

High Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on

“Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”

25 February 2015

UN Headquarters, New York

Following a proposal by the Permanent Missions of Qatar, Thailand, Italy, Mexico and Morocco, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the President of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly will convene a High Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on *“Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”* that will be held on 25 February 2015.

1. The scope and objective

Over the last decade, a number of UN documents, reports and surveys pointed to the intrinsic link between effective and accessible criminal justice systems and institutions that operate in accordance with the rule of law on the one hand, and the sustained and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, on the other.

The different inputs to the post-2015 development agenda provide that access to fair justice systems, accountable and inclusive institutions as well as measures to combat corruption and curb illicit financial flows, all forms of exploitation, trafficking, violence and torture, are integral to sustainable development.

This thematic debate will contribute to the deliberations on the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda as well as to provide an input to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to take place in Doha in April 2015, the theme of which is *“Integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation”* (GA Res. 68/185).

The overarching question that will be addressed in the thematic debate is how to tackle social and economic challenges and promote sustainable development through strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice systems, norms and standards, while combating the threats that undermine them, in particular transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and corruption. In this vein, the debate will focus on priorities, gaps and emerging issues that require further attention and support in the

implementation of the post-2015 development agenda - both from the point of view of national policies and international cooperation.

The morning session titled “*Towards sustainable development: Successes and challenges in implementing comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice policies*” will focus on the following questions:

- 1) How criminal justice systems and the institutions comprising them can incorporate public policies geared towards greater coordination and cooperation with state institutions dedicated to addressing social and economic challenges;
- 2) The role of criminal justice institutions and standards and norms in promoting sustainable development;
- 3) Sharing best practices and experiences in promoting crime prevention and criminal justice systems as critical agents of development, including on the role of civil society and private sector;

The afternoon session titled “*Shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Fostering international cooperation to promote crime prevention and criminal justice policies*” will focus on the following questions:

- 1) Identifying priorities, gaps and emerging issues in strengthening crime prevention that will require further attention and support in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda;
- 2) Opportunities for raising awareness of crime prevention and criminal justice as critical enablers of development and as development ends in themselves;
- 3) How criminal justice policies can better reflect the unique needs of women and children.

Format and Outcome

This one-day High-Level Thematic Debate will consist of an opening session in the morning followed by morning and afternoon interactive multi-stakeholder panel discussions. The President’s Summary will be issued at the conclusion and will be subsequently made available to all Member States and stakeholders as well as transmitted to the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for consideration.

Background

In 2000, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime recognized “*the negative effects of organized crime on society in general, in particular on sustainable development.*” (See Article 30(1)). In 2005, the General Assembly expressed “*grave concern at the negative effects on development, peace and security and human rights posed by transnational crime.*” (See GA Res. 60/1 at par. 111, 2005 World Summit Outcome Document).

In 2011, *The World Development Report* directly linked development and justice, arguing that threats to development stemming from organized violence, conflict, and fragility, cannot be resolved by short-term or partial solutions without legitimate institutions that provide all citizens equal access to security, justice, and jobs. As such, efforts to strengthen justice systems, manage and reduce vulnerabilities, and legally empower the poor, are not only crucial for dealing with crime effectively, but are also key for national development planning and policy.

In June 2012, the General Assembly held a Thematic Debate on “*Drugs and Crime as a Threat to Development*” in which the linkages between crime and development were discussed with participants highlighting the need to further integrate criminal justice and crime prevention into the broader work of the United Nations. The Presidential Summary suggested a follow up debate.

Recently, Member States reiterated that “*the rule of law and development are interrelated and mutually reinforcing and that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for sustained and inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, all of which in turn reinforce the rule of law.*” (Resolution E/RES/2014/19).¹

They also recognized “*the cross-cutting nature of the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice and development, and recommend[ed] that such linkages and interrelationships be properly addressed and further elaborated,*” underscoring that “*discussions on the post-2015 development agenda should take into account respect for and promotion of the rule of law and that crime prevention and criminal justice have an important role in that regard....*” (Resolution E/RES/2014/19 paras. 1 and 2).

Moreover, they acknowledged the centrality of crime prevention and the criminal justice system to the rule of law, and also that long-term sustainable economic and social development and the establishment of a functioning, efficient, effective and humane criminal justice system have a positive influence on each other.

Member States have also highlighted the importance of strengthened international cooperation, in order to dismantle illicit networks and counter transnational organized crime, which “*undermine sustainable development and the rule of law.*” They have likewise emphasized “*the importance of*

¹ See also Resolution A/C.3/69/L.16/Rev.1: “*the rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels, including through crime prevention and criminal justice mechanisms, is essential for sustained and inclusive economic growth and sustainable development and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, all of which in turn reinforce the rule of law.*”; and . Resolution 68/188, “*the rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing and that crime prevention and criminal justice elements that support the rule of law should therefore be considered in implementing the post-2015 international development agenda.*”

integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider United Nations agenda to address, inter alia, social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation.” (GA Res. 68/193).

The General Assembly has stressed *“that crime prevention should be considered an integral element of strategies to foster social and economic development.”* (Third Committee Resolution A/C.3/69/L.16/Rev.1 para. 12).

These points were further underscored in the April 2014 General Assembly Thematic Debate on *“Ensuring Stable and Peaceful Societies,”* recognizing the role of organized crime and illicit trafficking in people, wildlife, drugs and arms as stressors to peace and development, and the June 2014 General Assembly High Level Event on the *“Contributions of Human Rights and the Rule of Law in the post-2015 Development Agenda,”* highlighting that it is the poor who are most vulnerable to crime and violence, and that the rule of law prohibits corruption, illicit financial flows and transnational crime.

Moreover, proposed Goal 16 of the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development (A/68/L.61), *“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”* includes targets on ending all forms of exploitation, trafficking, violence and torture, promoting the rule of law at all levels and ensuring access to justice for all. It also includes targets on reducing illicit financial and arms flows, strengthening recovery and return of stolen assets, and combating all forms of organized crime.

And most recently, the *Synthesis Report of The Secretary-General on the Post 2015 Agenda*, provided that *“crime ... and the erosion of the rule of law are daily realities”* and that *“access to fair justice systems, accountable institutions of democratic governance, measures to combat corruption and curb illicit financial flows, and safeguards to protect personal security are integral to sustainable development ... The rule of law must be strengthened at the national and international level, to secure justice for all.”*

Programme

High Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on

“Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”

25 February 2015

Trusteeship Council Chamber

Time	<i>Morning</i>
10:00 – 11:00	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly• H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations• H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations• H.E. Dr. Khalid Bin Mohammed AlAttiyah, Minister of Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar (video message)• H.E. Dr. Danilo Türk, Visiting Professor of Law at Columbia University, Former President of the Republic of Slovenia• Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
11:00 – 13:00	Morning Session <p><i>Topic: “Towards sustainable development: Successes and challenges in implementing comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice policies”</i></p>

	<p>Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ms. Sheikha Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Luis Alfonso de Alba, Chair of the 24th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice • H.E. M. Mahjoub El Haiba, Interministerial Delegate for Human Rights, Kingdom of Morocco • Ms. Irene Khan, Director-General, International Development Law Organization (IDLO) • Ms. Giselle Martin, Legal Advisor of CARICOM IMPACS (The Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security) <p>Discussion – Interactive interventions from the floor (limited to 3 minutes)</p>
	<p><i>Afternoon</i></p>
<p>15:00 – 17:45</p>	<p>Afternoon Session</p> <p>Topic: “Shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Fostering cooperation to promote crime prevention and criminal justice policies”</p> <p>Co-chairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations • H.E. Mr. Virachai Plasai, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator, Director of Crisis Response

	<p>Unit, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations • Prof. M. Cherif Bassiouni, Emeritus Professor of Law, DePaul University; President, International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences (ISIS) • Hon. Dr. Vladimiro Zagrebelsky, Former Judge, European Court of Human Rights • Ms. Alison Hannah, Executive Director, Penal Reform International <p>Discussion – Interactive interventions from the floor (limited to 3 minutes)</p>
17:45 – 18:00	<p>Closing Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly



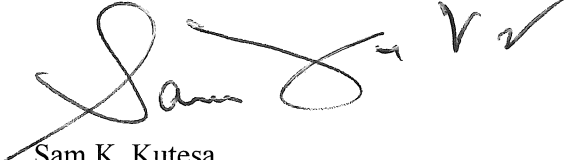
THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23 March 2015

Excellency,

It is my pleasure to forward herewith the President's Summary of the High-Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on "*Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*", that was held at the UN Headquarters in New York on 25 February 2015.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Sam K. Kutesa

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

**High Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on
Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
in the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

New York, 25 February 2015

President's Summary

The President of the General Assembly convened a High-Level Thematic Debate on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda in New York on 25 February 2015. This debate was organized at the initiative by the Permanent Missions of the State of Qatar, Thailand, Italy and the Kingdom of Morocco, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The purpose of this debate was to discuss the overarching question of how to tackle social and economic challenges and promote sustainable development through strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice systems, norms and standards, while combatting the threats that undermine them, in particular transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and corruption. In addition, the debate sought to contribute to the deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda as well as to provide input to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which will take place in Doha, Qatar, from 12 to 19 April 2015.

Opening Session

During the Opening Session of the Thematic Debate, speakers highlighted that the year 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, whose Charter reaffirms the “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” Speakers observed that, despite this solemn proclamation, many people across the world continue to suffer from the devastating consequences of poverty, crime, terrorism, exclusion, persecution, corruption and deprivation. They stressed that these people demand – and indeed deserve – accountable governance, fair and accessible justice systems, peaceful societies, personal security and lives of dignity. They further stressed that the international community has a duty to help people everywhere to grasp these opportunities, including by formulating an ambitious transformative post-2015 universal agenda, which is inclusive and firmly rooted in human rights and the rule of law.

During the session, speakers underlined that a sustainable development approach requires the formulation of effective, integrated and multidimensional strategies. They emphasized that the global character and complexity of contemporary crime necessitated a collective global response. In this context, they noted that the upcoming Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to be held in April 2015, will avail an important opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to reaffirm a global response to challenges of crime prevention and criminal justice. They further underlined that the outcome of the Congress will provide guidance in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice for the next five years; and will mark a renewed common vision and commitment to the implementation of the rule of law and human rights, as well as the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Speakers pointed out that crime has the greatest impact on the vulnerable, including women, children and persons with disabilities, as well as the marginalized and the discriminated. They noted, for instance, that crimes such as corruption undermine the delivery of basic services for many people across the globe, as it deprives them of economic and social opportunities and further weakens already fragile institutions.

On the rule of law, the speakers noted that the international community has long recognized its importance, particularly in effective crime prevention and for the creation of a strong human rights base. Furthermore, they highlighted that absence or deficit of rule of law is among the factors that impede the realization of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in some instances. They thus stressed that rule of law constitutes crucial means of advancing development activities at all levels and as a factor for strengthening such activities. In this regard, they emphasized the need for the rule of law to be integrated into the development agenda as a fundamental principle.

Panel Discussions

The morning and the afternoon panel discussions were entitled respectively; “*Towards sustainable development: Successes and challenges in implementing comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice policies,*” and “*Shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Fostering international cooperation to promote crime prevention and criminal justice policies*”.

Messages from the participants in both sessions are clustered as follows:

The Legal Framework: Speakers called for adherence to and full implementation of all relevant international instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its protocols, and existing drug conventions. They also called for continued support for the Implementation Review Mechanism of UNCAC as it prepares for the beginning of its Second Cycle. Moreover, they noted that the foregoing international legal frameworks and the criminal justice standards and norms provide a common platform for Member States to counter serious forms of criminal activity, irrespective of differences in legal systems and traditions; and they allow for flexibility in the development and implementation of crime prevention and criminal justice policies and strategies.

National Ownership: Speakers stressed that genuine national ownership and leadership are essential in ensuring that crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and institutions effectively promote the rule of law and sustainable development. They also pointed out to the importance of traditional or customary systems of justice that often operate side-by-side with the formal justice system. Additionally, they underscored the importance of the full independence of judges, the judiciary and prosecutors, as well as of their integrity. Finally, they underlined the need for governments to undertake detailed crime research and analysis, which would enable them to make effective policy choices.

Public Participation: Speakers noted that broad and inclusive public participation in both the development and implementation of crime prevention and criminal justice strategies was critical to their success and effectiveness. They placed special emphasis on the most vulnerable in society, including women, youth, the poor as well as the persons with disabilities, noting that a truly inclusive process marked by meaningful participation increases the ability of people to contribute to the policy choices that are likely to affect them the most and hold governmental institutions accountable. They observed that such public participation can also help develop and foster a culture of lawfulness through education and access to information, which can be a powerful driver of crime prevention. The importance of the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) to enable them hold governments accountable on their commitments, was particularly emphasized.

International Cooperation and Partnerships: Speakers noted that international cooperation among Member States and inter-agency coordination and cooperation is critical in tackling crime, which has become more sophisticated and transnational in nature. In this regard, they stressed that international cooperation in fighting transnational organized crime should go hand in hand with effective access to justice for all; and must also include a focus on strengthening capacity to monitor trafficking in persons, arms, drugs, wildlife and cultural property, as well as illicit financial flows.

Speakers recognized UNODC's global programme to combat wildlife and forest crime and called upon the international community to support the its efforts, including those aimed at promoting international cooperation and partnerships to strengthen criminal justice systems regionally. They underscored that effective international cooperation encompasses law enforcement partnerships, including the sharing of information, data and intelligence; mutual legal assistance in its broadest sense and procedures that are streamlined and efficient; and extradition procedures that allow for flexibility and accommodate differences in legal systems. Furthermore, speakers noted that strengthened implementation of relevant conventions, as well as the role of regional and sub-regional organizations and agreements, are critical components to facilitating effective and efficient international cooperation. They called for strengthened partnerships between governments and other donors, private sector experts, non-governmental and civil society organizations, the media, as well as the academia.

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building: Speakers underlined the importance of technical assistance for strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice strategies and institutions, particularly in developing and post-conflict States. In addition, they stressed the need to transfer technology and equipment necessary for law enforcement to effectively investigate and meet the challenges of an increasingly mobile and sophisticated level of criminal activity. In this regard, they highlighted the importance of strengthening UNODC's capacity, and acknowledged ongoing activities and assistance provided by UNODC, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

Development of Indicators: Speakers noted that the goals and targets to be agreed upon in the post-2015 development agenda, especially those relating to crime prevention and criminal justice as well as the rule of law, will need to be accompanied by appropriate indicators so as to enable States to measure progress in implementation, including on the effectiveness of criminal justice

institutions. It was noted in particular, that there was a meaningful opportunity for UNODC and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) to provide valuable advice on technical indicators and metrics in crime prevention and criminal justice with regard to several goals and targets to be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, speakers pointed out that the CCPCJ could draw on existing resources and tools, including data gathered by UNODC and other agencies on global crime trends and the operation of national justice systems. They further stressed that developing countries and those in post-conflict situations would be in particular need of international support and assistance to strengthen their data collection capacities as well as statistical and analytical departments.

Specific Proposals:

Participants recommended the following:

- a) The thematic reviews of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), should take into consideration the normative work of the CCPCJ, and then channel it to the Executive Boards and Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes for their support to countries in the field of the implementation of policy guidance.
- b) During the current session, the General Assembly should consider a resolution on illegal trade in wildlife, which has adverse impacts on sustainable development, biodiversity and stability in some regions.
- c) The Crime Congress should consider the gaps inherent in the implementation of existing international legal instruments for combating transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism.

Closing Session

In his concluding remarks, the President of the General Assembly stressed that in order to deliver on their promises of sustainable development, Member States must ensure that societies are secure and peaceful, including through the promotion of the rule of law and strengthening of the criminal justice systems that uphold the fundamental principles of justice, fairness and equality.

The President noted that the forthcoming UN Crime Congress provides a historic opportunity to further discuss the importance of integrating the rule of law and criminal justice in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

25 February 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the High-level Thematic Debate on “Integrating
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development
Agenda”**

**Excellencies,
Mr Deputy Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today’s event on integrating crime prevention and criminal justice in the post-2015 development agenda is a landmark event for several reasons:

First, our discussions today will serve as an important contribution toward the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the future development agenda.

Second, today’s event precedes the 13th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which will be held this coming April in Doha, where we will explore the importance of integrating the rule of law and criminal justice with our sustainable development aspirations.

Esteemed colleagues,

The importance of crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law were elaborated in the proposal of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Report includes targets related to ending all forms of exploitation, trafficking, violence and torture, promoting the rule of law and ensuring access to justice for all. It also include targets on reducing illicit financial and arms flows, and combating all forms of organized crime.

Crime prevention and access to justice go hand in hand with many critically important development objectives, including the eradication of poverty and increasing access to health services, life-long education, water and energy.

They also contribute to other important initiatives, such as creating adequate opportunities for employment and economic, social and political inclusion, as well as the elimination of inequality and discrimination.

Excellencies,

As people everywhere seek to make good on economic and social opportunities for their families and to increase their living standards, we know that protection against crime and violence is one of the most fundamental pre-requisites for leading a dignified, productive life.

In past General Assembly debates, Member States have affirmed that criminal activities, especially transnational organized crime, weaken state authority and fuel corruption.

Crime harms already fragile economies and undermines the quality of life of citizens, particularly women, children and the marginalized.

In our interconnected world, crime continues to transcend borders and to grow in size and scope. Today we talk of crime not just as an issue for individual countries to grapple with, but as a transnational threat to entire regions. Modern, transnational organized crime has great reach and considerable influence due to the billions of dollars that flow from its activities.

The wide-spread, negative impact of crime on citizens, communities and governments has resulted in resounding calls for better crime prevention and greater justice, fairness and equality.

This, in turn, has led to a growing recognition among Member States that there is a need to safeguard our development work by strengthening the rule of law and criminal justice systems.

However, if the rule of law is to become the global guardian of development and defend the hopes and dreams of people around the world, it must be integrated into our larger development aspirations.

The rule of law cannot stand isolated from our overarching global sustainable development efforts. Rather, the rule of law must be a fundamental principle integrated into the core of our work.

To achieve this, we must create effective criminal justice systems that are fit for the purpose of protecting fundamental human rights and promoting justice, equality and fairness.

Such an approach must start at the highest possible levels to ensure that a State's commitment to international law is built into the basic architecture of national criminal justice systems.

In this context, I encourage the adoption and full implementation of all relevant international instruments, including the Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime and against Corruption.

The centerpiece of our efforts should be criminal justice reform, aimed at access to justice and the promotion of an independent judiciary.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Time and again we have heard people around the world stress the importance of secure and peaceful communities. Our collective efforts must demonstrate that we have heard their calls for concrete steps to create communities that are free of violence and cruelty.

To do so, justice and equality must be embedded in every civilized society as the foundation for strong institutions and peaceful communities. I hope our discussions here today will positively contribute to those important endeavours.

I thank you for your kind attention.

25 February 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the High-level Thematic Debate on “Integrating
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development
Agenda”**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Esteemed panelists,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Thank you for participating in today’s debate on “Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”.

The insights and contributions shared today have been informed, incisive and driven by genuine concerns to prevent crime and strengthen criminal justice systems to assist people and communities.

As highlighted by many, this debate is both timely and pertinent. It comes ahead of a number of landmark events; most notably the 13th Crime Congress that will take place in Doha, Qatar in April. It also coincides with our on-going work to formulate a transformative development agenda that seeks to improve the lives of people around the world.

Today’s debate, therefore, has come at an opportune moment as the international community focuses greater attention to the resounding need to support those affected by poverty, crime, terrorism, persecution, joblessness, disease and deprivation, among other challenges.

As many speakers pointed out today, the negative impacts of crime are most acutely felt by vulnerable segments of our populations, including the poor, women, and children.

In order to deliver on our promises of sustainable development, we must ensure that our societies are secure and peaceful. As was repeatedly stated during today’s deliberations, we must fight crime to foster development.

Our aspirations can only be realized if we promote the rule of law and strengthen the criminal justice systems that uphold the fundamental principles of justice, fairness and equality.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Illicit trafficking in firearms, cybercrime, human trafficking, wildlife crime and many other illicit activities are on the increase. These crimes represent serious obstacles to the achievement of sustainable development and the well-being of people worldwide. As emphasized during today's debate, crime is a universal scourge. It transcends country and regional borders and must be collectively confronted by all to deny criminals the access and space needed to commit crimes.

We must tighten the links between the international conventions on drugs, crime and corruption, and the international treaties on terrorism and domestic laws.

Our strategies against transnational organized crime must also be firmly rooted in cooperation, coordination and improved communication amongst nations and law enforcement agencies. The role of regional and sub-regional organisations is also crucial in these efforts. It is also of utmost importance that civil society and other stakeholders contribute to these endeavours.

Improving data collection and timely sharing of information is another area that deserves our attention. Countries should strive to improve their data collection processes to foster the creation of effective and efficient crime prevention policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we have had a very fruitful and productive debate that has provided valuable contributions to our work. I would like to thank the delegations of Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Qatar and Thailand for initiating this meeting.

A summary of the key messages and proposals from our discussions will be prepared and circulated to Member States and other stakeholders, as well as transmitted to the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for consideration.

I thank you for your participation.