

**MESSAGE OF BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI,
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

I send my greetings and good wishes to the criminal justice officials and researchers who are attending this Conference.

I see this Conference as contributing to understanding between practitioners in the criminal justice system of a number of Member States and the academic community; and also as providing a valuable opportunity for cross-national dialogue and debate on crime and criminal justice issues.

Crime and victimisation are of increasing concern to the international community. The International Victimization Survey has great potential for informing and reforming policies relating to crime, its effects, and justice. The United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power is an example of the positive outcome of the use and analysis of victim surveys.

The international exchange of data, analysis and policy viewpoints in the crime and criminal justice fields, mediated by institutions such as UNICRI and conferences such as this, have an important contribution to make to the realisation of the social goals of the Charter of the United Nations, and the attainment of "Social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

**ADDRESS BY NICOLA MANCINO,
MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, ITALY**

I am particularly honoured to address the opening of this International Conference which, given the theme under discussion and the scientific authority of the participants, is of such great importance.

I wholly support both the programme and the objectives of the Conference; not only the substantive aspects which provide a new contribution to the further understanding of the phenomenon of crime, but also the innovative methodological aspects and their particular significance in the light of the organisational and managerial involvement of the United Nations in this endeavour.

Given its high level of authority, its neutrality with respect to the particular interests of each single country, and its noble aims, the United Nations undoubtedly provides the most suitable forum for the objective analysis and evaluation of the phenomenon of crime, even at an international comparative level.

By its involvement - through the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Institute (UNICRI) - in this initiative, Italy has made available its own data and experiences to the international community, for analysis and evaluation together with the results of the other 30 European and non-European countries involved in the survey. The common aim of this initiative is to promote a greater awareness of the reality of crime, so as to enable governments to identify and focalise on the necessary crime prevention measures.

It has often been claimed by authorities, even of international level, that highly industrialised countries tend to have higher crime rates. From this it can be deduced, therefore, that a cause-effect relationship exists between economic development and increased violence, although I am not personally in total agreement with this current of thought.

In fact, highly developed countries with low levels of criminality also exist, as do socially and economically depressed countries with very high crime rates.

As far as Italy is concerned, the frequent episodes of criminal brutality can be attributed to various causes and forms of behaviour which are easy to identify but difficult to understand and diagnose.

During the last few years it has often been asserted that the correct functioning, impartiality and efficiency of administrative action must be ensured if the obstacles to social development and civil recovery are to be removed. These obstacles pollute the human environment and pose heavy limits to any legitimate legal action.

There is an element of truth in this claim. Nor should one underestimate the fact that the degradation of social life has its origin in the debasement of those values which used to be part of collective and individual conscience.

In fact, respect for the human being has withered away and often, in order to encourage and justify behaviour that is antagonistic to public order, new anti-state ideologies have been advanced.

The public is certainly more aware of crime nowadays than in the past and the violent expansion of some criminal phenomena has led to a strong demand on the part of society for a more firm response by the state.

A marked decrease in criminality has been registered during the last few years. In fact, compared to the same period in 1991, between 1 January and 30

September of this year a decrease was recorded in homicides (1,105 compared to 1,937 in 1991 -20.90%); serious robberies (8,845 compared to 11,747 -24.72%); and pickpocketing (43,287 compared to 57,835 - 25.15%).

The decrease in petty crime can be linked to tougher policies in the fight against organised crime. They involve a differentiated legislation, borrowed from the positive experience of the fight against terrorism, which has been introduced into the legal system. In other words, substantial penal law foresees different sanctions and different application procedures depending on whether petty or organised crime is being dealt with.

New measures were introduced in the latest provisions of August 1992 which have proved particularly effective for the action of the law enforcement agencies.

For example, patrimonial prevention measures require people to account for the origin of certain valuable goods; they thus strike at those people who own valuable goods that are above their actual economic capacity.

In the field of investigative activities, new important measures have been introduced which aim to encourage the so-called repentant offenders, even those in detention, to collaborate with the justice.

There is no doubt that, recently, the law enforcement agencies have inflicted heavy blows on criminal associations. Without attaching too much weight to them, the following operations should certainly be mentioned: the arrest of Madonia and Alfieri; the extradition from Caracas of the Cuntrera Brothers; The Green Ice Operation and the latest so-called "Leopard" Operations. These are operations of vast dimensions, which were made possible thanks to the revelations of collaborators with the justice.

Very recently, public attention has focussed on the phenomenon of extorsions, following the tragic episodes of Gela and Foggia. The dimensions and trend of the phenomenon of extortion are not, in fact, easy to describe both because of the various forms they can assume and the growing gap between the number of extorsions that are reported to the police and those that are actually put into practice.

It should, in fact, be highlighted that the phenomenon takes on a more serious and complex dimension if the criminal actions preceding the request for money - intimidations, dynamite or fire attacks - are taken into consideration.

The victim is often afraid to collaborate with the law enforcement agencies or the magistrates. It is, however, this very attitude that has to change since the only effective way to combat this abject phenomenon is by reporting it to the authorities, either individually or in groups (trade associations could - and in fact do - play a valid role in these cases).

For this reason public opinion must be mobilised as much as possible, so as to create an atmosphere of collaboration between the community and the institutions, and conditions of moral deterrence.

Predictions on possible targets are often made: it would also be useful to conduct a comparative study of the persons at risk, to intensify protective measures and to carry out intelligence activities.

It is now part of the law enforcement agencies' routine work to study the level of risk. Organised crime uses different logics, strategies and objectives.

Whereas the clans were initially in competition with one another, nowadays it is possible to identify a criminal organisation of much vaster and sophisticated

proportions and with a very high level of efficiency. Whether or not the "cupola" actually exists, it is impossible to deny the existence of a hierarchy that uses well targetted actions with a ferocious determination.

From an analysis of recent trends, it is possible to identify the development of forms of delinquency, in the light of rapid mobility; the use of data processing systems; access to the international banking systems; the possibility to use capital even on the world financial markets, and a high capacity to invest illegal profits.

The expansion of this type of economy seriously disrupts the socio-economic order, by threatening the correct functioning of the market and by inhibiting growth, especially in the south of Italy where the presence of criminality suffocates any initiatives and obstructs any attempts to set up external enterprises in the area.

A new law is being finalised which will place a tighter control on the sale/purchase of commercial enterprises and land, as well as on the transfer of the title of companies from one person to another, especially those with limited responsibility.

Despite several indisputable successes, the old axiom whereby delinquency can only be beaten by the police, must be abandoned. It is essential, instead, to aim towards a new social and legal moral awareness, so that people will overcome fear and indifference and start collaborating with the state: the greater the collaboration, the more powerful will be the state's offensive against crime.

Lack of involvement by the public, and lack of interest on the part of those who hold responsible positions and carry out important functions have also contributed towards the proliferation of crime.

The spirit of tolerance, fear, and sometimes of conditioning or even collusion on the part of the elected public authorities make it even more difficult to fight criminality.

As can be imagined, the problem of values and morality invests the political and administrative life of the country, the transparency and correctness of the "general good" and the ethics of those who have taken it upon themselves to produce the "common good".

It was with this aim that the Parliament approved Law 221, which foresees the dissolution of provincial and town councils that are implicated with, or infiltrated by the Mafia.

It is not enough to aspire towards the honest behaviour of each citizen; those in power must also exhibit a transparent morality, and the state should not simply represent a repressive organ.

In order to achieve this, a social and political order must be established in which the individual is the means and the end; in other words, a society which does not base its values on its level of well-being but also on its capacity to create justice and human growth.

Only in this way will it be possible to construct a state which has a "monopoly of the law". By this we mean a state which, by means of its legality, is able to construct conditions based on the law which permits social dialogue, and in which individuals and groups can exercise their initiative and potential to the full.

Even this is not always sufficient: the state also has the inexorable duty to care for the victims of criminal activity, and this is the theme of this meeting.

In this respect, international organisations have made increasing and authoritative demands for the protection of victims of crime and of those people who are considered at greatest risk.

As I have already mentioned, during the last few years Italian legislation has given priority to these problems. In fact, the state should keep in mind that the citizen is the principal subject of politics and, as such must participate in social life.

This type of state action would not only produce greater moral results and ensure the protection of human rights; I am convinced that it would also produce side effects in at least two other areas of great interest, from both a practical point of view and for the positive development of civil society.

In the first place, victim surveys represent an alternative tool for the analysis of crime and its effects on society. In particular, through the collection of information, even of an anonymous type, it is possible to comprehend the reaction of citizens who have been victims of criminal acts. Even in those cases where the incidents are not reported to the police or to the magistrature, an understanding of the reasons for non-reporting allows for an analysis of the conditions of life and of the environment which is useful for crime prevention and repression activities.

Secondly, a study of that large indeterminate area, known as the "dark figure" permits scholars and people working in the justice field to become acquainted with all those aspects related to the offences, the people involved and their local and family environments.

A global vision of criminality, and hence not simply of those aspects related to its prevention and repression, will facilitate an evaluation of the effects of the operations carried out, and of the adopted policies. This in turn will enable the law enforcement agencies and the government to refine their techniques and strategies, and hence to create more efficient and scientific intervention policies.

A greater interest in the victims on the part of the State could lead to greater awareness and involvement of the citizens, as well as to their stronger moral and civil commitment. Italy also needs to intensify its commitment in this direction.

Since the seventies our country has witnessed the parallel diffusion of serious crime - most of which was produced by the direct action of organised crime - but also of minor offences, such as theft, bag-snatching, and assaults, which are closely linked to drug pushing.

The recent offensive of the state has upset consolidated criminal equilibria and has brought to light new and more fragmented groups, which have, and still are attempting to raise the level of confrontation. The state has for some time now been able to provide an adequate response to each attempt at escalation.

The present situation presents positive elements and it is comforting to note that, according to data from international sources, Italy has more or less average victimisation rates when measured against other comparable European countries.

These discoveries strengthen my intention to develop further those actions aimed at stimulating and controlling the rules of good administration. This action should be based on an awareness of the deep roots of malaise and criminal infiltration in the nerve of society. It should also be based on the certainty that the problem of organised crime cannot be solved by the use of police instruments alone.

I am sure that new ideas will be presented by those participating in this Conference. The definition of crime prevention policies are the precondition for a professionally trained and updated police force.

**ADDRESS BY UGO LEONE,
DIRECTOR, UNICRI**

It is my privilege on behalf of the United Nations and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute to welcome you to this International Conference on Understanding Crime: Experiences of Crime and Crime Control. I would like to extend a special welcome to the Right Honourable Nicola Mancino, Minister of the Interior of Italy, Dato Steenhuis, Procurator General of the Netherlands, and Herman Woltring, Officer-in-Charge of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division at the United Nations Office at Vienna.

Our sincere thanks go to the Ministry of the Interior of Italy and the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands whose generosity and support have made this important event possible.

There is no doubt that poverty, peace, environment, drugs and crime represent the major problems facing mankind and society at present, and that they will continue to do so in the decades to come.

Crime has a direct effect on the quality of life, economic development and the progress that can be achieved by a civilised society. Traditionally, its study has been restricted to the points of view of the protection of society, control by the state, or the behaviour and characteristics of those perpetrating criminal acts. Now, however, an effort is being made to enrich comprehension of the phenomenon through the development of the science of victimology, i.e. crime as perceived by the victim, including the very important question of compensation.

A fundamental requirement of this new approach is the availability of extensive and reliable data, which unfortunately is not always to be found in either industrialised, or to an even greater extent, developing countries. The latter are often confronted with major, urgent problems which until only a few years ago diverted attention and resources from the carrying out of this sort of research, which might erroneously appear highly sophisticated.

From their initiation, victim surveys were mainly confined to the developed countries, where their diffusion was relatively rapid, becoming more focused and regular, while their presence in the developing world was very meagre. Experiences gained with the national and local surveys led to the First International Survey (1989) in 14 developed countries. Co-operation between the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands and UNICRI enabled the second (1992) survey to include 12 developing countries, only two less than the total number of developed countries covered by the first survey.

The 1992 survey covered almost thirty countries: developed, developing, and Eastern and Central European. This obviously makes the survey an important instrument for the creation of the international comparative crime and criminal justice data base, which is in line with the priorities of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. UNICRI for its part will continue in its efforts to enrich and differentiate the strategies and sources employed in the development of the international crime and criminal justice data base.

Our involvement in the survey in developing countries may be seen as a form of technical co-operation through research, also prioritised by the Crime and Criminal Justice Programme. In this particular case, its added value lies in the co-operation

offered by two highly-developed donor countries, Italy and the Netherlands, the United Nations and the developing countries. This model has proven highly successful and we look forward to further developing it with the countries already involved, and hopefully some additional ones in the future. Our gratitude goes to the governments of Italy and the Netherlands, and all of those from the participating countries who enabled or at least took a favourable position towards this endeavour.

I would like to underscore the fact that technical co-operation, even in our case, does not consist only in research activities. One of the main purposes of the project in developing countries was to sensitise the policy-makers and criminal justice administrators to the utility of the victim surveys for the evaluation of policy and in particular to the possible means of policy formulation and implementation that would really meet the needs and expectations of the community, and protect the rights of the victim in particular. In this respect our main reference point was, and still is, the United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power adopted by the General Assembly on 29 November 1985.

This Conference is intended to provide a forum for the presentation of the main results of the 1992 Survey, and discussion of the key research and policy issues related to the main topic. That is why the participants come from the two institutional structures that should work closely together: research on the one hand, and policy making/administration on the other. In order that the participants appreciate the position of the respondent, our colleagues from the Dutch-based survey company "The Interview" will demonstrate the use of the computer assisted personal interview technique and I would kindly request your co-operation in this demonstration project.

The programme of the Conference has been designed to comply with its objectives, dividing the works into several sessions each chaired by highly-qualified experts and policy makers.

The first session will be devoted to the presentation of the main comparative findings. The second session will focus on selected research issues, in particular those related to: data collection and validity, risk assessment and secondary analysis. The third session will discuss policy utility and implications of the victims surveys: their types, level and area of coverage, use for policy monitoring and evaluation with respect to the law enforcement agencies and the programmes and schemes designed to meet the needs of the victims. These sessions will be followed by discussion periods which I hope will prove to be interesting and fruitful.

The discussion period will conclude with a Round Table devoted to a topic of general concern: Citizens and Criminal Justice. The participants will be high-level policy makers from several countries and the United Nations system.

Our last day will be used to summarise the achievements of the Conference. We will hear the results of the demonstration project: victimisation experience and attitudes of the participants of this Conference. Three specially appointed rapporteurs, Ms. Patricia Mayhew, Mr. Dato Steenhuis and Professor Francesco Bruno, will present the reports dealing with various subjects discussed in the course of the proceedings. The synthesis report will be prepared by the General Rapporteurs: Drs. Jan van Dijk from the Dutch Ministry of Justice, and Ugljesa Zvekic, Research Co-ordinator at UNICRI.

The International Conference on Understanding Crime: Experiences of Crime and Crime Control provides, in short, a unique opportunity to look at crime on national and international levels from the victim and community perspectives, and to promote the further development of policy-relevant research, hand in hand with crime prevention and control policy targeted at the needs of the community and the rights of the victim.

We believe that both the 1992 International Survey and this Conference merit regular follow-up activities. These may consist in the further promotion of surveys across the world and their increased use in research, policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. The Acts of the Conference will be published and widely disseminated, and at least three additional publications will be presented for world readership: an overall comparative volume, a volume on criminal victimisation in the industrialised world, and an UNICRI volume on victimisation in the developing world.

As has been the Institute's experience in relation to endeavours in other sectors, it is possible, and indeed very much hoped, that the work achieved here in the next three days will give rise to prospects for the development of activities in this important area of crime control. Stimulating ideas in this direction will be highly welcomed by UNICRI, particularly those that, within the limits of the Institute's mandate and resources, might contribute in some way to an improvement in the quality of life of mankind.

PART ONE

Main findings
of
the 1992 International Survey

