

Comments given by Karen Judd Smith, Co-Chair of the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice during the NGO Dialogue on the the 14th Crime Congress, March 6th, 2017.

Mr. Chairman, Vice–Minister of Justice, Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends:

Konnichiwa, and thank you Mr. Ambassador for enabling me to join you this afternoon, from a usually sunny California (it’s just a little early at the moment.) My colleagues in the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and I sincerely appreciate our inclusion in these early preparatory discussions of the 2020 Crime Congress.

Thank you too to your colleague, the Vice Minister of Justice of Japan for ensuring this consultative process is underway. Our thanks extend also to Ms. Jo Dedeyne and Mr. Dimitri Vlassis for their helpful overview of the work UNODC is spearheading, the Global Programme you have underway and for facilitating these dialogues.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps you read our minds—or the Civil Society Doha Declaration* that we presented in 2015? Rather I suspect you are simply ahead of schedule and inclusive of Civil Society consistent with the Doha Declaration. I wish to acknowledge your foresight and to extend our gratitude. We are heartened and honored to be partners in this dialogue today, and in the work ahead.

Our world is increasingly complex, lines are blurring, every-day values are changing before our eyes, and stability seems to have faded with the close of the 20th century. Yet, in the midst of all this, the UN continues forward as do so many concerned and self-activating individuals in civil society who are committed to improving our remarkable world. We are committed to working at the grassroots levels where we see the gaps and needs; and at the community and national levels where we can help shape the societies in which our families live and grow. Additionally, in our globalizing world, we are committed to bringing our expertise and insights to international policy levels even when those stretches are hard for us.

With the escalating pace of change becoming the new norm, I believe we all concur that there is great value in linking the social intelligence, hard won by those on the ground, working in our communities, organizations and associations, as well as in scientific and academic communities, as quickly as possible to the governmental processes underway. This social intelligence still does take time to formulate and communicate. We no longer have the luxury of the more comfortable pace of the past. Timing, as noted by the previous speaker, is of the essence.

A book just published in November entitled, “United Nations Unlocked” spoke to this issue as well, while also looking at one of the biggest challenges before us: how to upgrade our social structures, especially the mature hierarchical ones such as the United Nations, so they can be sufficiently agile and relevant in fast-changing and turbulent times. The Doha Declaration speaks to this in some part, with the foresight of including in paragraph 10, a call for, “the development and implementation of consultative and participatory processes.”

Your early action here today Mr. Chairman, bodes well for the 2020 Congress in today’s tech-leveraged world that perhaps even more urgently needs to be surrounded by a culture of law, where more effective crime prevention, and increased capacities to reduce violence and defend human rights in light of the Doha Declaration can emerge.

Excellencies, we all know how challenging asynchronous partnerships can be. They are hard to forge, often exasperating to nurture and at times, they stretch us to our limits. Yet, in the end, we are social creatures and we do better together. Often it is the challenges that require great investment that enable us to reach even further.

I do not expect all aspects of the Member State – Civil Society relationship to be easy and comfortable. But, neither does having challenges diminish the value of the partnership. We have difficult problems to solve and we may well have to wrestle with ourselves and with one another. We will work to bring our best to this work.

Now to the main point to which I wish to bring your attention today: the Civil Society also had a Doha Declaration in 2015 and it has eight (8) major focus areas. As I quickly review these, I think it is important to note that each of these eight areas of concern are grounded in existing work and in the experiences of groups and teams and organizations. Each area of concern highlighted is but a bullet point tip of an iceberg of actions: of lessons learned and hearts and minds invested in creating and improving people-centered approaches to real life problems.

Excellencies, the ongoing intent of Civil Society is to use our knowledge and social capital to strengthen the positive impact intended by Member States. Unsung heroes are at this moment, augmenting policies, standards and norms with promising practices and innovations that upgrade existing programs and transform lives. So as we better understand how we can participate more effectively as with Member States in this work, and are included in the various processes, you will see the frameworks the Member States and the United Nations so valuably provide come alive and transform more lives.

The full document of the Civil Society Doha Declaration is available on the [Alliance website](#),* and I will briefly list the main topics it addresses in more depth from the NGO perspective for reference.

1. The crosscutting nature of the promotion of the rule of law, human rights and sustainability.
2. The cooperation needed to prevent and combat transnational organized crime and corruption and the importance of utilizing the capacities of Civil Society to support the implementation, monitoring and enforcement efforts associated with UNTOC and UNCAC
3. The urgent need to prepare for new and emerging forms of transnational crime and unexpected threats
4. National approaches be community-centered engaging Civil Society organizations who focus on the most vulnerable and especially including women and youth
5. The role of UN standards and norms that support effective, fair, human and accountable criminal justice systems in the Member States including minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners, Mandela Rules.
6. Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.
7. New avenues for increasing public involvement in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
8. Implementation utilizing evidence-based plans, training, capacity building both within governments and civil society.

Mr. Chairman, our hope is that the expanded explanations in this document can be one more starting point for meaningful conversations and future collaboration. For our part, we will be looking more closely at the details of the Doha Declaration, and perhaps especially paragraphs 7 and 10, and we will ramp up our communication with our network of NGOs to increase their awareness of and involvement in future dialogues and engagement so as to expand the impact of your office's efforts.

We will naturally continue to work closely with the UNODC's Civil Society Team for which we are most appreciative and seek to strengthen other constructive linkages promising new forms of engagement that can scale existing and proven promising practices, especially in some of the most pressing areas of concern such as countering violent extremism.

Relevant to the various topics at hand, the Alliance will work to inform you of projects that are successful "proofs of concept" for promoting peaceful, corruption-free and inclusive and sustainable societies, that successfully counter trafficking, transnational crime, and more. In short, we will

continue work through the multitude of avenues in which Civil Society operates to ignite the latent potential within the communities we address, for we know they long for a culture of law so ably articulated in the Doha Declaration.

Aware too of emerging challenges sparked by the exponential growth of technology today, our members are also working to expand the involvement of the tech community in solutions to the challenges of, for example, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Social Good. With AI increasingly at the heart of technological and social evolution, its impact will be felt in many arenas including labor, health, environment, criminal justice, human rights and peace and security and the containment—or spread—of violent extremism.

Mr. Chairman, do keep us on our toes... *and* please be there to support us. We will do likewise for you as we seek to help you break new ground through innovative participatory processes in the weeks and months ahead. We are, after all, [#bettertogether](#), especially in these turbulent times.

Thank you for your kind attention.

*** Civil Society Doha Declaration:**

http://cpcalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Doha-Civil-Society-Forum-Declaration-13th_6pm.doc