

**Address of the Minister for Justice of the Netherlands,
His Excellency Benk Korthals
10th Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders
Vienna, 15 april 2000**

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Thank you, Mister Chairman,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of our High Level segment and assure you of the full support of the Netherlands delegation.

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, It gives me great pleasure to address this meeting.

The programme of this 10th Congress is quite comprehensive, reflecting the broad approach of the UN to crime prevention. The Netherlands delegation is convinced that this Congress forms another milestone in our joint efforts to combat crime and to enhance our mutual co-operation. In doing so, our Congress is in line with the proposals recently presented by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his impressive report "We the Peoples". This title underlines the importance of a joint commitment to tackle global problems. Nowadays, unfortunately we have to admit that the phenomenon of transnational organised crime has become yet another of these global problems. Therefore, this theme has rightly been given prominence in this congress. I am also glad to note that other priority issues have been on our agenda in the past week. We find this particularly important Since we firmly support a sound balance in the work of the Crime Commission and the Centre, when addressing crime and crime prevention in all its aspects. Our Congress Declaration clearly reflects our ambitions in this field.

Mister Chairman,

I would like to address a few issues that are of key concern to the Netherlands government.

These are:

- the Convention on Transnational Organised Crime,
- corruption,
- victim support, and
- trafficking in human beings.

As for the Convention, mister Chairman, The Netherlands attaches great importance to the expeditious completion of the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, and its protocols. The added value of this convention to existing international instruments lies in clear provisions on certain key areas. We believe that these should include money-laundering, prevention and corruption.

Mister chairman,

The scope of the Convention is transnational organised crime. At the same time, when regulating law-enforcement and judicial cooperation, the provisions should allow for a practical and effective application of the instruments.

Regarding corruption,

we welcome the fact that the Draft Convention includes a provision on corruption.

However, it is obvious that not all manifestations of corruption are connected to organised crime.

To effectively curb corruption it is crucial that a holistic approach is followed, that reaches beyond the scope of this convention. This approach is also adopted by the Global Programme against Corruption. It is exactly for that reason, that the Netherlands is providing substantial funding to that programme. Along the same lines, we support the establishment of a new UN instrument against corruption. The Netherlands is of course fully prepared to contribute actively to this process.

I would recall that, in may 200 I, my country will host the Second Global Forum on Fighting Corruption an Safeguarding Integrity in The Hague. We are hopeful that the conference will prove to be a useful instrument in facilitating the negotiations of a new UN instrument on corruption.

Let me now turn to Victim Care

The improvement of victim care is an ongoing process in the Netherlands. Over recent years, we have adopted special provisions relating to victims in our penal law and regulations. Victim support organisations, with many skilled volunteers, inform victims about possible further proceedings and give them mental and practical support.

It is clear that victim care is beneficial to individuals and society in general. For this reason, I support initiatives, including the provision of financial

means, to establish organisations dedicated to victim care in countries where this kind of support is not available. We look forward to discussing this concept in further detail at our next weeks session of the Crime Commission.

Finally, allow me to say a few words on Trafficking in human beings. Since 1998, the Netherlands has intensified its efforts to combat trafficking in human beings: investigation and prosecution have been improved and maximum penalties have been increased. All forms of facilitation and exploitation of prostitution under use or threat of violence,, abuse of power, or deception are now punishable.

I have drawn up special guidelines for the investigation and prosecution of the trafficking in human beings, which include instructions for the police how to deal with victims. The voluntary co-operation of victims as a witness is crucial for a successful prosecution.

The Netherlands government also supports preventive publicity campaigns in other countries. In addition, the Netherlands is active in repatriating the victims of trafficking in human beings to their country of origin.

During its presidency of the European Union in 1997, the Netherlands followed a multi-disciplinary approach, as is also reflected in the European Union's Hague Declaration. One of the actions points that adopted in that context was the appointment of a national observer on trafficking in human beings. We have recently appointed such a observer in the Netherlands, who also participated in this congress. I hope many other countries will follow our example.

In conclusion, mister Chairman

The overwhelming presence of so many participants in the High Level and all other segments shows that tackling serious crime has clearly become a pressing international concern. This congress and the Crime Commission offer us the opportunity to develop jointly the necessary tools to address the challenges that we are confronted with. Not only for the benefit of our police and judicial systems, but ultimately for the special benefit of our citizens. They must be able to count on the improved quality of crime fighting and prevention. International co-operation has become the cornerstone for this.

I thank you for your attention.