

**UNODC Executive Director's Message**

**CCPCJ Thematic Discussions 2022: Pillar 2: Advancing Criminal Justice Systems**

**December 5, 2022 (recording on Thursday, 24 November)**

Distinguished Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address you at the second thematic discussion of the CCPCJ to follow up on the Kyoto Declaration.

Today's discussion addresses a central foundation for any country's efforts against crime: the criminal justice system.

From crime scenes to police stations to courtrooms, justice systems must earn the trust of citizens and deliver true justice.

They do so by holding perpetrators accountable, through effective investigations and legal proceedings.

By giving victims every form of support that they need and are entitled to.

And by protecting those who come forward as witnesses, and those who bravely report on crime and corruption.

The integrity of a criminal justice system is reflected most of all in how it stands with the most vulnerable.

Women and girls are exposed to specific risks of violence and exploitation, even as they continue to face stigma and obstacles to their rights in criminal proceedings.

Children and young people are more exposed every day to crime as victims and as perpetrators, in an age of conflicts, crises, and digital expansion, and they must be treated with sensitivity.

Criminal justice institutions must find ways to break patterns of discrimination, and to ensure that justice is attainable for all.

For fairer and more prosperous futures, prisons should be places of rehabilitation, with humane conditions, as envisioned by the Nelson Mandela Rules.

This thematic discussion is an opportunity for Member States to come together with UN partners, international organizations, civil society, and academia, to translate the commitments of the Kyoto Declaration into concrete measures.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime will continue to be your partner in developing criminal justice systems that are strong, fair, and equal in their treatment of everyone.

Together, we can build trust through justice.

Thank you.