



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
26 April 2012

Original: English

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Twenty-first session

Vienna, 23-27 April 2012

Draft report

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Addendum

Use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice

1. At its 8th and 9th meetings, on 26 and 27 April 2012, the Commission considered agenda item 8, entitled “Use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice”. For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to violence against women (E/CN.15/2012/13);

(b) Note by the Secretariat on the meeting of the expert group on strengthening access to legal aid in criminal justice systems (E/CN.15/2012/17);

(c) Report of the Secretariat on the work of the Expert Group on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (E/CN.15/2012/18);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice (E/CN.15/2012/22);

(e) Report on the meeting of the Expert Group on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners held in Vienna from 31 January to 2 February 2012 (UNODC/CCPCJ/EG.6/2012/1);

(f) Notes and comments on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (E/CN.15/2012/CRP.1);

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(g) Background note on the meeting of the Expert Group on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (E/CN.15/2012/CRP.2).

2. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children made a statement. An introductory statement was made by the Chief of the Justice Section, Division for Operations, of UNODC. Statements were made by the representatives of Germany, Thailand, China, South Africa and Canada. Statements were also made by the observers for Libya and Norway. Statements were also made by the observers for Amnesty International, Penal Reform International, the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates, Pax Romana, the World Society of Victimology and the Academic Council on the United Nations System.

Deliberations

3. Several speakers reiterated the relevance of the standards and norms and recalled the role played by the Commission in their development. Some speakers referred to changes in crime trends, which necessitated multifaceted responses taking into account differences in legal systems and technical assistance needs. It was stressed that efforts of States should focus on the crime prevention dimension, as that would enable timely progress in combating violence against children and women. In this regard, it was reiterated that the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime provided the necessary framework. Several speakers referred to deficits in the implementation of the otherwise well-developed international norms on juvenile justice.

4. Many speakers underlined the relevance of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners as a landmark and a basis for penal reform worldwide. Several speakers commended the work of the intergovernmental expert group on the Standard Minimum Rules and expressed their support for the targeted review of the Rules to reflect recent advances in correctional sciences and best practices. There was consensus that no changes to the Rules should lower any of the existing standards. A number of speakers emphasized the central role of technical assistance in order to promote and support the wide implementation of the Rules, making the most efficient use of available resources.

5. Several delegates welcomed the work of the expert group on strengthening access to legal aid in criminal justice systems at its meeting held in November 2011. Delegates also emphasized the crucial role of access to legal aid in ensuring the right to a fair trial and promoting fair and efficient criminal justice systems, and welcomed the opportunity to further support those goals through the application of the United Nations principles and guidelines on access to legal aid in criminal justice systems.

6. Several speakers stressed the importance of addressing violence against women and expressed their concern at the fact that that form of violence was still widespread, pervasive, often unreported and sometimes even condoned. It was recognized that comprehensive institutional and legal frameworks were needed to prevent and respond to violence against women, and reference was made to the important role played by the criminal justice system in this regard. Some speakers referred to relevant national measures and called for strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice at the national and the international level in order to respond to violence against women.