



**REMARKS BY H.E. MR. VOLKAN BOZKIR  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
Opening of the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime  
Prevention and Criminal Justice  
7 March 2021**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you, Madame President, and the Government of Japan, for inviting me to address the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. I also avail of this opportunity to congratulate you on your election.

Last year, the General Assembly moved to postpone this meeting, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the Government of Japan, the Executive Secretary of the Congress, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for their flexibility and innovation which has ensured business continuity and safety for all participants.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,



Since the 1965 Kyoto Crime Congress, we have advanced the global crime prevention and criminal justice agenda. The Crime Congresses, have been instrumental in the normative development of the rule of law. Indeed, the adoption of the Nelson Mandela Rules, on the Treatment of Prisoners, is a testament to the strength of international cooperation in this area.

However, criminal activity persists in every country, and is increasingly transcending borders. The draft Kyoto Declaration, submitted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for adoption today, seeks to address, the key challenges facing the people we serve.

Make no mistake. We will not achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, if we do not take action on the rule of law, crime prevention, and criminal justice.

The track to 2030 is already more difficult as we contend with the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. We cannot allow crime, to derail us further. In this Decade of Action, we need to improve governance, strengthen the rule of law, and promote effective and accountable institutions of criminal justice.



In an era of inequalities, poor governance, weak infrastructure and poverty in rapidly urbanizing areas, are leading to higher crime rates. Cities are facing serious security challenges, as criminal gangs and transnational organized crime groups prey, on vulnerable communities. Corruption, money-laundering, the trafficking of illicit firearms and terrorism, are undermining the rule of law and threatening peace and security, the primary objectives of the United Nations, as set out 75 years ago.

We must take collective action to eliminate urban crime. To this end, I will organize a high-level debate on this issue in April. This will allow us to discuss how we can build capacities to eradicate local vulnerabilities which have, for too long, been exploited by criminals. Furthermore, I will hold, the first ever United Nations General Assembly Special Session against Corruption, from the 2nd – 4th June.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2015, the world pledged:

- to leave no one behind;
- to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development;



- to make cities, inclusive, safe and resilient;
- to provide access to justice for all.

We cannot revoke this promise, at a time of crisis.

I urge you to prioritize the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice throughout your work.

I thank you.

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