

Minister Kari Häkämies
Minister of the Interior, Finland

**STATEMENT AT THE TENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS FOR THE PREVENTION OF
CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS** Vienna, 10-17 April 2000

Mr President,
Distinguished participants

The organization of the Tenth United Nations Congress in the year 2000 is the proper time for introspection.

I would like to address briefly three issues in which Finland has a special interest, the development of crime prevention programmes, work on the prevention of violence against women, and our response to organized crime. All three are examples of issues which Finland addressed during its recent Presidency of the European Union, and which were reflected in the deliberations of the Tampere European Council in October, and of the Helsinki European Council in December 1999. I would also like to take the occasion of this Tenth Congress to address the issue of the fundamental issue of the role of the United Nations in providing a structure for international co-operation.

The development of crime prevention programmes

The connection between crime and crime control is complex. Over the past few decades, the trend seems to be towards a comprehensive multi-strategic approach. Such an approach combines situational crime prevention with measures directed at individual development, especially early intervention that is targeted at factors that increase the risk of criminality. The approach also emphasises local inter-agency co-operation, including problem-oriented community policing. Finland has developed a crime prevention policy based on these ideas. Our experiences have been positive.

One year ago, Finland adopted a National Crime Prevention Programme. The rationale of the programme is that not only the State but also municipalities, the business community, the Church, civic organisations and even private individuals should take into consideration the impact that their actions may have on crime. In principle, the programme covers all types of criminality. However, particular attention is to be directed against offences that victimise citizens in their every-day environment and that cause a sense of insecurity. The programme seeks to decrease opportunities for crime, for example by making the commission of crime more difficult or less profitable. The programme also seeks to target criminogenic risk factors connected with childhood, to support young persons in danger of marginalisation, and to interrupt criminal careers that have already begun.

This programme supplements other programmes in Finland that have a more specific target, such as the national *Strategy for the Prevention of Economic Crime, 1999 to 2001* and the recently adopted *National Drug Policy Programme*. In this respect, I would like to note that Finland has been one of the first countries to seek to apply the situational crime prevention approach to the prevention of economic crime.

Violence against women

One matter of public concern around the world is violence against women. Finland's sexual equality programme, called "From Beijing to Finland", approved by the Council of State in 1997, promotes projects seeking to respond to this pervasive problem. In accordance with the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health launched a five-year national "Programme for the Prevention of Prostitution and Violence against Women" in 1998. The programme aims at addressing the vast issues related to violence against women through working for the prevention of violence as well as through influencing attitudes against violence. The programme has set up regional, multi-professional teams around Finland, with the aim to plan and co-ordinate new models of social work for both victims and perpetrators of violence in their areas. The programme launched a media campaign on violence against women and promotes the development of teaching and training materials for the police, social and health workers and other professionals who come into contact with both victims and perpetrators of violence. The programme is also involved in researching, gathering information and doing follow-up in the field of the commercial sex industry.

One example of the network-building activities of the project are the Finnish-based STOP projects, which are partly financed by the European Commission. The activities started with a project for monitoring, analysing and combating trafficking in women and children around the Baltic Sea. The activities are continuing with the present project, which focuses on minors in the sex trade. The final result of this five-year programme on the prevention of prostitution and violence against women will be a national programme against violence against women.

Finland has also been one of the few countries to carry out a national survey specifically addressing violence against women. The survey has been based on a sample (5000 women) that is considerably larger than what is generally used in victim surveys, and has sought to go further into experiences with violence and into the related factors. As has also been the case in the other countries that have focused their attention on this issue, the results show quite clearly the wide extent of this problem. The national survey has thus helped us realise the extent of the problem of violence against women, and has made the extent of violence against women more visible. Now we are using the results of the survey to attempt to identify strategies that would come to grips with the many aspects of the issue of violence against women.

Organized crime

During Finland's recent Presidency of the European Union, the Tampere European Council had as one of its main themes transborder crime. The European Council identified a number of measures that should be taken in this respect. Particular attention was paid to the control of on-shore and off-shore financial centres, and to the prevention and control of money laundering. Many other important themes were touched upon, including mutual recognition of decisions and judgments, the establishment of joint investigation teams, the strengthening of the role of Europol, and the establishment of a European Police College and of a new body, EUROJUST. The Helsinki European Council at the end of 1999 called, inter alia, for a new strategy for preventing and controlling organized crime. Such a strategy was introduced by Finland, and it is my pleasure to report that it was approved by the European Council on 27 March 2000.

The role of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme

On the occasion of the Tenth Congress, it would be very much in order to congratulate the United Nations on its work in promoting international co-operation in the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders. We have already heard many eloquent and, may I say, well-earned words of praise to the United Nations along these lines. I certainly join in the congratulations.

I would like to note that the decision to have just one Declaration emanating from this Tenth United Nations Congress instead of a number of different resolutions has further increased the amount of time which can be devoted to the exchange of information and experience.

Finland actively supports the current work on the drafting of a United Nations convention against transnational organized crime and its protocols. We believe that the Convention and protocols will be a major contribution to international cooperation in dealing with organised crime in general, and with trafficking in firearms and persons, as well as the smuggling of migrants. These are undeniably serious problems that deserve the attention of the world community, as represented by the United Nations.

However - and this is a central point - I would like to recall in this connection the clear position of the United Nations Commission, as confirmed by the Economic and Social Council for example in 1998, that a balance should be maintained in the work of the United Nations programme. Organised crime is a serious problem world-wide, but the reality is that member states around the world are confronting other crime and criminal justice problems as well, and are turning to the United Nations for assistance.

Mr President and distinguished participants, when we look at the challenges of the twentyfirst century, we should not look only beyond our borders. The challenges - and the proper response to these challenges - can also be found in the streets and in the homes in our own communities. By working together, we can plan the best way forward into the new century.