

Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention
of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
Vienna, 10 - 17 April 2000

Mr. President,

On behalf of the African Group, I would like to congratulate you for your election as President of the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. Africa is very proud of you and assure you of its total cooperation and its full support for the success of this present Congress. I would like also to congratulate the other Members of the Bureau.

The African group wishes also to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Pino Arlacchi, the Secretary General of the Congress and his Staff for the expertise they have put into the preparation for this Congress.

Mr. President,

The Tenth Congress is being held at a time when the scope of crime is on the increase. We are resolute and unified in our resistance to crime in all its forms and manifestations. We also believe that through our deliberations we will construct instruments that will empower us in the fight against crime and demonstrated that we will not be coerced into accepting its debilitating effects on our societies. We should clearly indicate our needs to each other and encapsulate solutions in the results of this Congress. In view of this, the African Group gives paramount importance to the implementation of the recommendations emanated from the African regional preparatory meeting held in Kampala in 1998.

The economic and social difficulties that African countries are facing, increased by the negative effects of globalisation, have brought transnational organised crimes in various dimensions that challenge and continue to challenge the very existence of man. However, experience has shown that

through concerted international efforts, the management of crime can be reduced or eliminated. For these reasons the African Group fully supports the theme of this Tenth Congress.

Mr. President,

Crime is a global phenomenon. It has been with man since creation and history has revealed that efforts exerted by man aimed at fighting crime alone have not been an easy task. It therefore, needs solution. We believe that international co-operation is the only way of combating transnational organised crime. In this regard, the African Group supports the quinquennial Congresses of United Nations on the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders. Indeed, these fora provide significant opportunities for a periodic exchange of information, experiences and expertise in the field of crime prevention. As a result of the internationalization of criminal activities and their linkages with the global economy and advanced technologies, special attention should be given to the situation in the developing countries.

The world, particularly Africa is beleaguered by terrorism. Efforts to combat terrorist crimes should be enhanced, recognizing the severe threat that they pose to Human Rights and the stability of countries. Steps should be taken to identify obstacles to progress in international co-operation to eliminate the financial sources of terrorist activities. In this regard, the last Summit of the Organization of African Unity, held in Algiers, in July 1999, adopted a convention with the object of combating terrorism in all its forms. We, therefore, strongly support the initiatives to convene an international conference on terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations.

Money laundering and corruption pose also challenges to our national economies, security and the well being of our societies. Developing countries should be assisted to combat corporate crimes committed mostly by organised crime syndicates based in developed countries.

Mr. President,

Regarding the prevention of the proliferation of firearms which continue to pose serious problems to disarmament and crime prevention in our continent,

the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention Programmes should follow up the work of drafting the new instruments on the prevention, control, trafficking and manufacturing of firearms.

On the issue of juvenile crime, measures should be taken to address the increasing number of children and minors involved in conflict and wars and to provide adequate technical assistance to deal with those problems.

For effective crime prevention which can keep pace with new development, Africans recommend the involvement of effective community participation and the development of initiatives that will be culturally sensitive.

Mr. President,

Stable and genuine democracies and strong criminal justice system are prerequisites for promoting and strengthening the rule of law. In this respect, the African Group call for States to be provided with

required technical assistance to strengthen its democratic institutions in order to promote the rule of law.

The full implementation of the newly drafted Convention against transnational organized crime and its protocols depends on international co-operation. In view of this, the African Group believes that in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century on crime and justice and achieve the goals which we are going to set for ourselves in the Vienna Declaration, tangible technical assistance is needed to strengthen democratic institutions and community participation. These could be realized by establishing a special fund to assist developing countries in fulfilling their obligations and commitments under the aforementioned international instruments.

Africa also calls on International Community, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the United Nations to provide financial and other required support to African Institute for the Prevention of Crime to enhance its position as regional focal point and to enable it undertake policy oriented research programmes.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, given the added mandate to the Center for Crime Prevention and Drug Control, the African group would appeal to the donor community to continue its initiatives of support for the Centre. We are hopeful that at the end of this Congress the International Community would have a clear vision on how to tackle the menace of Crime.

On a final note, let me express the Group's full support to the statement of the Group of 77 and China.

Thank you, Mr. President.