

Final

**DRAFT STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE
ELEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON CRIME
PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
BANGKOK, 18-25 APRIL 2005**

Mr, President,

On behalf of the African Group, allow me to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. We have confidence in your ability to successfully conduct the activities of this Congress, and let me assure you of the cooperation of the African Group throughout the deliberations ahead.

Let me also seize this opportunity to convey the sincere gratitude of the African Group to the Government and people of Thailand for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to all delegations and for the arrangements put in place to ensure a successful Congress.

The African Group also wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretariat for the preparations and timely availability of the documents for the Congress.

Mr. President,

The African Group associates itself with the statement of the G-77 and China delivered by the distinguished Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Indonesia.

Mr. President,

Since the Tenth Congress in Vienna in 2000, the international community has witnessed significant events and developments in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. First, and sadly, we have witnessed horrendous terrorist attacks around the World. Secondly, on a more positive note, there has been the conclusion of two Conventions, namely, the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols and the Convention against Corruption. The conclusion of these conventions and the entry into force of the TOC and two of its protocols are testimony to the usefulness of this Congress that had over the years recommended their adoption.

Mr. President,

The African Group considers as a significant accomplishment, the entry into force of the TOC Convention and two of its protocols, namely, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. The Group looks forward to the early entry into force of the third protocol on firearms. As we celebrate this accomplishment, we must recognize that the fight against organized crime is just beginning. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention must ensure the provision of technical assistance to developing countries for the implementation of the Convention in accordance with its Article 30. Therefore, we call upon the international community to provide African countries with the necessary technical assistance and expertise, not just to ratify but to effectively implement the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols,

The Group also welcomes the signing of the UN Convention against Corruption in Merida, Mexico in December 2003. African countries constitute the largest group of signatories and majority of those that have ratified the Convention. This is a *re-affirmation* of our commitment to fight corruption and to recover all the proceeds of corruption from wherever they are kept and their return to countries of origin. As with the ratification of TOC Convention, most members of the Group require specialized assistance and advice in order to expedite national legislative review and ratification process.

As the Convention against Corruption gathers the required 30 ratification for its entry into force, the African Group is concerned that most of the ratification have been by developing countries and that no developed country had so far ratified the Convention, We therefore, call on all countries, especially our development partners to consider speeding up their domestic mechanism for the ratification of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Organized criminal and terrorist groups threaten security on a large scale throughout the world, targeting innocent people, and the very foundations of democracy and the rule of law, thereby jeopardizing efforts to promote human prosperity. Africa can attest to this, as the linkage between insecurity and lack of development is more pronounced on the continent. Also pronounced in Africa, is the linkage between transnational organized crime, financial crime, drug trafficking and ^{terrorism} corruption. The

activities of criminal groups engaged in human and drug trafficking, kidnapping and extortion have perpetuated humanitarian crises mainly in post conflict countries and aggravated insecurity in neighbouring countries.

In Africa, crime and drug problems are developmental issues. These problems undermine democracy, governance and the rule of law with attendant negative consequences for peace and security on the Continent. The Group wishes to recall the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice, which recognized that comprehensive *crime* prevention strategies must address the root causes and risk factors related to crime and victimization through social, economic, health, education and justice policies. It is in this context that the African Group calls on the international community to assist the Continent in building an effective response in addressing the root causes of crime, especially poverty.

Africa has been a victim of terrorism and the African Group appreciates the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen international cooperation in combating this scourge. The Group believes that a broad and sustained strategy to combat terrorism must include capacity building at the national, regional and international levels to ensure the implementation of the 12 international instruments relating to terrorism in strict conformity with international human rights laws. In this context, we urge the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UNODC to continue to provide all necessary assistance and expertise needed to strengthen the rule of law and to build national capacities to implement the relevant Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism. The Group urges the international community to prevent Africa becoming a platform for terrorist activities.

Mr. President,

Standards and Norms have become indispensable tools in harmonizing legislation and in the effective administration of justice and its application is a positive step towards addressing crime prevention and criminal justice. However, the Group wishes to stress that the application of standards and norms depends on various factors related to socio-cultural background, legal systems, and stages of development.

This year 2005 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations standard-setting in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, coinciding with the Eleventh Congress. Like the previous World Congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice, which have

contributed to the process of standards setting, it is hoped that the Eleventh Congress will have its own contributions.

Similarly, previous World Congresses have been a moral force in galvanizing the international community towards the conclusion of crime-related conventions such as the TOC and the Convention against Corruption, In the same vein, it is our hope that the Eleventh Congress will make a pronouncement in favour of the drafting and conclusion of the following:

- i) The Convention against Theft of and Trafficking in Cultural Property;
- ii) The Convention against Cyber Crime;
- iii) The Code of Conduct against Terrorism; and
- iv) The Comprehensive Convention against Terrorism in all its ramifications.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Africa has a Common Position adopted by the African Union and the Group would like to have the issues and concerns raised in this paper, reflected in the Final Declaration of this Congress.

Once again, on behalf of the African Group, I wish to assure you of our support in the great tasks ahead.

I thank you.

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