

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY
 ENGLISH (a)  
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 SPANISH

## FIRST UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS

ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

I. Background

The General Assembly of the United Nations provided, in resolution 415(V) of 1 December 1950, for the convening every five years by the United Nations of a World Congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders. The Congress is part of a broader structure, calling in addition for the appointment by Governments of individual correspondents with the United Nations Secretariat and for the organization of regional conferences, set up by the plan relating to the transfer to the United Nations of the functions of the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission. Thus, the Congress will be, from an historical point of view, the continuation of the Congresses previously organized by that Commission, the last of which was held at the Hague in August 1950.

II. Date and Place

The Congress, it is planned, will be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, from 22 August to 3 September 1955.

III. Membership

The Congress will group three categories of participants, namely:

- (1) Members officially appointed by their Governments, who are experts in the field of the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders and have a special knowledge of, or experience in, the question of the agenda;
- (2) Representatives of specialized agencies, and of non-governmental organizations having working relationships with the United Nations;
- (3) Individual participants having a direct interest in the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, namely:
  - (a) officials of ministries or departments concerned, police officials, officials of institutions for adult and juvenile delinquents;
  - (b) members of courts and tribunals;
  - (c) advocates who are members of the Bar;
  - (d) members of the teaching staff of universities;

(e) persons of high repute for their scientific work in the field of prevention of crime and treatment of offenders;

(f) delegates of governmental or private social agencies concerned with offenders or undertaking preventive work in this field;

(g) representatives of social welfare conferences and schools of social work; and

(h) persons or representatives of organizations invited by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The United Nations will bear the cost of the organization of the Congress, and there will be no registration fee. On the other hand, expenses of participants will be borne by the governments, organizations or individuals concerned.

#### IV. Programme

The agenda of the Congress will include the following items:

- (1) Standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners;
- (2) Selection and training of personnel;
- (3) Open institutions;
- (4) Prison labour;
- (5) Juvenile delinquency.

For the consideration of the items on its agenda, the Congress will be divided into three Sections, each of which will hold at least ten meetings. The work of the Sections will be allocated as follows:

Section I: Standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners;  
Selection and training of personnel.

Section II: Open institutions;  
Prison labour.

Section III: Juvenile delinquency.

Approximately six plenary meetings of the Congress are being planned, and the Sections will report to the plenary. The resolutions adopted by the Congress will be communicated to the Secretary-General and, if necessary, to the policy-making bodies of the United Nations.

The official languages of the Congress will be English, French and Spanish, and simultaneous interpretation from and into these three languages will be provided for all Section and plenary meetings.

In addition, the programme of the Congress will include certain related activities, such as visits to institutions, the showing of films, etc.

V. Documentation

The documentation to be submitted to the participants in the Congress will vary according to the question to be considered. It is intended that all documents will be distributed well in advance of the Congress, so as to allow for a thorough preparation of the discussions.

(1) Standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners

At the request of the United Nations, the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission revised in 1951, prior to its dissolution, the Standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners drafted by the Commission in 1933 and endorsed by the Assembly of the League of Nations in 1934. The revised draft was submitted to the Governments, and later to the United Nations regional conferences in the field of the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders held from 1952 to 1954 in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia and the Far East. The Congress will be called upon to complete and approve the draft standard rules, for subsequent action by the appropriate organs of the United Nations. For this purpose the Secretariat of the United Nations will lay before the Congress a report, giving a synthesis of the decisions taken with regard to the draft rules by the various regional conferences.

(2) Selection and training of personnel

This question was also considered by the United Nations regional conferences, and the Secretariat will present to the Congress a report giving a synthesis of the discussions as well as of the findings of those conferences. In addition, the Secretariat has secured the preparation of approximately twenty national reports from selected countries in various regions of the world, describing concrete examples of programmes for the selection and training of personnel in operation. The Congress will thus be presented with both a statement of the principles involved and factual information on this question.

(3) Open institutions

The pattern of documentation for the consideration of this question will be the same as described above for the question of the selection and training of personnel. In addition to the synthesis of the work of the regional conferences and in addition to national reports, however, two special reports will also be distributed to participants in the Congress, dealing with particular aspects of the question of open institutions. Those reports, prepared by consultants

at the request of the United Nations, will consider respectively the selection of offenders suitable for treatment in open institutions, and the place of the open institution in a penal system as well as the rôle of the community and its attitude towards open institutions.

(4) Prison labour

The question of prison labour will be considered by the Congress on the basis of a general report prepared, in co-operation with the International Labour Organisation, by a consultant retained for this purpose by the United Nations. Information relating to this question has been secured by means of a comprehensive international enquiry made with the co-operation of the correspondents of the Secretariat of the United Nations in the field of the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders and of the correspondents of the International Labour Office throughout the world, supplemented from other sources.

(5) Juvenile delinquency

The Congress will be presented with a general report on juvenile delinquency prepared by the Secretariat of the United Nations. This report will, inter alia, give a synthesis of the conclusions reached at regional and international conferences in recent years with particular reference to the prevention of juvenile delinquency. In addition, participants will receive a report on practical programmes now in operation directed toward the prevention of juvenile delinquency, prepared by the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency, in London, retained as a consultant for this purpose, as well as papers on particular aspects of the question submitted by the specialized agencies concerned, viz., the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organisation.

VI. Registration of individual participants

Individuals who wish to attend the Congress should register for that purpose by applying to the Director, Division of Social Welfare, United Nations, New York, U.S.A., giving full particulars with regard to their profession and their entitlement to participate (see section III (3) above), as well as a tentative indication of the section whose work they will probably be most interested to follow. They should also indicate with which of the working languages of the Congress (English, French or Spanish) they are most conversant.

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](mailto:CJSmithphd@comcast.net) or Emil Wandzilak at [emil.wandzilak@unodc.org](mailto:emil.wandzilak@unodc.org).