

## FINLAND

Madam President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Republic of Finland, I want to congratulate the Government of Japan and the Secretariat of the UNODC for organising the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Finland fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and its Member States, delivered by Commissioner Ylva Johansson.
2. The preparations have been carried out through during the ongoing pandemic. The circumstances have been most demanding. We are most grateful for your determined work, and we thank you for bringing us together for this great event, whether we are participating in person or online. The organisation of the Congress will give direction to the entire United Nations in how to maintain high standards even in difficult circumstances.
3. Finland is convinced that **sustainable development** and **the rule of law**, as set forth in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, are strongly interlinked. Strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights are cornerstones in achieving structural transformation for sustainable development, and in eradicating poverty. The rule of law is the basis for solid and inclusive societies, in which crime prevention and counteracting corruption are consistent.
4. Effective and responsible **crime prevention** enhances the quality of life of all citizens. It has long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system, as well as other social costs that result from crime. Crime prevention also enhances strong institutions because, as research

shows, **trust in public institutions** is an important element for a societal climate conducive to sustainable development.

5. To advance the safety and well-being of all citizens, we need an effective **criminal justice system**, including a smooth process of investigation, prosecution and adjudication. To this end, cooperation and communication between all authorities involved, is imperative. We need the entire criminal justice chain from criminal investigations to the enforcement of criminal sanctions, to work together. Throughout this, fundamental principles, such as that of the **right to a fair trial**, must always be upheld. In addition to criminal justice, **alternative conflict resolutions mechanisms** must be in place.
6. It is important that in the coming days we share experiences of what the COVID pandemic has taught us. The extensive use of digital tools is one of the key lessons we have learned in the past year. With **digitalisation and artificial intelligence**, we will be able to significantly improve the efficiency of criminal proceedings. At this Congress, we have a unique opportunity to discuss and share best practices also in this area.
7. Finland also firmly believes that sustainable development and crime prevention can be promoted efficiently only when **all of society participates** and works in one direction. We are confident that we can reach the best results through multi-stakeholder cooperation, including civil society. The most important work is done together.
8. Madam President, I want to close by expressing my warmest congratulations for the excellent preparations of the congress, and for the adoption of the Kyoto Declaration. The Declaration sends in a balanced way a global political message and direction to practitioners for the years to come.

