

International cooperation in the forensic field

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice,

Recognizing the important investigative and intelligence role of forensic science service providers as part of criminal justice systems,

Recognizing also the importance of international cooperation and collaboration in the forensic field for the purposes of international harmonization through the worldwide exchange and coordination of forensic expertise, information and data, and mutual operational assistance and support to achieve appropriate levels of preparedness to deliver forensic services,

Recognizing further the role played by existing regional networks and associations of forensic science institutes and professionals, such as the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors, the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes, the Senior Managers of Australian and New Zealand Forensic Laboratories, the Ibero-American Academy of Forensic Science Institutes, the Asian Forensic Sciences Network and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation Forensic Science Subcommittee, in promoting the quality of forensic science at the regional level,

Convinced of the need for strategic and open cooperation between existing and emerging regional networks and their members through the exchange of information and transfer of knowledge and technology to enhance regional experience, knowledge and skills,

Convinced also of the complementary role, as forensic enablers, of relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as bilateral efforts, in promoting a comprehensive, synergistic, coordinated and cost-effective approach to international cooperation and collaboration in the forensic field,

Convinced further of the importance of forensic data for law enforcement and criminal intelligence purposes and the benefits of closer integration of forensic networks and associations with their forensic and law enforcement counterparts at the regional level, such as the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes and the European Police Office,

Recalling related discussions by the working group on forensic services in Africa at the Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, held in Windhoek from 12 to 16 October 2009, which recognized networking of forensic service providers as an excellent initiative to strengthen forensic capacity in the region and recommended that Governments should encourage their forensic service providers to initiate regional cooperation networks so as to strengthen their forensic capacity,

Taking note of the study on obstacles to cooperation and information-sharing among forensic science laboratories and other relevant bodies of different Member States and between these and counterparts in third countries,

Recognizing the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in promoting international cooperation in the forensic field, including in relation to the

preparatory work for the Southern African Regional Forensic Sciences Network in October 2008 and the recent inauguration of the Asian Forensic Sciences Network in Kuala Lumpur in November 2009,

1. *Calls upon* Member States and international, regional and subregional organizations and bodies to contribute to international cooperation in the forensic field by encouraging and supporting forensic science institutions to actively participate in regional networks as a means of developing sustainable forensic services worldwide; providing expertise where appropriate for the development and maintenance of cooperative networks among forensic science service providers and scientists; and exploring innovative ways to ensure a more effective exchange of forensic expertise and information worldwide, guaranteeing the autonomy of national forensic laboratories and promoting their internal development and modernization, including education and training, in order to strengthen technical competency;

2. *Requests* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to support international cooperation in the forensic field, promote and facilitate the establishment and/or sustainability of regional forensic science associations or networks and, to that end, further explore areas of synergy between its traditional support for the work of drug analysis laboratories and forensic science institutions more generally;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to report to it at its twenty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution.