

ECOSOC INTEGRATION SEGMENT

“Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development:

Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”

2 July 2021

Panel discussion

“Institutional strengthening, governance, inclusion and the rule of law”

15:10-16:05

H.E. Ambassador Alessandro Cortese

Chair of the 30th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

PANEL INTERVENTION:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to take part in this important event, in my capacity as Chair of the 30th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

Let me first extend my sincere appreciation to ECOSOC and in particular its President, H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, whose address to the ceremonial opening segment of the Commission, last 17 May, was highly appreciated. On that occasion, we celebrated in Vienna the 30th anniversary of the CCPCJ.

It is no secret that the most vulnerable were hardest hit by the pandemic.

COVID exacerbated socio-economic vulnerabilities - vulnerabilities that are exploited by criminal networks to scale up their activities.

The pandemic also hampered Member States' efforts to prevent crime and strengthen criminal justice institutions.

If we want to build back better after the pandemic, it is key that we invest - like many Ministers have stated at the CCPCJ - in crime prevention and criminal justice efforts that mitigate the negative impacts of pandemic.

Efforts that focus on the most **vulnerable members of society**.

For example, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

Reinstating the basic principles for equal access to services, including healthcare, and protection without discrimination is essential during the crisis.

This was one important topic that the Commission discussed at its thirtieth session in May, and adopted a resolution¹ that **addresses challenges in combating the smuggling of migrants resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.**

¹ Resolution "Strengthening international cooperation in addressing the smuggling of migrants"

And I am happy to inform you that at the reconvened session of the Commission, next December, we will hold a **thematic discussion** on “Effective measures to prevent and counter the smuggling of migrants, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants, particularly women and children, and those of unaccompanied migrant children”.

In my view, it is also important to ensure that our **criminal justice systems mitigate the negative impact** of the pandemic, particularly **in the context of imprisonment**, and promote **the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders**.

I wish to stress here that at the thirtieth session in May, the CCPCJ adopted resolutions^{2,3}, calling on Member States to take into account lessons learned and best practices applied during the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort:

- **to make criminal justice systems more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive, responsive and better prepared for similar future challenges, and**

- **to develop comprehensive strategies or action plans to reduce reoffending through effective interventions for the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders.**

² Resolution “Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”

³ Resolution “Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration”

Another key area for our action is preventing and countering **corruption and fraud** occurring more extensively in the absence of adequate oversight measures in rapid and largescale disbursement of resources during the COVID-19.

Most recent recognition of this has been expressed in the Kyoto Declaration, adopted at the **Fourteenth Crime Congress** in March and endorsed by the Commission at the May session, whereby Member States committed to a number of **comprehensive anti-corruption actions and efforts**. Significant commitments in this area were made by Member States also in the Political Declaration adopted by the **Special Session of the General Assembly on Corruption**, held at the beginning of June.

Excellencies,

Effective crime prevention and strong criminal justice institutions are integral to foster development, peace, stability and security, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Commission works to strengthen the capacity of Member States to detect, prevent, prosecute and combat all types of crime, to provide access to justice for all and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels – **thereby supporting Member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda**.

In doing so, the Commission has incorporated a COVID-19-related angle into its deliberations and activities, as **strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses is indispensable to build back better** from the pandemic.

To conclude, let me reiterate that under my Chairmanship the Commission will continue playing a major role in strengthening international cooperation in addressing global challenges and threats, while mitigating the negative impact of COVID-19.

Thank you.

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CONCLUDING MESSAGE:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the face of the global unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for a **coordinated and joint multilateral response** to prevent and counter transnational crime has never been more compelling. And it has been proved that this is the most effective approach.

In taking this response, we should be guided first and foremost by the principle of **“leaving no one behind”**.

We should make sure that the real and concrete risks posed by COVID-19 on vulnerable members of society, including in the context of crime prevention and criminal justice, are not overlooked.

Let me reiterate that the Commission looks forward to continuing the dialogue and cooperation with all of you, so that we can live up to the expectations and implement the SDGs, together by accelerating our joint action, while leaving no one behind.

Thank you.