

UNICRI STATEMENT at the U.N. CRIME COMMISSION
By UNICRI Director, Mr. Sandro Calvani

On the Occasion of the
Seventeenth Session of the United Nations Commission
On Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Vienna, 14 April 2008

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

It is a great honour for me to briefly address the distinguished Members of this Commission.

This year UNICRI – the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute – celebrates 40 years of assistance to intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations and civil society in formulating and implementing improved policies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. A report of the UNCIRI Board of Trustees has been circulated, with number E/CN.15/2008/13, to the Commission.

In a rapidly changing world, UNICRI's major goals today are advancing security, serving justice and building peace.

UNICRI sees itself as 'the first response broker'. In its forty years of experience, it has become known for its dynamic, fresh and innovative approach in applied research. Knowledge management, creativity in finding solutions and the power of partnerships are the major UNICRI instruments of work.

UNICRI operates in selected niches as a 'laboratory of ideas' and its activities help the integration of national and international efforts to search for good practices and adapt them to different national situations.

The UNICRI Applied Research Programme is organized in four main work areas: Emerging Crimes and Anti-Human Trafficking; Security Governance and Counter Terrorism Laboratory; Justice Reform and Post-Graduate Training.

Let me briefly illustrate them.

Justice Reform

UNICRI's aim in this area is to strengthen the governance of judicial institutions and to support judicial reform and operational capacity building.

Within this framework, we design projects drawn from UNICRI's long-standing experience in judicial and juvenile justice reform, which were major fields of action ever since the establishment of the Institute. Indeed, at present we embrace projects pertaining to the protection of vulnerable groups, with a special attention to children at risk and women. UNICRI Justice Reform activities aim at supporting countries making the best use of international expertise and best practices and in setting up appropriate structures and institutions.

UNICRI promotes the rule of law and the adoption of international standards in the field of crime prevention and human rights protection thus, assists countries in formulating just and efficient criminal justice policies through the elaboration of juvenile justice laws, regulations and protocols.

Moreover, UNICRI is fully committed in fighting corruption through its involvement in few projects, among which the UNICRI/UNODC Technical Guide which will be launched soon. This Guide aims at assisting policy makers and practitioners in the implementation of the provisions of the UNCAC after the ratification process.

Since UNICRI considers training an indispensable tool to strengthen fair and efficient justice systems capable of effectively dealing with serious crimes (such as corruption, drug trafficking and organized crime) the Institute carries out training projects for judges, prosecutors and other specialized personnel.

These projects are worldwide carried out with special attention to the African region, Balkan region and Latin America.

Security Governance/Counter Terrorism Laboratory

UNICRI's activities in the fields of security governance and counter terrorism are specifically designed, and regularly refined, to offer Member States a comprehensive range of effective response options to prevent acts of terrorism, and enhance capacity through effective security governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Operating from an extremely flexible and responsive cooperation platform, the Institute offers advisory services, strategic assistance and action-oriented analysis across a wide spectrum of security topics.

UNICRI supports national, regional and international policy makers facing new challenges such as security during Major Events; the prevention of illicit trafficking

in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials; the illicit trafficking of precious metals and stones; security governance in the post-conflict context; and interreligious dialogue.

The Institute is fully committed to implementing the UN Counter-terrorism Strategy through its participation in the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. Within the latter, it is co-leader of two working groups on “radicalization and extremism that lead to terrorism” and “the protection of vulnerable targets”.

UNICRI’s principal security governance and counter terrorism initiative is IPO, the International Permanent Observatory. Designed to enhance security governance and major event security worldwide, the programme is unique in terms of UNICRI activities in that it is mandated by the E/2006/28 ECOSOC Resolution on IPO.

Moreover, the Institute coordinates the EU-SEC project which aims to enhance the coordination of existing national research programmes and to set up a common long-term strategy for research in the field of security at Major Events within the European Union.

The Institute is also pioneering a Programme of Excellence aimed at increasing the level of knowledge and prioritization given to existing modes of multilateral cooperation.

Emerging Crimes and Anti-Human Trafficking

With specific regard to this year commission’s focus, I would like to stress the efforts of the Institute on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to a particular form of violence against women: trafficking in human beings.

UNICRI is actively involved in efforts to reduce trafficking in human beings for commercial and sexual exploitation through a wide range of activities. The Institute also designs and implements projects aimed at countering organised crime involved in trafficking in human beings in peace-support mission areas.

Within this framework, UNICRI collects and evaluates information to design technical programmes of intervention in different countries and to strengthen international and regional cooperation through information-sharing.

The activities carried out aim to enhance an institution’s capacity to combat criminal groups exploiting the victims and to develop mechanisms for the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficked people. The activities are carried out in several areas of the world, such as Africa, South-East Asia, Central America, Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

UNICRI has recently opened new fields of action on emerging crimes, such as money laundering, counterfeiting, environmental crime, illegal trade in cultural property and stolen works of art, and cyber crime. Regarding counterfeiting the Institute has produced a Report which includes data from governments and international organizations, underlines the magnitude of counterfeiting and recommendations on the strategies to be implemented to counter it.

In Afghanistan UNICRI is jointly carrying out two projects with UNODC aimed at creating 2 different training manuals to be handed over to Afghan Judges and Prosecutors. The main objective of both manuals is to give support in improving of the professional skills and delivery capacity of judges and prosecutors in selected provinces of Afghanistan on corruption and drug related crimes.

Post-Graduate Training

Finally, UNICRI is implementing a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Organizations, International Criminal Law and Crime Prevention which aims at providing participants with competencies in the field of International Criminal Law, and an in-depth knowledge of the theoretical and practical international instruments for preventing and countering international and transnational crimes.

The Institute is also developing a Summer School on migration and development.