

**STATEMENT BY NIGERIA AT THE 14th UNITED NATIONS CRIME
CONGRESS HOLDING IN KYOTO FROM 7 TO 12 MARCH 2021**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Nigeria congratulates Madam President, the Members of the Congress Committee, and Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this Congress. Permit me, also, to express our appreciation to the Government of Japan for the hospitality extended to the Nigeria delegation.

2. Nigeria is pleased to endorse the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Africa Group.

Madam President

3. This Congress provides, another opportunity to take stock of our efforts at all levels in crime prevention and criminal justice, and the adoption of the Political Declaration, earlier, by consensus of Member States is a demonstration of unity of purpose in this regard. Nigeria is hopeful that our commitments expressed in the Declaration will spur greater efforts in crime prevention and criminal justice.

4. The Congress theme, which focuses on the rule of law and achievement of the 2030 Agenda is most appropriate, especially at a time when the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals has been found to contribute to advancing the rule of law. Nigeria, therefore, enjoins states to redouble their efforts and commitments to the 2030 Agenda.

5. Nigeria continues take measures to fulfill her obligations under the UNCAC and UNTOC and its Protocols, by improving domestic conditions through comprehensive Strategic Action Plan. The Action Plan guides national responses to issues of cross border crimes including corruption, money laundering, illicit financial flows, Trafficking in Persons, drugs, and terrorism.

Madam President

6. My delegation underscores the importance of International Cooperation in facilitating Mutual Legal Assistance for the tracing, freezing, confiscation and unconditional return of proceeds of corruption. It has become expedient to highlight the primacy of asset return at a time when financing for development continues to dwindle, while the COVID-19 has contributed to loss of revenue in many developing countries. There is, therefore, an urgent need for states to demonstrate political will in removing all barriers and obstacles to the full implementation of the provisions of UNCAC, particularly, Article 51 on Asset Recovery and return, including in cases that make use of settlements. Our major objective should be to narrow the gap between confiscated assets and actual assets returned to their legitimate owners.

7. Nigeria condemns terrorism in all its manifestations, including kidnapping and hostage taking by terrorists to raise funds, and call on states to strengthen cooperation at all levels to combat the threat posed by terrorism and to enhance timely information sharing, logistical support and capacity-building activities to affected states, including in combating the linkage between terrorism and corruption, illicit financial flows, cybercrime and trafficking in drugs.

8. Thank you.