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Current Crime Trends, Recent Developments and Emerging Solutions, in Particular New Technologies as Means for and Tools Against Crime

Concept Note for Workshop 4 at the 14th Crime Congress in Kyoto

Committee II, 3 Meetings

Wednesday, 10 March 2021 Two afternoon sessions (TBC)

Thursday, 11 March 2021 Morning session (TBC)

Crime, policing and security are enabled by, and co-evolve with, technologies. As criminals compete with law enforcement and criminal justice authorities for gaining technological advantage, the criminal misuse of technological innovations, in different areas and manifestations, has lowered the bar of entry to the criminal world, which, in turn, provided fertile ground for crime to flourish.

On the other hand, while advances in technology have enabled criminals and organized criminal groups to target more victims, expand their illicit businesses and conceal crimes, they also leave behind virtual traces to follow. This means that well trained law enforcement and criminal justice authorities can also benefit from advancements of technology and innovations fuelled by them. This co-existence of benefits and risks epitomizes the use of technology as a “double-edged sword”.

The workshop will build on these considerations and, taking stock of recent developments in various areas where technology can be used both ways as described above, will aim to promote dialogue and exchange of views in order to gain a better understanding of the impact and role of technology as both a driving force for, and a shield against, crime. The workshop will cover such areas and topics as cryptocurrencies; technology and darknet markets, including drug markets; firearms and technology-related security threats; technology as a facilitating factor in trafficking in persons cases; technology and smuggling of migrants; the effects of new information and communication technologies on the abuse and exploitation of children; artificial intelligence (AI); robotics and drones; the use of technology in the field of international cooperation in criminal matters; and ethical considerations, as well as procedural and human rights safeguards pertaining to the use of technology in the law enforcement and criminal justice landscape.

As such, the workshop will continue and expand a discussion that had started at the Thirteenth Congress, at which participants exchanged views and experiences, in both plenary meetings and a dedicated workshop, on the role of social media and new communication technologies within the broader framework of public participation and contribution in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice.

The workshop will also provide an opportunity to share experiences from different countries and from different stakeholders, including not only competent governmental authorities, but also academia, the civil society and the private sector. It will also serve as a forum to allow for the discussion, evaluation and sharing of good practices.

In view of its interconnection with agenda item 6 of the provisional agenda of the Fourteenth Congress, the workshop will be designed to offer substantive contributions to, and supplement, as appropriate, those



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elements related to the discussion under this agenda item which refer to the growing use of information and communication technologies by terrorists.

The following institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network have assisted in the preparation and organization of the workshop: the Korean Institute of Criminology and the National Institute of Justice of the United States Department of Justice.