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Statement by Hon. Bamdev Gautam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, and the Leader of the Nepalese Delegation to the 13th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice 12-19 April, 2015, Doha, Qatar

Mr. President
Hon. Ministers
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over this 13th UN Congress. I assure you of my delegation's full support throughout the deliberations of the Congress.

I would like to express my delegation's gratitude to the Government and people of the State of Qatar for warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation since our arrival.

I commend Secretary General His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon for the dynamic and active role he has been playing to advance the agenda of crime prevention and criminal justice. My thanks are also due to UNODC team for the excellent arrangements made for this Congress.

The very theme of the Congress "Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda" is both pertinent and timely. It is so when the international community is engaged in framing the post 2015 development agenda. I am confident that the Congress will provide us with an opportunity to share our good practices, learn from each other's experiences, and define our future priorities for the larger interest of international community as a whole.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary General's report entitled 'State of Crime and Criminal Justice Worldwide' that we continue to face several challenges in ensuring safe and dignified life to all. The low-income and least developed countries are disproportionately affected by crimes of both national and transnational nature. Hence, our efforts against crimes including intentional homicide, corruption, gender-based violence, drug abuse, wildlife crime and trafficking in persons, among others, need to be further strengthened. It is time we identified our specific priorities and charted out actions to address them.

The issues of crime prevention and criminal justice system are inseparable. Successes and failures in implementing comprehensive crime prevention programmes reflect the nature and effectiveness of criminal justice measures. In addition to this, policies, strategies and methods of combating existing and newly emerging forms of crimes are the major issues intricately related to crime prevention and criminal justice system. This is more so when the nature of crimes becomes further complicated with the use of modern technologies and the emergence of formless enemy. We need a common approach to identify and address new forms and dimensions of transnational crimes. An enhanced and better understanding at the national, regional and international levels is critical in this regard

Mr. President,

Nepal is committed to the principles of fair, impartial and accountable criminal justice system. We have worked to a great extent in putting in place the policies, plans, programmes and institutions to effectively prevent crimes and provide criminal justice. In addition to this, various acts including on mutual legal assistance, extradition, organized crime (elimination) and money laundering have been implemented with a view to fighting and eliminating the transnational organized crimes. We have also initiated the process for necessary legal reforms in this area. The Government of Nepal has submitted various Bills including on Penal Code and Criminal Procedures Code, Sentencing Act, and Some Nepal

Acts Amendment, Adjustment and Repeal Act to the Legislature-Parliament for consideration. These Bills aim at addressing the changing trends and needs in criminal justice system.

Nepal has a total commitment against impunity. Efforts are underway to address gaps concerning all forms of criminal activities thereby addressing the need of criminal justice in a holistic manner. Education on human rights and criminal justice has been an integral part of the trainings for the security agencies and other concerned officials. We value the important role of the civil society organizations, human rights defenders and media in creating awareness and education about crime prevention and criminal justice at the grassroots level. Our endeavours are towards strengthening respect for the values of human dignity, rule of law and justice.

Nepal's judiciary is independent and competent enough to uphold and safeguard, among others, the issues of criminal justice. We have been effortful in strengthening it and making necessary reforms. We have introduced Third Strategic Plan of Judiciary for its effective functioning. Separate criminal and civil Benches are established as models in some district courts. New comprehensive Prosecution Guidelines has been developed and implemented.

We have recently established Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Commission on Investigation of Disappeared Persons to look into the conflict era cases. These Commissions are mandated to establish the truth about such cases, bring the perpetrators to justice, address the needs of the victims, and ultimately pave the way for reconciliation, lasting peace and stability in the country. Due consideration has been given to the spirit of international law, including the growing jurisprudence of the transitional justice mechanism and domestic circumstances and while crafting the legislation of the aforementioned Commissions.

With respect to our international commitments, we have accorded high priority to the protection and promotion of access to justice and life with human dignity for all. We have made concerted efforts in strengthening criminal justice system with an aim to building a crime free society and ensuring the better quality of life to our people. We have devised policies to bring together the community in development.

Mr. President,

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to update this august House about the latest political scenario in Nepal. At present we have been making all-out efforts to come out of the protracted phase of transition and to institutionalize the democratic gains through the promulgation of a constitution by the Constituent Assembly. The government remains committed to take all stakeholders on board in the constitution writing process and to put the country on the path of peace, stability, development and democratic system of governance.

Finally, Mr. President, my delegation is committed to engaging constructively in the deliberations of this Congress. I hope we will be able to chart out concrete actions to address the special needs in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice. I wish the Congress all success.

I thank you, Mr. President.