

STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. COLLEN V. KELAPILE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)**

AT THE

OPENING SEGMENT

OF

**31ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

16 MAY 2022

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- **Excellencies;**
- **Honourable Ministers;**
- **Distinguished Delegates;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. It is a pleasure to participate at this **31st Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.**
2. The Commission -- as one of the functional commissions of ECOSOC -- plays a key role in mobilising international action to prevent and address national and transnational crime and in advancing the efficiency and fairness of criminal justice systems, thereby making an important contribution to an integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. The Commission also serves an important function as a preparatory and implementing body of the United Nations Congresses on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

4. In this respect, I am very pleased to note that the Commission has initiated an intensive and comprehensive follow-up process to the implementation of the outcome document of the Fourteenth Crime Congress, held in Kyoto, Japan last year, namely the Kyoto Declaration on ***"Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."***

Excellencies,

5. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit all spheres of our life, affecting countries, communities and individuals especially the most vulnerable. Crime prevention and criminal justice were no exception.
6. The pandemic has had a disruptive impact on the efforts of Member States to prevent and combat crime, in all its manifestations. Criminal justice systems around the world face challenges in fulfilling their mandates, while criminal organizations exploit the new realities to adapt their *modus operandi* or develop new illicit activities.

7. With many services now provided online, there is a high risk of criminal networks taking advantage of the increased use of online technology to diversify their disruptive tools and methods.
8. In this regard, I commend the thematic focus of the 31st Session of the Commission on ***“Strengthening the Use of Digital Evidence in Criminal Justice and Countering Cybercrime, including the Abuse and Exploitation of Minors in Illegal Activities with the Use of the Internet.”***
9. I am confident that this year’s thematic discussion will enable a fruitful debate on innovative solutions to countering the emerging issue of cybercrime. In addition, the discussions should foster an interactive exchange of ideas on ways to strengthen the collection and management of digital evidence in criminal justice.

Excellencies,

10. I note with appreciation that the Commission has submitted -- as it has done in previous years -- a substantive contribution to enrich our discussions on the theme of the 2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which is: ***“Building back better from Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) While Advancing the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”***
11. Furthermore, the Commission has contributed to the ongoing review by the Council of the work of its subsidiary bodies. It has actively engaged in this exercise, bringing forward the Vienna perspective.
12. To conclude, let me underscore that effective crime prevention and strong criminal justice institutions are key to strengthening the rule of law and human rights and serve as a prerequisite for the sustainable fight against organized crime, corruption and terrorism, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. The work of the Commission is therefore critical to ensuring an integrated and action-oriented response to the multifaceted crisis posed by COVID-19.

14. Let me reiterate that the Council will continue supporting the work of the Commission, including through facilitating its collaboration and coordination with other functional commissions of ECOSOC.

I thank you for your kind attention.