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

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I. BACKGROUND

1. By resolution 415 (V), the General Assembly of the United Nations provided for the convening every five years of an international congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders. The First Congress was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, in 1955; the Second Congress, with the Government of the United Kingdom acting as host, at Church House and Carlton House, London, in 1960; the Third Congress, with the Government of Sweden acting as host, at Folkets Hus, Stockholm, in 1965; and the Fourth Congress, with the Government of Japan acting as host, at the International Conference Hall, Kyoto, in 1970.
2. This information circular for the next Congress is being issued well in advance, as a result of past experience and in response to many requests for details of the arrangements, to permit charter flights and group travel plans to be made. At this stage not all the decisions have been taken and many arrangements are incomplete. It is hoped nevertheless that this account of the progress so far and the state of the planning for the Congress will prove useful to Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others who may need it.

II. DATE AND PLACE

3. The Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders will be held at The Four Seasons Hotel, Toronto, Canada, from 1 to 15 September 1975. The Government of Canada will act as host and has set up a small working group which will be the nucleus of its organizing committee. The responsible Minister, the Solicitor General of Canada, will be convening a national advisory committee in the early autumn.

III. MEMBERSHIP

4. It has been the established practice for the Congress to include three categories of participants, namely:

(a) Members officially appointed by their Governments who are experts in the field of social defence or are directly concerned with policies and programmes affecting the prevention and control of crime and delinquency (e.g. social planners, educational, social welfare, youth development and employment experts and policy-makers) and who have a special knowledge of and experience in the topics on the agenda;

(b) Representatives of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, of intergovernmental organizations and of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council interested in or concerned with social defence matters;

(c) Individual participants having a direct interest in the field of social defence (such as members of the teaching staffs of universities, of criminological or social research institutes and of national non-governmental organizations concerned with social defence matters; staff correctional establishments and institutions for juvenile delinquents; members of courts and Bar Associations; social workers; youth workers, education specialists, police officials).

5. This will also be the format of membership for the 1975 Congress, subject to the reservation, however, that the composition of the Congress may need to be modified if the demand for participation exceeds available resources.

6. The need to provide for adequate representation and participation by the increased official delegations of the Member States of the United Nations and the limitations of time and interpretation facilities means that it might prove difficult to extend Congress facilities to more than 2,000 members. This is double the Kyoto figure and probably represents the maximum number for a meaningful professional Congress along traditional lines. Moreover, it represents the maximum if the Congress were to be held at United Nations Headquarters - a limitation which might properly apply to Congresses held elsewhere.

7. A decision has not yet been made to limit the size of the Congress, but it is clear that any such limitation of participation would mainly affect the number of individuals seeking to attend. There would be no restriction on official government delegations or the representation of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

IV. COSTS OF PARTICIPATION

8. Costs of membership - i.e., travel and subsistence allowances - will be the responsibility of participating Governments for their delegations, of the

intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their representation and of individuals for their own participation. This again is in accordance with previous practice at these Congresses. This advance notice might prove helpful to Governments and organizations budgeting for the travel and subsistence funds necessary to ensure adequate representation at the Congress. The sizes of delegations vary but, to ensure full representation of all the interests in the subject of crime, delegations of from 10 to 30 have not been unusual.

V. PROGRAMME

9. It is still too early to provide full details of the programme. In the organization of the Congress, the Secretariat will be guided by the recommendations of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control as approved by the Economic and Social Council. The theme for the Congress has not yet been decided, but it is expected that there will be six sections and facilities for small group meetings. The programme of the Congress will also include visits to Canadian crime-prevention services and correctional institutions, film shows and an exhibition; post-Congress tours and visits to places of interest are to be arranged by the host Government.

10. The official languages of the Congress will be Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Further information on meeting services will be communicated in due course.

VI. DOCUMENTATION

11. The United Nations Secretariat will prepare a working paper on each of the substantive items on the agenda of the Congress. Those documents will set the stage for the discussions by giving the elements of the problem, indicating the preoccupation of various countries and defining the major issues involved. The specialized agencies and the non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may also prepare, at the invitation of the Secretariat, background documentation on specific questions pertaining to the subject matters under consideration. National statements prepared by Member States will also be invited in advance of the Congress.

12. The documentation will be mailed to participants at least six weeks in advance and there will be no distribution of documents during the Congress.

VII. REGISTRATION

13. Registration will commence in September 1974 and full details of the registration procedure will be given in future information circulars. Meanwhile any inquiries regarding the Congress, its subjects and the organization of the meetings should be addressed to:

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New York, N.Y. 10017.

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.