

United Nations congresses

United Nations congresses on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders have been held every five years since 1955. The congresses have promoted crime prevention studies and technical assistance and have encouraged Governments and professionals to share expertise and experience, leading to the formulation and adoption of international guidelines. They have fostered innovative approaches and led to the establishment of more humane methods of crime prevention and management, and have contributed to the creation of an environment conducive to international cooperation to cope more effectively with the new challenges of crime prevention and criminal justice.

The Tenth Congress: meeting the challenges of transnational crime

Criminal groups exploit modern-day phenomena such as globalization, an increasingly border-free world and technological advances. They produce and traffic in ever-changing varieties of illicit drugs, traffic in women and children for forced labour and sexual exploitation, smuggle illegal migrants across national boundaries, manufacture and smuggle firearms and ammunition and carry on illicit trade in artefacts and endangered species. They generate violence and inflict severe personal harm, launder huge sums of money, corrupt public officials and abuse and endanger economic and financial systems. Their operations victimize millions of citizens worldwide, while the negative impact of criminal groups upon societies threatens both national security and social stability.

These newly emerging problems cannot be adequately addressed by Governments acting individually or through traditional forms of international cooperation in crime prevention. At the turn of the century, the international community faces a major challenge in building and sustaining a viable framework to fight transnational crime.

The Tenth Congress offers an urgently needed opportunity for nations to reach agreement on a long-term plan of action to meet the challenges posed by transnational crime. It will introduce effective prevention measures based on standards and norms established with the support of the United Nations. The Tenth Congress will bring together representatives of Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, scholars, experts, practitioners and the media. It will be a unique global forum to exchange and enhance innovative ideas emanating from various disciplines, to demonstrate practical solutions and formulate common strategies. Special attention will be paid to emerging crime issues, in particular that of transnational crime. It will also be an occasion to identify common goals, enter into concrete commitments and establish a road-map and target dates to achieve them.

Date and venue

The Tenth Congress will take place in Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000, in the Austria Center, Vienna (Am Hubertusdamm 6, 1200 Vienna).

The high-level segment

The high-level segment of the Tenth Congress, to be held on 14 and 15 April 2000, will be attended by heads of State or Government, government ministers and attorneys-general. It will serve as a platform for political leaders to commit their Governments to the fight against crime, especially transnational crime, as an integral component of fostering human security. Special attention will be devoted to establishing ways and means of putting the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime—currently being prepared by Member States—into practice.

Outcome of the Congress

The General Assembly has asked the Tenth Congress to draw up a single declaration of recommendations and conclusions, to be submitted to the Millennium Assembly in 2000 for its consideration and action.

The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice has prepared a preliminary draft of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century for submission to the Congress, which can be accessed at <http://www.uncjin.org>

Theme, agenda, workshops and format

Substantive preparations for the Tenth Congress are being made under the guidance of Mr. Pino Arlacchi, appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General as Secretary-General of the Tenth Congress. Mr. Jan van Dijk has been appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General as Executive Secretary of the Tenth Congress.

The theme, agenda and format of the Tenth Congress have been formulated pursuant to decisions of the General Assembly and recommendations of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and in accordance with the views of Governments and interested intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Commission, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, has served as the preparatory body for the Congress.

1. Theme and agenda items

- (a) The theme of the Tenth Congress is “Crime and justice: meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century”;
- (b) The substantive items to be considered by the Congress are:
 - (i) Promoting the rule of law and strengthening the criminal justice system;
 - (ii) International cooperation in combating transnational crime: new challenges in the twenty-first century;
 - (iii) Effective crime prevention: keeping pace with new developments;
 - (iv) Offenders and victims: accountability and fairness in the justice process.

The annotated agenda and the draft programme of work for the Congress will be issued by the Secretariat (A/CONF.187/1) in advance of the Congress. A discussion guide on the subjects to be covered has been issued by the Secretariat (A/CONF.187/PM.1) and can be accessed at <http://www.uncjin.org>

2. Workshops

Four practically oriented technical workshops on the following topics will be held as part of the Congress:

- (a) Combating corruption;
- (b) Crimes related to the computer network;
- (c) Community involvement in crime prevention;

(d) Women in the criminal justice system.

A discussion guide on the workshops, ancillary meetings, symposia and exhibits to be held at the Tenth Congress has been issued by the Secretariat (A/CONF.187/PM.1/Add.1) and can be accessed at <http://www.uncjin.org>

3. Format

Pre-congress consultations, to be attended by heads of delegations, will be held on 9 April 2000. Those consultations will finalize recommendations on procedural and organizational matters for the Congress to consider on its opening day, including the election of officers, the appointment of a credentials committee and arrangements for the preparation of the report of the Congress.

The highlight of the opening session on 10 April will be an overview of the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide. The Congress will then pursue its work in concurrent sessions of a plenary and two committees.

Ancillary meetings, symposia and exhibits

Ancillary meetings, symposia and exhibits will be organized during the Congress by interested parties. A list of such events will be compiled and circulated prior to the Congress. Those interested in organizing such events are asked to contact the Secretariat, which will issue guidance and information on organizing activities.

Languages

The languages of the Congress will be the official languages of the United Nations—Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Simultaneous interpretation into those languages will be available for all formal segments of the Congress.

Provisional rules of procedure

The Tenth Congress will be conducted according to the provisional rules of procedure for United Nations congresses on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders (A/CONF.187/2). Those rules may be accessed at <http://www.ifs.univie.ac.at/~uncjin/congr10/index.htm> or obtained from the Secretariat.

Regional preparatory meetings

Four regional meetings were held to prepare for the Congress (Asian and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting, Bangkok, 2-4 November 1998; Western Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting, Beirut, 11-13 November 1998; African Regional Preparatory Meeting, Kampala, 7-9 December 1998; and Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting, San José, 22-24 February 1999). The reports of those meetings have been issued (A/CONF.187/RPM.1/1 and Corr.1, A/CONF.187/RPM.2/1, A/CONF.187/RPM.3/1 and A/CONF.187/RPM.4/1).

Documentation

1. Basic documents

(a) Preliminary draft of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century, prepared by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and submitted to the Tenth Congress by the Economic and Social Council;

(b) Reports of the four regional preparatory meetings;

(c) Overview of the state of crime and criminal justice worldwide;

(d) Working papers on each of the four substantive items of the provisional agenda of the Tenth Congress;

(e) Working papers on each of the subjects of the four workshops.

2. Background documents

(a) Discussion guide on the substantive items on the agenda of the Tenth Congress (A/CONF.187/PM.1);

(b) Discussion guide on the workshops, ancillary meetings, symposia and exhibits to be held at the Tenth Congress (A/CONF.187/PM.1/Add.1);

(c) National reports and papers submitted by Governments;

(d) Reports submitted by United Nations entities, including specialized agencies of the United Nations, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the affiliated regional institutes and the associate institutes and centres of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network;

(e) Reports submitted by intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as contributions by individual experts who have received an invitation from the Secretary-General to attend the Congress, dealing with specific questions in their areas of concern.

Documents 1 (a), 1 (b), 2 (a) and 2 (b) can already be accessed on the Web site of the Centre for International Crime Prevention at <http://www.uncjin.org>, or obtained from the Secretariat.

Documents 1 (c), 1 (d) and 1 (e) will be available on the same Web site and from the Secretariat by March 2000.

Reports and papers

Government delegations are encouraged to submit national reports and statements on the topics to be considered by the Congress. Specialized agencies and other United Nations entities may provide written contributions on aspects of the agenda within their area. Other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, observers and individual experts may also make appropriate submissions.

To the extent possible, reports should contain specific recommendations to be considered by the Congress, including on the declaration to be adopted. They should also contain relevant research findings, examples of best practices, recommendations for follow-up action and indications of ways the submitting party could help further common objectives and joint strategies with the United Nations and other stakeholders. Assessments of existing needs could be accompanied by proposals for meeting them.

A document entitled “Information for participants” will be issued by the Secretariat early in 2000 and will provide details on logistics, organizational aspects and the format and modalities for submission of reports.

Note: (a) Reports will be distributed in the language(s) of submission, that is, in one or several of the official languages of the Congress (see above);

(b) The number of copies of reports to be submitted will be specified in the “Information for participants” document.

Participation and attendance

All States Member of the United Nations and non-member States are invited to take part in the Congress. The General Assembly has reiterated its invitation to Member States to be represented at the Tenth Congress at a high political level, for example, by heads of State or Government, government ministers or attorneys-general.

According to the provisional rules of procedure of the Congress, representatives of organizations with a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate as observers in all international conferences convened under its auspices may participate in Congress discussions as observers without the right to vote.

Representatives of United Nations organs and specialized agencies as well as observers designated by other intergovernmental organizations will be invited to the Congress. Similarly, representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and others invited to the Congress may participate in Congress discussions as observers without the right to vote.

Individual experts in the field of crime prevention, criminal justice and the treatment of offenders who have expressed interest in attending and have indicated their professional qualifications to the Secretariat may be invited by the Secretary-General in their individual capacity to participate in Congress activities without the right to vote.

Attendance costs

The United Nations will cover the travel costs only of one government-nominated delegate from each of the 48 least developed countries, that is, Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, the Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, the Sudan, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.

The United Nations does not cover any costs of Congress attendance for participants. These should be covered by participants or their respective Governments or organizations. There is no fee for attending the Congress.

Information

1. Information for participants

For more information, please consult the web site of the Centre for International Crime Prevention at <http://www.uncjin.org>

You may also contact in Vienna:

Jonathan Lucas, Secretary
Tenth United Nations Congress
on the Prevention of Crime and the
Treatment of Offenders
Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

Telephone: +(43) (1) 26060-4280
Facsimile: +(43) (1) 26060-5917

Maureen McGregor
Centre for International Crime Prevention

E-mail: maureen.mcgregor@cicp.un.or.at
Telephone: + (43) (1) 26060-4229/4269
Facsimile: + (43) (1) 26060-5898

2. Information on workshops

Additional information on the Congress workshops may be obtained by writing to the respective main workshop organizers, as listed below:

Workshop on Combating Corruption
United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice
Research Institute
Via Giulia 52
I-00186 Rome, Italy

Telephone: +(39) (06) 6877437
Facsimile: +(39) (06) 6892638
E-mail: unicri@unicri.it
(See also: <http://www.unicri.it>)

Workshop on Crimes related to the Computer Network
Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of
Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
1-26 Harumi-cho
Fuchu-shi
Tokyo, Japan 183-0057

Telephone: +(81) (42) 333 7021
Facsimile: +(81) (42) 333 7024
E-mail: LDJ00272@nifty.ne.jp
(See also <http://www.unafei.or.jp>)

Workshop on Community Involvement in Crime Prevention
International Centre for the Prevention of Crime
507, Place d'Armes, Bureau 2100
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 2W8

Telephone: +(1) (514) 288-6731
Facsimile: +(1) (514) 288-8763
E-mail: cipc@crime-prevention-intl.org
(See also <http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org>)

Workshop on Women in the Criminal Justice System
European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control
Kasarmikatu 46-48, 5th floor

P.O. Box 161
FIN-00131 Helsinki, Finland

Telephone: +(358) (9) 1825 7880
Facsimile: +(358) (9) 1825 7890
E-mail: heuni@om.vn.fi
(See also: <http://www.vn.fi/om/suomi/heuni/about.htm>)

3. Contact points for non-governmental organizations

The following additional contact points may be of use for non-governmental organizations wishing to organize or to be involved in ancillary meetings:

Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (New York Branch)
Director
Information Centre
P.O. Box 81826
Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-1826
United States of America

Telephone: +(1) (402) 464-5931
Facsimile: +(1) (402) 464-5931
E-mail: Garyhill@cega.com

Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Vienna Branch)
Chairperson
Jugendgerichtshof Vienna
Rudengasse 7-9
A-1030 Vienna, Austria

Telephone: +(43) (1) 711 51 1211
Facsimile: +(43) (1) 711 51 1144

International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council
Acting Chairman of the Board
30 Waterside Plaza, Ap. 37J
New York, NY 10010
United States of America

Facsimile: +(1) (212) 689-7667

or:

Centro Nazionale di Prevenzione e Difesa Sociale
Palazzo Comunale delle Scienze Sociali
Piazza Castello 3
I-20121 Milan, Italy

Facsimile: +(39) (0-2) 72008431

4. Media

Press releases will be issued throughout the Congress and there will be daily briefings for the media, as well as facilities for radio, photo and television coverage.

For additional information on the media, please contact the following persons:

In Vienna:

Sandro Tucci, Spokesman for the Executive Director
Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Telephone: +(43) (1) 26060-5629
Facsimile: +(43) (1) 26060-5875
E-mail: sandro.tucci@undcp.org

In New York:

Mr. Bill Hass, Public Information Officer
Development and Human Rights Section
Department of Public Information
Room S-1040
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
United States of America

Telephone: +(1) (212) 963-0353
Facsimile: +(1) (212) 963-1186
E-mail: Hass@un.org

5. Press accreditation

Ms. Veronika Mayerhofer
United Nations Information Service—Vienna
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Telephone: +(43) (1) 26060-3342
Facsimile: +(43) (1) 21346-3342
E-mail: veronika.mayerhofer@unis.un.or.at