

Commission on Crime Prevention and
Criminal Justice,
Statement by Mr. TAKAI Kentaro
Attorney, International Affairs Division,
Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Justice,
Japan

Mr. Chair,

It is a great honour for me to have this opportunity to deliver a statement on the topic of “Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration”.

I also wish to thank the UNODC Secretariat for organizing this very important initiative to follow-up on the Kyoto Declaration.

First of all, I would like to emphasize the

importance of reducing reoffending in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

Mr. Chair,

Reducing reoffending cannot be achieved by criminal justice agencies alone. This is because the challenges offenders face are diverse and complex, and they require involvement of a wide variety of professional agencies.

In this regard, the Japanese government established Recidivism Prevention Plan, which aims to reduce reoffending by promoting public-private partnerships among national and local governments and private-sector organizations.

The plan provides a comprehensive strategy, grounded with five basic policies and states

seven major challenges. It highlights securing close coordination and cooperation between the State and local governments, and private-sector organizations, identifying the roles of each ministry and agency.

This plan draws links between measures of relevant agencies and each of the seven challenges, encouraging agencies to collaborate on achieving the goal of reducing reoffending.

With the development of this plan, Japan has been promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration in the field of offender rehabilitation.

Such efforts are building progress toward reducing reoffending in Japan.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to share with you Japan's public-private partnership of Volunteer Probation Officers, *hogoshi*. The *hogoshi* system has a long history of contributing to reducing reoffending in Japan. It initially started with community volunteers appointed by a private organization but is now fully established as a part of the statutory offender rehabilitation system in Japan.

Hogoshi are citizen volunteers who support the rehabilitation of offenders in the community by working with professional probation officers, commissioned by the Minister of Justice based on the Volunteer Probation Officers Act.

Hogoshi, while working hard without remuneration, are devoted with good will and passion for the betterment and rehabilitation of offenders through human contact and the formation of relationships based on trust and respect.

They empower the individual offender by listening to his or her thoughts and feelings and providing practical advice and support with warm consideration showing that they accept the offender in their community.

They empower the community – where the offender and *hogoshi* both live – through developing resources and creating networks to address the client’s complex needs.

Also, they empower the whole community by raising awareness of the importance of offender rehabilitation, acceptance of offenders in their community and making their community inclusive.

Mr. Chair,

Unfortunately, we often observe offenders reoffend. To prevent further crimes and avoid victimization, reducing reoffending is critical. Furthermore, reducing reoffending allows more offenders to be reintegrated into our society as law-abiding citizens. This contributes to the notion of “leaving no-one behind” and the achievement of the SDGs, in particular Goal 16.

Given the importance of this issue, the Kyoto Declaration has a subsection entitled

“reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration” which sets out the international community’s commitment to address this issue.

Against this background, Japan is eager to work together with the Member States to develop Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending – new UN standards and norms which consist of non-legally binding guidance on what works in promoting offender rehabilitation and reintegration.

Thank you very much.