

**X UN Congress on Crime Prevention
at Vienna (April 10-17, 2000)
Statement by India in the Plenary
April 15, 2000**

Honourable President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

As the leader of the Indian delegation, I am privileged this afternoon to speak on behalf of my country. At the outset, I would like to convey our gratitude to the President and the Secretary General of this Congress for providing the right ambience which has enabled all of us to give our best for ensuring that this Congress is a roaring success.

2. I look upon this Congress and its Declaration as a watershed in the long and painful history of the fight against crime, especially of the transnational organized variety. It is difficult to exaggerate the pernicious impact of such crime on modern civilization. It is equally difficult to ignore the linkages involved in this phenomenon or its dimensions. Deliberations of this Congress confirm that there is hardly a country which is not conscious of this serious situation. I would like to be categorical in saying that India is second to none in this. We pledge ourselves wholeheartedly to this international crusade against transnational organized crime. We have initiated various measures including new legislation that would articulate our unequivocal stand. Constraints of time do not unfortunately permit me to list all these measures. Suffice it to say that my Government is extremely sensitive to its responsibilities to strengthen the international community's resolve to contain crime, in whatever form it exists.

3. International organized crime and the terrorism that plagues the various parts of the world are intertwined. It is our knowledge that crime, in many cases, is perpetuated actually to fund terrorist activities and aims at undermining the internal security of countries and destabilizing civil social order. Further, international organized crime cannot be viewed narrowly as an individual act of breach of law. It is an all-encompassing activity intended to create disorder and curtail the economic development of people in countries which are still in transition. It is, therefore, necessary to appreciate the linkages between such crime and its objectives. I would urge that we bring as broad a perspective as possible on the analysis of crime in the modern setting.

4. In India, the kind of situations we have faced in the last 10 years or so are all well-known. We have faced terrorism and extremism in their worst forms. We know it for certain that the sustenance of this scourge was from funds generalized through criminal activities both within and outside the country.

5. Many of my earlier speakers spoke of the nexus between drug smugglers and anti-national and extremist elements. It is appropriate that our Declaration clearly emphasizes this linkage and the need to combat terrorism from a broad plane.

6. I am happy to inform this august assembly that, in order to curb the menace of ill-gotten wealth and consequent money laundering, a separate legislation is in the process of enactment. We hope to get the Act in place at the earliest.

7. We have a comprehensive anti-corruption Act which has worked satisfactorily. In this connection, I have to refer to our government's resolve to fight corruption and the recent significant statement of our beloved Prime Minister declaring "zero tolerance" of corruption.

8. Information technology is profoundly impacting us each day. The future is going to be unthinkable without the significant solutions offered by computers. If they provide many opportunities, they do also pose a few threats. These threats are in the form of a new generation of high-tech crimes which need to be effectively countered

9. With a strong human-ware and a sound infrastructure, India has taken several initiatives. A Bill called the **Information Technology Act** has been placed before our Parliament in an effort to address the legal requirements to combat computer-related crimes and the crimes on the network. Commanding a niche position globally in the area of software development, we have directed our efforts to find adequate solutions. A planned step to ensure capacity building to deal with such crimes effectively would eventually result in our ability to extend necessary technical assistance to countries that require it.

10. As the world is opening up, there is a constant movement of men and material between countries. Communication has become far too easy. No country can, therefore, afford to be complacent.

11. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that India has always believed in the spirit of cooperation and consensus in all matters. We look forward to the Vienna Declaration and its effective implementation in due course so that we can have a crime-free society and the efforts of the world community are wholeheartedly focused on economic development and progress. In sum, we are determined to make the world a friendlier place to live and a safer place for our children and grandchildren...