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Background Press Release

Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to Be Held in Bangkok, 18-25 April 2005

“Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”

VIENNA, 14 March (UN Information Service) -- The Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, hosted by the Government of Thailand, will take place in Bangkok, from 18 to 25 April 2005. The main theme of the Eleventh Congress is “Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice”, as decided by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 57/170 of 18 December 2002.

There are five substantive items on the agenda of the Congress:

- Effective measures to combat transnational organized crime;
- International cooperation against terrorism and links between terrorism and other criminal activities in the context of the work of the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC);
- Corruption: threats and trends in the twenty-first century;
- Economic and financial crimes: challenges to sustainable development;
- Making standards work: fifty years of standard-setting in crime prevention and criminal justice.

Six technical workshops will be held on the following subjects:

- 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, with reference to the relevant international conventions and protocols;
- Measures to combat economic crime, including money-laundering;
- Measures to combat computer-related crime.

A High-level Segment will be held during the last three days of the Congress, from 23 to 25 April 2005, where Heads of State or Government, Ministers and other high-level government representatives will address the main agenda items of the Congress. Consistent with the recommendations repeatedly made by the General Assembly, UNODC and the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations have agreed to offer States the opportunity to undertake treaty actions during the High-level Segment (deposit instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession) with regard to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols, as well as the four multilateral instruments against terrorism deposited with the Secretary-General. On the occasion of this special treaty event, States will also be able to deposit instruments of ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which has received 118 signatures and 18 ratifications so far, and needs 12 ratifications to enter into force.

“The Eleventh Congress is an opportunity to encourage Member States to take concrete steps to prevent transnational organized crime, terrorism and corruption by ratifying international instruments,

thus showing their commitment towards implementation and enhancement of international cooperation”, said Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, UNODC, and Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna.

There will also be numerous ancillary meetings organized by NGOs, covering a broad range of issues pertaining to crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law. Crime Congresses provide a global forum for exchange of views and experience, bringing together government delegations, representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies and other United Nations entities, as well as individual experts, academicians and other professionals in the crime prevention and criminal justice field. The First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in 1955, was attended by 61 countries and territories, and had over 500 participants, while the Tenth Congress, held in 2000, was attended by 137 Governments and had approximately 2,000 participants. A similar, if not higher attendance is expected at the Eleventh Congress.

The United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the preparatory body for the Congress, has been tasked by the General Assembly to prepare the text of a draft declaration for submission to the Eleventh Congress, taking into account the recommendations of the regional preparatory meetings, held in early 2004 in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, San José and Beirut. The Congress will adopt this single declaration, which will contain recommendations that will have originated from discussions at the various segments of the Congress. After its adoption, the Declaration will be submitted to the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for appropriate consideration at its next session in May.

The Congress will also provide the impetus for formulating comprehensive national responses to crime prevention, and a platform to facilitate increased cooperation between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the area of criminal justice reform, thus promoting more effective international action.

The United Nations Crime Prevention Congresses have been held every five years since 1955, when the first Congress took place in Geneva, Switzerland. Having dealt with a wide spectrum of topics, Crime Congresses have made a considerable impact in the international crime prevention and criminal justice arena, influencing national policies and professional practices. As a global forum, the Congresses have facilitated 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. Crime Congresses have taken place in different parts of the world, namely: 1960: London, UK; 1965: Stockholm, Sweden; 1970: Kyoto, Japan; 1975: Geneva, Switzerland; 1980: Caracas, Venezuela; 1985: Milan, Italy; 1990: Havana, Cuba; 1995: Cairo, Egypt; 2000: Vienna, Austria.

For further information about the 11th Crime Congress:

www.unodc.org
www.unis.unvienna.org
www.11uncongress.org