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UN CONGRESS MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS
IN FIELD OF PRISON LABOR

(The following was received from the UN Information Center, Geneva.)

The Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders today unanimously adopted recommendations on prison labor and started examination of recommendations on the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

Ernest Lamers of the Netherlands, Rapporteur of Section II, this morning stated that the recommendations on prison labor would provide means to prevent idleness, maintain order and build up savings through equitable remuneration. He stressed that the subject of prison labor had not been studied by four regional groups, as was the case for other points on the agenda, but only by the European group. However, the Section had agreed on general principles and had recommended that further study be given by regional groups to various questions involved.

The Congress then adopted nine general principles covering such matters as the need for prison labor and conditions for it; vocational training and vocational examination; precautions to ensure safety and protect health; equitable remuneration; and the possibility for prisoners to go out daily for work during the last few months prior to their release.

On a motion by Edward Cass of the United States, the Congress adopted an amendment by a vote of 15 to 4, with one abstention, which provides that preference should be given to the State use system to provide suitable employment for prisoners.

Paul Cornil of Belgium introduced an amendment providing that part of the remuneration should be used to indemnify victims of prisoners. This amendment was adopted by 20 to 15, with one abstention.

The Congress noted that the International Labor Organization had taken the preliminary step toward review of the Convention on Forced or Compulsory Labor.

Finally, the Congress recommended that further study be given by regional groups to the integration of prison labor with the national economy; methods of

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remuneration; appropriate prison labor programs for special categories of offenders; special problems for untried prisoners; measures to avoid a situation whereby a sentence constitutes a barrier to employment after liberation.

The whole document as amended was adopted unanimously. Thorsten Sellin of the United States, General Rapporteur, presented a draft resolution which was adopted by acclamation. Under this action, the Congress requests the Secretary-General to submit recommendations to the Social Commission of the Economic and Social Council; expresses the hope that the ECCSOC will endorse the general principles contained in these recommendations and recommend to governments that they take them as fully as possible into account in their practice and when considering legislative and administrative reform; calls attention in particular to proposals for further study and expresses the hope that the Social Commission will find it advisable to include these topics in the future work program of regional consultative groups organized in accordance with the resolution.

This afternoon the Congress began discussion on the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Paul Tappan of the US, Rapporteur of Section III, presented recommendations of the Section. He stated that the United Nations had recognized the significance of the problem and that juvenile delinquency is an increasingly difficult and widespread problem in different parts of the world.

Marc Ancel of France considered that the recommendations submitted were too categorical and too numerous. He felt the Section's document should not be considered as final but only as constituting a basis for further studies under the United Nations auspices.

Manuel Lopez-Rey, chief of the UN Section on Social Defense, stressed that the plenary should first study the document in accordance with the established procedure and that a resolution could be presented subsequently.

Discussion of the document followed. It states that because of wide variations in custom, law and philosophy of different countries, a limited and universal definition of juvenile delinquency was not feasible. The attention of the Section therefore had been directed primarily to pre-delinquency. The recommendations formulated referred to preventive action in the community, the family, the school, through social services including health services, through labor and other agencies.

The Congress will conclude its work tomorrow (Saturday) by studying recommendations on research relating to delinquency causes, prediction and prevention. It will then proceed to act on the recommendations as a whole as well as on the proposed resolution.

This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at CJSmithphd@comcast.net or Emil Wandzilak at emil.wandzilak@unodc.org.