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## Remarks at the high-level conference on sustainable development, crime prevention and safe societies

**Bangkok, 5 March 2018**

Your Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be back in Bangkok to open this important high-level event featuring so many distinguished speakers and participants.

It is a particular honour to have with us Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha, who I am so proud to say is UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Rule of Law in Southeast Asia.

As a lawyer and prosecutor, Her Royal Highness is a passionate advocate for the rule of law and improving people's lives throughout the region.

Her Royal Highness also hosted the Bangkok Dialogue on the Rule of Law in 2013, which built momentum for Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Today's High Level Conference can be another milestone in advancing Goal 16.

Crimes such as corruption, cybercrime, human trafficking, migrant smuggling and wildlife crime harm millions of vulnerable victims. They also endanger the security, health and well-being of all our societies.

We know that when the rule of law and institutions are weak, global efforts to lift people out of poverty and to sustain development are hindered and undermined.

But we also know that the rule of law, and fair criminal justice systems, can prevent crime, and enable and promote sustainable development.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the challenges of justice, security and building strong institutions form part of the holistic approach to achieve the SDGs.

UNODC, together with its many partners, plays a central role in addressing areas of crime prevention and criminal justice.

Through forums such as the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice - the CCPCJ - UNODC helps to raise awareness of evolving threats.

The Office provides Member States with the latest research and insightful analysis of trends to inform policy responses to these multifaceted challenges.

And using our integrated global field network, our unique portfolio of expertise and diverse partnerships across the UN system and outside, UNODC delivers the technical support and capacity building needed.

This work is driven by the UN conventions on drugs, crime and corruption; the international counter-terrorism instruments; and UN standards and norms promoting crime prevention strategies and effective, fair and humane criminal justice systems.

UNODC also supports Member States to put into action the Doha Declaration from the 2015 Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

I warmly commend Thailand for its efforts to realize the commitments contained in the Doha Declaration as well as the 2030 Agenda, at home and globally as a member of the CCPCJ, through systematic assessment and plans for implementation.

The next Crime Congress will take place in Kyoto in 2020 and focuses on "Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda."

Today's conference can help us build support for SDG 16 in Kyoto, while ensuring that discussions on the rule of law and the SDGs are broad-based and inclusive.

Our goal must be to encourage greater cooperation and ensure that justice, governance and development are addressed comprehensively.

High-level events such as these serve an important purpose. They increase awareness that security and criminal justice are not separate processes, and are tightly bound to development; that transparency, equity and fairness are the springboard for achieving sustainable development; and that strengthening institutions, especially criminal justice systems, is a prerequisite for long-term prosperity.

UNODC supports these objectives in South East Asia through an integrated approach delivered by our regional office, which is dedicated to assisting ASEAN address transnational crime, drug and rule of law issues.

The UNODC regional office based in Bangkok supports action against transnational crime, corruption, and terrorism; promotes drug policies aligned to the international drug control conventions and outcomes of the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem; and delivers tailored criminal justice reform programmes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This High Level Conference is a unique opportunity to consider urgent issues, and to discuss different perspectives.

But we can also use this meeting to send a very clear message, here in South East Asia, and beyond.

If we want safe societies, sustainable development and better lives for all, we must foster the rule of law and fair criminal justice systems capable of protecting these worthy goals.

Thank you.