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Bangkok, Thailand 18-25 April 2005



Plenary
High-Level Segment
5th & 6th Meetings (AM & PM)

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11TH UN CRIME CONGRESS CONCLUDES WITH ADOPTION OF BANGKOK DECLARATION

CALLING FOR ACTION AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME, TERRORISM

Other Matters Addressed Include Human Trafficking, Money-Laundering, Corruption, Cybercrime, Restorative Justice

Greatly concerned by the expansion and dimensions of transnational organized crime, terrorism and any existing links between them and by the increasing sophistication and diversification of the activities of organized criminal groups, the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice today unanimously adopted the “Bangkok Declaration”, addressing those matters, as well as issues such as trafficking in human beings, money-laundering, corruption, “cybercrime”, restorative justice, and the root causes of crime (document A/CONF.203/L.5).

According to that Declaration, entitled “Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”, Member States reaffirmed their readiness to seek to improve international cooperation in the fight against crime and terrorism at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, in areas including extradition and mutual legal assistance. They also sought to ensure national capacity to engage in international cooperation, in particular in the prevention, investigation, prosecution and adjudication of transnational organized crime and terrorism and in discovering any existing links between them.

The Congress also called on all States that had not yet done so to ratify and implement the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. It further called upon donor States and financial institutions to continue to make adequate voluntary contributions for the provision of technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in order to help them build capacity to prevent and tackle crime, to apply the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice and implement the aforementioned conventions and the international drug control conventions.

Recognizing that comprehensive and effective crime prevention strategies could significantly reduce crime and victimization, the Declaration urged that such strategies address the root causes and risk factors of crime and victimization. United Nations Member States pledged to strengthen international cooperation in order to create an environment conducive to the fight against crime, including by promoting growth and sustainable development and eradicating poverty and unemployment.

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Noting that countries emerging from conflict were particularly vulnerable to organized crime and corruption, the Congress, in its Declaration, recommended that Member States, regional organizations and international entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, provide more effective responses to those problems, in order to re-establish, strengthen or sustain the rule of law and deliver justice.

The Declaration called on all States that had not yet done so to become parties to and implement the universal instruments against terrorism. It expressed support for the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to assist States, in coordination with the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, to support States to become party to and implement those instruments and to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions against terrorism. It expressed the hope that the ongoing negotiation of a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism would be concluded as soon as possible and recognized that arriving at a possible definition of terrorism was one of the key issues to be resolved.

Regarding corruption, the Congress, in its Declaration, called on all States that had not yet done so to ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption. In order to curb corruption, it recognized the need to promote a culture of integrity and accountability in both the public and the private sector. It also emphasized the need to adopt measures to facilitate asset recovery, consistent with the principles of that Convention.

The Congress recommended that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice give consideration to reviewing the adequacy of standards and norms in relation to prison management and prisoners. To promote the interests of victims and the rehabilitation of offenders, it recognized the importance of further developing restorative justice policies, including alternatives to prosecution. Member States participating in the Congress affirmed their determination to pay particular attention to juvenile justice, considering ways to ensure the provision of services to children who were victims of crime and children in conflict with the law.

The Declaration further addressed matters such as the theft and trafficking in cultural property and illicit trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna. It noted with concern the rise of kidnapping and trafficking in persons, often committed with the objective of funding criminal organizations and terrorist activities. Apart from measures to combat those crimes, there was also a need for measures to provide adequate assistance and protection to their victims and their families. It also noted the concerns raised regarding the illicit removal of and trafficking in human organs.

The Declaration reaffirmed the fundamental importance of implementation of existing instruments and the further development of national measures and international cooperation in criminal matters, in issues such as cybercrime, money-laundering, trafficking in cultural property, extradition, mutual legal assistance and the confiscation, recovery and return of the proceeds of crime.

Regarding computer-related crime, the Congress invited the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to examining the feasibility of providing further assistance in that area. It also sought to improve international cooperation to combat document and identity fraud in order to curb organized crime and terrorism.

Recognizing the importance of protecting witnesses and victims of crime and terrorism, Member States in the Declaration committed themselves to strengthening the legal and financial framework for providing support to such victims.

The Congress encouraged measures to strengthen the role of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as non-governmental organizations in contributing to the prevention of and the fight against crime and terrorism.

The Congress reaffirmed continued support for and commitment to the United Nations and to its Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, especially the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institutes and the institutes of the Programme network.

Finally, the Congress, in its Declaration, expressed its profound gratitude to the people and the Government of Thailand for the warm and generous hospitality towards participants and for the excellent facilities provided for the Eleventh Congress.

Other Business

In other business, the Congress adopted a number of reports, including the report of its Credential Committee and the reports of its First and Second Committee and the report of the Plenary, all as orally amended.

The representatives of Pakistan (on behalf of the Asian Group), Paraguay (on behalf of the Group of 77 Developing Countries and China), Luxembourg (on behalf of the European Union), and Syria (on behalf of the Arab Group) made congratulatory remarks and expressed appreciation to the Government and people of Thailand for their hospitality.

The Secretary-General of the Congress, Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the President of the Congress, Suwat Liptapanlop, Minister of Justice of Thailand made closing remarks.

Representative from Iraq, Argentina, Benin, Egypt, Myanmar, France, Cyprus, Brunei Darussalam, Jamaica, Nepal and Madagascar spoke during this morning's high-level segment, as did the representatives of the Holy See, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Council of Arab Ministers of Interior and the League of Arab States.

Congress Highlights

The Eleventh Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which took place from 18 to 25 April, under the theme "Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice", addressed such issues as: effective measures to combat transnational organized crime; international cooperation against terrorism and links between terrorism and other criminal activities; corruption; economic and financial crimes; and making standards work: fifty years of standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice.

During discussions in Plenary and Committee meetings, emphasis was placed on the need for international cooperation in order to combat the new forms of transnational crime and terrorism (“Cooperation, cooperation, cooperation,” as one delegate put it) and the need for implementation of existing conventions and other international instruments in the area of crime prevention and terrorism (“Implementation, implementation, implementation”, said another delegate). The need for technical assistance to countries that needed it to assist them in implementing conventions was particularly underlined.

There were 2,370 participants in the Congress, including many Ministers of Justice and other high-level officials, as well as representatives from 167 non-governmental organizations and 1,135 individual expert observers.

The Congress’ opening session was addressed by Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand, who was accompanied by his daughter, Princess Bairakitiyabha.

The Congress also organized six workshops, with the participation of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individual experts on:

- Enhancing international law enforcement cooperation, including extradition measures;
- Enhancing criminal justice reform, including restorative justice;
- Strategies and best practices for crime prevention, in particular in relation to urban crime and youth at risk;
- Measures to combat terrorism;
- Measures to combat economic crime, including money-laundering; and
- Measures to combat computer-related crime.

During the Congress’ Treaty Event, 16 treaty actions were undertaken. Zambia delivered four instruments and became the fortieth Party to the third Protocol of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, namely the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. That Protocol would now enter into force 90 days from the date of deposit of ratification instruments.

For many participants and staff of the Congress, certainly one of the highlights was the reception, accompanied by fireworks, hosted by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand on 23 April in the Royal Thai Navy Convention Hall.

Statements

ABDULBAKI M. SWADI, Adviser, Ministry of Justice of Iraq, said the world had, in recent years, witnessed the propagation of high-tech transnational organized crime. Iraq had also been a victim of crime, including terrorism, which was why it was committed to fighting terrorism and crime in all its forms. Technical assistance was needed in that respect, and Iraq was currently

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in the process of ratifying the various international instruments and was striving to build its capacity to fight crime in all its forms. It was also working on a legal framework in which to fight crime. Part of that effort required adequately trained law enforcement and criminal justice personnel and, in that regard, he thanked the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for its determination to cooperate with Iraq.

On Iraq's domestic legislation, he said a special transparency and auditing unit had been established to fight against corruption. Strengthening the capacity of the police was one way of guaranteeing peace and security. Iraq was also concerned about its prison population and had taken measures to deal with the situation. His country had also sought to strengthen security and stability within its borders, which was why it had many expectations of the congress. He thanked the state of Qatar for hosting the second conference of magistrates in April 2005 and he hoped that meeting would help move the crime prevention agenda forward.

EUGENIO MARIA CURIA, Director-General of the Legal Counsel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, said his country had been working on a daily basis in the fight against organized crime, including such crimes as kidnapping and corruption. It was party to numerous conventions in that field, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Argentina also had ratified the statute of the International Criminal Court and had adopted the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on money-laundering. All of that gave the country a framework for the battle against criminality.

He thought the Congresses that had been held every five years for the last 50 years were closely following the signs of the times and were always based on standards. Sometimes they focused on legal reforms, sometimes on children's rights and, in recent years, on new challenges such as terrorism and corruption. At this time, international cooperation had to be improved between security agencies and legal bodies. Issues such as extraditions, seizures and recovery of assets had to be addressed. There was, no doubt, commitment among participants, so there was no excuse not to have seen a qualitative change in efforts over five years. The weak point of the Congresses was the lack of adequate use of the international mechanisms for international cooperation. The capacity of the international actors in that area, therefore, needed improvement, through training and technical assistance. Argentina supported the proposal of Brazil to host the 2010 Congress.

DOROTHÉ C. SOSSA, Minister of Justice of Benin, said crime was a threat to democracy, good governance, the rule of law and the free exercise of human rights. Benin had played its role in the fight against the scourge of crime and had actively participated in efforts to create the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Benin's instruments of ratification would soon be in place. He agreed with other speakers that the international community must remain firm in the fight against crime. Terrorism violated the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, violated fundamental human rights and was a dire threat to democracy, especially to young and fragile ones.

He said Benin had used its accession to the United Nations Convention as an opportunity to reform its criminal code and a recent law had resulted in the reorganization of Benin's judiciary. Part of the reform was to bolster the role of the judiciary through recruitment and adequate legal training. Benin's criminal justice system constantly sought to track down criminals, while

respecting their rights. Regionally, Benin was active in cooperating with other national police forces, both through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and on a bilateral basis. An example of that cooperation was joint border patrols by Benin and Nigeria. The face of crime was the same everywhere and a convergence of efforts were needed to efficiently confront it. The Congress must assist the United Nations in its efforts to make the world a safer place.

GUY DE VEL, Observer and Director-General of the Council of Europe, said, during the last five years, the work of the Council of Europe had significantly contributed to the work of the United Nations and had had an impact at the regional level. It had half a century of experience in promoting human rights and in combating crime. Its Extradition Treaty, for instance, dated from 1950.

He said that, in 1977, the Council had elaborated a pioneering convention against terrorism. After 11 September 2001, it had immediately started on implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and it had appealed to its member States to ratify the United Nations conventions on terrorism and to adopt a protocol to the 1977 convention regarding the repression of terrorism. It had adopted guidelines on the issue of human rights in the fight against terrorism and on the protection of victims of terrorist acts. Three recommendations had been adopted dealing with technical investigations and the protection of witnesses. Moreover, it had cooperated closely with the United Nations, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Regarding financial and economic crimes, he said many speakers had stressed that the 1990 Council Convention on Money-Laundering had been signed by 47 States, including Australia. There was also a new convention on the suppression of financing of terrorism. He reiterated the Council's willingness to work for the Convention against Corruption. Regarding cybercrime, he said many speakers stressed the importance of the Europe Council convention -- the only one existing, which was open to non-member States. South Africa, Japan, Canada and the United States had signed it. The Council had also addressed the issue of trafficking in human beings and, in cooperation with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), would organize two conferences on the matter.

ISKANDAR GHATTAS, Assistant Minister of Justice for International and Cultural Cooperation Division of Egypt, said the fight against terrorism was one of the Congress's most basic concerns. Aware of the gravity of the issue, the international community needed to adopt an international strategy to confront any new manifestation of crime or terrorism. Terrorism had shaken the very foundations of society and was not limited to any single region, religious belief or civilization. Egypt had been an active partner in efforts to fight the scourge of terrorism, calling for the adoption of an international treaty against terrorism. Egypt was a peace-loving nation that rejected crime. Egypt had set up a special coordinating body to coordinate national efforts to deal with the issue. Security measures alone were not enough but had to be accompanied by policies to attack the very root causes of the scourge. In that regard, it was important to promote a culture of dialogue. The right to life, peace and security were at stake.

Egypt saluted the United Nations initiative to commemorate the fiftieth Anniversary of the First Crime Congress, he added. He hoped the current session would result in greater cooperation

between all international bodies, leading to the adoption of an international strategy to confront and eradicate terrorism.

TUN SHIN, Deputy Attorney-General of Myanmar, said, since the Tenth Crime Congress in 2000, Myanmar had acceded to 10 conventions in the field of terrorism and had signed one. There were nine national laws on the issue, and new legislation was being drafted to align domestic legislation with the provision of international conventions. His country had acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two of its Protocols. It was also party to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and had adopted relevant domestic law in 1993.

He said his country was actively addressing the area of economic and financial crimes. A money-laundering control law had been promulgated in 2002, in accordance with international standards and the Financial Action Task Force 40 recommendations. There was also a law on mutual assistance in criminal matters, promulgated in 2004 in cooperation with experts from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Myanmar had taken active part in the drafting of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. In the field of narcotic drugs control, it had 11 multilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with countries in the subregion.

SALVATORE PENNACCHIO, Observer of the Holy See, said the scourge of trafficking in human beings took away the hope for a decent future of the most vulnerable, especially women and children. That crime was partly related to declining possibilities for regular migration coinciding with the emergence of a market for irregular migration services. It was of the utmost importance that national and international criminal justice systems identify not only criminals, but also those who suffered as victims. Another issue of great concern to the Holy See was the sale and possession of firearms. Clearly, there was a link between crime and trafficking in firearms that fed terrorism. A reduction in the availability of firearms would facilitate the establishment of peace and security and contribute to channelling money spent on trafficking weapons into programmes for development.

He said corruption assailed a basic value of society -- the rule of law. It was, therefore, crucial to cooperate with key segments of the political and judicial sector, with civil society and the media in order to fight corruption. It was also an international phenomenon and often reflected an unstable social environment that hindered sustainable development. Crimes in post-conflict situations destabilized and transformed the hope and trust of a population into scepticism, desperation and disillusionment, leading to a downward spiral. It fostered corruption and close links between organized crime and politics, and public trust in institutions, political parties and even leaders eroded quickly.

One aspect of concern for the prevention of crime and criminal justice was the effective implementation of the United Nations established rules concerning the just treatment of prisoners and minors. Due consideration should be given to the proposals for the elaboration of a Charter of the Fundamental Rights of Prisoners. Particular attention in such a document should be devoted to a treatment of prisoners that fully respected their human dignity and to their meaningful reinsertion into society.

PATRICK VILLEMUR (France) said the international community had accomplished remarkable work in creating the necessary instruments to combat the various manifestations of crime. International legislative instruments to fight terrorism, organized crime and corruption were the standard-setting foundation for that work. All such efforts, however, now depended on the implementation of the various universal instruments. That was where the Congress would play an important role. Ensuring the credibility of those instruments was a daunting and heavy task. Having ratified the Palermo Convention and the 12 international instruments on terrorism, France had begun procedures for ratifying the Convention against Corruption. In light of its international obligations, France had adjusted its domestic legislation and had provided training for its law enforcement personnel. A special unit had also been established to fight white-collar crime.

France had also sought to foster international cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally through various initiatives, he said. France, in collaboration with the United Kingdom, would be funding the holding of a round table for Africa to be held next May in Addis Ababa. The results of the round table would be reflected in the programme of action it adopted. France also attached great importance to capacity-building in terms of operational instruments. Given the demands of implementing already existing instruments, he did not think it was wise to open new fields of endeavour, as that would dilute what had already been achieved.

Addressing the issue of crime prevention, he said the fight against crime could not only be a question of repression and law enforcement. Prevention was a complex issue, and prevention policies must be based on partnerships with justices, police and social workers. They must take place at the local, national, and international levels. Preventive policies must also be imaginative. The victims of crime deserved special attention. In the last 20 years, France had adopted an ambitious project in that regard. Criminal mediation that was based on dialogue and the restoration of social links would go a long way towards achieving justice. The Congress had rightly highlighted the importance of civil society engagement, but it would be remiss if it did not strongly support the Secretary-General's reform recommendations. France would be an active partner in the effort.

MICHALAKIS KATSOUNOTOS, Inspector, Legal Officer to the Minister of Justice and Public Order of Cyprus, said his country had taken effective measures to combat all forms of crime, including terrorism. Since the Vienna Declaration, Cyprus had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols. It had also signed the Convention against Corruption and was a party to all 12 international conventions against terrorism. Cyprus had ratified international instruments in the area of economic crime, and had concluded several bilateral agreements with European Union member States.

Organized crime, drugs, corruption and terrorism had no respect for borders or nationalities, threatening democracy and development around the world, he said. In the fight against crime, civil society engagement must be strengthened, and democracy and the rule of law must be a priority in combating crime. The Congress had already mobilized Member States to express, through the Bangkok Declaration, their willingness to improve international cooperation in the fight against crime and terrorism at all levels. Cyprus was fully committed to joining forces with governments, on a bilateral and international level, in the struggle to eliminate crime.

DATO HAJI KIFRAWI BIN DATO HAJI KIFLI, Attorney-General of Brunei Darussalam, said his country had acceded to eight and signed two of the United Nations anti-terrorism conventions. As it viewed corruption as a serious threat, Brunei Darussalam had comprehensive laws to counter that threat with robust enforcement. It had also signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption. A review of domestic legislation was currently being undertaken to make it compliant with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. His country also had new and comprehensive legislation concerning mutual assistance in criminal matters.

He said that, last year, Brunei Darussalam had signed an agreement on mutual legal assistance among like-minded countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It had enacted a new law on the trafficking and smuggling of persons, and its extradition law was being reviewed to simplify the process and to extend the range of crimes for which extradition could be granted. Laws had been amended, and new legislation introduced to ensure that acts of terrorism and related offences were sufficiently punished and that the proceeds of criminal acts, including terrorism financing, would be subjected to forfeiture. It had set up two national committees which acted as focal points and coordinating bodies: the National Committee on Transnational Crimes and the National Anti-Money-Laundering Committee.

PAUL ROBOTHAM (Jamaica) said the record of the past 50 years showed that United Nations standards and norms could make a significant contribution to the development of crime prevention programmes and help to bring the international community closer to a shared vision of the significance of the rule of law to progress and development. The role of the United Nations in that area was crucial, as it was the only universal organ that could provide a global perspective and mobilize the support of both intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. His country had enacted statutes in the areas of corruption prevention, forfeiture of proceeds from drug offences, extradition, firearms, money-laundering, and mutual assistance in criminal matters, among others.

He said that, as a small, developing country, Jamaica faced many constraints in the fight against organized crime and terrorism. It lacked the resources to fully tackle and overcome large-scale organized crime and it was, therefore, grateful for the external assistance it had received to improve institutional capacity. Jamaica also sought to enhance its capacity to combat organized crime at the regional level and was a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Regional Task Force on Crime and Security. It had contributed to the work of the Meetings of the Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General. Bilateral instruments to permit information sharing and cooperation among police forces had also been signed. He was grateful to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for its programmes, particularly its work in promoting the ratification and implementation of international legal instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the conventions on terrorism and corruption.

The scourges of terrorism, transnational organized crime and criminal activity in general posed a serious threat to the peaceful and democratic socio-economic development of many countries. No State could, by its own efforts alone, make itself invulnerable to today's threats, and all needed cooperation of other States. That was particularly true for developing countries. It was, therefore, indispensable to increase financial and material assistance to developing countries with a view to strengthening their capacities to combat crime domestically.

KEDAR PAUDEL, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs of Nepal, said the international community under the aegis of the United Nations had been striving to prevent crime by adopting effective criminal justice measures. Despite such efforts, the world continued to suffer from crime. New forms of crime were emerging, facilitated by the development of new technologies. Terrorism was a serious threat to international peace, security and development, damaging democratic institutions, national economies and the rule of law. Corruption promoted other forms of crime, in particular transnational organized crime, human trafficking and economic crime. The tremendous expansion of the Internet had contributed to the emergence of computer crime. Cybercrime was relatively new to many developing countries, which had yet to create the necessary legal framework to confront it.

He agreed that no country could face the new challenges of crime in isolation. Nepal was a party to most of the major anti-terrorism conventions and international human rights instruments. The nature of crime was changing and new forms of crime were emerging. Close cooperation among law enforcement agencies was needed to fight crime, including through the formalization of information exchange amongst criminal justice agencies. Acting under the umbrella of the United Nations, international and regional organizations could play an active role in fostering cooperation for the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders.

LALA RATSIHAROVALA, Minister of Justice of Madagascar, said the international community needed to mobilize to establish a framework for the struggle against organized crime, which threatened the peace and security of the world. Her country had ratified all 12 international instruments regarding terrorism, as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention against Corruption. In reforming its own legislation, Madagascar had adopted a law on the control and suppression of drug trafficking. An inter-ministerial coordinating committee had developed a national plan against drug trafficking which focused on converting the numerous cannabis fields in her country into agricultural areas. A new anti-money-laundering law included provisions for seizures, and a Financial Intelligence Unit had been set up.

She said that, in 2004, an anti-corruption law had been adopted that added new criminalized offences and had provisions for seizures, as well as for cancellation of all contracts and agreements resulting from corruption. It also protected whistle-blowers. An Anti-Corruption Bureau had also been set up. Judges and magistrates were being trained, and an awareness-raising campaign was being launched. High functionaries of States were obliged to declare annually their wealth and income.

At present, there were no specific measures targeting terrorist activities, but some terrorist offences had been included in the new Penal Code, she said. Bilateral cooperation had been established with France and the United States, among others, to build up capacity, and an anti-organized-crime service had been set up that also pursued anti-terrorist activities. Criminal justice was addressed in a strategic programme for fighting poverty. Three major areas had to be addressed, namely the weakness of judges, overcrowded jails and a lack of resources. A school for judges and magistrates had been set up, and a commission was addressing criminal justice reform. Alternatives to incarceration were being considered.

FRIEDRICH HAMBURGER, European Commission Ambassador to Thailand, said the European Union had addressed the new global challenges in its multi-annual Programme for strengthening the area of freedom, security and justice endorsed by the European Council in 2004. In the present era of open borders and global integration and interdependence, the European Union's internal security was inseparably linked to external security aspects. Cooperation to tackle organized crime should be further developed with third countries, through agreements and other instruments. The Commission was actively promoting compliance with recognized international standards in third countries, notably in the fight against organized crime, money-laundering and terrorist financing. The Commission strongly supported the development of multilateral approaches to combat organized crime, working to ensure comprehensive ratification and implementation of the various international instruments.

The last years had shown an increase in the European Union's powers and responsibilities in the field of justice and home affairs, he said. The Union was committed to remaining at the forefront of the fight against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism by constantly improving its anti-money-laundering framework. The best contribution countries could make to the fight against money-laundering would be the implementation of the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on money-laundering.

The Union was determined to fight terrorism in all its forms, he continued. Many Member States had suffered terrorism at home and had developed expertise in dealing with it. The Union supported the key role of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism and would continue to work to ensure universal adherence to all United Nations Security Council resolutions, United Nations conventions and protocols.

In addition to its role in fighting organized crime, the Union contributed to the prevention of general crime, especially urban, juvenile and drug-related crime, he said. Preventing those forms of crime was the objective of the European Crime Prevention Network. One of the key methods of both preventing crime and enforcing punishment was through the application of the principle of mutual recognition, which was a cornerstone of judicial cooperation in the European Union. The first instrument in that area was the implementation of the European Arrest Warrant Framework Decision, which provided fast and efficient procedure for the surrender of people within the European Union, while maintaining fundamental guarantees. Another legal instrument dealt with the issue of asset freezing. A third instrument on mutual recognition of financial penalties allowed for the speedy execution of cross-border financial penalties by judicial authorities.

MOHAMMED BIN ALI KOMAN, Secretary-General of the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior, said the Council was created for the purpose of development cooperation and coordinating efforts among Arab States in the field of internal security and fighting crime. The Council had adopted, among other things, an Arab Security Strategy, an Arab Strategy against the Illicit Use of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and the Arab Convention against Terrorism. The Comprehensive Arab Model Information Plan, developed in cooperation with the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice, aimed to raise the awareness of Arab citizens against the dangers of terrorism and immunize them with spiritual, moral and educational values. The Council had also adopted plans on fraud, money-laundering, cybercrime and corruption.

He said the Council was keen on promoting cooperation with various international entities that shared a common interest and specialty in order to unify all possible efforts in facing the common dangers. It cooperated with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Interpol and it had participated in the preparation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Two years ago, in the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Commission, it had proposed a fourth protocol to the Convention to Prevent and Punish the Trade in Human Organs. Such a protocol was necessary due to the human miseries caused by that trade. It hoped that negotiations on a Comprehensive Convention to Combat Terrorism would be successful and that the international community would agree on a decisive definition of terrorism that would distinguish between terrorism and the legitimate right in struggling for liberation and countering aggression.

MOHAMED REDOUANE BEN KHADRA, Legal Counsellor, Director-General of the League of Arab States underlined the importance of international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime. Outlining the efforts of the League of Arab States in that regard, he welcomed the outcome of the Riyadh conference on terrorism. He also welcomed the holding of the second conference of ministers of justice to be held in Doha. The Arab States were aware of the need to cooperate in their efforts against terrorism.

He said League members had adopted a number of laws against terrorism, including measures on money-laundering and extradition. The Arab League would work to further reinforce cooperation among the criminal justice systems of its members. He concluded by asking for a general convention on terrorism that would clearly define terrorism, distinguishing it from the legitimate right of people to fight occupation. He also stressed the need to be relentless in the fight against occupation, poverty and exclusion.

Adoption of Reports

At the outset of its afternoon meeting, the Congress first adopted the report of its Credentials Committee (document A/CONF.203/17), introduced by its Chairperson, LUIS PLAZA GENTINA (Chile), as orally amended by the representative of the Philippines.

It then adopted the report of Committee I (documents A/CONF/ 203/L.3 and Add.1-5), as orally amended. Committee I Chairperson MATTI JOUTSEN (Finland) introduced the report.

ISKANDAR GHATTAS (Egypt), the Chairperson of Committee II, then introduced the report of that Committee, contained in document A/CONF /L.4/ and Add. 1-4.

The Congress adopted the report of Committee II as orally amended by the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Rapporteur-General EUGENIO CURIA (Argentina) then introduced the report of the plenary, which included the Bangkok Declaration on “Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice” (documents A/CONF/203/L.2 and Add.1-4, and A/CONF/203/L.5).

Before adopting those reports, the representatives of Jordan and China made oral corrections.

Also speaking before action, the representative of the Netherlands noted that, as part of the rules of procedure adopted by the Congress, it had been agreed that representatives of non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations would be able to participate. They had discussed how the rules of procedure related to discussions on the declaration. In the end, it had been decided that deliberations would be for Member States only. She asked that the report include that some delegates had expressed concern that non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations could not be present during discussions relating to the Bangkok Declaration.

The representative of Canada also had concerns in relation to the non-participation of non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations during the negotiations for the Declaration. That went against the letter and spirit of the rules of procedure adopted at the beginning of the Congress. She hoped that would not create a precedent for future Congresses. Regarding document A/CONF/203/L.2 and Add.2, she asked that the word “due” in paragraphs 24 and 26 be replaced with the word “full”.

Mexico's representative associated his delegation with the concerns expressed by the representatives of the Netherlands and Canada about the exclusion of non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations in the deliberations.

The report of the plenary, including the Bangkok Declaration, was then adopted as orally amended.

Concluding Remarks

In concluding remarks, the Secretary-General of the Congress, ANTONIO MARIA COSTA, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, said it was an honour on the part of the United Nations to thank the Thai Government, the people and his Majesty for their generous hospitality. The meeting had been in a class by itself, “a lesson in efficiency, generosity and hospitality”. During meetings, he had heard a commitment to address the questions of transnational organized crime and general crime, as well as terrorism. The Crime Congress was different from other United Nations gatherings, “a stand alone event in the galaxy of United Nations sessions”, because it brought together stakeholders that usually were not part of United Nations meetings, including representatives of the judicial system, non-governmental organizations and civil society. There had also been representatives of both crime victims and offenders.

He said the debates had been alive in formal meetings, as well as in the round tables and auxiliary meetings. He applauded the idea of the Executive Secretary of the Congress, Eduardo Vetere, when he combined the technical prelude to the meeting with the high-level session. “When practice and policy meet, that is where the event acquires a special dimension”, he said.

As to whether the Congress' outcome was satisfactory, he said one could always ask for more, but more was not always better. He had recommended that the Declaration should not be long on words and short on action. The Bangkok Declaration was the other way around. States

would work closely together in addressing crime prevention, reducing corruption and transnational organized crime, and reducing terrorism.

He said 16 treaty actions had been undertaken during the Treaty Event of the Congress. Zambia had delivered four instruments and had become the fortieth party to the third Protocol of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, namely the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. That Protocol would now enter into force 90 days from the date of deposit of the ratification instruments -- a significant accomplishment. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime had exceeded the "magic" number of 100. He expressed regret that only three of the five permanent members of the Security Council had ratified it.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption now had 25 ratifications, five ratifications short of the number of 30 required for entry into force. He, therefore, urged all countries to complete their domestic procedures, so that, during the treaty event of the September summit in New York, the entry into force of that Convention could be announced. He recalled that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention against Corruption had been negotiated and had gathered ratifications in record time.

The Declaration made strong reference to greater application of United Nations standards and norms, and there was also recognition of need for technical assistance. He was pleased that the Declaration mentioned the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime need for additional resources. He was also pleased that the Declaration made reference to the necessity of completing the comprehensive convention against terrorism and of an internationally recognized definition of terrorism. He further welcomed the reference to the rule of law as a prerequisite for peace and stability.

The representatives of Pakistan, (on behalf of the Asian Group), Paraguay, (on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing nations and China), Luxembourg (on behalf of the European Union) and Syria (on behalf of the Arab Group) took the floor to express appreciation to the Government and people of Thailand for their hospitality and excellent work in arranging the Eleventh Crime Congress. They also paid tribute to the President of the Congress and the Congress Vice-Presidents for their handling of the Congress deliberations.

Special tributes were also paid to the Secretary-General of the Congress, Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; the Executive Secretary of the Congress, Eduardo Vetere; and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Conference Service Coordinator, Liselotte Waldheim-Natural.

Before receiving a standing ovation, Congress Executive Secretary EDUARDO VETERE took the floor to thank delegates for their kind words. He said he felt overwhelmed, not only by the expressions of appreciation, but also by the warmth and friendship behind them. He extended thanks to the Thai Organizing Committee of the Ministry of Justice for what it had done from the early planning stages of the Congress to its execution. He would also never forget the smiles of all the young students who had volunteered at the conference. He also honoured the Conference Service Coordinator, Ms. Waldheim-Natural, who was also retiring from the United Nations.

The President of the Congress, SUWAT LIPTAPANLOP, Minister of Justice of Thailand, thanking everybody involved in the preparation and organization of the Congress, said it had been an honour and privilege to have been President of the Congress, not only a personal honour, but also an honour for the Royal Thai Government, the Ministry of Justice and for all the people of Thailand. During the past eight days, it had become apparent that all countries were concerned about terrorism, human trafficking, drug abuse, transnational organized crime, cybercrime, money-laundering and corruption. Finding ways to prevent and resolve those problems could only be achieved through a common approach. No one could doubt that, over the past eight days, the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had provided a stage for facilitating the essential sharing of experience and knowledge needed for such united, common approach.

He said participation in the Eleventh Crime Congress had reached new levels, especially in the attendance of Ministers and Attorneys General. He was impressed by the dedications of all participants and also by the Bangkok Declaration. "Now we all have the duty of a parent, to cherish it and see that it grows to fulfil its potential", he said. He hoped it would become a strong platform on which action plans for the suppression of crime and the furtherance of criminal justice could be constructed.

He was convinced that, in formulating policies, exchanging views and learning to listen to each other, the next five years would see a large number of important advances being made, based on international cooperation at all levels. "I am equally sure that, by the time the next Congress convenes in 2010, we will be faced with new dilemmas, new permutations in crime, new challenges", he said.

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government he presented the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Costa, a painting made by an inmate at one of the correctional facilities in Bangkok. He said the scene depicted was the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. That place was dear to the hearts of all Thai people.

Mr. COSTA in thanking Mr. Suwat, said it was an example of complete Thai generosity. The painting would be featured prominently in the Secretariat building in Vienna.

Mr. Suwat then paid tribute to the Secretary of the Congress, Mr. Vetere, who had been the mastermind, the brains and the inspiration for the work of the United Nations in criminal justice matters and wished him the best for his forthcoming retirement. He would always be a welcome and honoured guest in Thailand.

He then declared the Congress closed.