

Check Against Delivery

14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice High-Level Segment

Video Statement, Pakistan Minister of Interior

7-9 March, 2021

Kyoto, Japan

Distinguished Guests

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by thanking Japan for hosting this Congress in these challenging times. We believe that this Conference will make an important contribution towards achieving the goal of sustainable development by advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and rule of law.

The threat posed by crime to our security and socio-economic development is real and potent. Crime continues to diversify and has assumed new forms and manifestations, owing to the interplay of globalization and advanced technology, among other factors. It has become more organized and more lucrative. In certain cases, gains of crime for organized syndicates exceeds the GDP of some countries.

Our criminal justice institutions, policies, and strategies have to be responsive to our specific needs and sensitive to our economic, social and cultural contexts. For effectively combating criminal activity, cooperation has to be based on respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States. We also need to build and strengthen states' capacities against organized crime and associated syndicates.

Problems such as drugs, corruption, white collar crime, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants as well as terrorism transcend national boundaries. Addressing them effectively is, therefore, a common and shared responsibility and demands a concerted global response.

The magnitude of illicit production, demand, and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances pose a serious threat to the health and welfare of our societies and undermine their economic, cultural and political foundations. The use of New Psychoactive Substances especially among the Youth needs special attention and efforts of this Congress.

Pakistan has been in the forefront of the anti-drug campaign. Our relentless efforts in countering the drug menace are manifested in Pakistan's poppy free status for the past many years. As a transit and destination country for drugs, Pakistan is trying to control the drug flow by fencing its western border.

Complex chains of hidden and fraudulent transactions, spanning multiple jurisdictions, move ill-gotten wealth and resources to safe havens across borders.

According to safe estimates around \$7 trillion of private wealth is hidden in safe havens and equivalent to 10 percent of world GDP may be held in offshore financial assets. Existence of such safe havens contributes to impunity for crime.

Tax avoidance and evasion, money-laundering, and corruption constitute the main activities that lead to these illicit financial flows.

This reduces available resources for investment in essential public goods and services, undermines the social contract, and weakens domestic financial systems and economic potential of developing countries.

There is an urgent need to enhance international cooperation for prevention of corruption and, in particular, for freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime and their return to countries of origin.

International community should focus on creating mechanisms for holding perpetrators and enablers of corruption accountable. Hurdles should be removed for access to information about the beneficial ownership of foreign companies by the affected governments. Above all, there is a need for demonstration of sincerity and strong political will for the removal of all barriers to the return of stolen assets to the countries of origin.

Pakistan, on its part, is making efforts to strengthen its legislative and implementation frameworks. The Anti-Money Laundering Act 2020 and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, 2020 have been passed recently in this regard. During the 8th Conference of State Parties to UNCAC, Pakistan sponsored a resolution titled “Promoting good practices in relation to the role of national parliaments and other legislative bodies in preventing and combating corruption in all its forms”. The unanimous adoption of the resolution reflects the credibility of the resolution in fighting the scourge of corruption.

Terrorism remains a common challenge for all of us. We will continue to cooperate and coordinate with the international community in addressing this challenge. There is a need at the international level to focus on the root causes of these trends.

Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants call for our continuous focus and attention. To counter human trafficking, Pakistan has taken a number of measures and has recently promulgated two acts, namely the

Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018

Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018

Our fight against this menace will be aided by exploring legal and safe avenues of migration.

Emerging forms of transnational organized crimes have taken several different forms including cybercrime and illicit trafficking in cultural property, minerals and natural resources. New international legal instruments may be considered to better coordinate our efforts against these emerging challenges.

Fighting organized crime is a shared responsibility. We are confident that deliberations over the next few days would result in increased sharing of information, greater exchange of experiences and a more coordinated, better equipped response in future.

My delegation wishes this UN Crime Congress complete success

Thank you