



# General Assembly

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## Western Asia Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Beirut, 26–28 March 2019

### Draft report

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#### Addendum

## II. Conclusions and recommendations (*continued*)

### B. Substantive items and workshops

3. **Multidimensional approaches by Governments to promoting the rule of law by, inter alia, providing access to justice for all; building effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive institutions; and considering social, educational and other relevant measures, including fostering a culture of lawfulness while respecting cultural identities, in line with the Doha Declaration (agenda item 5); and education and youth engagement as key to making societies resilient to crime (workshop 3)**

#### Summary of deliberations

1. The meeting emphasized that effective, impartial and inclusive institutions are essential to promoting the rule of law and achieving Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Agenda. It was noted that in order to build peaceful and just societies, partnerships among the Government, civil society and the private sector were key to end all forms of violence and promote access to justice for all with a special focus on children, youth and women.

2. Participants at the meeting reported on their national efforts to strengthen their crime prevention and criminal justice systems and to ensure they are fair, just and humane, with a special focus on children and women. They also reported on their measures to use education as a key prevention effort and on other social and economic measures that empowered youth.

3. The discussion also focused on the modalities that could be undertaken to ensure that the criminal justice system met its multiple accountability responsibilities, and that the reform of the criminal justice system has to be coupled by the principle of accountability, which is the backbone of the rule of law. The meeting also discussed the importance of strengthening judicial integrity, accountability and professionalism and the use of the Bangalore Principles and the Commentary on the Bangalore



Principles of Judicial Conduct were highlighted as important tools and resources for supporting the judiciary. It also welcomed the Judicial Integrity Network and the work undertaken by the Network thus far. In observing such dimension, it was also noted that strengthening the accountability of the criminal justice system could also support fostering a culture of lawfulness.

4. Participants at the meeting reported on their national efforts, good practices and experiences in strengthening access to justice for all and in strengthening their crime prevention and criminal justice systems. As such, the meeting emphasized the importance of strengthening the rule of law through legal mechanisms that supports providing access to justice for all, including the access to a defence counsel, protection of witnesses and whistle-blowers, free trial and other measures that support such an endeavour.

5. With regards to the Fourteenth United Nations Crime Congress, it was highlighted that it presented an opportunity to provide a platform for discussing approaches taken by Governments towards the general public that contribute to fostering a culture of lawfulness in the context of promoting the rule of law, and in this regard, it was noted that building the capacity of criminal justice institutions contributes to building the public's trust and respect for the law and its enforcement and may therefore be an important measure that contributes to fostering a culture of lawfulness.

6. The meeting recognized that a "culture of lawfulness" can be promoted and fostered through educational programmes and activities that aim at instilling values, skills and knowledge among children and youth to prevent violence, crime, corruption and terrorism. It was also noted that sport was a powerful tool to help in building resilience and preventing criminal behaviour among youth. One participant noted the important work done under the Education for Justice (E4J) and the youth crime prevention through sport initiatives under the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration.

7. In discussing the importance of empowering and building the resilience of youth, the host country of the Fourteenth United Nations Crime Congress reiterated its intention to organize a Youth Forum and introduced the discussion topics: (a) youth engagement in crime prevention and reintegration; (b) youth education for fostering a culture of lawfulness; and (c) youth commitment towards a safe information society. It was acknowledged by participants at the meeting that such initiative to involve youth in Crime congresses would be a promising approach to foster a culture of lawfulness through youth education and empowerment in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

#### **Outcome of deliberations**

8. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Undertake appropriate and comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice reform strategies, policies and programmes to ensure that access to legal aid that is effective, credible, sustainable and accessible to all without discrimination, is provided at all stages of the criminal justice process;

(b) Increase access to justice for children, by strengthening the responses of the criminal justice system and ensuring that it can provide children with fair, equitable and effective, child-sensitive responses;

(c) Undertake appropriate and comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice reform strategies, policies and programmes to ensure access to legal aid that is effective and is provided at all stages of the criminal justice process, and support the exchange of good practices and evidence-based initiatives;

(d) Assist Member States in developing and implementing measures to increase access to justice for women victims as well as women offenders and prisoners;

(e) Enhance coordination between criminal justice institutions and education sectors in the formulation of crime prevention, criminal justice and other rule of law policies at the national, regional and international levels;

(f) Ensure and promote quality education and awareness-raising activities such as youth forums, that provide children and youth with the knowledge and skills enabling them to foster a culture of lawfulness, and enhance their perception of the rule of law thereby reducing conflict with the law;

(g) Recognize the need to enhance preventive measures in addressing new and emerging forms of crime, including through education and various awareness raising activities to all stakeholders including youth, civil society and the private sector;

(h) Promote the establishment of early law-related education curriculum in schools, or integrating the rule of law into education, with particular emphasis on teaching core values of the rule of law, with a view to fostering a culture of lawfulness among the general public;

(i) Support the sharing of good practices among Member States, and enhance the coordination between Member States and PNIs with relevant expertise and experiences of technical assistance and capacity-building projects that contribute to fostering a culture of lawfulness;

(j) Encourage Member States in undertaking holistic and multidimensional approaches, and in doing so consider using and strengthening the use of the United Nations Standards and Norms on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the principals on the independence of Prosecution and the Bangalore Principles, as well as UNODC's tools and programmes including the Judicial Integrity Network, the Education for Justice (E4J) and youth crime prevention through sports initiatives.

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