



## Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Kyoto, Japan, 20–27 April 2020

### Report of the Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 January 2019

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## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [56/119](#), on the role, function, periodicity and duration of the United Nations congresses on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, the General Assembly decided that each congress should be preceded by regional preparatory meetings and also decided to call future congresses United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice.
2. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Lessons Learned from United Nations Congresses on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its meeting held in Bangkok from 15 to 18 August 2006, discussed how to incorporate regional concerns and perspectives into the preparation of the congresses. The Group stressed the importance of regional preparatory meetings as a key preparatory tool for the congresses and noted that, despite globalization and the increasingly transboundary nature of criminality, different regions of the world continued to have different concerns, which they wanted to see properly reflected in the consideration of various topics by the congresses ([E/CN.15/2007/6](#), para. 23).
3. In its resolution [72/192](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to facilitate the organization of the regional preparatory meetings for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to make available the necessary resources for the participation of the least developed countries in those meetings and in the Fourteenth Congress itself, in accordance with past practice and in consultation with Member States. In the same resolution, the Assembly encouraged the relevant United Nations programmes, specialized agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as other professional organizations, to cooperate with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the preparations for the Fourteenth Congress.
4. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, to prepare a discussion guide for the regional preparatory meetings for the Fourteenth Congress and for the Congress itself in a timely manner, and invited Member States to be actively involved in that process.
5. At its twenty-seventh session, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice considered the draft discussion guide. In its resolution [73/184](#), the General Assembly took note with appreciation of the draft discussion guide and requested the Secretary-General to finalize it in a timely manner, taking into account the recommendations of the Commission, as well as additional comments and feedback from Member States, in order to enable the regional preparatory meetings for the Fourteenth Congress to be held as early as possible in 2019. The finalized discussion guide ([A/CONF.234/PM.1](#)) was published in September 2018.
6. In its resolution [72/192](#), the General Assembly encouraged Governments to undertake preparations for the Fourteenth Congress at an early stage and by all appropriate means, including, where appropriate, the establishment of national preparatory committees. Also in that resolution, as well as in resolution [73/184](#), the General Assembly urged participants in the regional preparatory meetings to examine the substantive items on the agenda and the topics of the workshops of the Fourteenth Congress and to make action-oriented recommendations to serve as a basis for the draft recommendations and conclusions for consideration by the Congress.

## II. Conclusions and recommendations

7. The Secretary of the Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting recalled that the main theme, agenda items and workshops of the Fourteenth Congress had been carefully identified by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and adopted by the General Assembly. In that regard, she highlighted that,

building on the success of the Thirteenth Congress and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/206, all efforts had been made to ensure that the overall theme, the agenda items and workshop topics were streamlined. She reminded participants that, since the main theme was designed to serve as an umbrella for the substantive agenda items and workshop topics and for the discussions under those that would take place at the Congress, they were invited to engage in a general, aspirational discussion with regard to the relationship between the main theme and the substantive agenda items of the Congress, as well as the policy implications of that relationship. She explained that, in order to facilitate the preparations for and discussions at the regional preparatory meetings and the Congress itself, the discussion guide had clustered the agenda items that dealt with issues of broad and global importance together with the relevant workshop topics, on the understanding that the latter were designed to cover more specific topics and draw on practical experiences and approaches.

8. Presentations were delivered by representatives of the Secretariat introducing the main theme, substantive agenda items and workshop topics.

9. Stemming from the meeting, the following summary of deliberations was prepared and recommendations were identified, which were not negotiated by the participants.

#### **A. Main theme of the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice: “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda”**

##### **Summary of deliberations**

10. The mutually reinforcing relationship between the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice and sustainable development, as particularly reflected in the interrelationship between Sustainable Development Goal 16 and other relevant Sustainable Development Goals and targets thereof, in particular, Goals 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 17, was emphasized.

11. The Meeting recognized that the overall theme of the Fourteenth Crime Congress would build on the achievements of the Thirteenth Crime Congress and its outcome document, the Doha Declaration on 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. It was noted that, since the adoption of the Doha Declaration, there had been a growing understanding of the interconnectedness of the rule of law and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Meeting emphasized that the Fourteenth Crime Congress offered a unique opportunity for Member States to review their efforts in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice in terms of advancing their efforts in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. While recognizing the complementarity of the Sustainable Development Goals and the crime prevention and criminal justice agenda, concerns were expressed that linking that agenda to the entire Sustainable Development Agenda could involve the risk of shifting the focus of the crime prevention and criminal justice agenda excessively towards development concerns.

12. Moreover, it was noted that, since the adoption of the Doha Declaration, a number of multilateral milestones had been achieved, such as the adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

**Outcome of deliberations**

13. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Prioritize the essential crime prevention and criminal justice elements needed to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through investing in skills, namely by enhancing the capacities of practitioners across the entire spectrum of the criminal justice system, while reflecting on impact with a view to fostering the general public's respect for the rule of law and the enforcement thereof, including through measures that strengthen cooperation among practitioners;

(b) Promote an integrated, inclusive and comprehensive approach, with a focus on people, particularly children and youth, and including community-based policies, towards promoting the rule of law and fostering a culture of lawfulness;

(c) Enhance cooperation among governmental authorities and other relevant stakeholders, including the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society, thereby pursuing an intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(d) Support UNODC in continuing its role in "operationalizing" the outcome documents of the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice, bearing in mind the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as the policymaking body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, and in promoting the implementation of relevant Sustainable Development Goals through the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building and through the facilitation of the exchange of good practices and experience in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice;

(e) Strengthen the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in continuing to advance discussions on the relationship between the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice and the 2030 Agenda, including by continuing its substantive contributions to the thematic review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(f) Prioritize assistance to Member States in carrying out their responsibilities to ensure the safety of their own citizens, to define and enforce criminal laws and to promote access to justice and the rule of law;

(g) Enhance cooperation with the institutes that are members of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network to further promote research in the field of rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice and their links to sustainable development, with a view to strengthening the sharing of information, good practices and lessons learned on crime-related threats and challenges, as well as ways and means to address them in an effective manner.

**B. Substantive items and workshops****1. Comprehensive strategies for crime prevention towards social and economic development (agenda item 3); and evidence-based crime prevention: statistics, indicators and evaluation in support of successful practices (workshop 1)****Summary of deliberations**

14. It was recognized that criminal justice practitioners were the fundamental actors in crime prevention and criminal justice efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Meeting emphasized that the forthcoming Congress should focus on practical measures that criminal justice practitioners undertook in that regard.

15. It was also recognized that the Fourteenth Congress should discuss the role of citizens in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, and other roles that they might play.
16. It was further recognized that criminal justice systems and the institutions comprising them had a critical role to play in promoting the rule of law; for that infrastructure to operate effectively, the Meeting accorded high priority to investing in the training and capacity-building of practitioners, including prosecutors, police officers and probation and corrections or prison officers. Cooperation and coordination among such practitioners were essential to addressing crime, including transnational organized crime, at the national, regional and international levels.
17. The Meeting emphasized the importance of integrating a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice measures and policies.
18. Furthermore, the importance of community-based policing, which could play a key role in promoting crime prevention strategies at the local level, was noted. Such policing could not be carried out without the engagement of society, in particular the engagement of youth in activities with the police, which in turn fostered public confidence in and cooperation with law enforcement authorities.
19. It was underlined that educational, social and health measures should be utilized not only to advance crime prevention efforts, but also to address some of the causes of criminality. Furthermore, it was stressed that education acted as a catalyst within integrated approaches to crime prevention. In that regard, the Meeting emphasized the need to advance national, regional and international efforts to promote education and utilize sports programmes to empower children and youth to assume their inherent roles as agents of positive change.
20. In the context of crime prevention, some participants highlighted the importance of a culture of lawfulness that was focused on fostering trust and respect among the general public for the law and its enforcement. It was recognized that national strategic plans that included educational and family-related approaches had contributed to strengthening crime prevention.
21. It was noted that the evolving nature of gang-related violence and other urban crime required specialized and targeted crime prevention approaches, in particular to prevent the involvement of young people in such violence and crime, including their recruitment into organized criminal and terrorist groups, and that UNODC could support Member States in analysing recent trends in and good practices to address gang-related violence and urban crime.
22. In preventing and addressing trafficking in persons, the importance of a victim-centred approach to crime prevention and criminal justice measures was highlighted. In that regard, prioritizing the dignity, human rights, safety and well-being of victims and survivors was stressed.
23. The importance of evidence-based crime prevention, including the strengthening of data collection, was emphasized. It was noted that data collection should be carried out in accordance with the requirements of domestic legislation to ensure proper implementation of crime prevention policies.
24. It was noted that the Fourteenth Congress should be utilized to highlight innovative and creative practices in designing and implementing integrated and diversified crime prevention programmes.
25. It was mentioned that a shift to a new model of law enforcement operations, from a “police force” to a “police service”, needed to be considered. In that regard it was suggested that the Fourteenth Congress examine that approach in more detail to help Member States and civil society share research, good practices and lessons learned.

**Outcome of deliberations**

26. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement officials through training. Such training was recommended by the Meeting as key, not only to address needs at the national level, but also to strengthen cooperation among practitioners at the regional and international levels, as well as to address new *modi operandi* of criminal groups and advancements in information technology;

(b) Strengthen and develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing access by women to justice and redress, enhance the representation of women in the criminal justice system and make gender-specific measures an integral part of any crime prevention and criminal justice policy;

(c) Consider ways to learn from good practices in preventing and fighting trafficking in persons;

(d) Enhance cooperation among competent authorities to provide children and youth with education and sports programmes that equip them with the knowledge, values and skills necessary to contribute to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies for sustainable development. The utilization of education programmes was recommended as a good practice in preventing crime and violence;

(e) Promote effective national responses and enhance international cooperation to address the persistent and evolving threats related to the world drug problem;

(f) Improve data-collection methodologies, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, develop new ways to enhance cooperation in the field of crime statistics in order to deepen the collective ability of Member States to understand global crime trends and strengthen their capacity to collect and analyse crime-related data, including through support provided by UNODC.

**2. Integrated approaches to challenges facing the criminal justice system (agenda item 4); and reducing reoffending: identifying risks and developing solutions (workshop 2)**

**Summary of deliberations**

27. It was noted that independent and transparent criminal justice institutions were critical to upholding the rule of law and combating corruption; furthermore, effective and accountable law enforcement and justice services were essential components of good governance and stability.

28. Reference was made to the usefulness of pursuing integrated criminal justice approaches that were based upon: (a) the strengthening of collaboration to build trust within and between relevant agencies and to enhance formal and informal cooperation at all levels; (b) the establishment of internal information-sharing procedures and systems; and (c) the promotion of collaboration between police and criminal justice agencies with external actors, including community service providers, data-collection experts, the media and civil society.

29. Some participants emphasized that the capacity of criminal justice institutions, in particular, that of correctional institutions or prisons, was a prerequisite to finding effective responses to the risk of reoffending. Inter-agency cooperation between criminal justice institutions and other relevant agencies and cooperation with the private sector were equally important in that regard. It was noted that vocational training in correctional facilities or prisons was important for the social reintegration of offenders. Upon release from prison, timely job placements were deemed essential for their reintegration; such placements could only work if supported by employers who were willing to employ ex-offenders. Participants reported on good national practices in that regard, ranging from collaborating with so-called “cooperative

employers” and volunteer probation officers to promoting youth participation and partnerships in social reintegration and rehabilitation efforts.

30. It was noted that the relevant workshop of the Congress would provide an opportunity to discuss multi-stakeholder approaches to the issue of the rehabilitation of offenders. Therefore, it would be useful to devote further efforts to ensuring the presence of expertise from different regional groups for more constructive sharing of information, experiences and good practices.

31. The importance of the role of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network in promoting prison- and community-based approaches in support of rehabilitation was highlighted.

32. It was noted that appropriate consideration might need to be given to the specific circumstances and backgrounds of offenders who were at risk of being left behind, such as women and children, those from poor and marginalized backgrounds, persons with disabilities and foreign prisoners, as discussed in the UNODC *Handbook on Prisoners with Special Needs*.

33. The view was expressed that the UNODC *Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes* might need to be updated.

### **Outcome of deliberations**

34. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Examine best practices in combating trafficking in persons through a victim-centred approach, and consider methods of applying such best practices to protect and assist all victims of crime, with full respect for their human rights and dignity, and provide the foundation upon which victims become survivors;

(b) Design rehabilitation and social integration plans for offenders on the basis of an assessment of their needs and the risks they might encounter, including their personal history, mental condition, family environment and availability of social contacts;

(c) Pursue more effective implementation of United Nations standards and norms, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to promote human-centric and gender-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, as well as the use of non-custodial measures, including restorative justice;

(d) Explore practical measures on the active participation of citizens within local communities in assisting ex-offenders;

(e) Share best practices for preventing young people and adults from re-entering the criminal justice system, or entering it in the first place, and disseminating evidence-based best practices to reduce the rate of recidivism, such as vocational training, education programmes and prison employment opportunities;

(f) Explore best practices for whole-of-government approaches to reducing recidivism through: (i) analysing the latest research on evidence-based correctional practices that help prisoners re-enter communities as productive, law-abiding citizens; (ii) sharing examples of programmes that support prisoner rehabilitation and social reintegration, both within prison settings and in the community; (iii) enhancing collaboration between correctional or prison systems, other government agencies, civil society and community organizations to address a range of social and economic factors that affect recidivism rates; and (iv) considering ways to improve training and

capacity-building for staff at all levels of the correctional or prison system, including administrative and management officials, in order to manage offenders and support rehabilitation and reintegration;

(g) Share experiences and best practices regarding the use of alternatives to incarceration at all stages of the criminal justice process, while protecting the safety of the community.

**3. Multidimensional approaches by Governments to promoting the rule of law by, inter alia, providing access to justice for all; building effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive institutions; and considering social, educational and other relevant measures, including fostering a culture of lawfulness while respecting cultural identities, in line with the Doha Declaration (agenda item 5); and education and youth engagement as key to making societies resilient to crime (workshop 3)**

**Summary of deliberations**

35. It was mentioned that the promotion of the rule of law relied, inter alia, on: (a) access to justice for all; (b) building effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive criminal justice institutions; and (c) advancing social and educational measures to foster a culture of lawfulness. The Meeting discussed ways and means of promoting multidimensional, interdisciplinary and multisectoral approaches to crime prevention and criminal justice. It was emphasized that comprehensive approaches were needed to advance the rule of law at the national, regional and international levels.

36. The development of partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including collaboration with the private sector, was noted as an essential element of multidimensional approaches to promoting the rule of law. It was also noted that such partnerships could provide effective and innovative solutions to improve criminal justice responses, including through the use of new technologies.

37. The Meeting referred to the need for broad community support to address youth involvement in crime. It was noted that priority should be accorded to the following issues relating to rule-of-law interventions in the field of preventing and combating youth crime: (a) ways to identify children at risk; (b) identification of evidence-based indicators of youth crime (for example, gang affiliations); (c) good practices in social reintegration, including good practices in alternatives to incarceration; and (d) partnerships between law enforcement authorities and local communities in support of young people at risk.

38. Participants reported on good practices, experiences and challenges in strengthening access to justice and improving the quality of legal aid. They underscored the necessity of the following: (a) expanding the scope of beneficiaries of legal aid programmes; (b) ensuring coordination among the authorities involved in such programmes, including through liaison points; (c) promoting access to legal aid in rural areas and communities, as well as to people with disabilities; and (d) strengthening international cooperation in the field of legal aid.

39. Participants noted the need to give priority to strengthening technical assistance, including for developing countries in support of their efforts to build effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive criminal justice institutions. In that regard, the importance of the work of UNODC was underscored.

40. The benefits of technical assistance provided by institutions such as the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering were noted.

41. The diversity in the way that societies and cultures enhanced human peace and harmony was noted as an element to be considered in the context of crime prevention and criminal justice.

42. It was noted that the Fourteenth Congress was a platform for discussing approaches by Governments that contributed to fostering a culture of lawfulness in the context of promoting the rule of law. Particular reference was made to the role of



youth forums, including the Youth Forum that would precede the Fourteenth Congress, as a platform to strengthen the engagement of youth. It was also noted that enhancing the capacity of law enforcement institutions contributed to building the public's trust and respect for the law and its enforcement and might therefore be an important measure in contributing to the fostering of a culture of lawfulness.

43. A number of participants noted that, in order to promote the rule of law throughout society, Governments could also consider focusing on ways and means of enhancing the general public's trust in and respect for the law and its enforcement. In that regard, education at all stages for children and youth was mentioned as a critical element in advancing efforts related to the rule of law. The importance of diverse educational approaches and tools, including extracurricular activities and awareness-raising campaigns in communities, was highlighted.

### **Outcome of deliberations**

44. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Develop inter-agency cooperation mechanisms to establish effective and comprehensive national crime prevention strategies involving all relevant sectors in society (the education sector, communities, criminal justice institutions, law enforcement authorities, etc.) and, in doing so, increase efforts to reduce crime and violence, with a particular focus on young people;

(b) Establish collaborative platforms that facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas, recommendations and good practices, as well as the building of partnerships to support measures that contribute to advancing the rule of law;

(c) Strengthen community-based crime prevention and social cohesion measures, including through the development of coordination mechanisms at the local level that encourage the active participation of government institutions, civil society organizations and individuals;

(d) Take measures to increase access to justice for children by strengthening the responses of the criminal justice system and ensuring that it can provide children with fair and effective child-sensitive responses;

(e) Promote policies and strategies geared towards enhancing the capacity of criminal justice institutions in support of efforts to promote the rule of law;

(f) Support the advancement of criminal justice systems and their institutions to ensure that they are able to perform their multiple mandated responsibilities and that they are accountable, without discrimination of any kind, to those who seek fair administration and delivery of justice;

(g) Undertake appropriate and comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice strategies, policies and programmes and strengthen the capacities of legal aid service providers to ensure that access to legal aid is provided at all stages of the criminal justice process and that it is effective, credible, sustainable and available to the destitute and other vulnerable members of society, such as women, children, the elderly and persons with physical or mental disabilities, without discrimination or bias;

(h) Promote, taking into consideration the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime,<sup>1</sup> crime prevention approaches that include social and economic development, such as parenting skills and life skills for young people, community-based prevention through the active engagement of community stakeholders, reducing opportunities for crime through the provision of information to potential victims and preventing reoffending through social reintegration programmes for young offenders in prison and community settings;

<sup>1</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13, annex.

(i) Integrate crime prevention perspectives into relevant social and economic policies and programmes, in particular those affecting young people, with a special emphasis on programmes that increase educational, recreational and employment opportunities for young people;

(j) Leverage advancements in information technology for the benefit of education through the development of educational resources and tools for children and youth;

(k) Request UNODC to continue its efforts to provide technical assistance to Member States, upon request, to strengthen accountability and efficiency within the criminal justice system, in particular through its Global Judicial Integrity Network, and to advance its efforts to promote education on the rule of law through its Education for Justice initiative;

(l) Enhance the support provided by UNODC to Member States to develop and implement comprehensive policies and programmes to increase access to justice for all, including through the exchange of good practices and evidence-based initiatives.

**4. International cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime: (a) terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; and (b) new and emerging forms of crime (agenda item 6); and current crime trends, recent developments and emerging solutions, in particular new technologies as means for and tools against crime (workshop 4)**

**Summary of deliberations**

45. The Meeting discussed threats and challenges posed by terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Comprehensive approaches and enhanced international cooperation, including in the area of capacity-building, were needed to further advance counter-terrorism efforts and concerted action. Emphasis was placed on the importance of countering the financing of terrorism, including by strengthening the effectiveness of financial investigations. The significance of international cooperation to target the proceeds of crime was stressed as an important step towards detecting, disrupting and dismantling criminal and terrorist networks. The use of encrypted communications by criminals in the digital environment to facilitate terrorist activities was also mentioned as another area of increasing concern that required attention and a focused response.

46. It was noted that Member States should formulate strategies aimed at addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including but not limited to, prolonged unresolved conflicts, the dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of the rule of law, violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socioeconomic marginalization and lack of good governance, while recognizing that none of those conditions could excuse or justify acts of terrorism. It was also noted that enhancing communication among population groups, promoting tolerance, preventing the indiscriminate targeting of different religions and cultures and addressing development issues and unresolved conflicts would contribute to international cooperation, which was among the most important elements for combating terrorism and extremism.

47. Reference was also made to the need to adopt effective measures and policies against corruption.

48. The Meeting recalled that the threats posed by new and emerging forms of crime had been identified in the Doha Declaration, and that they also needed to be reflected in the outcome of the Fourteenth Congress. The importance of international cooperation and technical assistance was emphasized, particularly bearing in mind the evolving nature of those crimes.

49. The Meeting stressed the importance of the “legal architecture” of the international treaty framework in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.
50. The significance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the international conventions and protocols against terrorism, as legal bases for international cooperation, in particular, extradition, mutual legal assistance and asset recovery, was emphasized.
51. The significance of using multilateral conventions as legal bases for promoting international cooperation in criminal matters, when needed, was stressed. In that connection, the momentum of having in place review mechanisms both for the Organized Crime Convention and its Protocols and for the Convention against Corruption was mentioned as an opportunity for further joint work and concerted efforts to curb crime, in its different manifestations, at the international level, bearing in mind the guiding principles and characteristics of both mechanisms.
52. It was noted that bilateral treaties, agreements or arrangements, where applicable, as well as the principle of reciprocity in the absence of such bilateral instruments, could be utilized to enhance international cooperation. Reference was made to the usefulness of regional cooperation and ways to promote it. Specifically, for the Asia and Pacific region, it was highlighted that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Treaty on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters had proved to be an effective tool for improving cooperation among its States parties.
53. It was mentioned that more work needed to be done to promote effective asset recovery and to combat trafficking in cultural property.
54. Focusing on the operational context of international cooperation in criminal matters, reference was made to cooperation between the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and the ASEAN Association of Chiefs of National Police to tackle payment card fraud. That cooperation was identified as a good practice and a potential example for similar initiatives to address the challenges posed by the criminal misuse of cryptocurrencies, where appropriate. Examples of cooperation between national authorities and UNODC, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and other foreign partners to combat various types of transnational organized crime, in particular through collaborative operations at borders, were also mentioned. In general, the Meeting accorded priority to practical aspects of international cooperation, in particular those relating to empowering and improving the skills of practitioners.
55. In the field of cybercrime, the Meeting raised concerns about the increasing use of the digital environment for criminal purposes, from drug trafficking on the darknet to the sexual abuse and exploitation of children through the misuse of new information and communications technologies, and from identity-related crime and illegal online gambling and betting to the criminal misuse of cryptocurrencies for money-laundering purposes.
56. It was mentioned that drug traffickers were exploiting the international mail system and tools associated with new information and communications technologies – including the Internet, the darknet and cryptocurrencies – to evade traditional methods of detection and interdiction.
57. While it was noted by some participants that new international instruments could address challenges relating to cybercrime, trafficking in cultural property and wildlife crime, others noted that an expansion of the existing international treaty framework was not necessary to address those crimes and challenges.
58. Participants expressed appreciation for the work of the Expert Group to Conduct a Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime. In doing so, they stressed the importance of ensuring that the Expert Group continue its work and continue to function as the platform for further discussion on substantive issues related to cybercrime, in accordance with its mandate and agreed workplan.

59. In order to make the best use of the positive impact of technology, participants supported the promotion of tailor-made technical assistance and capacity-building programmes aimed at enhancing the expertise and technical capabilities of criminal justice and law enforcement authorities to address complex crime challenges. In that regard, partnerships with the private sector were encouraged, as were synergies among UNODC and other international organizations to avoid fragmentation or duplication of efforts.

60. It was mentioned that national, regional and global efforts to address and counter the world drug problem should be accelerated, on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility, consistent with the three international drug control conventions and guided by a comprehensive, balanced, integrated, multi-stakeholder and scientific evidence-based approach, including by enhancing efforts to eliminate or reduce significantly and measurably: (a) the illicit cultivation of opium poppy, coca bush and cannabis plant; (b) the illicit demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and drug-related health and social risks; (c) the illicit production, manufacture, marketing and distribution of and trafficking in psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances; (d) the diversion of, trafficking in and illicit demand for precursors; and (e) money-laundering related to illicit drugs. In addition, the coverage of prevention, treatment, recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration facilities, particularly for children, young people and women, should be increased. In addition to that reference to paragraph 36 of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, reference was also made to the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of all the commitments made over the previous decade, which were to be implemented together. That discussion arose in the context of the new realities, including technology-facilitated drug trafficking.

#### **Outcome of deliberations**

61. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Effectively implement the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto, the Convention against Corruption and the international conventions and protocols against terrorism to enhance international cooperation, including asset recovery. Member States that had not yet done so were encouraged to consider becoming parties to those treaties;

(b) Review and strengthen national laws, as appropriate, to promote the implementation of United Nations conventions and other international agreements and allow for flexibility or a broad interpretation of legal requirements, such as that of double criminality, when dealing with international cooperation requests;

(c) Enhance the capacity of criminal justice officials responsible for international cooperation, strengthen mechanisms of information exchange and promote access to training opportunities;

(d) Continue supporting the establishment and functioning of central authorities responsible for dealing with mutual legal assistance requests and provide technical assistance to Member States, upon request, in order to enhance the capacity of practitioners to effectively and expeditiously deal with such requests;

(e) Assist Member States in establishing and/or strengthening regional and cross-regional cooperation networks of criminal justice officials and supporting their effective functioning;

(f) Consider the establishment of specialized units within investigative and prosecuting authorities to deal with new and emerging forms of crime;

(g) Enhance the role of legislative authorities in preventing and countering corruption, including by raising awareness among the public, reviewing and strengthening anti-corruption legislation, exercising oversight of legislative authorities, promoting the rule of law and strengthening institutions at the domestic level;

(h) Building on existing practices in other regions, explore the feasibility of establishing regional central entities entrusted with the task of facilitating communication and coordination when dealing with international cooperation requests;

(i) Make the best use of the resources available, including the technical assistance expertise of and tools developed by UNODC, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of central and other competent authorities in dealing with international cooperation requests;

(j) Explore ways and means, including technical assistance, of enabling criminal justice and law enforcement practitioners to share information and experience and utilize evolving technologies, such as artificial intelligence and information and telecommunications technologies, with a view to addressing sophisticated and complex criminal activities.

### C. Other issues

62. Stemming from the deliberations, the following recommendations were identified with regard to the structure and substance of the future Kyoto declaration:

(a) Building on the successful experience of the Thirteenth Congress, the preparatory process for the formulation of the future Kyoto declaration should be inclusive and open and relevant deliberations should be carried out in a timely manner, following the good practice of the deliberations on the Doha Declaration, with a view to facilitating the negotiation and adoption of the future Kyoto declaration at the opening of the Fourteenth Congress, during the high-level segment;

(b) Draft the future Kyoto declaration as a short and concise document that reflects a strong political message and ensure that the future Kyoto declaration is aimed at bridging the gap between political commitments and effective implementation on the ground, in relation not only to addressing new and evolving crime challenges but also to traditional threats and persistent crime challenges, including transnational organized crime and corruption. It was noted that investigating and prosecuting crime were becoming more complicated owing to the transnational nature of crime and advancements in information technology;

(c) Promote the maintenance of a continuum between the Doha Declaration and the future Kyoto declaration. In more concrete terms, the future Kyoto declaration could use the Doha Declaration as a point of departure, and be structured around targeted, operational and action-oriented recommendations and undertakings. In that regard, promote the role of UNODC in translating policy directives into actions through supporting Member States in implementing the outcome of the Crime Congress;

(d) Strengthen the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for crime prevention and criminal justice matters in advancing the implementation of the outcome of the crime congresses, in particular the future Kyoto declaration, by providing a forum for sharing experiences, lessons learned and good practices in translating policy directives contained in those outcome documents into meaningful action at the national, regional and international levels.

63. Member States were encouraged to consider including in their delegations practitioners who would serve as experts and panellists in the workshops.

### **III. Attendance and organization of work**

#### **A. Date and venue of the Meeting**

64. The Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 January 2019.

#### **B. Attendance**

65. The following States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific were represented at the Meeting: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, France, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, United States of America, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

66. Lebanon, Nigeria, Qatar and Saudi Arabia were represented by observers.

67. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented by observers: United Nations Environment Programme and UNODC.

68. The following institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network were represented by observers: International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council, Thailand Institute of Justice, and Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

69. The following non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council was represented by observers: Japan Federation of Bar Associations.

#### **C. Opening of the Meeting**

70. The Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was opened on 22 January 2019 by the Secretary of the Meeting.

71. A representative of UNODC, speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, highlighted the importance of the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice as a vital forum for taking stock of and assessing preparedness to deal with challenges and emerging threats and for undertaking a periodic review of crime-related standards and norms. Reference was made to the fact that the Fourteenth Congress would be held in Kyoto, Japan, where the Fourth Congress, the first Congress to be preceded by regional preparatory meetings, had been held 50 years previously. Since that time, the regional preparatory meetings had played a meaningful role in examining the substantive agenda items and topics of the workshops, and in making action-oriented recommendations from a regional perspective. The outcome of the Meeting would plant the seeds for the Kyoto declaration in 2020. He commended Thailand for the role it had played in United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice since hosting the Eleventh Congress. He also highlighted the work carried out by the UNODC Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific. He emphasized that the Thirteenth Crime Congress had been focused on the mutually reinforcing relationship between the rule of law and sustainable development, and that its political outcome had been well reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 16. The Fourteenth Congress, which would be held five years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, would provide an opportunity to take stock of and formulate practical and operational recommendations for action in support of peaceful and just societies.

72. The Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand addressed the meeting and expressed appreciation to the Government of Japan for the work undertaken in preparation for the 2020 Congress. He highlighted the valuable contribution that the Asia and Pacific region could make to the Congress, given its diverse legal systems and administrative cultures. He emphasized that numerous factors had affected crime patterns within the region and that challenges ranging from violence against women to trafficking in persons, other forms of organized crime, corruption and environmental crime were being faced, with countries responding in innovative ways to them. He referred to the frameworks in place for international cooperation within the region, such as ASEAN, and their development of new tools. He highlighted that the countries of the region had been working together on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The link between crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law and sustainable development had been echoed in the overall theme for the Fourteenth Congress, in which their importance as enabling elements for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda had been stressed. As the first Regional Preparatory Meeting to take place, he emphasized the excellent position that the countries were in to be able to establish a useful template for the negotiations of the Kyoto declaration at a later stage.

#### **D. Election of officers**

73. At its 1st meeting, on 22 January 2019, the Meeting elected, by acclamation, the following officers:

- Chair:* Wisit Wisitsora-at (Thailand)  
*Vice-Chair:* Kieran Butler (Australia)  
*Rapporteur:* Jawad Ali (Pakistan)

#### **E. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

74. Also at its 1st meeting, the Meeting adopted its provisional agenda (A/CONF.234/RPM.1/L.1), which read as follows:

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Main theme of the Fourteenth Congress: “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda”.
5. Substantive items on the agenda and the topics of the workshops of the Fourteenth Congress:
  - (a) Comprehensive strategies for crime prevention towards social and economic development (agenda item 3); and evidence-based crime prevention: statistics, indicators and evaluation in support of successful practices (workshop 1);
  - (b) Integrated approaches to challenges facing the criminal justice system (agenda item 4); and reducing reoffending: identifying risks and developing solutions (workshop 2);
  - (c) Multidimensional approaches by Governments to promoting the rule of law by, inter alia, providing access to justice for all; building effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive institutions; and considering social, educational and other relevant measures, including fostering a culture of lawfulness while respecting cultural identities, in line with the Doha Declaration (agenda item 5); and

education and youth engagement as key to making societies resilient to crime (workshop 3);

- (d) International cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime: (a) terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; and (b) new and emerging forms of crime (agenda item 6); and current crime trends, recent developments and emerging solutions, in particular new technologies as means for and tools against crime (workshop 4).

6. Recommendations for the Fourteenth Congress.

7. Adoption of the report on the Meeting.

75. At the same meeting, the Meeting approved its organization of work. The list of documents before the Meeting is contained in the annex to the present report.

### **Proceedings**

76. The 1st and 3rd to 6th meetings, from 22 to 24 January, were chaired by Mr. Wisitsora-at and the 2nd meeting, on 22 January, was chaired by Mr. Butler.

## **F. Other matters**

77. A representative of Japan, the host country of the Fourteenth Congress, briefed the participants, including through a video presentation, about the organizational and substantive preparations for the Fourteenth Congress and the Youth Forum that would precede it. He provided some information about the city of Kyoto, where the Fourteenth Congress would be held. He also provided a historical overview of the deliberations at and the outcome of the Fourth Congress, held in the same city in 1970, which had resulted for the first time in the adoption of a political declaration. The observer for the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council delivered a presentation on the arrangements for the ancillary meetings to be held during the Fourteenth Congress.

78. The observer for the Thailand Institute of Justice delivered a statement highlighting the importance of the overall theme of the Fourteenth Congress. He emphasized the readiness of the Institute to contribute substantively to relevant deliberations in its capacity, for the first time, as a member of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network. He noted that the Fourth Congress had had a pioneering role in the history of the crime congresses, as it had examined for the first time the linkages between crime and development. He highlighted the framework provided by the Sustainable Development Goals, which could support a development-led approach, as well as the need to address the challenges facing the criminal justice system through addressing the root causes of crime and through inclusive multisectoral partnerships. He emphasized the importance of investing in young people and strengthening national and international efforts with a view to promoting education that fostered a culture of lawfulness.

79. In that connection, it was noted that the concepts of development-led crime prevention and development-led criminal justice were intended as theoretical tools to highlight the cross-cutting nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was highlighted that, in the crime prevention field, practitioners had long understood the importance of a multi-sectoral approach, and the Sustainable Development Goals provided a suitable framework for that. Moreover, in the criminal justice area, practitioners were bound by laws, policies and practices, but often had scope for discretion in making decisions. In exercising such discretion and exploring the available options, practitioners should be encouraged to consider how their decisions could have a wider impact on the achievement of other Sustainable Development Goals and how multi-stakeholder approaches could be conducive to that effect.



80. The representative of the Government of Kazakhstan delivered a statement informing the meeting of the readiness of his Government to host the Fifteenth Congress, in 2025, in Astana. He mentioned that it would be the first time that a United Nations congress on crime prevention and criminal justice took place in Central Asia.

#### **IV. Adoption of the report and closure of the Meeting**

81. At its 6th meeting, on 24 January 2019, the Meeting considered and adopted its report (A/CONF.234/RPM.1/L.2 and Add.1-2), as orally amended.

## Annex

### List of documents

<a href="#">A/CONF.234/PM.1</a>	Discussion guide
<a href="#">A/CONF.234/RPM.1/L.1</a>	Annotated provisional agenda
A/CONF.234/RPM.1/L.2 and Add.1-2	Draft report
A/CONF.234/RPM.1/INF/2	List of participants
A/CONF.234/PM/CRP.1	Note by the Secretariat entitled “From policy directives to concrete results: a quinquennial strategic operational roadmap”
A/CONF.234/RPM.1/CRP.1	Conference room paper submitted by the institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network

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