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FIRST UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION  
OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

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Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat presented to the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee of Experts on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders some principles which might be considered as a basis for the discussion of the question of the prevention of juvenile delinquency. The Committee endorsed these principles with the suggestion that they be taken up by the Congress as one of its points of departure in the consideration of the question of the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

The Secretariat, therefore, has the honour to transmit herewith a formulation of these principles which could be considered in conjunction with Part Five, Section II of its report on The Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (Document ST/SCA/Ser. M/7-8).

GENERAL PRINCIPLES WITH REGARD TO THE PREVENTION  
OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

- (1) For international purposes and in order to clarify the extent and nature of juvenile delinquency, it would be advisable that the meaning of this term should be restricted to juveniles having committed criminal offences.
- (2) As far as possible, statutory definitions of juvenile delinquency should not include acts which although reprehensible or showing a certain maladjustment do not constitute criminal offences.
- (3) For the purpose of formulating social policy it would seem advisable that a distinction should be made between juvenile offenders and those who present behaviour problems or who are neglected, dependent, orphaned etc.

- (4) The prediction of behaviour which is presumed to lead to delinquency should be based on individual observation of each case and not on the automatic application of standardized methods.
- (5) The services in charge of the detection of juvenile delinquency should be staffed by experienced and trained specialists.
- (6) The application to a juvenile of preventive treatment measures implying restriction of civil rights should be approved by an organ having a judicial element.
- (7) In the formulation of policies for the prevention of juvenile delinquency the following principles are suggested:
- (a) As far as possible, a distinction should be made between indirect and direct policies;
  - (b) Within the framework of the political structure of the country concerned, appropriate machinery should be created to advise in the formulation of policies; to supervise their application; to co-ordinate activities directed to the prevention of juvenile delinquency; to participate in the formulation of policies for economic and industrial improvements in order to prevent the disrupting effects of such improvements when they are not accompanied by parallel preventive policies or programmes;
  - (c) The formulation of policies should mainly take into account national or regional characteristics and needs and at the same time due consideration should be given to the methods, techniques and programmes adopted elsewhere. Methods and programmes may be transplanted only when they fit in with the above mentioned characteristics and needs.
  - (d) The needs of society and those of the minor should be combined in formulating preventive policies.
  - (e) Upper and lower age limits should be established in accordance with national characteristics.
  - (f) The creation of medical, mental health and social services for the benefit of minor and parents in order to prevent and detect juvenile delinquency should be part of any preventive policy.

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).