

1st Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness

The 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was held in Kyoto in March 2021. Built on the achievements of this Congress, the 1st Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness was held in Tokyo in October 2021.

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THE United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (hereinafter the UN Crime Congress) is one of the largest UN conferences in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, held once every five years since 1955. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna serves as the secretariat of the UN Crime Congress. At the UN Crime Congress, ministers of justice and prosecutors general, criminal justice professionals and scholars from around the world, including those of international organizations and non-governmental

organizations (NGOs), discuss national initiatives and international cooperation, aiming to make the world a safer place.

After being delayed due to the global spread of COVID-19, the 14th UN Crime Congress (commonly referred to as the Kyoto Congress) was held in Japan for the first time in over fifty years at the Kyoto International Conference Center, with thorough COVID-19 infection control measures in place, from March 7 to 12, 2021. It was held in a hybrid format combining in-person and online participation and attracted more than 5,000 participants registered from 152 UN

Member States, both of which were the largest numbers ever.

The overall theme of the Kyoto Congress was, “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice, and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.” The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an action plan adopted by the UN in 2015, which lays out the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 16 is aimed at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and providing access to justice for all. At the Kyoto Congress, comprehensive strategies for crime prevention towards social and economic development, integrated approaches to challenges facing the criminal justice system, and other themes were discussed. The Kyoto Declaration, incorporating the promotion of crime prevention, the rule of law, and international cooperation, was adopted as the outcome of the Kyoto Congress. The Kyoto Declaration represents medium- to long-term guidelines for initiatives in these fields for the UN and its member states.

(See <https://www.moj.go.jp/KYOTOCONGRESS2020/en/> for more information on the Kyoto Congress)

Global Youth Forum

The Kyoto Declaration emphasizes the importance of empowering “youth to become active agents of positive change in their communities to support crime prevention efforts, including by organizing social, educational, cultural, recreational,



The opening ceremony at the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (the Kyoto Congress) in March 2021

sports-related youth programmes, and youth forums, as well as by using social media platforms and applications and other digital tools to amplify their voice.”

Against such a background, the Ministry of Justice of Japan held the 1st Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness at the Tokyo International Forum on October 9 and 10, aiming mainly to promote understandings among young people about modern issues related to the rule of law and justice, to raise awareness in the field of justice among young people, and to build a global network of youth participants. About 120 people from 41 countries participated in the youth forum, which was held in a hybrid format. During the opening ceremony, following the Minister of Justice’s opening remarks, Her Imperial Highness Princess Tsuguko offered encouragement and hope to the youth, who will be responsible for building a better and brighter future for the world.

With an overall theme of the Role of Youth in Achieving a Diverse and Inclusive Society, discussions were held by dividing participants into two group sessions, each addressing one of two agenda items: “Reaching the Age of Adulthood and Participation in Society,” and “Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-COVID-19 world—Youth Participation in Achieving an Inclusive Society.”

In the two group sessions, many fresh ideas on the ways to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve a diverse and inclusive society, which is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, emerged



Furukawa Yoshihisa, Minister of Justice, offered the opening remarks at the 1st Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness

from lively discussions among the participants.

Based on the discussions in the group sessions, the recommendations of the two group sessions were adopted by all participants during the closing plenary session. These recommendations encouraged governments to actively engage young people to promote their participation in society and to address difficulties specific to young people. They also encouraged governments to offer opportunities for young people to acquire social skills and to receive care for the isolation and mental health issues that have surfaced as critical issues facing young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. These

recommendations will be presented at the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), one of the functional committees of the UN Economic and Social Council.

(See the links below for more information regarding the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration and the Youth Forum. https://www.moj.go.jp/Implementing_the_Kyoto_Declaration/en/index.html and <https://twitter.com/CongressKyoto>)

Note: This article has been created with the consent of the Ministry of Justice and on the basis of materials published by the Ministry.



Participants in the group sessions



Participants attended discussions online