

Report of the 14th Crime Congress, Kyoto (Japan) 7-12 March 2021

The 14th Crime Congress, originally planned for April 2020, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and held from 7-12 March 2021 in Kyoto, Japan, in a shortened format. The Congress, taking place every five years, is a recommendation body and lines out the working plan for strategies on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for the next five years.

Member States will take those commitments forward at the 30th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna in May. The Congress is a unique forum to exchange valuable experience in research, law and policy development among countries, organizations, and experts.

It took place at an outstanding venue, in Kyoto International Conference Centre, where the fourth Congress took place 50 years ago. The agenda of the complex matter—crime—was embedded in an environment in harmony with nature, cultural heritage and tradition combined with modern architecture and technology. It might be symbolic and would have been an excellent place for networking and go home with enthusiasm, new ideas and new friends to build back better in strengthening the crime prevention and criminal justice agenda.

The Congress was attended by 5,000 people, only a limited number of ministers of justice and/or their deputies could participate in person. A record of 152 Member States were represented at the Congress along with 400 delegates of 114 non-governmental organizations, 37 intergovernmental organizations, 600 individual experts and several UN entities and institutes.

The Draft Kyoto declaration is entitled *on advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

Despite prior procedures, the outcome document of the Congress, the so called “Political Declaration” was already adopted at the start of the Congress on Sunday under which governments agreed concrete actions to advance responses addressing crime prevention, criminal justice, rule of law and international cooperation.

While welcome messages from the President of the UN General Assembly Volkan Bozkir and UN Secretary-General António Guterres were delivered online, Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado, Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga, Justice Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Prosecutor-General Makoto Hayashi as well the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Ghada Waly addressed the audience in person. The Congress was convened by two females, the Minister of Justice of Japan, Yoko Kamikawa as President of the Congress and the UNODC Executive Director Ms. Ghada Waly, assisted by the Secretariat of CCPCJ, Ms Jo Deydenne.

The Agenda of the Congress included discussion under:

3. Comprehensive strategies for crime prevention towards social and economic development
4. Integrated approaches to challenges facing the criminal justice system.
5. 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.

6. International cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime:(a) Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations;(b) New and emerging forms of crime.

Parallel to the plenary discussion, four workshops with experts and researchers gave substantive input to the work of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on:

- a) Evidence-based crime prevention: statistics, indicators and evaluation in support of successful practices.
- b) Reducing reoffending: Identifying risks and developing solutions.
- c) Education and youth engagement as key to making societies resilient to crime.
- d) Current crime trends, recent developments and emerging solutions, in particular new technologies as means for and tools against crime.

These workshops and 130 ancillary meetings gave an inside what practically works, how crime and corruption are changing, why the definitions have to be reconsidered etc. These events will be saved for download to follow up. All the research, analyzes, recommendations, tools and best practices should be available for further discussion and to work with to fill the box of the Declaration's Agenda. Experts and researchers called for valid data, definition of indicators for measuring crimes, in order to prepare solid statistics and to tailor guidelines and recommendations.

Eleven ancillary meetings were specifically addressing women's issues, hate crime, trafficking, domestic violence, many ancillary meetings included in their analyses gender perspectives, economic disproportions, vulnerabilities. Summaries and recordings are on the congress side.

At the closing, the president of the Congress said: "The Kyoto Declaration is not a goal but a starting point. Following the Declaration, our next step is to implement it to realize just, peaceful and inclusive societies."

Civil Society participation in this process is crucial and the Alliance of NGOs in cooperation with the Civil Society Team tried to do their best in giving space for NGOs. There were some obstacles to actively participate in the hybrid format of the meeting. The technical applications allowed networking during sessions and meetings only by contacting through chat. Only names were listed, so you had to know whom you want to address.

In the NGO meeting before closing of the Congress the Vice Chair of the Alliance summarized the concerns of Civil Society community:

Very few recognition of CS contribution in the high level segment by government delegates, more positive statements at Agenda item 3, several references to CS work in the workshops, restricted number of NGO speakers and sadly attempts to block NGOs by member states.

It needs common actions of NGOs not to get silenced as it is the Civil Society Community, who works at the ground and addresses the root causes.

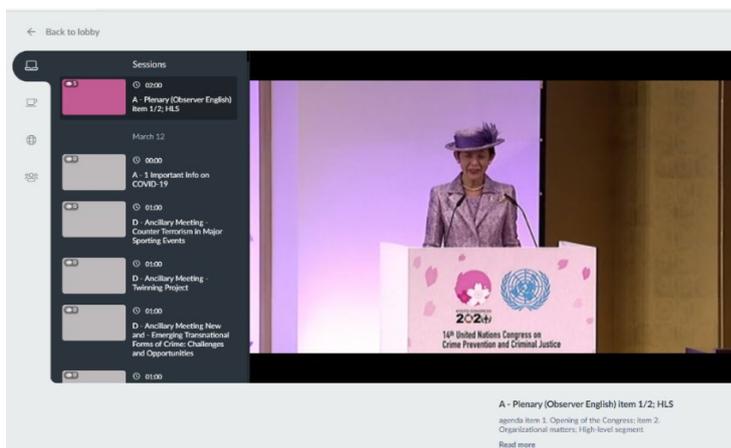
All congress documents and reports are stored under: www.crimecongress.org

Currently the ancillary meetings are stored at <http://www.un-congress.org/>

The virtual platform of the 14th Crime Congress, login page:



Opening by Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado:



Angela Me reporting about the workshops:

