Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Santiago, 5–7 February 2019

Draft report

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Addendum

II. Conclusions and recommendations

1. The Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting recalled that the main theme, agenda items and workshops of the Fourteenth Congress had been carefully identified by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and adopted by the General Assembly. In that regard, he highlighted that, building on the success of the Thirteenth Congress and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/206, all efforts had been made to ensure that the overall theme, the agenda items and workshop topics were streamlined. The Secretary reminded participants that, since the main theme was designed to serve as an umbrella for the substantive agenda items and workshop topics and for the discussions under those that would take place at the Congress, they were invited to engage in a general, aspirational discussion with regard to the relationship between the main theme and the substantive agenda items of the Congress, as well as the policy implications of that relationship. He explained that, in order to facilitate the preparations for and discussions at the regional preparatory meetings and the Congress itself, the discussion guide had clustered the agenda items that dealt with issues of broad and global importance together with the relevant workshop topics, on the understanding that the latter were designed to cover more specific topics and draw on practical experiences and approaches.

2. Presentations were delivered by representatives of the Secretariat introducing the main theme, substantive agenda items and workshop topics.

3. Stemming from the meeting, the following summary of deliberations was prepared and recommendations were identified, which were not negotiated by the participants.

Summary of deliberations

4. Participants noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represented a collective commitment of the international community and that all Member States should strive to achieve its Goals. It was further stated that the 2030 Agenda was not the first United Nations policy framework document to advance crime prevention and criminal justice priorities and that the outcomes and achievements of the past United Nations crime congresses were instrumental to shape policies and formulate recommendations in this field.

5. Other participants referred to the significance of the Doha Declaration, which was adopted by the Thirteenth Congress prior to the finalization and adoption of the 2030 Agenda, providing an added impetus to include in the Agenda, primarily in Goal 16, the recognition of the interrelationship between the rule of law and sustainable development. In this regard, it was recognized that the Doha Declaration represented a milestone, especially with regard to its focus on partnerships, international cooperation and coordination to foster this interrelationship.

6. Some participants also expressed satisfaction that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development established a policy framework for addressing crime prevention and criminal justice challenges within the broader context of promoting sustainable development. In particular, it was stated that violence and criminality were both a cause and consequence of poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment, while the former also tended to reduce the quality of life for people worldwide. In this regard, it was also noted that security was essential for peace and social progress, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. It was also noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could be seen as a complementary framework to the ongoing efforts of the international community to address effective crime challenges, including through the international legally binding framework used as the cornerstone for international cooperation in criminal matters such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto and the three drug control treaties.

8. It was stated that corruption presented a significant challenge to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 16. Participants emphasized the interlinkages between corruption, organized crime and other crimes, highlighting how integrated responses and preventive measures should be in place to address these issues. It was also noted that the General Assembly recently adopted a resolution calling for a Special Session of the General Assembly in 2021 to address challenges and measures to prevent corruption and strengthen international cooperation.

9. Participants briefly introduced some national efforts to translate into practice the main theme of the Fourteenth Congress and further referred to good practices to address vulnerabilities that may lead to crime. It was noted that the protection of human rights must be taken into consideration when implementing related measures in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

10. Participants were in favour of a short and concise text of the future Kyoto Declaration. Questions were, however, raised, about how this could be achieved in practice. One participant stated that a possible methodology for further consideration could be the elaboration of a general part that would include declaratory language reflecting policy-oriented commitments on behalf of senior government officials of

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Member States, coupled with an additional document which would include more specific and action-oriented recommendations at the practical level.

11. A number of participants stressed the importance of tangible implementation efforts at the national level to ensure that the commitments to be reflected in the future Kyoto Declaration would not remain on paper only. In this regard, the issue of making available sufficient financial resources for implementing effectively strategies and policies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice was emphasized.

12. The representative from Costa Rica expressed his regret that the regional preparatory meeting did not take place in his country as per established practice. In doing so, he referred to the legal and practical aspects that had caused delays and had resulted in the decision to organize the meeting in the seat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. He further expressed his country’s commitment to continue supporting the preparations for the Fourteenth Congress, as well as future congresses, and in this regard, hosting future regional preparatory meetings.

Outcome of deliberations

13. (a) Ensure that the Fourteenth Congress issues strong and clear political messages for inclusion in its Declaration to address the challenges stemming from its overall theme;

(b) Focus on the added value of human resources as driving force of the crime prevention and criminal justice institutions and, in this regard, place emphasis on the needs of crime prevention and criminal justice practitioners and strengthen international cooperation to foster exchange of information and good practices;

(c) Enhance collaboration between crime prevention and criminal justice practitioners and the general public, particularly by exploring innovative ways of public-private partnership and inter-agency cooperation;

(d) Pursue a holistic approach to address crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law that includes the respect and promotion of human rights, the promotion of peace as well as due regard to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities and people with disabilities;

(e) Ensure that adequate and sufficient financial resources are in place to support the work, and enhance the capacities, of practitioners in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, in promoting the rule of law within the broader context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and ensure that these resources are invested where they can be expected to have the most significant impact;

(f) Consider and emphasize the people-centred aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reflect this approach on crime prevention and criminal justice policies by considering the roles and importance of different stakeholders involved in addressing these issues, such as victims, witnesses, police, prosecutors, defenders and judges, as well as society as a whole;

(g) Strengthen capacity-building, as well as cooperation, including international legal cooperation, and coordination to address crime prevention and criminal justice (Sustainable Development Target 16.a), especially in consideration of its importance to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while also considering their importance to address serious crimes such as corruption and organized crime;

(h) Promote a culture of lawfulness as an approach to link governments and citizens, strengthen the rule of law, create trust in public institutions and provide guarantees to citizens, as well as a means through which to involve the public in fostering the rule of law;
(i) Consider that Sustainable Development Goal 16 should be seen as the central axis upon which to base efforts related to crime prevention and criminal justice issues within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(j) Consider addressing all forms of corruption (Sustainable Development Target 16.5) as key to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement crime prevention and criminal justice policies, as well as the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies;

(k) Consider providing additional space for discussions on national “execution models” and how different Member States can implement internationally agreed measures in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice.

B. Substantive items and workshops

1. Comprehensive strategies for crime prevention towards social and economic development (agenda item 3); and evidence-based crime prevention: statistics, indicators and evaluation in support of successful practices (workshop 1)

Summary of deliberations

14. The Meeting recognized that practitioners in the entire spectrum of the criminal justice system were the main thrust behind crime prevention and criminal justice initiatives geared towards promoting the rule of law and the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

15. A number of participants noted that the Fourteenth Congress should discuss the role of citizens in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, which included, in particular, fostering a culture of lawfulness, as a Government-led effort to promote trust and respect of the general public to the law and its enforcement.

16. It was further stressed that education and participation in such activities as sports and music could play an important role in crime prevention, by instilling values of social responsibility in citizens, especially children and youth.

17. It was underscored that social and economic inclusion in the local community was key to preventing crime. Participants highlighted the importance of recognizing social vulnerabilities, gender and neighbourhood aspects, as key considerations when designing crime prevention strategies at the national level. Reference was made to gender-related considerations and vulnerabilities, mostly related to domestic violence and high “femicide” rates in the region, as well as to “environment factors” that may have an impact on crime rates in specific urban settings. The special needs of children were also mentioned, also in conjunction with the evolving threat of bullying. In addition, it was stated that more attention could be devoted to groups of individuals or communities at higher risk, encountering the additional difficulty of limited opportunities for social advancement.

18. Participants underlined that the active participation of citizens through mechanisms to ensure cooperation with law enforcement and criminal justice institutions was pivotal to successful crime prevention activities, especially at the grass-roots level. In this regard, reference was made to community-based policing initiatives and the use of volunteer probation officers as examples of good practices.

19. It was noted that countries may have different needs or priorities at the national and municipal levels requiring specific and tailor-made approaches. In this regard, some participants stressed the importance of addressing crime challenges as a sociological phenomenon and in the wider context of promoting sustainable development. In doing so, they underlined the necessity of developing inclusive and interdisciplinary strategies to involve all relevant stakeholders, as well as ensuring cross-sectoral and inter-agency coordination at both the national and municipal levels.

20. It was also mentioned that the nature of the crime should be taken into account in developing crime prevention strategies. One participant emphasized the need to
address challenges posed by gangs and urban crime, as well as crimes motivated by intolerance and new patterns and trends in the field of drug trafficking.

21. A number of participants reported on national efforts, including in collaboration with UNODC through various regional and global programmes, to implement effective crime prevention measures and put in place effective management and monitoring mechanisms to gather reliable statistics on crime and justice and analyse related threats. In this connection, the availability of such statistics, based on research and analysis on factors that could prevent reoffending, were identified as substantial elements for developing coherent and efficient crime prevention policies. It was further noted that statistics needed to be structured and compiled in accordance with the legal framework of each Member State.

Outcome of deliberations

22. (a) Develop comprehensive crime prevention policies, strategies and action plans both at the national and local levels, bearing in mind the multiple factors that could be conducive to crime and addressing such factors in a holistic manner, in close cooperation with all stakeholders, including local community, development and welfare sectors, as well as civil society;

(b) Consider crime prevention policies and ensure that local challenges and specificities are strategically addressed when formulating and implementing relevant measures to enhance cooperation at both the international and regional levels;

(c) Focus crime prevention strategies and activities on root causes, vulnerabilities and risk factors, especially in relation to youth;

(d) In order to ensure comprehensive approaches, include in crime prevention policies or strategies measures to promote the rule of law, including youth education and awareness-raising measures that contribute to fostering a culture of lawfulness;

(e) Consistently gather and use reliable statistics on crime and justice to develop effective evidence-based crime prevention strategies; and, in doing so, use in a systematic and coherent manner harmonized criteria for the collection of such statistics at the regional level, where appropriate;

(f) Support UNODC in its efforts to collect and analyse reliable statistics on crime prevention and criminal justice for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of global crime trends.

C. Other issues

23. With regard to the structure and substance of the future Kyoto Declaration, the meeting agreed that:

(a) Enhanced efforts should be made to ensure that the negotiation process for the formulation of the Declaration be completed prior to the Fourteenth Congress and that its adoption take place at the opening of the Congress, during its High-level segment;

(b) The Fourteenth Congress, through the Kyoto Declaration, should ensure “continuity”, by building on the achievements of the Thirteenth Congress and the Doha Declaration and supporting the implementation for the years 2020–2025 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development up until five years before its intended maturity;

(c) The Fourteenth Congress should focus on the most urgent crime and security threats and criminal justice challenges and on targeted action-oriented recommendations for national practitioners, academia and the civil society to respond to these challenges;

(d) The future Kyoto Declaration should highlight the long-standing role of national law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners in promoting and
supporting rule of law both at the national and international levels and further emphasize the need for concerted action to make their work more efficient and effective;

(e) The Fourteenth Congress should be utilized as the most diverse forum in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice to bring together crime prevention and criminal justice practitioners to engage in exchange of lessons learned and good practices pertaining to their tasks and responsibilities; for this purpose, and with a view to ensuring the adoption of action-oriented and practical recommendations as part of the future Kyoto Declaration, Member States should consider the participation of national experts and practitioners at the Congress to ensure the presence of the necessary and adequate expertise in pertinent deliberations.