to justice.

Women still face barriers as claimants, victims, witnesses or offenders. Ensuring access to justice for women, particularly those from more marginalized sectors of society, is a means of implementing women's rights and is central to sustaining peace and the rule of law. Access also contributes to combating impunity for crimes against women, combats poverty and exclusion and protects women from economic exploitation and abuse.

UNODC, in cooperation with UN Women, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), has developed a toolkit aimed at ensuring that justice systems are non-discriminatory and inclusive. UNODC also has increased its activities to support countries in strengthening access to justice for women.

Access to justice in the context of human trafficking is critically important and requires clear and early identification of victims. Negative consequences of failing to properly identify victims include a denial of rights, a failure to investigate and prosecute offenders, removal from a country in which the victim has no right of residence and in certain cases, the charging and prosecution of victims for crimes that they were compelled to commit as victims.

Legal aid is an important component of access to justice. It means access to justice for the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged and when provided at no cost, protects those who are detained, arrested or imprisoned, suspected, accused of or charged with a criminal offence, as well as victims and witnesses.

Restorative justice is a key measure of increasing access to justice. The criminal justice system's processes are often entirely centred on the offender. Restorative justice gives an opportunity to all those affected by the crime to take part in addressing and repairing the harm caused by it. UNODC has produced a Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes which was recently updated.



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Effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive institutions

Corruption continues to taint many criminal justice institutions and persists in many forms and at many levels. It undermines objective decision-making, public trust and access to justice.

The UN Convention against Corruption provides a comprehensive framework for States to build effective and strong institutions free from corruption that operate on the principles of integrity, accountability and transparency. Such institutions are also central to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16.

The principle of judicial independence is the bedrock of an accountable judiciary. UNODC's Global Judicial Integrity Network creates opportunities for judges to network, helps information-sharing and responds to existing and emerging challenges related to judicial integrity.

Criminal justice practitioners must maintain superior standards of personal integrity and ethics. The Network has developed a comprehensive package of judicial ethics training tools. More than 40 jurisdictions worldwide have already begun testing the new tools.

With social media playing an important part in the life of many people and communities, its use by public officials may raise specific questions. The Global Judicial Integrity Network has developed non-binding guidelines on the use of social media by judges. The guidelines address the risks and opportunities in judges' awareness and use of social media, identification on social media, content and behaviour, online friendships and relationships and training.

Partnerships with civil society organizations in crime prevention and criminal justice are a key ingredient to achieving justice and the rule of law. Civil society plays an important role holding criminal justice

institutions accountable to citizens, defending human rights and educating the public.

Education for the rule of law

Integrating the rule of law into all levels of education enables young people to become positive agents of change and play a role in the promotion of a culture of lawfulness. This should begin at the primary level with values-based education and skills development, moving on to discuss more specific topics during secondary education. Universities have a key role in providing in-depth knowledge to future professionals and it should not be restricted to law schools or humanities courses.

UNODC's Education for Justice initiative has developed and disseminated education tools and materials for primary, secondary and tertiary education, reaching more than 417,000 beneficiaries, both students and educators, from more than 180 Member States.

Accountability

Criminal justice institutions must be accountable for the protection of society, in adherence to the principles of the rule of law, justice, peace and security. At the same time they must be accountable to individual members of society who seek fair administration and delivery of justice, particularly victims of crime, people accused of committing a crime and people at high risk of abuse and exploitation including women, children, the poor and minorities.

Promoting the rule of law should not be seen as the sole responsibility of law enforcement and justice institutions or governments. This also moves closer to the vision expressed by Member States in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Goals and targets are interdependent and the importance of partnerships and the principle of leaving no one behind are embedded in the Goals.