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

(It is kindly requested that this information note, prepared by the United Nations Secretariat, be given wide publicity by reproduction in part or in full in any language.)

1. An information circular on the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/CONF.56/INF.1) was issued on 5 June 1972. This second circular is intended to bring the information on Congress preparations up to date. At this stage, not all decisions have been taken and many arrangements are incomplete. However, it is hoped 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. It should also permit prospective participants to consider the possibilities of charter flights or group travel plans well in advance. In particular, it will enable views to be exchanged at an early date on the arrangements which are being made.

I. BACKGROUND

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 415 (V), provided for the convening every five years of an international congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders. The first was held at Geneva in 1955; the second in London, in 1960; the third, at Stockholm, in 1965; and the fourth, at Kyoto, in 1970.

II. DATE AND PLACE

3. The Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders will be held at Toronto, Canada from 1 to 15 September 1975. The Government of Canada will act as host and has appointed a co-ordinator for the Congress. With this appointment, a small working group was set up which has since become the nucleus of the Canadian Organizing Committee. The Solicitor General of Canada convened a National Advisory Committee in January 1973, and that meeting was attended by United Nations Secretariat officials who had detailed discussions with the Solicitor General. A proposal along the lines of the agreement concluded between the Government of Japan and the United Nations on the Fourth United Nations Congress has been drafted by the Government of Canada and submitted to the United Nations.

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; and

(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 of 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 that the composition of the Congress may need to be modified if the demand for participation exceeds available resources.

6. In negotiations with the Government of Canada, it was decided that a Congress of more than 2,000 participants would not be possible or desirable and the decision was later confirmed by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control. This will certainly mean a curtailment of participation by persons in category (c), and consideration is now being given to the formula which will be used. The limitation would obviously affect the countries from which most of the category (c) participants would come. Clearly it would be difficult to exclude persons travelling from distant territories to the Congress, and such persons might have to be given prior consideration over those from nearer countries already adequately represented in this category; but discussions on the precise criteria for limitation of category (c) are still being held.

IV. REGIONAL MEETINGS

7. The Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fifth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders was held at Tokyo, Japan, from 16 to 21 July 1973, at the Ministry of Justice. The Governments of Canada and Australia sent observers to this gathering. The Government of Brazil has agreed to host the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting scheduled to take place from 4 to 10 November 1973 at Brasilia. The Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa is expected to be held in 1974. An interregional seminar on the use

of research as a basis for social defence policy and planning (Copenhagen, Denmark, 20-31 August 1973) was also used to provide inputs for the Congress, and the Government of Denmark invited European Governments to send representatives to a special meeting held on 17 August to consider the Congress agenda.

8. Countries in developed regions are being encouraged to consider holding meetings at their own expense in preparation for the Congress. This kind of co-operation is necessary in view of the need to obtain world-wide studies of the problems while at the same time containing the budget for the United Nations and the host Government. The Government of Canada, for example, invited officers of the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control and the Secretariat to Canada in June 1973. At that time they participated in the programme of the biennial Canadian Congress of Criminology and Corrections. Special arrangements were made by the Canadian Criminology and Corrections Association for a review of the international aspects of crime prevention and control and particularly the agenda for the Fifth United Nations Congress.

V. PARTICIPATION COSTS

9. Membership costs - i.e., travel and subsistence allowance - will be the responsibility of participating Governments for their delegations, of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their representation and of individuals for their own participation. This, again, is in accordance with previous practice. Advance notice might prove helpful to Governments and organizations budgeting for the travel and subsistence funds necessary to ensure adequate representation at the Congress. It is important that delegations include representation of all the criminal justice and crime prevention services, i.e., police, prisons, courts, probation, parole, social welfare, forensic medicine, criminology, etc. There will be no restriction on the numbers of official delegates since these are essential to the success of the Congress. The sizes of delegations vary, but to ensure full representation of all the interests in the subject of crime, delegations composed of 10 to 30 persons have not been unusual. For the guidance of prospective participants, the current cost of single rooms at the Four Seasons-Sheraton Hotel ranges from \$US 20-29 and double rooms from \$US 27-35. This does not include food. The host Government has arranged with the Four Seasons-Sheraton Hotel that any changes in price will be announced well ahead and that, for the Congress, the rates charged will be fixed at the figures available in September 1974. Exact costs will therefore be calculable for one year before the Congress - i.e., at the time of registration.

VI. PROGRAMME

10. The theme for the Fifth United Nations Congress will be "Crime prevention and control - the challenge of the last quarter", and the agenda, as approved by the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control at its second session (E/CN.5/494) will be as follows:

- (1) Changes in forms and dimensions of criminality - transnational and national

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(2) Improvements in criminal legislation, law enforcement, judicial administration and correctional systems with a view to the prevention of crime and the treatment of the offender in the community

(3) The emerging roles of the police and other law enforcement agencies, with special reference to changing expectations and minimum standards of performance

(4) The treatment of offenders in custody, with special reference to the implementation of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted by the United Nations

(5) Economic and social consequences of crime: new challenges for research and planning.

11. These five items provide for four separate Section meetings and allow the first subject on the agenda to be discussed in a continuing plenary session which will also be the forum for lectures and special addresses.

12. The Congress programme 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.

13. The host country has before it a proposal for an international prison arts exhibition. The proposal comes from the Canadian Prison Arts Foundation, which has just completed its fourth annual exhibition of prison arts in Canada. The concept of prison arts is based on promoting creativity within the institutions. It has been suggested that the Member States of the United Nations could participate in the selection of prison art within their own countries. Each participating country would select a limited number of pieces of visual art that have been judged worthy of exhibiting. These pieces would be sent to Canada for exhibition at the time of the Congress and, later, on a touring exhibit of Canada. Suitable arrangements would be made for the security of the exhibits and their return or disposal, as instructed by the owner. Considerations to be borne in mind in the organizing of such an exhibition are (a) the effect on countries which may not be in a position to participate; (b) the feasibility of selecting entries without arousing criticism; (c) the problem of determining the limitation on the size and types of exhibits. The United Nations and the host Government feel that a decision on an exhibition of this kind must be made in full consultation with participating Governments. They need, therefore, the reactions of Member States to this proposal as soon as possible, since a great deal of time would be required to implement such a proposal. Since such an exhibition would be primarily the concern of the host Government, comments might be sent directly to

Office of the Canadian Co-ordinator
Fifth United Nations Congress on the
Prevention of Crime and the Treatment
of Offenders
Post Office Box 1975, Station B
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5
Canada.

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

VII. DOCUMENTATION

15. The United Nations Secretariat will prepare a working paper on each of the substantive items on the Congress agenda. Those documents will set the stage for discussions by giving the elements of the problem, indicating the preoccupation of various countries and defining the major issues involved. Specialized agencies and 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 matter under consideration. National statements prepared by Member States will be invited in advance of the Congress.

16. Documentation will be mailed to participants at least six weeks beforehand and there will be no distribution of documents during the Congress.

VIII. "SMALL GROUP" MEETINGS

17. Many different groups of professional and scientific interests need to be provided for by the Congress. Already applications are being received from organizations which would like to arrange meetings at the time of the Congress. This creates a problem, since the limitation of Congress membership is related to the organization, facilities and accommodation, and not all those attending such meetings could gain physical admission to the Congress - quite apart from the question of qualifying for official membership. The tendency, therefore, has been to discourage meetings which would arouse expectations of participation which cannot be fulfilled, and the United Nations would appreciate consultation with any groups having such plans long before they near completion. In general, it would be unwise to plan for meetings unless all participants have been able to secure registration for Congress membership.

18. At Kyoto, in 1970, a consultant was made available to organize such group meetings and the host Government provided rooms. It was impossible, however, to provide interpretation, and this is still the position for 1975. All available interpreters will be fully engaged in servicing the official meetings and will be unable to service side meetings of any kind. This leaves organizers with the choice either of holding common-language group meetings or of managing with such consecutive interpretation as they can provide themselves. However, the matter is under consideration by the United Nations and the host Government, and if it proves possible that extra help can be given, it will be announced in the next circular. An effort is being made to provide for a scientific group to meet so that research interests will have a special place. Once again, it is clear that interpretation facilities will not be available, but the host Government may consider the possibility of providing English/French interpretation.

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IX. REGISTRATION AND FURTHER INFORMATION

19. 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

Executive Secretary for the Fifth United Nations
Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the
Treatment of Offenders
United Nations
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.