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**United Nations congresses on crime
prevention and criminal justice**

Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/173 of 18 December 2007, entitled “Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it, through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its seventeenth session, on the implementation of that resolution.

2. Also in its resolution 62/173, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to Member States to implement the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Assembly resolution 60/177, annex) and encouraged Member States to consider utilizing the reporting checklist developed by the Government of Thailand in their reporting on the follow-up to the Eleventh Congress.

* E/CN.15/2008/1.



II. Preparations for the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

A. Background

3. In its resolution 56/119 of 19 December 2001, the General Assembly decided that, beginning in 2005, the United Nations congresses on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, pursuant to paragraphs 29 and 30 of the statement of principles and programme of action of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme (Assembly resolution 46/152, annex), should be held in accordance with the following guidelines:

(a) Each congress should discuss specific topics, including, where appropriate, a main topic, all of which should be determined by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice;

(b) Each congress should include one session of pre-congress consultations;

(c) Each congress should include a high-level segment in which States would be represented at the highest possible level and would be given an opportunity to make statements on the topics of the congress;

(d) As part of the high-level segment, the heads of delegation or their representatives should participate in a number of thematic interactive round tables in order to further the discussion on the topics of the congress through open dialogue;

(e) Panels of experts, to be selected by the Commission with due regard for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, should hold workshops dealing with the topics of the congress, maintaining an open dialogue with the participants and avoiding the reading of statements;

(f) Institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network should be invited to assist in the preparations for the workshops;

(g) The Secretary-General should facilitate, within existing resources, the organization of ancillary meetings of non-governmental organizations and professional organizations at each congress;

(h) Each congress should adopt a single declaration containing recommendations derived from the deliberations of the high-level segment, the round tables and the workshops, to be submitted to the Commission for its consideration;

(i) Any action suggested to the Commission regarding its programme of work, contained in the declaration of the congress, should be undertaken through individual resolutions of the Commission;

(j) The Commission, as the preparatory body for the congress, should request the Secretary-General to prepare only those background documents which were absolutely necessary for implementing the programme of work of the congress;

(k) Each congress should be preceded by regional preparatory meetings, when necessary, and the costs of the regional preparatory meetings for each congress should be streamlined by holding them in conjunction with other regional meetings, shortening their duration and limiting the preparation of background documents.

4. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/26 of 27 July 2006, entitled "Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice", recognized that lessons learned from the previous congresses could be a valuable management tool for the planning of future congresses and requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to convene an intergovernmental group of experts in order to consider lessons learned from prior congresses with a view to developing a methodology for capturing lessons learned for future congresses. Pursuant to that resolution, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Lessons Learned from United Nations Congresses on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held a meeting in Bangkok from 15 to 18 August 2006 and the report of the meeting was submitted to the Commission at its sixteenth session for consideration (E/CN.15/2007/6). In its report, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts made a number of recommendations to guide the selection of themes, agenda items, workshop topics, time allocation, effective follow-up to the congresses, political declarations and the role of the Commission. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/173, took note of the report and endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts.

5. Also in its resolution 62/173, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to facilitate the organization of regional preparatory meetings for the Twelfth Congress; also requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in cooperation with the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, a discussion guide for the regional preparatory meetings, for consideration and approval by the Commission; and requested the Commission, at its seventeenth session, to finalize the programme for the Twelfth Congress and to make its final recommendations on the theme of the Congress and on the organization of round tables and workshops to be held by panels of experts, through the Economic and Social Council, to the Assembly.

6. An informal open-ended working group was established at the intersessional meeting of the Commission held on 25 September 2007, to discuss preparations for the Twelfth Congress. The working group held three meetings in 2007 and further meetings were planned for 2008. It was agreed that the final recommendations of the working group would be reviewed at a subsequent intersessional meeting before being considered by the Commission at its seventeenth session.

B. Venue, dates and duration

7. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/173, accepted with gratitude the offer of the Government of Brazil to host the Twelfth Congress; and requested the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with the Government and to report on them to the Commission at its seventeenth session. In that connection, consultations with the Government of Brazil have been initiated by the Secretariat to discuss, *inter alia*, a possible venue and dates for the Twelfth Congress.

8. Also in its resolution 62/173, the General Assembly decided that the duration of the Twelfth Congress should not exceed eight days, including pre-Congress consultations.

C. Programme of work

Theme

9. The informal open-ended working group on preparations for the Twelfth Congress agreed that the theme for the Twelfth Congress should be “Comprehensive strategies for global challenges: crime prevention and criminal justice systems and their development in a changing world”.

Agenda items

10. In its recommendations, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts highlighted the importance of selecting focused, substantive topics reflecting worldwide concerns and the need to balance the number of agenda items and workshop topics¹ in order to allow sufficient time for in-depth discussion of each (E/CN.15/2007/6, para. 37).

11. At the time of preparation of the present report, the following topics were under discussion by the informal open-ended working group for possible inclusion as items on the draft provisional agenda of the Twelfth Congress:

- (a) Children, youth and crime;
- (b) Making the United Nations crime prevention guidelines work;
- (c) Criminal justice responses to the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons: links to transnational organized crime;
- (d) International cooperation against money-laundering;
- (e) New trends and strategies in fighting crime: the case of cybercrime;
- (f) Improving international cooperation: new and practical approaches to solving crime-related problems in a changing world;
- (g) Violence against migrants, migrant workers and their families: crime prevention and criminal justice responses.

Workshops

12. Acknowledging the fact that insufficient time had been allotted to each of the six workshops held within the framework of the Eleventh Congress, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts recommended that there should be a limited number of workshops, with an optimal duration of 2-4 meetings each.

13. At the time of preparation of the present report, the following issues were under discussion by the working group as possible issues to be considered by the workshops to be held within the framework of the Twelfth Congress:

¹ For the Eleventh Congress, five topics were included as substantive items on the agenda and six issues were considered by workshops held within the framework of the Congress.

- (a) Enhancing effective international cooperation in counter-terrorism through criminal justice systems;
- (b) International criminal justice education for the rule of law;
- (c) Science, technology and crime;
- (d) Drug trafficking and illicit trade in arms: structural links and a coordinated international response;
- (e) Strategies and best practices to prevent overcrowding of correctional facilities.

D. Outcome

14. Pursuant to paragraph 2 (h) of General Assembly resolution 56/119, the Twelfth Congress would adopt a single declaration for consideration by the Commission at its twentieth session.

E. Resource allocation

15. In its resolution 62/173, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make available the necessary resources for the participation of the least developed countries in the regional preparatory meetings for the Twelfth Congress and in the Congress itself, in accordance with past practice; and reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to provide the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime with the necessary resources, from within the overall appropriations of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, for the preparations for the Twelfth Congress and to ensure that adequate resources were provided in the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 to support the holding of the Congress. In that regard, the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, resources have been allocated for the preparations for the Twelfth Congress. In accordance with the practice followed for the Tenth Congress and the Eleventh Congress, resources have been allocated for the holding of four regional preparatory meetings for the Twelfth Congress (in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia), including necessary resources for the participation of the least developed countries.

F. Regional preparatory meetings

16. At its sixteenth session, the Commission stressed the importance of holding regional preparatory meetings as a way to reflect regional concerns in the preparatory process of future congresses.² In its resolution 62/173, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to facilitate the organization of regional preparatory meetings, including meetings of the least developed countries, for the Twelfth Congress; and also requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in cooperation with the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal

² *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 10* (E/2007/30/Rev.1), para. 161.

Justice Programme network, a discussion guide for those regional preparatory meetings, for consideration and approval by the Commission, and invited Member States to be actively involved in that process. Following the finalization of the programme for the Twelfth Congress, including the selection of the theme, agenda items and workshop topics, the discussion guide will be prepared for consideration and approval by the Commission at its eighteenth session. If that were done during the intersessional period, it would allow preparations for the Twelfth Congress to proceed in a timely manner, in particular the regional preparatory meetings to be held in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia.

III. Follow-up action to be taken by the Commission at its eighteenth session

17. At its eighteenth session, the Commission should consider and take action on the following matters:

- (a) Decision on possible amendment of the rules of procedure for United Nations crime congresses, if required;
- (b) Recommendations on the documentation for the Twelfth Congress;
- (c) Recommendation on the public information activities for the Twelfth Congress, which should be undertaken in a timely manner in order to ensure that Governments and civil society are fully aware of and participate in the Congress and the preparations therefor.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

18. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/173, it is recommended that the Commission, at its seventeenth session, should make its final recommendations on the theme of the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and on the organization of round tables and workshops to be held by panels of experts, through the Economic and Social Council, to the Assembly.

19. It is also recommended that the Commission take into consideration the action that will be required at its eighteenth session regarding the rules of procedure, documentation and public information activities.