

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

STATEMENT BY
LEADER OF DELEGATION

HON. JUSTICE M. L. UWAI, CON
CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA

ON THE STATE OF CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN NIGERIA

DELIVERED AT THE 10TH U.N. CONGRESS ON CRIME
PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS
VIENNA, 10 - 17 APRIL, 2000

**STATEMENT ON THE STATE OF CRIME IN NIGERIA
DELIVERED BY HON. JUSTICE MOHAMMED
UWAIS, HEAD OF NIGERIAN DELEGATION TO THE
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Mr. President,

May I on behalf of my delegation thank you for giving me the floor. May I also congratulate you on your election as the President of the Tenth Congress. Your election is a pride to Africa, and we are sure that under your able leadership, the Congress will produce concrete and credible recommendations that will go an immeasurable distance in reducing the scourge of crime at the end, of its deliberations.

Let me also use this opportunity to express our appreciation of the work done by the Secretariat under the able leadership of Professor Pino Alarchi, for organising the Congress and producing excellent documents made available to delegates.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the G-77 plus China as well as that of the African Group. Nigeria, like any other country in the International community, is seriously concerned with the menace of crime. Indeed, until the early eighties, when the scourge of organised crime manifested in Nigeria, we have had to contend with only the regulation of various forms of domestic criminal activities. By the late eighties however, criminal activities that were hitherto unknown began to take root in Nigeria as a result of a declining economy, an unstable political system and globalization. Crimes such as illicit drug trafficking, Urban Crimes, Advanced Fee Fraud. Corruption, Money Laundering and Human Trafficking provide today the greatest challenges to our crime prevention and criminal justice efforts. Nigeria has formulated policies, established institutional structures and committed resources within the limit of its capacity towards the control of crime and the strengthening of our criminal justice system. The

efficacy of these measures though encouraging, has however not been as effective as a result of the increasing complexity of these crimes.

Mr. President,

We recognise that no nation no matter how powerful can effectively tackle the problem of crime in isolation. The need for close international cooperation and collaboration becomes imperative. For us therefore, the current initiative by the United Nations at elaborating broad legal principles upon which such cooperation could be fostered is a most welcome development.

Nigeria operates the English system of criminal justice administration which over the years, has undergone tremendous changes to suit the peculiarities of the Nigerian environment. Successive constitutional development in Nigeria since independence has maintained the basic concept of the rule of law, providing for institutional independence and separation of powers of the three arms of government. These have been complimented by various legislations, which provide for the observance of the rule of law, and the guarantee of fundamental human rights. Institutions like the National Human Rights Commission, Public Complaints Commission and the Legal Aid Council have also been established in order to monitor and bring about the observance of these universal principles. Further, adequate legal provisions have been made specifying duties, functions and limitations of the various institutions concerned with crime prevention and criminal justice administration.

Nigeria Government has also taken adequate measures to strengthen these institutions through the provision of equipment and training. We also recognise the need for effective balancing between the need to preserve the rights of the individual as against the right of the state to combat criminality within the confines of the law.

In addition to the above, the current democratic administration in Nigeria has commenced measures to ensure

accountability, and transparency in the conduct of public affairs. To this end, an Anti-Corruption Bill containing elaborate provisions for combating corruption as well as establishing an Independent Anti-Corruption Commission has just been passed by the National Assembly.

Mr. President,

The types and manifestation of transnational criminal activities may differ from place to place, it is to be noted however that the effect of these criminal activities is clearly on the whole humanity than on national boundaries. This therefore underscores the need for a symbiotic relationship in which those with capacity render assistance to those with deficiency in resources. In this context, Mr. President, Nigeria welcomes the U.N. initiatives on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. It is our belief that with the cooperation of all nations, these initiatives could provide the greatest gift to humanity as we begin the journey in the new millennium.

I thank you Mr. President.