

CLOSING STATEMENT BY MINISTER MADUNA

TENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

Let me start by thanking the Executive Director, Prof. Pino Arlacchi for his statement. For the past several days, we have gathered here as a symbol of a unified force against the global threat to the foundation and stability of nations and civilisations as we know it, which is posed by transnational organised crime. We have also gathered here to show our unwavering determination and commitment to fight against this scourge with all our determination and might. The 10th Congress has offered us an opportunity to take stock of developments in crime and criminal justice for an effective response to the challenges of the 21st century.

During this week we have heard how the danger posed by organised crime has escalated and continues to escalate and how technological advances and globalisation are adding to the urgency of developing effective strategies that will find expression in practical and viable mechanisms to combat and prevent organised crime. Speaker after speaker stated that no single country can win this fight single-handedly and so building partnerships amongst States has become more important and urgent than ever before.

Numerous speakers urged the 10th Congress to note that fundamental to the fight against organised crime is the development of socio-economic policies, the building of proper institutions, mechanisms and capacity within States in order to cope with the growing threat, particularly in the developing world. Priority should be given to the involvement of civil society in policy formulation especially in the, development of crime prevention strategies for protection of the most vulnerable groups amongst us, such as women and children. Regrettably the opening of borders, something good and progressive, has in a number of instances been misused by the organised criminal groups to traffic in persons, particularly women and children in violation of their basic human rights. This is a growing trend in most countries. Current estimates indicate that this is becoming a major source of income for the criminal elements.

Distinguished delegates Corruption continues to be a major problem threatening the social, economic and political development of our countries as well as undermining democracy. Consequently, the development of an international legal instrument against corruption, independent of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, has become more urgent. Similarly, with increasing globalisation, moneylaundering is no longer confined to national borders and therefore requires co-operation and co-ordination amongst countries.

It is in that context that we consider the current draft of the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols,

to be submitted to the Millennium Assembly, a major milestone in the fight against crime. It is my conviction that this Congress has helped in establishing a framework of national and international mechanisms to effectively deal with the problem of crime and to implement the various provisions of the Draft Convention.

From the quality of the reports and my own interaction with numerous delegates at the Congress, I am convinced that our time has been wellspent and this has been a successful and fruitful Congress. The unanimous adoption of the Vienna Declaration by the High-level Segment, signifies a political and practical commitment to fight crime on all its levels and in all its manifestations. To achieve the goals and the targets we have set ourselves, international and regional co-operation becomes imperative. Each and everyone of us must accept the responsibility to take the results of our Congress forward. The real test of our work lies in the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of this Congress. It does not benefit us and does not benefit the citizens of our countries for us to produce documents and agreements which remain on paper only.

I would like to conclude by congratulating the Centre for Drug Control and Crime Prevention for the excellent work in preparing for this Congress and, my thanks go especially to the Executive Director, Prof. Pino Arlacchi and the members of his staff, for supporting me during my tenure of the Presidency. I would also like to thank Mr Matti Joutsen (Finland) as Rapporteur-General, Mr RK Raghavan (India) as Chairman of Committee 1, Mr Ziljko Harvati`c (Croatia) as Chairman

of Committee 11 as well as all the members of the General Committee which helped me in carrying out the tasks entrusted to me by this Congress. I would also like to congratulate all the delegations which have put so much hard work and commitment into making this Congress a success. I wish all delegates, my allies against the scourge of crime, who return home after this Congress, a bon voyage.

With these few words Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates, allow me the privilege to declare the 10th Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders as closed.

The meeting is adjourned.