II. Conclusions and recommendations (continued)

B. Substantive items and workshops

1. Integrated approaches to challenges facing the criminal justice system (agenda item 4); and reducing reoffending: identifying risks and developing solutions (workshop 2)

Summary of deliberations

1. Participants at the meeting shared their views on challenges facing the criminal justice system, that required interdisciplinary collaboration among various agencies and authorities, at domestic and international levels, and highlighted the importance of disseminating good practices to address them. The meeting discussed the need to improve communication within relevant agencies, and to integrate efforts of law enforcement and judicial authorities with that of other public services, including in the areas of education, health and social protection.

2. The meeting emphasized the importance of striking a balance among rights of victims, suspects and offenders, as well as the interests of society, which included ensuring a safe community environment and an effective criminal justice system. Delegates highlighted the importance of victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches, that included reparation and restitution mechanisms, participation in criminal proceedings, and assistance to victims of crime, such as affording them prompt access to available information and services. The meeting discussed challenges in the support to victims of crime in cross-border cases, and the need to ensure protection of their rights in different jurisdictions. Lessons learnt from the experience accumulated with victims of trafficking in human beings could apply to support victims of other types of crime. Restorative justice programmes were also mentioned as offering an opportunity for the involvement of victims and, as appropriate, the community.
3. Participants noted the exceptional nature of imprisonment, which was to be used as a measure of “last resort” especially for children in conflict with the law, and explored the need for increasing the use of non-custodial measures in appropriate cases, highlighting that the engagement of social welfare and education services were needed to address risk factors particularly upon release from prison. The possible radicalisation of prisoners was identified as a new issue that deserved further and in-depth attention.

4. Participants also discussed useful programmes, including educational and professional training, to reduce recidivism, and underscored the need to focus on youth offenders, preventing their entry into the criminal justice system.

5. Delegates also underscored the usefulness of putting in place mechanisms allowing for the seizure of proceeds of crime and their subsequent confiscation, including non-conviction based, as appropriate, noting that the confiscation of assets needed to be accompanied, as appropriate, by their return in transnational criminal cases. Delegates also underlined the importance of promoting the use of confiscated assets for public and social purposes.

6. The meeting considered fundamental the systematic gathering and analysis of data, disaggregated by gender and age, to inform evidence-based policies and programmes. Several speakers underscored the importance of collaboration with civil society, in the planning and implementation of programmes aimed at having a social impact, such as programmes aimed at the social reintegration of offenders and the protection of victims’ rights.

7. Delegates highlighted the importance of incorporating gender perspectives in all sectors of the criminal justice system, including the training of law enforcement and judicial authorities.

Outcome of deliberations

8. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Develop or strengthen multidisciplinary inter-agency cooperation mechanisms among sectors of the criminal justice system, involving, as appropriate, other relevant sectors of society;

(b) Promote victim-centred policies and strategies, including to address cross-border offences, and promote the exchange of good practices among agencies at national and international levels;

(c) Strengthen community-based crime prevention and criminal justice, including through the development of coordination mechanisms at the local level that encourage the active participation of civil society organizations, educational institutions, law enforcement authorities, health professionals, and social workers;

(d) Foster collaboration and information sharing among law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners, as well as other relevant service providers;

(e) Promote approaches which enhance the reuse of confiscated assets for public or social purposes, thus fostering community-based responses to crime;

(f) Undertake appropriate and comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice strategies, policies and programmes that ensure that vulnerable members of society, such as women, children, elderly, physically and mentally disabled, are treated without discrimination or bias;

(g) Address the misuse of modern information and communication technologies, including the use of the darknet for the commission of hate crimes;
(h) Strengthen the capacities of practitioners to handle cases involving women and children who have experienced violence, including domestic violence, and ensure that victims are given access to a comprehensive set of essential services;

(i) Promote the development and implementation of restorative justice programmes, especially when involving children as victims or within juvenile justice systems;

(j) Enhance the support provided by UNODC to Member States, upon request, in developing and implementing comprehensive policies and programmes aimed at reducing recidivism and fostering rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders, including through the exchange of good practices and evidence-based initiatives.