

**UNODC Executive Director's Remarks**  
**Opening of the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission on**  
**Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**  
**Monday, 16 May, 10:00**

Ambassador Hikihara,  
Executive Director Bahous,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

I am very happy that the circumstances in Vienna are allowing more in-person interactions with you, our Member States, as we have made a full return to office at the UN in Vienna.

Even as pandemic-related restrictions are beginning to lift in many parts of the world, we continue to face formidable challenges.

We have become accustomed to speaking of a world in crisis and of “new normals”. Indeed, peace, climate, health, and livelihoods around the globe are under attack and in peril.

Multilateralism and the United Nations must be able to avert crisis as a norm, and to offer solutions.

Last week, Vienna hosted the Secretary-General's Chief Executives Board, where we took stock of how the UN can rescue the promise of the SDGs, and help put the world back on track through Our Common Agenda.

The Agenda contains a new vision for the rule of law that prioritizes fair and equal access to justice as a cornerstone for trust in societies.

The CCPCJ is where Member States can reaffirm their commitment to criminal justice responses, and to international cooperation in this field.

It is where you can bring into action the Kyoto Declaration adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> Crime Congress last year, which outlines a comprehensive vision for preventing and combatting different forms of crime, promoting justice, and protecting victims.

This week, Member States can take their commitments forward by adopting a number of important draft resolutions, as well as fostering engagement between practitioners, civil society, and other stakeholders, and tackling a number of key issues in more than 80 registered side events.

At the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, we are committed to supporting countries in upholding justice, integrity, and the rule of law – foundations that are needed to persevere and overcome any crisis, and to protect and help the people who need us.

During times of instability, the most vulnerable are the most in need of assistance, as criminal networks take advantage of people left without income, without social support, and who are desperate for safety and opportunity.

Women and girls are among those most exposed, finding themselves at greater risk of human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and gender-based violence as a result of conflict in Ukraine, strife in Afghanistan, and deepening inequalities everywhere.

I am grateful to the Executive Director of UN Women for being with us today as we look to protect and support women and girls everywhere.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime is doing great work with UN Women, such as developing a new statistical framework for measuring femicide, to inform more effective responses, as well as supporting better access to legal aid for women in Africa.

Furthermore, UNODC is stepping up its efforts to protect and empower women and to ensure gender parity, including through our new gender strategy to be launched next month, and through our women in justice/for justice initiative.

We will look to UN Women and all of our partners, as well as our Member States, to support this ambitious new push.

To defend women and all those at risk and to leave no one behind, we must address priority threats and build resilience where it is needed most, and at UNODC we are adapting to provide support where and how it is needed.

Developments in Ukraine and Afghanistan are leaving millions of people vulnerable to criminal exploitation; UNODC is implementing interventions against organized crime and terrorism challenges in and around Afghanistan through our Strategic Stability Grid, and we are currently developing a framework for our responses to the conflict in Ukraine, which has displaced close to 14 million people.

Security of people and planet is further endangered by climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, all of which are aggravated by criminal exploitation of natural resources.

In response, UNODC is expanding the scope of our work and research on crimes that affect the environment, and aiming to educate people and raise awareness about the dangers of these crimes, building on the outcomes of the CCPCJ thematic discussions in February.

We are also enhancing our support against corruption and money-laundering, as global crises take their economic toll.

We have developed a new conceptual framework for the statistical measurement of illicit financial flows, together with UNCTAD.

We continue to work with the World Bank through the StAR initiative, as well as through our growing GlobE network of law enforcement authorities, to return stolen assets and proceeds of crime.

To keep pace with the threats of terrorism in Africa, Afghanistan, and the world at large, UNODC will soon launch a new Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Terrorism, focusing on robust legislation and institutions, inclusive policies, and the means to achieve justice across borders.

More broadly, we have consolidated some of our programmes to provide even more agile, tailored support.

Our new Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Section is well-aligned with CCPCJ mandates.

We have established a new Border Management Branch bringing together our biggest global programmes such as Container Control, AIRCOP, Global Maritime Crime, and CRIMJUST, as well as a new Drugs, Laboratory, and Scientific Services Branch.

We also stand with Member States in addressing the criminal uses of information and communication technologies.

UNODC is supporting the ongoing process of elaborating a new UN convention on this issue, and I am eager to see the outcomes of this session's thematic discussion on electronic evidence and countering cybercrime.

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

When we met to open the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March, I told you that our functional Commissions in Vienna will not resolve global political disputes, but that their success in carrying out their role can keep vital work going to address threats and challenges affecting people everywhere.

The CND succeeded in carrying out its important mandate, despite the obstacles.

This 31<sup>st</sup> session of the CCPCJ, once again taking place in a complex global context, can send a message that Member States will not abandon international efforts to deter crime and support its victims.

This month we observe the 30th anniversary of the assassination of judge Giovanni Falcone of Italy. He was a man who defied organized crime despite the daunting odds, and he paid the ultimate price while contributing to a better, safer world.

Let the work of this session during this difficult time be inspired by his example, and by all those who take a stand for justice.

Thank you, and I wish you every success in reaching a fruitful outcome to this session.