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FIRST WORLDWIDE UN CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION AND
TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS OPENS IN GENEVA ON 22 AUGUST

A basic set of rules for the treatment of prisoners and ways of preventing juvenile delinquency are among the topics to be discussed at the first United Nations World Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, which will be held in Geneva from 22 August to 3 September.

Some 400 specialists are expected to attend this congress. Some of them will be scientists in the field, such as professors of criminology and research workers. Others will be practitioners, including prison wardens, juvenile court judges, physicians, social workers and many others.

Basis for the congress's discussion of juvenile delinquency will be a general report on the subject, prepared by the UN Secretariat, giving the conclusions reached at regional and international conferences in recent years. Another report will be received on practical programmes now in operation, prepared by the London Institute for the Treatment of Delinquency.

The congress will also consider a basic set of rules to guide countries in the treatment of prisoners, which have been revised by the UN Secretariat. The rules deal with such questions as accommodation, personal hygiene, food, exercise, medical services, discipline, contacts with the outside world, books, religion and individual treatment to rehabilitate prisoners.

Congress to draft Recommendations

In addition to juvenile delinquency and the treatment of prisoners, the congress will consider the selection and training of correctional personnel and the questions of prison labour and of open institutions. The latter have no physical precautions against escape and depend on a system of self-discipline.

Recommendations adopted by the congress will be sent to the UN Secretary-General and to the Social Commission of the Economic and Social Council. It is expected that some of the recommendations will be forwarded to governments by the Council.

Although this is the first world congress of its kind organised by the United Nations, 12 similar congresses were held in the past by the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission, which was founded in 1872. With the transfer of the latter's functions, library and archives to the United Nations in 1951, however, the UN General Assembly authorized the convening of similar congresses by the UN every five years.

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.