

Stop Crime

The Ninth United Nations Congress on
the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

The United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is the major functional body of the United Nations providing policy guidance in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Established by the Economic and Social Council in 1992 to replace the now defunct Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, the 40-member body is charged with developing, monitoring and reviewing the United Nations programme on crime prevention and mobilizing support for it among Member States. It is also expected to coordinate the activities of interregional and regional institutes on crime prevention and criminal justice.

The Commission has established as its priority themes international action to combat national and transnational crime, including organized crime; economic crime, including money laundering; the role of criminal law in the protection of the environment; crime prevention in urban areas, including juvenile and violent criminality; and improving the efficiency and fairness of criminal justice administration systems. Aspects of those themes are selected for consideration at each session.

Among the tasks assigned to the Commission is to make preparations for the United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which are held every five years. Eight have been held so far, and a ninth will take place in Cairo, Egypt, from 29 April to 8 May 1995.

The Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Secretariat is the central repository in the United Nations system of technical expertise in matters of crime prevention, criminal justice, criminal law reform and major criminological concern. It prepares studies and reports for the quinquennial United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders as well as to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Chief of the Crime Branch is Eduardo Vetere, an Italian national, who is also secretary of the Commission.

The Branch formulates policy options and fosters standard-setting and the application of United Nations norms and instruments in the crime control field. It collects and analyses statistics, and provides technical assistance to Member States and regional institutes for crime prevention and control. It prepares periodic country-by-country surveys of crime trends and crime prevention and criminal justice policies and has established a United Nations Criminal Justice Information Network on which Member States and their agencies can draw via Internet.

Among its field activities, the Branch has provided technical assistance and advisory services in connection with United Nations missions in Cambodia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, including the development of a training course for civilian police components of peace-keeping operations. It prepared and published a handbook on



criminal justice, human rights and humanitarian law standards for United Nations peace-keeping police supervisors and contributed to the re-establishment of the police and criminal justice system in Cambodia and Somalia.

In its substantive work, the Branch works closely with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (based in Rome), as well as with the following United

Nations-affiliated institutes: Regional Institutes for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Africa (Kampala), Asia and the Far East (Tokyo) and Latin America (San José), and the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (Helsinki). It also works with associated institutes in Vancouver, British Columbia; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Woden, Australia; and Siracusa, Italy.

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.