

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS TO THE OPENING OF
THE 14TH UNITED NATIONS
CONGRESS ON CRIME
PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL
JUSTICE**

Kyoto, 7 March 2021

I am pleased to greet the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

For more than half a century, these Crime Congresses have served as the largest and most diverse gathering of governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, experts and scholars to seek solutions to shared challenges of crime prevention and criminal justice.

I congratulate Ms. Yoko Kamikawa, Minister of Justice of Japan, on being elected as President of the 14th Congress, and I commend Qatar, the host of the 13th Crime Congress, for your service.

I thank all participants for your work to advance multilateral solutions to crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law.

As the theme for the 14th Crime Congress attests, your efforts are integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

You meet in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused turmoil around the world.

Today, the disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis is presenting criminals with new opportunities to exploit the marginalized and at risk.

We face profound choices.

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to address the grave injustices and inequalities that have plagued societies for generations.

Inequality works against human development – for everyone.

We all suffer its consequences.

High levels of inequality are associated with economic instability, corruption, financial crises, increased crime and poor physical and mental health.

Crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law have a key role in renewing the social contract between states and their populations.

Respect for the rule of law underpins human rights and enables sustainable social, political, and economic development.

People need an inclusive justice system that works for all and is intolerant of discrimination.

Restoring confidence in institutions and strengthening the rule of law and access to justice is necessary to prevent corruption, deter illicit financial flows and protect vulnerable people from organized crime, violence, human trafficking, online exploitation and radicalization to terrorism.

The Kyoto Declaration, endorsed by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for adoption by this Congress, recognizes that crime has become increasingly transnational, organized and complex.

Criminals are exploiting new and emerging technologies to carry out their illicit activities, which include cybercrime.

Lawless behaviour in cyberspace has created a new domain for the propagation of crime.

The rule of law of the future must be built for and with technology to facilitate people's access to justice and to address these emerging trends, including the proliferation of misinformation and hate speech.

The agenda of the 14th Crime Congress targets the responses we need to strengthen crime prevention and criminal justice in the current crisis.

These include comprehensive crime prevention strategies to underpin social and economic development; integrated responses to shore up criminal justice systems, and revitalized international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime.

I thank all those who made this Congress possible under difficult circumstances.

Let us use this meeting to galvanize international cooperation to help pave the way to a world of justice and integrity.