

Your Highness,
Secretary General of the United Nations,
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Zanaty on behalf of the EU.

Let me express my gratitude to the government and people of Qatar for their warm hospitality and for putting these superb conference facilities at our disposal. I also want to pay my compliments for the thorough manner in which Qatar prepared this 13th UN Crime Congress, together with Mexico as the facilitator of the process that resulted in the adoption of the 'Doha Declaration'.

I would furthermore like to express my appreciation for the important work that UNODC is doing with regard to the topics at hand. UNODC is helping countries to ratify and implement key conventions, notably the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the UN Convention against corruption, and it is carrying out a wide range of programmes, for which there is great need. The Netherlands provides financial support to a number of these programmes, in such diverse fields as combating piracy, the container control programme to combat trafficking in wildlife, and care projects for injecting drug users living with HIV/AIDS.

The main theme of this Congress is how to integrate crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider UN development agenda. It is clear that organised crime and corruption seriously hamper development efforts.

Building strong criminal justice institutions should indeed be part and parcel of development cooperation. Well-functioning justice institutions, guided by the rule of law, are critical to building peaceful societies where citizens can feel safe and socio-economic development can take hold.

Against this background, I welcome the fact that the Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals proposed a set of targets under goal 16, which relates to crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law. The Netherlands has a long-standing tradition of providing development aid. As part of our development cooperation we are also supporting capacity-

building with regard to the criminal justice system in a number of countries. Our police and border guards are providing training to their counterparts in many countries.

Weak and fragile States pose a special challenge to the world. In these States, conflicts, rebellions and criminal activities often form a deadly mix and can become a breeding ground for radicalism and terrorism. These situations call indeed for “a holistic and comprehensive approach”, to quote from the Doha Declaration.

Such a comprehensive approach is one of the cornerstones of our international engagement: combining, where necessary, robust military assistance with development assistance that addresses some of the underlying reasons for instability. In this vein the Netherlands for example contributes with almost 500 troops to MINUSMA, the UN mission in Mali while at the same time our development cooperation engages with the judiciary and civil society to rebuild the trust between the justice system and the Malian citizens. Creating conditions to address root causes of crime, conflict and instability is an important reason why the Netherlands has supported and will continue to support UN peacekeeping missions.

The Netherlands is furthermore an active partner within the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), in particular on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. In this context we would like to highlight our strong support for the important work done by the ‘Hedayah’ Institute in Abu Dhabi on de-radicalisation, also in areas affected by criminal activities.

These are some examples of how the Kingdom of the Netherlands works for peace, justice and development. And we do so in partnership with others. That same spirit of partnership is also at the heart of our campaign for a seat in the UN Security Council for the term 2017-2018.

Like Qatar which hosts this Congress, we are a nation that seeks to bring countries together and build bridges. Thus, later this very week, we will be hosting in The Hague, in the Netherlands, a “Global Conference on Cyber Space”, which will bring together ministers and officials from almost 100 countries as well as business representatives, technical experts and NGO’s. They will be discussing the many dilemmas which confront us in the cyber domain: how to maintain a free, open and secure internet with its many social and economic benefits while protecting people and businesses from cybercrime and threats to their privacy. The conference

will launch a Global Forum on Cyber Expertise which will be a platform for building capacity and exchanging knowledge and best practices between a wide variety of States and companies. The Global Forum on Cyber Expertise will continue to welcome new partner countries who are interested in benefitting from the initiatives and concrete projects that will be undertaken, including technical assistance to countries that lack the capacity to secure themselves against cyber threats. Thereby we will be following up on the call in the Doha declaration for “a secure and resilient cyber environment” and for more efforts to bridge the digital divide.

Mr Chairman,

I look forward to a productive week here in Doha, that will inspire participants from around the world with new ideas, and that will enhance international cooperation to jointly continue to build effective criminal justice systems that are able to uphold peace and security, and to achieve sustainable development and respect for human rights.

Thank you, Mr Chairman