

U.S. National Statement
Delivered by Ambassador Luis E. Arreaga,
Special Representative of the U.S. Secretary of State to the
13th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

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Thank you, Mr. President. The United States delegation is grateful to the Government of Qatar for its hospitality this week, and for its leadership in organizing and hosting a meaningful and productive Crime Congress.

Mr. President, we are here this week to discuss the linkages between crime prevention, criminal justice, and sustainable development. It is clear that there can be no prosperity without security, and that there can be no security without effective, transparent, and responsive governance under the rule of law.

Strong criminal justice institutions establish conditions for citizens to pursue economic activities. When those institutions are fair, effective, impartial, and transparent, citizens can rely on them to report wrongdoing and settle grievances peacefully. When these systems fail or are perceived to be corrupt, citizens may seek justice elsewhere and lack the security needed to achieve their full potential.

This is not economic or political science theory. It is one of the foundations of the United States' foreign policy and the underpinning of our assistance in support of crime prevention and criminal justice. Let me give you an example: two months ago, President Barack Obama requested \$1 billion from the United States Congress to support the efforts of Central American governments to promote prosperity, security, and good governance. This three-pronged approach recognizes that peace, economic growth, and the presence of effective and transparent state institutions are mutually reinforcing.

In other regions like West Africa, Central Asia, and the Caribbean, the United States is similarly committed to working with international partners to address security sector reform at many levels, such as the community, the police, the courts, and corrections.

These are also the pillars of our West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI). Under that framework, the United States has proudly supported regional programs like the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP), which is a UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) initiative to build effective central authorities and promote regional and international legal cooperation.

As we explore ways to incorporate crime prevention and criminal justice into the Post-2015 Development Agenda, it is worth remembering that “justice” and “better standards of life”

represent two of the four goals outlined in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. We should recall that “human rights” is another. The United States believes that it is the primary responsibility of states to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. This includes the equal protection of vulnerable populations such as women, children, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

We are celebrating an important anniversary. Fifteen years ago, the international community came together in Palermo, Italy to codify its commitment to the rule of law by signing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). This year, we come together in Doha to explore how we can use the UNTOC, the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and other legal instruments to confront both old and new forms of crime, including cybercrime, trafficking in cultural property, among others. The United States believes that the framework established by the UNTOC, UNCAC, and the three UN drug conventions provides a global foundation for law enforcement and legal cooperation between governments on a broad range of criminal justice issues.

This week, we must keep in mind that that it is unnecessary – and even counterproductive – to develop new protocols and treaties to address specific forms of crime. Instead, let’s dedicate ourselves fully to the effective implementation of the existing treaties, tools, standards, and norms. And we should encourage Member State action on areas of consensus, such as the need of many countries for law enforcement capacity building, training, and technical assistance.

The United States applauds the commitment of Qatar and UNODC to ensure that this Congress takes full advantage of the experience and expertise that civil society and other expert practitioners bring to the discussion. None of our crime prevention or development goals can be achieved by governments alone. Economic growth is only sustainable in an environment where civil society and the media can hold governments accountable and eliminate impunity. The United States encourages Member States to consider ways to strengthen the role of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in all bodies that support and guide the work of the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program.

In this spirit, I am pleased to announce that the United States will host an ancillary meeting on “Combating Wildlife Trafficking on the Internet” on April 14. The panel will feature representatives of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), TRAFFIC Asia, INTERPOL, and Etsy, an online marketplace. The urgent problem of wildlife trafficking is emblematic of the critical contributions that civil society can make, from tracing the DNA of illegal ivory and investigating incidents of poaching, to raising public awareness of wildlife trafficking and lending their expertise to multilateral efforts in the United Nations and other fora.

Seeing such a diversity of people and organizations in this room gives me great confidence that, together, we can one day achieve the conditions of global security, prosperity, justice, human rights, and dignity envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations. We look forward to working with Member States, both through the Post-2015 Development Agenda, as well as under the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program, to bring this vision to fruition.