

Japan

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

Statement of

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High Level Segment

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(check against delivery)

Your Excellency the Chairman of the High Level Segment, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour for me to have this opportunity to speak at this Congress on behalf of the Japanese delegation.

Mr Chairman,

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to you on your election to the Chairmanship of the High Level Segment of the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

Mr Chairman,

Japan has always attached great importance to the United Nations Congresses as valuable occasions on which policy makers, officials, practitioners and experts in different fields of criminal justice can get together and discuss various matters so as to address the issues confronting the international community.

Mr Chairman,

Let me now present a brief picture of the current trends of organized crime in Japan as well as our countermeasures.

In Japan, traditional organized criminal groups called Boryokudan, as well as new groups of domestic and foreign origin, are becoming increasingly bolder in many illegal activities such as illicit trafficking in firearms or narcotic drugs, illegal economic activities including underground illegal banks, and the smuggling of migrants.

In addition to these criminal groups, Japan continues to be concerned about the illegal activities of Aum-Shinrikyo, a cult group which committed a poison gas attack on the Tokyo underground just before the Ninth Congress.

In 1999, Japan introduced new legislation in order to control the illegal activities of these groups.

First, in August 1999, three new laws were adopted by the National Diet, which provide various measures essential in the struggle against organized crime, such as the introduction of new offences of organized murder or other serious crimes and unlawful control of enterprises through the proceeds of crime, and the extension of predicate offences of money laundering to serious crimes. The new laws also entrusted the Financial Supervisory Agency with the function of a Financial Intelligence Unit and introduced provisions which enhance international cooperation and victim protection as well as those allowing for the use of the interception of telecommunication.

Second, as a measure against Aum-Shinrikyo, the National Diet adopted a new law, establishing a system to control the activities of a group, which has carried out the indiscriminate murder of many people with a view to promoting, supporting or opposing a particular political doctrine or policy and which continues to have dangerous elements that indicate a likelihood it will commit such murder again.

Mr Chairman,

Organized criminal groups operate beyond national borders, and it is apparent that there is a need for consolidated international action, which has been emphasized since the adoption of the Naples Political Declaration and the Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime in 1994 and culminated in the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which is also working on three important protocols.

In addition to actively participating in the discussion of the Ad Hoc Committee, Japan has been making specific contributions to this process, both by making financial contributions and by organizing meetings which address the issues related to the technical questions in areas covered by the Convention and the Protocols.

The financial contribution so far totals 480,000 US dollars, which will be allocated, especially, to assist the attendance of developing countries to the Ad Hoc Committee, thus ensuring the global character of this forum.

The meetings hosted by Japan include a series of workshops and seminars on firearms control organized by the National Police Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as the "International Seminar on Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms" held in June 1999.

There are also seminars held by the Ministry of Justice: first on immigration control; second on techniques to detect forged travel documents; and third on data processing system development for immigration control.

Japan will continue to be actively involved in the elaboration of these international documents, carried out in accordance with the request of the General Assembly through resolution 54/126.

Finally, Mr Chairman,

I would like to touch upon one of the workshops to be held at this Congress, namely, the Workshop on Crimes Related to the Computer Network, which will address these issues in a practice-oriented manner.

The Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, a United Nations affiliated regional institute based in Japan and known as UNAFEI, has played an active role in the organization and preparation of this Workshop.

Mr Chairman,

Before closing, Japan welcomes with gratitude the initiative of Thailand expressed by the honourable Attorney General of Thailand to host the 11th Congress, which would mark the second Congress to be convened in the Asia region.

In concluding my statement, Mr Chairman, let me assure you of the intention of the Japanese government to fully support the activities of the work of the United Nations, most notably those of the Centre for International Crime Prevention.

I thank you, Mr Chairman, Distinguished Participants.