

Mr. Chairman

On taking the floor, on behalf of the Italian Government, it gives me great pleasure to express my warm greeting to you - who are so effectively chairing this high level Segment and also to the President of this Congress, Mr. Pennuel Maduna - South Africa's Minister of Justice - who is bringing his wide experience, together with the one of all the other members of the General Committee, towards a positive outcome of the Congress' works.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation for Mr Pino Arlacchi's commitment and decisive action over the years as Executive Director of the ODCCP, which enabled the organisation to reach its present high level of efficiency .

Mr. Chairman

The Italian Government would particularly like to stress its satisfaction for the Declaration the Congress is going to adopt.

We welcome the Congress' effort in working out an instrument that not only declares that the States have a common political will and reinforces their ability to co-operate, but also underlines priorities the United Nation's Programme shall concentrate upon for the coming years.

Italy is therefore convinced that the Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the other institutions involved in this field, will enforce the Declaration's ideas and will take the necessary organisational and operative measures, including time setting to put them in practice.

The Italian Government appreciates that the Declaration, while respecting the balance among the various themes of the Crime Programme, underlines medium term priorities. We believe that, on the basis of the Declaration, United

Nations' action should aim at developing and reinforcing the crime prevention and criminal justice systems of States, as well as developing mutual co-operation between States in the fight against crime, in particular transnational crime.

Mr. Chairman

Italy believes that among our practical priorities the most immediate one should be the successful conclusion, by the end of this year, of the negotiations on the Convention on Transnational Organised Crime. As we all know, this Convention should be signed during the forthcoming Palermo Conference. As a matter of fact all the Italian Government departments are actively contributing to the organisation of this Conference since they realise that the Convention will certainly prove to be a key tool for international co-operation in the fight against crime.

The Convention will then need to be completed by the protocols presently under negotiations, which we regard as crucial instruments for an effective and common fight against specific and rising forms of transnational crime.

I would like to refer, for instance, to the Draft Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, to which Italy attaches particular importance.

The wide consensus obtained by the works on this Protocol reflects the great attention clearly given to the issue by the international community. Trafficking in persons is a particularly hideous form of trafficking. It involves enormous masses of people that are at the same time the victims of the crime and the means for committing it.

Nevertheless, we believe that the above instruments are not exhaustive of the international legal tools necessary to fight widespread international crime. The Italian Government believes that a world convention on corruption would be

necessary, and thus expresses the hope that the drafting of it may start after the conclusion of the present Convention and of its three protocols.

Mister Chairman,

In its present draft, the Convention against transnational organised crime - in the Italian Government's view, contains a well-balanced mix of measures for international judicial co-operation, law-enforcement agency co-operation, and measures aiming at reinforcing the national criminal legal systems, as, for example, those making mandatory the criminalisation of a number of acts.

As to the first kind of measures, the Italian Government attaches great importance to the provisions concerning extradition, mutual assistance and co-operation in the field of witness protection. The provisions on these points will help in establishing effective co-operation schemes applicable on a large scale.

It is also important for the Convention and the Protocols to create a legal basis for widespread experience-sharing that will enable countries to take advantage of the legal patterns and national practices which have proved factually effective, within a framework respectful of national legal systems.

I wish to express the Italian Government's satisfaction for the emphasis given to the technical assistance aspects in the Convention present draft and also for the approach taken in this regard by the ODCCP

In fact, the ODCCP's Global Programmes on fight against corruption, organised crime, traffic in human being and on money-laundering, provide appropriate schemes within which assistance projects can be developed in relation to the crimes the Convention and the Protocols deal with.

Then, the implementation of the Convention requires a constant monitoring of the effectiveness of its provisions as well as a constant assessment of the relevant criminal phenomena.

To promote this goal, the Italian Government is ready to support and organise, as a follow-up to the Palermo Conference, international initiatives.

This commitment completes the Italian constant and strong financial support to the Drug Control Programme.

Mr. Chairman,

The Italian Government also aims at contributing substantially to everyday justice issues so that the community's resources be further used and increased.

In this connection, and in line with the Resolution Italy tabled on the subject at the last session of the Commission, the Italian delegation is submitting to the Congress a written report on its domestic experience on criminal mediation and restorative justice. We hope that the report will offer practical working suggestions for sharing practices and developing standards.

Mr. Chairman,

on behalf of the Italian Government I reaffirm our wish that this Congress will consolidate the International community's support for the global approach to crime prevention that I have called for repeatedly, and thus confirm our continuing commitment to achieve this objective.

Vienna, 15 April 2000