



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Pre-Recorded Video Statement

by

H.E. Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Vincent and the
Grenadines

At the

**Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal
Justice: Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice, and the Rule of Law -
Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda**

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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes this Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic, with its various challenges and dimensions, has underscored the importance of multilateral cooperation. In times of uncertainty, such as these, strong partnerships are critical for ensuring equity and justice for all.

Despite the challenges precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has worked, assiduously, at all levels - locally, within our schools and communities; nationally across all segments of society; and with our regional neighbours and multilateral partners to address the causes and drivers of crime; improve access to justice; and strengthen the rule of law.

To advance crime prevention, we have used evidence-based techniques and new technologies to strengthen our law enforcement capacities to tackle all forms of organised criminality, including the most sophisticated, proactively and comprehensively. The Financial Intelligence Unit in my country has taken the necessary steps to foster interagency cooperation and facilitate information sharing in real-time. This allows us to address systematically, the risk of money-laundering and that of terrorist financing.

International partnerships, including the technical assistance that we have sought and received from the World Bank and other regional and international agencies, ensure that we have adequate criminal and financial intelligence capacities, and are well-positioned to tackle terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Through these partnerships, personnel within governmental and law enforcement agencies, as well as those employed in the financial sector, have gained exposure to new and emerging forms of crime and preventive measures.

Additionally, major legislative reforms have enabled Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, despite our limited financial resources, to strengthen protections for consumers from unconscionable and fraudulent conduct, promote child justice, improve witness protection, and reduce the risk of reoffending through requisite social measures. Programmes have been developed on the ground to limit or prevent youth, girls and the vulnerable in the community from becoming involved in unlawful activities whilst funding the arts, business, sports, and culture as a positive means of engagement. Investment has also been made in prisoner reform and skills building, and drug addiction recovery programmes.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has taken great strides, despite our exceptional bundle of encumbrances - *both historical and contemporary* - to advance, meaningfully and pragmatically, a social and economic development agenda that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Indeed, as we endeavour to reconcile the difficult challenges and exciting opportunities of the current times, we have recommitted ourselves to building a modern, competitive, many-sided, post-colonial economy which is at once national, regional and global. Our approach to advancing crime prevention, criminal

justice, and the rule of law fits, harmoniously, within this strategic people-centred vision.

Thank You.