

**Statement by H.E. Sebahattin ÖZTÜRK  
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**Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice  
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High-Level Segment 12-13 April 2015**

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

At the outset, I would like to express Turkey's gratitude to the State of Qatar for their generous hospitality in convening the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. We are glad to be in the beautiful city of Doha.

We appreciate all efforts, also with the support of the UNODC, for organizing such an important event. We are particularly grateful to the Secretariat for the excellent work which has helped us in preparing for the discussions.

Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the leadership of the Thirteenth United Nations Crime Congress and would like to assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation in seeking to make this Congress a success.

Mr. President,

Transnational organized crime remains among the major challenges to security and development of nations and to the international community as a whole. It is an impediment to the progress of society, a constant and systematic breach of justice, and a severe threat to lives and wellbeing of individuals.

United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Congress, as a consultative body to the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, provides an excellent forum for exchange of views, experiences in research, law and policy development, identification of emerging trends in crime prevention and criminal justice, recommending policy options at the national, regional and international levels, and as such makes significant contribution to the progress of international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice. Coinciding with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the United Nations we believe that this Congress will provide us with valuable inputs and insights in this field.

The main theme of the Congress "*Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation*" is particularly well-defined and quite relevant considering the current challenges the world is facing due to transnational criminal activities. It goes without saying that there is a perpetual aspect of the nature of the crime that never alters. This aspect is the "social and economic motives of the crime and criminal acts". These notions are mutually dependent. Socio-economic challenges

provoke the criminal mind, and vice-versa. Any attempt to explain the root causes behind the criminal acts would be insufficient if the socio-economic dimension is ignored. In other words, no criminal justice response could be sufficient if the problem is not addressed in its entirety. The strategy of crime prevention and criminal justice should be comprehensive and take all dimensions of the problem into account. Strengths in one part of the strategy could easily be put in jeopardy by weaknesses elsewhere.

On the other hand, the economic and social development is also directly linked with justice. Threats to development stemming from organized crime can only be resolved by establishing rule of law that will be achieved by creating legitimate institutions that would provide all citizens with the feeling of security and justice. Strengthening the judicial systems and empowering the society through solid legal infrastructure are crucial not only for dealing with crime effectively, but also for implementing national development policies successfully.

This is why, we strongly believe that integrating the crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider UN agenda is the appropriate strategy. Promoting rule of law and public participation should definitely be an integral part of this very approach. The notions such as “justice”, “security”, “rule of law”, “law enforcement”, “prevention of transnational organized crime, terrorism and corruption” should be complementary with the priorities of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

We are also cognizant of the fact that the nature of crime has also the ability to quickly evolve. Improved communication and information technologies, greater mobility of people, goods and services across borders and the emergence of a globalized economy pave the way for the criminals to move to new areas further away from their traditional bases. We live in a world of new and evolving threats, that could not have been anticipated when the first Crime Congress was convened in 1955. We witness the emerging of new crimes in every consecutive Congress. The world of the transnational organized crime with all its emerging forms make this threat more critical for all of us. The “criminal mind” create innovative methods, ways and means while forcing us to be vigilant and to initiate new, relevant and appropriate measures for prevention and criminal justice responses.

Mr. President,

Collective security depends on accepting that the threats which each State or region of the world faces are perceived as equally urgent for all. We believe that effective responses to these threats, must include national, regional and international strategies, applied in an integrated and sustainable manner, based on the principle of shared responsibility. Only by enhanced international cooperation, coupled with strong political will and mutual trust, can we obtain success in our fight against the scourge of crime.

In this vein, we attach great importance to the work carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in cooperation with the Member States, for enhancing their responses to the intertwined problems of drug, crime and terrorism and for strengthening rule of law by promoting fair, humane and accountable criminal justice systems.

The United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice are very valuable instruments, providing examples of best practices that can be shared by States in carrying out in-depth assessments leading to the adoption of necessary criminal justice reforms. Universal adherence to the United Nations Convention against Transnational

Organized Crime and its Protocols, and to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as well as to the Conventions and Protocols against terrorism and their effective implementation would certainly contribute greatly to the enhancement of security and justice around the world. So, it would be advisable that the Thirteenth United Nations Crime Congress urges all Member States, if they have not done so, to become parties to these international legal instruments and implement effectively their provisions as well as relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly, in a manner that it would leave no safe haven for criminals.

As a State Party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and to its supplementing Protocols, we are determined to continue combating illicit trafficking in firearms, trafficking in persons, as well as smuggling of migrants and to protect the victims of such crimes. Turkey has effectively benefited from the relevant instruments in reforming its criminal justice system and has taken significant steps in the recent decades towards enacting legislation and enhancing the capacities of its authorities against organized crime. We have also adopted the Action Plan against Organized Crime for 2013 to 2015, the National Drug Policy and Strategy Paper for 2013-2018 as well as its Plan of Action.

Technical assistance is another crucial aspect of our work in this Conference. We applaud the work done by the UNODC to improve the capacity of States to implement the Convention and its Protocols. On its part, Turkey has contributed to the capacity-building activities through providing training to the officials of other governments based on their needs, by making financial contributions to UNODC-led programs, and by hosting high-level international meetings in this field. The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime carries out academic studies and training programs in close cooperation with the UNODC and with its counterparts abroad. Turkey has hosted workshops held by the UNODC to train judicial and law enforcement officials. Moreover, it should be highlighted that the Inter Agency-Networking the Networks meeting was held in Istanbul on 12-13 December 2013 with the participation of the Executive-Director of the UNODC, which focused on an inter-regional approach to eliminate drug trafficking and to promote closer cooperation among existing law enforcement centers and platforms. We will continue to host a number of training courses of the UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch in the wider region.

We know that voluntary funding is required to enable UNODC to continue to conduct key technical assistance activities with a view to implementing its global mandate. We call, therefore, all Member States to provide sufficient resources to make UNODC technical assistance operate effectively. Being among the major donor countries of the UNODC since 2006, Turkey has been providing support to many programs in the fight against transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking.

Mr. President,

A particular issue which we would like to emphasize is the alarming threat stemming from the terrorism and terrorist organizations. We observe with concern that the global threat of terrorism is expanding both geographically and in terms of tactics in an accelerating pace. And that occurs, despite the increasing resources and means devoted for the fight against terrorism.

Turkey, as a country committed to combatting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations without distinction, attaches special importance to international solidarity in countering this scourge. We have a long and painful experience in the fight against terrorism since we have

been targeted by numerous terrorist groups for decades. We have learned a lot from our counter terrorism efforts, including the fact that international solidarity, coherent action and cooperation are crucial in countering terrorism. For this very reason, we actively support international and regional efforts in that direction.

The United Nations lies most naturally at the center of our common efforts on counter-terrorism. UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy provides us the backbone of both national and international work to be done in this area. We cherish the instrumental role played by all UN agencies and bodies. We are currently supporting projects by the UNODC and the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy. Turkey is party to all the UN conventions and protocols on terrorism. All relevant UN Security Council Resolutions dealing with counter-terrorism are swiftly implemented in Turkey. Lately, we welcomed Resolution 2170, 2195 and co-sponsored Resolution 2178 and 2199 which also underline the importance of international cooperation to counter the Foreign Terrorist Fighter threat.

The problem of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, while very serious in scope and volume, is only part of the overall threat. We should be ready for a long struggle which will require a wide range of tools. Operational and timely intelligence cooperation is of vital importance to this end. We also need to implement preventive and subversive measures simultaneously. That is by no means easy but compulsory.

Turkey has long been emphasizing the link between terrorism and transnational organized crime, such as drug trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Today, terrorist organizations continue to benefit and mainly depend on such types of crime, which are cross-border in nature, as a source of finance.

In the same vein, we would like to underline that there is still room for improvement in the judicial cooperation on the extradition of persons who are convicted as being members of trans-national organized crime groups, notably those linked with the terrorist groups.

Last but not least, I would also like to emphasize the importance of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum that was initiated by Turkey and the United States in 2011 with a view to contributing and facilitating the implementation of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy of the UN.

Mr. President,

According to estimates, today there are around 230 million international migrants all around the world. They contribute to economic, social and cultural life in the host countries by filling the gap in labour markets, alleviating adverse effects of aging populations and enriching the cultural life in the host societies. This calls for strengthened efforts and action to promote migrants' well-being and prosperity. However, migrants will not be the only beneficiaries of this approach. Experience has shown us that migrants whose human rights are secured, who are able to exercise their talents and energy in productive work, and who are well integrated in the host countries, are able to contribute greatly to the development of their countries of origin and destination, as well as to the well-being of their families and communities. This is why preserving well-being of migrants, migrant workers and their families should be among the issues addressed in the Crime Congress framework.

On the other hand, ongoing conflicts, civil strife and humanitarian crises in the neighborhood of Turkey have a wide range of negative consequences, including the increased threat and practices of migrant smuggling. Thus Turkey has intensified in recent years its border-protection measures both on land and at sea to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. Between 2005 and 2014, approximately 500.000 suspected immigrants were apprehended while they were illegally crossing the border. Given the complex and cross-border nature of the problem, international cooperation, solidarity and effective information sharing are indispensable in order to find a solution for irregular immigration. With this understanding, Turkey participates in almost every international and regional activity in this field. Turkey has also stepped up its efforts at domestic and international levels to counter this situation. In this respect, Foreigners' International Protection Act has been adopted in 2013, whereby the Department for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking has been established. Turkey has signed a number of bilateral readmission agreements to address issues related to smuggled migrants and to ensure their safe return commensurate with human dignity.

Currently Turkey serves as the chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), until the end of December 2015. We attach importance to strengthening the influence of the GFMD process within the UN system, and we will work to build on the Declaration of last year's High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which acknowledged that the United Nations system can benefit from the discussions and outcomes of the GFMD.

Mr. President,

It goes without saying that cultural property is the most valuable wealth and heritage of the nations. It identifies the peoples and societies that own it. It also reflects the exact traces of the adventure of the mankind throughout the history. Keeping awareness of those traces by preserving this heritage is an obligation for all of us. This obligation should keep us vigilant against the illicit trafficking of the cultural property.

As the cradle of different civilizations throughout history, Turkey is among the richest countries with regards historical monuments and artifacts. This makes Turkey a target of illegal trafficking of antiques and artifacts which are smuggled out of the country. Thus, protection of cultural property within the framework of the Convention has always been an issue of particular importance for my delegation. The looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property have become an urgent challenge that calls for coordinated criminal justice response by the international community. We welcome the progress made with respect to the Guidelines on the Trafficking of Cultural Property. We are now looking forward to working on the basis of the Guidelines with a view to their full implementation.

However, we believe that the current level of international cooperation in this field is unfortunately far from being satisfactory. The international legal framework has certain shortcomings. In order to effectively counter the trafficking of cultural properties of the countries, we need a new, strong, comprehensive and binding international treaty that will be based on the framework of the penal law and that will be complementary to the current international legislation. Therefore, we invite the UN Member States to consider the inadequacies in this field and to take further steps within the penal code context.

Mr. President,

We believe that the issues emphasized in the Doha Declaration are quite relevant and significant in terms of the global developments. These notions constitute the core of our common responsibilities as the Member States in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. They are also stark reminder of the necessity for enhanced international cooperation in this field.

We should not forget that this document will remain as a unique and most important guideline for the further efforts in this field until the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress to be held in Japan in 2020. Therefore, after the adoption of such significant guideline, the most important issue will be the full implementation of the notions enshrined in the document. In this vein, we all have the responsibility to take all necessary and rapid steps to this end.

I wish that the Doha Declaration will contribute to our efforts for paving the way for promoting peace and security for future generations of all nations.

Thank you.