



**Contribution by the Chair of the  
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice  
To the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

**2023 Theme:**

**“Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”**

**I. Introduction**

This contribution is submitted by **H.E Mary MUGWANJA (Republic of Kenya)**, the **Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) at its thirty-second session**, in response to a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council on 10 November 2022, inviting the Commission to provide an input to the 2023 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

The 2023 HLPF will be organized under the auspices of ECOSOC at the United Nations headquarters in New York from 10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023, on the theme **“Accelerating the recovery from the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”**. The input aims to highlight the guidance and key measures put forth by the CCPCJ, which contributes from a crime prevention and criminal justice perspective to building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic, all while striving to meet the commitments contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) is the **principal policymaking body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice**, acts as the **preparatory and implementing body for the United Nations Congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice** and, together with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), functions as one of the **two governing bodies of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, which acts as the **focal point for measuring and monitoring progress across many of the indicators of SDG16**. The CCPCJ works on a large portfolio of issues; the ones addressed in this contribution do not reflect the work of the Commission in a comprehensive manner, but represent **examples related to the 2023**

**HLPF theme and the SDGs under thematic consideration this year, namely SDGs 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.**

The contribution **covers the period March 2022–February 2023**<sup>1</sup> and complements the contributions submitted in previous years.

#### **Normative framework:**

The **Fourteenth United Nations Crime Congress, which the CCPCJ prepared**, was held on **7–12 March 2021** in Kyoto, Japan, and online. At the opening of the Fourteenth Crime Congress on 7 March 2021, Member States adopted the “***Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***” by consensus. The Declaration, which represents the contemporary key political commitments on crime prevention and criminal justice, was **endorsed by the General Assembly in its Resolution 76/181**.

As mentioned before, the Commission acts not only as the preparatory body for the Fourteenth United Nations Crime Congress but also as its follow-up body. In this capacity, and following the request in the Kyoto Declaration and in **GA Resolution 76/181**, it adopted a **multiyear workplan of thematic discussions to effectively follow up on the Kyoto Declaration**, which follows the **four pillars** of the declaration, namely Pillar I on Advancing crime prevention; Pillar II on Advancing the criminal justice system; Pillar III on Promoting the rule of law; and Pillar IV on Promoting international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime.

#### **Work undertaken in 2022:**

The **31<sup>st</sup> Session of the CCPCJ, chaired by H.E. HIKIHARA Takeshi (Japan)**, held **its main Session from 16 to 20 May 2022** in a hybrid format, gathering over 1,300 participants representing 130 Member States, several United Nations bodies and agencies, 11 intergovernmental organizations and 55 non-governmental organizations. At the margins of the May meeting, 80 side events were organized, co-sponsored by Member States, United Nations entities, international and regional organizations and civil society, covering a wide range of topics related to crime prevention, criminal justice and rule of law.

Following the **first thematic discussions on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration**, held in November 2021 on the topic of “**Advancing crime prevention**”, the salient points were reflected in a **Chair’s summary** available in a conference room paper submitted for the **consideration of the**

---

<sup>1</sup> Considering that the submission deadline is 1 March 2023.

**Commission at its thirtieth session in May 2022.**<sup>2</sup> The second thematic discussions were held from 5 to 7 December 2022 and focused on pillar II of the Declaration, namely on “**Advancing Criminal Justice Systems**”. The 2022 discussions focused on the following subtopics: Safeguarding victims’ rights and protecting witnesses and reporting persons; improving criminal investigation processes; improving prison conditions; reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration; mainstreaming a gender perspective into criminal justice systems; and addressing the vulnerabilities of children and youth in contact with the criminal justice system. The **procedural report** can be found on the following website: [Procedural Report for 2022 CCPCJ Thematic Discussions on the Implementation of the Kyoto Declaration \(adobe.com\)](https://www.adobe.com), and a **Chair’s Summary** containing the salient points made during the Thematic Discussions will be submitted for consideration by the Commission at its regular 32<sup>nd</sup> session in May 2023 (E/CN.15/2023/CRP.2).

At the reconvened 30th session in December 2021, the Commission also agreed on a recommendation for the **themes for the thematic discussions which are held annually during its regular sessions, for the period 2022-2025**. ECOSOC adopted this workplan in its **decision 2022/317** in February 2022 and encouraged the Commission to conduct those thematic discussions within the framework of the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration, thereby contributing to the consideration of the annual themes of the Council and the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development. In line with this decision, the theme for the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission was “**Strengthening the use of digital evidence in criminal justice and countering cybercrime, including the abuse and exploitation of minors in illegal activities with the use of the Internet**”, and the topic for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session, planned to be held from 22 to 26 May 2023, will be “**Enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system to ensure access to justice and to realize a safe and secure society**”.

The **regular thirty-second session of the Commission** will be held from **22 to 26 May 2023**.

**II. Progress, experience, lessons learned, challenges and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, 17 from the vantage point of CCPCJ, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and interlinkages across the SDGs and targets, including policy implications of their synergies and trade-offs.**

#### **General framework:**

In the **Kyoto Declaration**, negotiated within the CCPCJ, States expressed their endeavor to take decisive actions and action-oriented measures to address challenges and remove international impediments

---

<sup>2</sup> E/CN.15/2022/CRP.1, available here: [E\\_CN15\\_2022\\_CRP1\\_e\\_V2200282.pdf \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org)

posed and aggravated by COVID-19 to crime prevention and criminal justice, including by a multilateral approach and strengthening the resilience of law enforcement and other criminal justice institutions through multilateral cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnership, with special attention to the urgent capacity-building and technical assistance needs of developing Countries in this regard, bearing in mind the long-term social and economic implications of the pandemic, including for sustainable development and international cooperation, and recognizing that the poorest and most vulnerable were the hardest hit by the impact of the pandemic (para. 15). They further recognized, in light of the ongoing experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in preparation for any similar future challenges, the need to review criminal justice systems and to make them more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive and responsive through promoting digitalization (para. 16).

In resolution A/RES/76/184, entitled "*Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*", negotiated within the Commission, Member States underlined that the pandemic posed cross-cutting, multifaceted challenges to the criminal justice system and that it required comprehensive, integrated, multisectoral and coordinated responses, including through cooperation between the justice and health sectors.

**SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

and

**SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

The Commission has contributed to these goals from the angle of addressing **crimes that affect the environment**, which include **trafficking in hazardous wastes and dumping** and wildlife crime. Action against crimes that affect the environment can support the achievement of the SDGs under review, including **SDG6 on clean water and sanitation**, in particular **target 6.3 of SDG 6, to improve water by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping, and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials** and **SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy**.

In the ***Kyoto Declaration***, Member States expressed their endeavour to adopt effective measures to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment, such as illicit trafficking in wildlife, including, inter alia, flora and fauna as protected by the Convention on International Trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, in timber and timber products, **in hazardous wastes and other wastes** and in precious metals, stones and other minerals, as well as, inter alia, poaching, by making the best possible use of relevant international instruments and by strengthening legislation, international cooperation, capacity-building, criminal justice responses and law enforcement **efforts aimed at, inter alia, dealing with transnational organized crime, corruption and money-laundering linked to such crimes**, and

**illicit financial flows derived from such crimes**, while acknowledging the need to deprive criminals of proceeds of crime.

In Resolution **76/185**, entitled “**Preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment**” which was prepared by the Commission, the General Assembly expressed its deep concern that **activities of organized criminal groups that affect the environment hindered and undermined efforts undertaken by Member States to protect the environment** (which includes the availability of natural resources, such as water, and accessibility to sustainable energy), promote the rule of law and achieve sustainable development, including efforts to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Assembly **recognized that crimes that affect the environment may also have a negative impact on economies, public health, human safety, food security, livelihoods and habitats**. It also recognized the need for a balanced, integrated, comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach and response to address the complex and multifaceted challenges related to crimes that affect the environment, acknowledging that long-term comprehensive and sustainable development-oriented responses are required to address and overcome those challenges.

Following the request contained in **General Assembly Resolution 76/185**, the Commission held **intersessional expert discussions on preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment** from **14 to 16 February 2022**<sup>3</sup>. National practitioners and policymakers from a large number of United Nations Member States, United Nations entities, other intergovernmental and international organizations, and civil society experts exchanged good practices and lessons learned in preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment and strengthening international cooperation. A **procedural report**<sup>4</sup> was prepared and a **Chair’s Summary containing the salient points made during the Thematic Discussions** was submitted for consideration by the CCPCJ at its regular 31st session in May 2022 (E/CN.15/2022/CRP.2 ).

As outlined in the 2020 UNODC World Wildlife Crime Report<sup>5</sup> putting an end to wildlife crime is an essential part of building back better from the COVID-19 crisis. In 2022, the Commission adopted Resolution **31/1 on strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife**. The Resolution recalled that protection of wildlife must be part of a comprehensive approach to achieving poverty eradication, food security, sustainable development, including the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, economic growth, social well-being and sustainable livelihoods, which includes access to energy, and to water and sanitation.

---

<sup>3</sup> [CCPCJ thematic discussions crimes that affect environment \(unodc.org\)](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2020/World_Wildlife_Report_2020_9July.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [Procedural Report 2022 CCPCJ Expert Discussions on Crimes that Affect the Environment \(adobe.com\)](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2020/World_Wildlife_Report_2020_9July.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> UNODC, World Wildlife Report, 2020 [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2020/World\\_Wildlife\\_Report\\_2020\\_9July.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/wildlife/2020/World_Wildlife_Report_2020_9July.pdf)

## **SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

The **disproportionate impact of COVID-19 in prison settings** has demonstrated what can happen when already overburdened and ill-equipped prisons are confronted with crises. Communicable diseases not only affect prisoners, their families, visitors and prison officers, but also put an increased health burden on society at large. Therefore, addressing the challenges associated with incarceration, such as **poor prison conditions, including infrastructure challenges**, overcrowding, and insufficient coordination between the justice and health sectors, should be a key part of the effort to “build back better”. The consequences for public safety, health, and human rights, as well as the financial and socioeconomic costs resulting from these long-standing deficiencies are immense. **Building and improving safe, sustainable prison infrastructure** can contribute to the achievement of **target 9.1 (develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all)**.

The *Kyoto Declaration* includes a call to **improve prison conditions**, address overcrowding and promote the **practical application of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners** (the Nelson Mandela Rules, General Assembly Resolution 70/175, annex). As part of this work, the Commission supports efforts to **build and upgrade correctional facilities** around the world according to specific criteria in order to improve the wellbeing of prisoners, for instance regarding accommodation, hygiene, space for exercise and sport, and health-care facilities.

In 2022, the Commission negotiated a draft Resolution on *Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration*, later adopted by the General Assembly as *A/RES/77/232*. This Resolution encourages Member States to support the development of necessary skills among offenders in correctional facilities and facilitate working opportunities, including through public-private partnerships between government authorities and local communities, to promote the **social rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders**. These skills, strengthened also through vocational and technical training and educational programmes, often include entrepreneurship skills. They therefore enhance the integration of offenders and link their work to the creation and growth of small-scale enterprises and their integration into value chains and markets, as referenced in **target 9.3 of SDG 9 (“increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, particularly in developing countries, to financial services including affordable credit and their integration into value chains and markets”)**.

With regard to **fostering innovation**, the Commission has **addressed technology and innovation as instruments to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and advance full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The *Kyoto Declaration* promotes, inter alia, the

appropriate utilization of technology by law enforcement and other criminal justice institutions, as well as the adaptation of legislation, regulations and policies to continuous technological developments. In *General Assembly Resolution 76/184 (“Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”*), prepared by the Commission and already referred to above, it was recommended that Member States take into account lessons learned and best practices applied during the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to make criminal justice systems more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive, responsive and better prepared for similar future challenges, by recognizing the need to adapt to epidemics and pandemics, **including through, as appropriate, promoting digitalization, the use of technology, health-care services and health-related improvement measures.** During the thematic discussion on “**Strengthening the use of digital evidence in criminal justice and countering cybercrime, including the abuse and exploitation of minors in illegal activities with the use of the Internet**”, held at the occasion of the 31<sup>st</sup> regular Session of the Commission, speakers, *inter alia*, agreed that effective international cooperation was of paramount importance for gathering and sharing electronic evidence from other jurisdictions in the context of cross-border investigations, and highlighted the **added value of public-private partnerships** in obtaining electronic evidence from service providers in a timely manner.

#### **SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

The *Kyoto Declaration* stresses the need to promote **tailor-made crime prevention strategies** that **take into account local contexts**, including by fostering among the general public a culture of lawfulness, cognizant of cultural diversity, based on respect for the rule of law, in order to advance cooperation among stakeholders and the police, promote positive conflict resolution, as well as **community-oriented policing** in accordance with national legislation, and **prevent gang-related and urban crime** and all forms of organized crime (paragraph 26). In this context, the Commission promotes **urban safety and local crime prevention strategies** which proactively engage community stakeholders.

In the above-mentioned Resolution *A/RES/77/232*, entitled “**Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration**”, Member States were encouraged to promote a **rehabilitative environment in the community to facilitate the social reintegration of offenders with the active involvement of local communities**, giving due regard to the need to protect society and individuals and the rights of victims and offenders.

In its *Resolution A/RES/76/183*, negotiated by the Commission, entitled “**Integrating sport into youth crime prevention and criminal justice strategies**”, Member States recognized that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had affected youth, especially those who were in vulnerable situations, and that many of the hardships faced during the COVID-19 crisis in the fields of formal and non-formal

education and well-being and health, including mental health, in addition to economic dislocations, were also known risk factors associated with crime, violence and illicit drug-related activities and were likely to expose youth to increased victimization and involvement with crime during and after the pandemic. In order to build back better, the Commission called upon Member States to **strengthen community-based support measures for youth to address risk factors of crime and violence, including through the provision of sport and recreational facilities and programmes.**

### **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**

**Fostering partnerships is key in the Commission's work.** The *Kyoto Declaration* called “upon the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in accordance with its mandate, to adopt the appropriate policy and operational measures for the follow-up to this Declaration (...) and invite(d) the Commission to engage with other relevant stakeholders, including the institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network (PNI), in order to strengthen global partnership in advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda”. The Declaration also promotes **multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation on a variety of specific issues**, including – amongst others - crime prevention, reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration and combating cybercrime.

In this regard, during the 31<sup>st</sup> regular Session of the Commission in May 2022, the **PNI network organized a workshop on improving criminal justice responses to Internet-related crimes against children**, in preparation of the thematic discussion held by the Commission during the same session. The workshop was chaired by the First Vice-Chair of the Commission and moderated by the observer for the Australian Institute of Criminology, a member of the PNI network.

Throughout 2022, the Commission also continued to seek **synergies and cooperation within the ECOSOC system and the United Nations system**. H.E. Mr Collen V. KELAPILE, President of the ECOSOC, and Ms Sima Sami BAHOUS, the Executive Director of UN-WOMEN, addressed the Commission **during the opening of its regular Session**. The opening session of the above-mentioned Thematic Discussions on the Implementation of the Kyoto Declaration held in December 2022 was addressed by H.E. Ambassador Lachezara STOEVA (Bulgaria), the President of ECOSOC; H.E. Ambassador Mathu JOYINI (South Africa), the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women; and H.E. Ambassador Alya AL-THANI (Qatar), the Chair of the Commission for Social Development. Presenters from 13 United Nations agencies made presentations in their respective field of expertise.

**III. Three key areas where transformative actions for accelerated progress have been successful, and three key areas where support is most urgently needed, with regard to the cluster of SDGs under review in July 2023.**

**Areas where progress has been made:**

From the vantage point of the Commission, **significant progress has been made** related to **SDG 11** in emphasizing the importance of **urban safety and local crime prevention**, including in the Kyoto Declaration and in several resolutions, which have often translated into concrete action by Member States, including with the assistance of UNODC. For instance, in GA Resolution 77/232 on “**Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration**”, the Commission encouraged Member States to promote a rehabilitative environment **in the community** to facilitate the social reintegration of offenders with the active involvement of **local communities**, giving due regard to the need to protect society and individuals and the rights of victims and offenders. In its **Resolution A/RES/76/183**, negotiated by the Commission, entitled “**Integrating sport into youth crime prevention and criminal justice strategies**”, the Commission called upon Member States to strengthen **community-based support** measures for youth to address risk factors of crime and violence, including through the provision of sport and recreational facilities and programmes.

With regards to **SDGs 6 and 7**, **progress has been made** with regard to **crimes that affect the environment**, including trafficking in hazardous wastes and dumping. Environmental aspects have continuously become stronger in the Commission’s work. In its **Resolution A/RES/76/185**, negotiated by the Commission, entitled “**Preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment**”, the General Assembly expressed its deep concern on the observation that **activities of organized criminal groups that affect the environment** hinder and undermine efforts to protect the environment, promote the rule of law and achieve sustainable development. **Long-term comprehensive and sustainable development-oriented responses to crimes that affect the environment** will contribute to addressing and overcoming these challenges, including to improving water by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping, and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials.

With regards to **SDG 17**, as explained above the Commission is implementing (as decided in **GA R Resolution 76/181**), in consultation with Member States, a **multiyear workplan of thematic discussions to effectively follow up on the Kyoto Declaration**, which follows the four pillars of the declaration. These annual discussions have proven to be a successful avenue to strengthen partnerships among and galvanize international support from Member States, United Nations entities, international organizations and civil society organizations around the topics contained in the Declaration.

### **Areas where support is most urgently needed:**

With regards to **SDG 9**, a key area where **urgent support is needed** concerns **enhancing prison infrastructure** as a step to improve overall prison conditions, which include the overall quality of accommodation, sanitation, and hygiene, and the provision of basic services, as well as rehabilitation opportunities, including humane and gender-responsive prison infrastructure that supports a decent and constructive prison environment. Prison conditions constitute a key aspect of the overall quality of prison life and the human dignity of prisoners.

Regarding **SDGs 6 and 7**, while **environmental aspects** have become stronger in the work of the Commissions, **urgent needs remain unaddressed**. Existing research indicates that crimes that affect the environment have become some of the most lucrative transnational criminal activities. **Disrupting illicit financial flows stemming from these crimes and addressing violent crime committed by organized criminal groups involved in or benefiting from crimes that affect the environment** are among the key areas which urgently require more support.

### **IV. Examples of specific actions taken to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic that also accelerate progress towards multiple SDG targets, including actions identified by your intergovernmental body, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving SDGs**

The Commission recognizes that, **in recovering from the pandemic**, efforts should **focus on the most vulnerable members of society**, guided first and foremost by the principle of “**leaving no one behind**”. This entails making sure that the real and concrete risks posed by COVID-19 on vulnerable members of society, such as children, prisoners, women and migrants, including in the context of crime prevention and criminal justice, are not overlooked. This message was **reflected in many CCPCJ resolutions adopted at its thirtieth session in May 2021**, and **in resolutions adopted in its thirty-first session in May 2022**, when the pandemic was already receding.

**In 2022**, the Commission adopted a draft Resolution, later adopted by the General Assembly (**GA Resolution 77/233**) on **strengthening national and international efforts, including with the private sector, to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse**. The Resolution recognizes that the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in offenders and children spending more time online and has therefore **increased the need for safety measures and education mitigating the risks to children from online sexual exploitation and abuse**.

The Commission also adopted, as already referred to above, a draft Resolution later adopted by the General Assembly (GA Resolution 77/232) **entitled “Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation**

*and reintegration*”, which encouraged Member States to develop comprehensive strategies or action plans to reduce reoffending through **effective interventions for the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders**, a population group often subject to social exclusion.

**Among the resolutions adopted in 2021 by the Commission** which stressed the need to leave no one behind, including against the background of the pandemic, reference is to be made to ***Resolution 30/I on “Strengthening international cooperation in addressing the smuggling of migrants”***, in which the Commission requested Member States to **address challenges in combating the smuggling of migrants resulting from COVID-19**. The Commission in the same Resolution also encouraged Member States to **effectively promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrant children**, stressing the need to avoid approaches that might aggravate their vulnerability, particularly in the wake of the pandemic.

The importance of taking into account the **specific needs of women prisoners and women offenders during the development, monitoring and evaluation of responses to the challenges posed by COVID-19 to the criminal justice system** was stressed in the Resolution on ***“Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease pandemic”*** (Resolution 76/184, negotiated by the CCPCJ). In the same Resolution, the General Assembly recognized **“that the poorest and most vulnerable are among the hardest hit by the impact of the pandemic”**.

**V. Assessment of the situation in the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and within the respective areas addressed by your intergovernmental body, and policy recommendations, commitments and cooperation measures for promoting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.**

The situation in the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs has to be considered **in the context of the situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic implications**, which have created **new opportunities for, and transformed the modus operandi of criminals and organized criminal groups, as well as the challenges that it has posed to criminal justice and criminal justice institutions, particularly to law enforcement and penitentiary systems**.

**SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

With a view to **SDG 16**, which is particularly under the purview of the Commission, this leads to the following short assessment of the situation in the mid-point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

The pandemic has posed cross-cutting, multifaceted challenges to the criminal justice system and requires comprehensive, integrated, multisectoral and coordinated responses, including through cooperation between the justice and health sectors. For the further implementation of SDG 16, the General Assembly in its *Resolution A/RES/76/184, entitled “Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*”, negotiated within the Commission and referred to above, recommended that Member States would **take into account lessons learned and best practices applied during the COVID-19 pandemic**. It encouraged Member States, in implementing holistic and comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice policies, **to promote alternatives to imprisonment** and to take appropriate measures to ensure that, subject to their constitutional principles and the basic concepts of their legal systems, **sentencing for criminal offences is proportionate to the gravity of the offence**. The General Assembly recommended in the Resolution that Member States **mainstreamed a gender perspective** into their criminal justice systems, promoted the **application of the relevant United Nations standards and norms for improving the detention conditions** and promoted a **rehabilitative environment in correctional facilities**. Further, the General Assembly stressed **the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to strengthening criminal justice systems**, including the involvement, as appropriate, of relevant stakeholders and public-private partnerships, **and enhancing domestic inter-agency cooperation, capacity-building for criminal justice officials and practitioners and specialized training and education for prison staff and relevant criminal justice officials**, as well as the importance of **improving prison management and preparing for health-related challenges**.

Regarding **indicator 16.2 (End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children)**, the General Assembly has, in its *Resolution 77/233 entitled “Strengthening national and international efforts, including with the private sector, to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse”*, negotiated by the Commission and referred to above, noted the growing efforts by Member States, including through national or domestic legislation and strategies, and through relevant multilateral agreements as well as other relevant formats, to prevent and combat the online sexual exploitation and abuse of children, but **called on Member States to take further measures, such as, criminalizing all forms of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, make appropriate legislative and policy efforts to enable law enforcement authorities to prevent and respond to online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and to increase public awareness on the topic**.

The Commission has addressed **target 16.3 (Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all)**, when drafting the *Kyoto Declaration*, in which Member States have expressed their endeavour to **ensure equal access to justice and application of the law to all, including vulnerable members of society**, regardless of their status, including by taking appropriate measures to ensure treatment with respect and without discrimination

or bias of any kind by criminal justice institutions. **CCPCJ Intersessional Thematic Discussions on this commitment will be held in September 2023.**

Regarding **target 16.4 (By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime)**, speakers during the first Thematic Discussions on the Implementation of the Kyoto Declaration, held on 10-12 November 2021, highlighted the need to strengthen **inter-agency cooperation and collaboration at the national level**, including with the private sector, as well as **international cooperation in criminal matters**. The importance of **political will for the disruption of transnational crime networks** was underlined. The importance of both **upstream investigations** (starting with the trace of crime and then following the economic consequences), and **downstream** (“follow-the-money”) **investigations**, was discussed. Speakers called for **national leadership towards enhancing financial investigations** and recommended a comprehensive approach to criminal cases with a view to including financial investigations as an integral part of the case from the beginning.

**SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

**and**

**SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

While **the protection of the environment**, including with a view to **protecting water-based ecosystems and sustainable water management**, had been addressed by the Commission since a number of years, the **Kyoto Declaration** has provided a **new policy framework** addressing persistent challenges and new threats in the form of evolving types of crime that pose an obstacle to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular, crimes that affect the environment such as trafficking in hazardous wastes and other wastes and in precious metals, stone sand other minerals. **This has greatly increased the momentum for addressing crimes that affect the environment.**

In view of the new challenges faced in this field, and those exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission resolved to address them through a variety of measures, including the adoption of Resolutions, intergovernmental discussions, initiatives, events and official documentation containing recommendations on the way forward. Notable in this regard are, as already mentioned above, in particular **General Assembly Resolution 76/185**, entitled **“Preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment”**, and the ensuing **CCPCJ Expert Discussions on preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment** held from 14 to 16 February 2022.

During these discussions, many speakers stressed the important role of **preventing such crimes** and the harm associated with them, in the light of the fact that **reactive responses were too late** “for the tree that had been felled or the ecosystem that had been destroyed”. Some speakers highlighted that

joint efforts to prevent crimes that affect the environment were **integral to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, noting that **such crimes had direct and adverse consequences for biological diversity**. It was further mentioned by a number of speakers that such crimes were not only about ecosystems, but also about human rights and social rights, and contributed to the increased vulnerability of marginalized communities. Reference was also made to the **impact of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on crimes that affect the environment**, which included **limited access to physical markets and thriving online markets, as well as an increase in crimes such as poaching**. The Chair's Summary of the Expert Discussions contains a situation assessment and an overview of contemporary recommendations on preventing, combating and strengthening international cooperation to address crimes that affect the environment.<sup>6</sup>

#### **SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

Similarly to what is the case for crimes that affect the environment, the adoption of the ***Kyoto Declaration*** has also **reinforced commitment and political momentum for prison reform, including for prison infrastructure**.

During the **2022 Thematic Discussions on the Implementation of the Kyoto Declaration**, held in December 2022, many speakers referred to the urgent need to strengthen prison management and improve prison conditions; in particular, the **protection of prisoners against natural disasters and other challenges exacerbated by climate change** was mentioned as an important emerging challenge. In this context, several speakers referred to the duty of care that Member States have towards persons in detention. The importance of ensuring that **prison planning and architecture met the needs of prisoners** was also emphasized, including **by providing adequate infrastructure arrangements for different types of visits, for rehabilitative activities** such as work, education or vocational training, **and for specific types of populations, including elderly prisoners**.

#### **SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

The **prevention of crime, including urban crime**, has been at the heart of the Commission's work since its start. The ***Kyoto Declaration*** reflects the state-of-the-art international standards on tailor-made (urban) crime prevention strategies stating that they **should, inter alia, take into account local contexts, promote positive conflict resolution and prevent gang-related and urban crime (see above)**.

---

<sup>6</sup> E/CN.15/2022/CRP.2

During the first **thematic discussions on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration, held on 10-12 November 2021**, a number of speakers addressed the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including concerns that the COVID-19 crisis could lead to an increase of crimes, including various forms of trafficking, domestic and gender-based violence, and child online abuse and exploitation. They also highlighted the **need to engage communities in crime prevention**. They underlined that **combining focused deterrence with social service provision for at-risk youth** showed positive results. Many speakers shared **examples of participatory, inclusive crime prevention initiatives**. Further, speakers shared **examples of successful innovative case management and referral systems to therapeutic and educational institutions**, as well as literacy and therapy programmes in prisons, and programmes for the rehabilitation of offenders. The connection between safety and holistic crime prevention was highlighted by a number of speakers. During the **second round of thematic discussions, held from 5 to 7 December 2022** with a focus on advancing criminal justice systems, speakers emphasized the **important role played by communities, volunteers and local organizations in the reintegration and rehabilitation of offenders upon release from detention**.

### **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**

The *Kyoto Declaration* contains commitments to **enhance multidisciplinary efforts to prevent and combat crime through cooperation and coordination** between law enforcement and other criminal justice institutions, and other governmental sectors, as well as to support their work, **by engaging in and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships** with the private sector, civil society, academia and the scientific community, and with other relevant stakeholders as appropriate. As already referred to above, in the context of reducing reoffending, the Declaration promotes **multi-stakeholder partnerships** to reduce reoffending by fostering interagency coordination among relevant government authorities, such as employment and social welfare agencies and local governments, as well as **public-private partnerships** between those authorities and the community, including cooperating employers and community volunteers who support the long-term and social reintegration of offenders.

The *Kyoto Declaration* also contains **commitments to a broad range of forms of cooperation**, including by taking measures to, *inter alia*,

- Intensify concerted global efforts to prevent and combat crime by facilitating and strengthening **international cooperation in criminal matters**;
- Increase the **efficiency and effectiveness of central authorities and other competent authorities** responsible for facilitating international cooperation such as mutual legal assistance and extradition;

- Strengthen effective **international cooperation in criminal matters, including in the areas of extradition and mutual legal assistance**, while effectively addressing existing challenges and difficulties, especially with regard to requests, **and promoting good practices, facilitate the use of existing regional and international instruments**, including the Convention against Corruption and the Organized Crime Convention, as a legal basis for extradition and mutual legal assistance cooperation, **and implement and conclude, as necessary, agreements or arrangements to enhance international cooperation** in this regard; and
- Establish or strengthen **regional and cross-regional cooperation networks of law enforcement and other criminal justice practitioners** and facilitate the formal and informal exchange of information.

All Resolutions adopted by the Commission in 2021 called for the **strengthening of international cooperation and multistakeholder engagement in their respective areas** – whether to tackle wildlife crime, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, to strengthen crime prevention and criminal justice systems, integrate sport into youth crime prevention strategies, or reducing reoffending. In particular, *General Assembly Resolution 76/184, entitled “Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”*, referred to above, invites Member States to exchange, including through UNODC, information on national legislation, best practices and technical assistance and to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to the criminal justice system, including to its facilities, institutions and non-custodial settings, taking into account the contributions of relevant stakeholders such as civil society and academia with a view to better preparing for future similar challenges.

## VI. Key messages for inclusion into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit

The following key messages may be included into the Political Declaration of the September 2023 SDG Summit:

- We express grave concern about the ongoing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic for effective crime prevention and criminal justice, and **we reiterate our resolve to intensify concerted global efforts to prevent and combat crime** by promoting evidence-informed crime prevention measures and by making criminal justice systems more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive and responsive as well as by facilitating and strengthening international cooperation in criminal matters;
- We encourage States to **mainstream crime prevention and criminal justice into their COVID-19 Recovery Plans** with a view to accelerate recovery and ensure that no one is left behind, thereby retaining effective measures set up or strengthened during the pandemic, such

as the use of new technologies to ensure the continuity of crime prevention and support services, and remote access to justice;

- We call on all Member States to **allocate sufficient funding in national post-COVID-19 recovery budgets to strengthen crime prevention and criminal justice systems** and make them better prepared for future challenges; and
- We **recall our commitment to implement the *Kyoto Declaration on “Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*** adopted at the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2021, and encourage all Member States and all other interested stakeholders to invest in international dialogue, exchange of good practices and lessons learnt and **to actively participate in the thematic discussions on the Kyoto-Declaration follow-up held under the auspices of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.**