

Japan

**The Tenth United Nations Congress
on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders**

Statement of

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(check against delivery)

Thank you Mr President.

First of all I would like to echo my previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr President, for your election to the Presidency of the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. My delegation is very pleased to have this wonderful opportunity to work under your leadership during this important meeting.

I also thank the Secretariat for preparing the working paper A/CONF. 187/5, which illustrates the current state of crime and criminal justice worldwide and which will aid our discussion on this topic today and tomorrow.,

Now I would like to present, on behalf of the Japanese delegation, a brief overview of the state of crime in Japan.

To start with the overall picture of crime trends in Japan, the number of cases reported on Penal Code Offences such as murder, theft, robbery, fraud, extortion, forgery etc. excluding traffic accident offences, was about two million in 1998. Apart from the Penal Code offences, there are also other categories of crimes laid down by special laws, such as drug or firearms related offences, immigration offences, offences related to prostitution and so forth. In 1998, public prosecutors offices throughout Japan received more than 80,000 cases related to these special law offences. I would like to point out that the number of offences is in general terms on the increase in recent years.

When we look at the crime situation in general, there are several aspects which merit attention. First, accelerated involvement of organized criminal groups; second, the increase of crimes involving violence; third, computer related crimes, and last but not least, crimes involving public officials.

Recently, criminal activities involving organized criminal groups have become more vigorous in Japan. This is especially the case for drug trafficking and smuggling of migrants. For example, a large number of stimulant drug imports have been discovered since 1998 and, in 1999, the authorities seized a record-breaking amount of almost two tons of amphetamine type stimulants. The Japanese authorities have also on many occasions intercepted the smuggling of migrants, sometimes more than one hundred being smuggled in a single ship.

The second aspect in recent crime trends is the increase in violent crimes. The public is especially concerned by the increasing incidence and cruelty of violent crimes committed by juveniles, which is shown, for example, by the fact that the number of arrests of juveniles for manslaughter and murder increased 56 percent in 1998 compared with that of 1997.

Crimes related to computer networks are increasing at the same speed and breadth as the expansion of computer networks. The emergence of international computer networks enables users in one country to engage in all kinds of communications and transactions with other users all over the world in an instant. However, it also provides opportunities to commit various crimes, such as criminal attacks on the proper functioning of computer systems or against data contained therein, unlawful access to those systems and data, as well as content-related illegal activities including computer fraud and child pornography. The number of cases concerning computer-related crime has been drastically increasing in Japan. For example, in 1998 the Japanese police cleared thirteen times as many cases as those cleared in 1993.

Corruption is also an issue which has been attracting public attention not only in Japan but worldwide, and is one of the themes of the Congress workshops. Responding to this public concern, Japanese prosecutors and police are actively engaged in investigation of crimes involving public officials, which will lead to their prosecution and punishment.

In view of the emerging trends of criminality, the Japanese government recently introduced a considerable amount of new legislation as well as revising important criminal laws. These include three new laws against organized crime which provide various measures to combat organized crime; the Unauthorized Computer Access Law; revision of the Immigration Control Law which introduced new offences such as collective stowaways; revision of the Unfair Competition Prevention Law which introduced the new offence of bribery of foreign public officials for the purpose of obtaining or retaining improper business advantage; the Law for Punishing Acts Related to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and for Protecting Children, and so on.

Before concluding my presentation, I would like to stress our firm conviction that effective measures should be taken in order to cope with the emerging trends of crime. Therefore, I look forward to the presentations made by the distinguished delegations from all over the world on the status of crime and criminal justice, which will be invaluable resources in our common endeavour to fight against crime.

I thank you, Mr President, Distinguished Participants.