

13th UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS
ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
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Speech

HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT
DELEGATION OF CANADA

Monsieur le Président, distingués délégués,

Je suis sincèrement honoré d'adresser la parole aux éminents experts invités à ce treizième Congrès des Nations Unies sur la prévention du crime et la justice pénale.

J'aimerais tout d'abord remercier notre hôte, le Qatar, pour un accueil chaleureux et une excellente organisation. Je souhaite aussi remercier l'équipe du Secrétariat à qui a été confiée la tâche ardue de préparer les intéressants rapports qui guideront nos travaux au cours des prochains jours, ainsi que les instituts du programme des Nations Unies sur la prévention du crime et la justice pénale pour leur apport substantif et leur appui technique à nos discussions, notamment en ce qui concerne les ateliers.

Au Canada, nous avons la chance de pouvoir compter sur la présence de deux instituts, le Centre international pour la réforme du droit criminel et la politique en matière de justice

pénale – basé à Vancouver – et le Centre international pour la prévention de la criminalité – basé à Montréal. Nous avons donc une appréciation toute particulière pour l'ampleur du travail accompli par ces instituts. Enfin, nous tenons à remercier les nombreux experts, universitaires et autres représentants de la société civile pour l'éventail impressionnant de réunions ancillaires offert aux participants du Treizième Congrès, le tout organisé de main de maître par Gary Hill dont nous saluons le travail infatigable.

Le Canada a toujours été un partisan de ces Congrès en ce qu'ils ont pavé la route à de nombreuses principes directeurs et règles minima qui ont servi et continuent de servir de fondement à la règle de droit dans plusieurs de nos pays. Nous remercions le gouvernement du Japon d'avoir encore une fois offert de perpétuer cette excellente tradition quinquennale en offrant d'accueillir le 14^{ème} Congrès des Nations Unies.

J'ai moi-même eu le plaisir et le privilège de participer aux six derniers Congrès, soit depuis le 8^e Congrès tenu à Cuba en 1990. Je puis vous assurer que la participation des délégués du Canada sera très active tout au long du présent Congrès.

Mr. President,

Following on the footsteps of the 2010 Salvador Congress, and having read the Report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Salvador Declaration with interest, we agree with the idea that the Doha Congress should be a point of departure and not a point of arrival. In this regard, we are pleased with the adoption of the Doha Declaration earlier this week as we believe that it provides a good overview of what brings us together here today and where the international community should be going over the course of the next five years and beyond. We look forward to the discussion of the Doha Declaration during the upcoming session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice next month.

Mr. President,

The 13th Congress offers an opportunity to look at crime prevention and criminal justice in a new light. Until now, congresses have adopted inward-looking agendas, focussed on how States define and respond to specific forms of crime. Canada believed that the time had come for the Congress to adopt a broader approach to crime and proposed to the 2011

Crime Commission that the Thirteenth Congress focus on how crime, crime prevention and criminal justice fit within the broader United Nations agenda.

In the sixty years since the first Crime Congress was convened in Geneva, the social and economic environments in which crime occurs and our understanding of crime have changed dramatically. We have learned many valuable lessons as a result of our responses to prevent and counter crime and we know that to be successful, we must work together, taking a holistic approach to ensure that these responses are taken into account in other environments.

Needless to say, we are very pleased to see this approach reflected in the agenda of the Doha Congress, particularly in the synergy between the main theme, the agenda items and the workshop topics.

Mr. President,

Canada strongly believes in the crucial importance of the rule of law, public safety, and respect for fundamental freedoms. But freedoms can only flourish where there is also a sense of security, and development and prosperity depends on the ability of our populations to exercise free choices in a secure

environment. This has been Canada's experience, and we believe that our own security and prosperity depend on promoting the same conditions everywhere.

Today, we understand that crime is a global, transnational problem, and that by assisting other States in preventing and fighting crime, we also help to protect ourselves. Fighting organised crime, corruption and terrorism, and establishing the rule of law and effective criminal justice systems globally are essential measures needed to protect populations and to maintain a stable and prosperous global economy.

Without the rule of law, commercial markets fail and effective criminal justice systems cannot be established. A lack of effective criminal justice systems can result in undermining the long-term development and stability of communities and entire countries, and marginalizing further vulnerable minorities.

Where the rule of law and criminal justice systems are fully functional and equally accessible by everyone: legal questions can be resolved by the neutral and consistent application of the law; public powers are exercised predictably and in good faith; human rights are protected;

and, States themselves comply with both national and international law.

We know that the rule of law and crime-control measures must be integral parts of development and reconstruction projects, in order to create the environment of personal security, local stability and trust needed before other development projects can succeed.

We have come to understand that crime does not exist in isolation and requires broad strategies in response, as well as a continuum of interventions from crime prevention to enforcement and prosecution, and in appropriate cases, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Crime prevention has been a recurring theme over the past twelve Crime Congresses, and has become even more important as evidence has accumulated that it works. We have learned that crime prevention and criminal justice measures that extend equality and full protection to all are worthy objectives in themselves, but also because:

- stronger and more vibrant communities are advanced when development partners and commercial investors trust that their funds are protected against corruption and

organised crime, and where citizens are considered equal, important participants in their own development;

- children are more likely to become productive members of society when they grow up in safe environments, protected from exploitation, free from all forms of violence, including family and sexual violence, free from child, early and forced marriage; and,
- because societies themselves will only be stable and prosperous if they are governed by effective laws to combat organised crime, corruption and terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the important role played by victims in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice.

Internationally, Canada has long played an active role in support of victims of crime, including during the 7th Congress held in Milan in 1985, where the UN Declaration on Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power was adopted.

Canada believes in the need to have the right tools to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. And more

significantly, to ensure that the voices of victims – too often silenced in our justice systems – are clearly heard.

This is why the *Victims Bill of Rights Act* was introduced in the Canadian Parliament. Once passed into law, it will enshrine rights for victims of crime for the first time in Canadian history.

Canada is especially committed to protecting the most vulnerable of all victims, children. Canada played a leadership role in the development of the 2005 UN Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime, clearly demonstrating our commitment to protecting some of our most vulnerable citizens. This commitment is also reflected in one of our recent legislative initiatives designed to strengthen the criminal justice system's response to sexual offending against children. Bill C-26, the *Tougher Penalties for Child Predators Act*, proposes penalty increases for those who prey upon children's vulnerability. Among other things, the Bill would also assist in preventing offenders from going abroad to commit sexual offences against children and in holding such offenders to account when they do so.

Canada believes all members of society must be free to contribute and share in prosperity. Women and children,

especially girls, must not only be encouraged, but legally entitled to enjoy full participation in all aspects of the social, political and economic lives of their communities and countries. This also means that women and children must be entitled to receive full legal protections of their rights, security and freedom. Furthermore, Canada believes all countries need to do more to protect women and girls from violence, including sexual violence and early and forced marriage.

The most vulnerable and marginalised members of our societies must be fully included in the public discourse. Canadians know that free and healthy societies require the full participation of the most marginalized among us. The exclusion or oppression of any group of people based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, race, or religion, from the full and equal protection of the law is not acceptable, and can in fact lessen the social cohesion of any society to the point where it becomes an obstacle to development. This exclusion and marginalization creates fertile ground for recruitment or exploitation by organised criminal groups or terrorist organisations.

Mr. President,

May the collective lessons we have learned guide our work here over the next few days, particularly as we discuss the cross-cutting nature of crime prevention and criminal justice issues and the consequent need to better integrate these concepts into the wider agenda of the United Nations.

May our discussions bear fruit and help pave the way forward to achieve international and regional stability and to build a better world for future generations.