

## **“We Must Focus on Reducing Vulnerabilities”**

SALVADOR, 12 April (UN Information Service) – The following is the text of the message from the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Antonio Maria Costa, to the 12<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, delivered by John Sandage, Officer-in-Charge, Division for Treaty Affairs.

I would like to add a few words from the perspective of UNODC (Mr. Costa is on mission in Mexico, and will be joining us for the high-level segment).

This Congress is part of a busy calendar of events in 2010 that provides an unprecedented opportunity for us to strengthen crime prevention and criminal justice. The full agenda of eight substantive items and five workshops will enable us to focus on making the criminal justice response ‘fit for purpose’.

First, this Congress enables us to take stock of the world crime situation, and to assess our preparedness to deal with it – particularly emerging threats. Frankly, at the moment the picture is rather blurry due to a shortage of information and analysis. UNODC is trying to sharpen the focus, for example by preparing a transnational organized crime threat assessment.

This meeting also provides an opportunity to start a systematic review of all crime-related standards and norms – to make sure that we have the legal basis to achieve security and justice for all.

Furthermore, we must make sure that the UN guidelines on crime prevention work.

In particular, we must focus on reducing vulnerability: for example among individuals, like women, children, youth and migrants; among states, particularly where governance is weak; and among sectors, like the internet and the financial sector, that are being exploited by criminals. We must also identify, and cut, the links between drugs, crime and terrorism.

From Salvador, we will go to Vienna. The Crime Commission next month will be the first chance to drive forward the strategies outlined in the Salvador Declaration.

In June, there will be a High Level Meeting of the General Assembly in New York to foster political momentum in support of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Please ensure that your Ministers attend this event. For those States that are not yet a party, please come with instruments of ratification for deposit at the special treaty event. What better way to mark the 10th anniversary of the Palermo Convention.

In October, we look forward to the Conference of Parties of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Let’s use that occasion to make better use of the world’s foremost crime-fighting treaty and its three Protocols, including by agreeing on a mechanism to review its implementation. Such a mechanism would enable us to measure progress, and identify needs for technical assistance. We did it in Doha for the anti-corruption Convention. We can do it in Vienna for the Palermo Convention.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come a long way to get to Salvador – not just in terms of distance, but in terms of the criminal justice reforms that have been made over the past decade. And yet, crime is a threat to security, justice and development like never before. Therefore, this Congress comes at an important moment – one that we must seize in order to prevent crime and build justice in a changing world.

On behalf of UNODC, I would like to thank the Government of Brazil for its generosity in hosting us and its hard work in preparing this Congress. I would also like to thank all participants who have

come here to make our cities and states – indeed our world – a safer place. Not least a big welcome to all representatives of civil society who have turned out in force: over 80 ancillary meetings are planned.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Crime Congresses are remembered for the impulse that they provide in tackling specific problems: like the First Congress in 1955 that adopted the Standard Minimum Rules of the Treatment of Prisoners, or the 10th Congress that set the stage for the UN Convention against Corruption.

This week, it is up to you all to define the legacy of Salvador. Let us therefore take steps that will address the real crime and justice challenges of our time.

I wish you all a productive meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

For further information:

To download the press kit and other information (also in Portuguese), visit:  
[www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/events/2010/12th-crime-congress.html](http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/events/2010/12th-crime-congress.html)  
[www.un.org/en/conf/crimecongress2010/](http://www.un.org/en/conf/crimecongress2010/)

**For live webcast: [www.un.org/webcast/crime2010](http://www.un.org/webcast/crime2010)**