

**Fourteenth United Nations Congress on the Crime Prevention and
Criminal Justice
Kyoto, Japan, 7-12 March 2021**

**Statement by Ms Maris Lauri, Minister of Justice,
Head of Delegation of the Republic of Estonia**

Mr Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Ms Executive Director,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Estonia aligns itself with the statement made by Commissioner Ylva Johansson on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.
2. This is an honour for me to address the fourteenth UN Crime Congress, the world's largest and most diverse gathering of policy-makers, practitioners, academia, intergovernmental organizations and civil society in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.
3. I would like to thank the Government of Japan and UNODC for organizing the Crime Congress during this difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Reducing reoffending is the key focus of criminal justice systems in many countries, including my own, and is one of the key topics of this congress. When setting an ambitious target of reducing reoffending it is hard to underestimate the importance of reliable data.
5. Goethe did not believe he could show humankind the passage to the better. I think that the role of the criminal justice is to show exactly this direction to offenders. For that we have to use innovative ways in supporting offenders in their aspirations for crime free future. This includes taking a deep look into functioning of existing probation systems. We need to rethink how we see punishments, and strive for more individual punishments and interventions. Reducing reoffending presupposes willingness from the society to allow redemption. Achieving this is not easy, but one should work on that.
6. I hope we will find time to discuss how to prevent new forms of technological crimes. As technology advances, crimes do the same, besides new types of crimes, they are more difficult to discover, and criminals are more inventive. Increasing use of artificial

intelligence means that we have to decide about responsibilities of producers, owners, users and other actors. There are lot of complicated issues related with technological crimes. Hence we must also make full use of available UN and other international instruments such as UNTOC and the Budapest Convention that facilitate international cooperation.

7. But most important, when building up effective crime prevention and criminal justice systems we must not overlook protection and promotion of the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms.
8. I look forward to fruitful discussions in Kyoto as well as online. Let me conclude by wishing to all of us the successful UN Crime Congress.

Thank you for your attention!