

**Kyoto Crime Congress Ancillary meeting:
World Congress for Community Volunteers
Supporting Offender Reintegration**

Closing remarks

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured and delighted to take the floor, on behalf of UNODC, at the closing of this successful event, following the adoption by the World Congress of its Kyoto Declaration on Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration.

Each Crime Congress aims at leaving a legacy of innovation in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. I believe the just adopted Kyoto Declaration's spirit and its innovative recommendations on promoting the role of community volunteers will become a significant part of the Fourteenth Congress' legacy.

The HOGOSHI system has a long-standing tradition in Japan and, as we have heard throughout this afternoon's presentations and discussions, community volunteers such as volunteer probation officers are active in many countries all over the world. They uphold and promote the humanistic spirit of leaving no one behind. Through their partnerships with criminal justice practitioners and their impact on the general public's understanding of offenders' needs, volunteer probation officers powerfully contribute to crime prevention, to offenders' social reintegration and to building inclusive and peaceful communities.

Today's gathering has demonstrated how important and valuable it is for volunteer probation officers to have an international platform on which they can exchange on their practices and the common challenges they face. UNODC therefore welcomes the Kyoto declaration's recommendation that a global network of community

volunteers working for the reintegration of offenders should be established to strengthen their cooperation and mutual support across borders.

UNODC also acknowledges that reducing reoffending is an essential and often neglected aspect of crime prevention. The engagement of community volunteers working alongside criminal justice practitioners and supporting in a practical and human-centred way the reintegration of offenders in the community should certainly prominently feature among strategies to reduce reoffending endorsed by the international community.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate and thank the Ministry of Justice of Japan, UNAFEI, all speakers and panellists, and all those who have prepared this event, participated in it, and ensured its great success. Above all, I would like to congratulate and wholeheartedly thank all community volunteers who use their time, life experience and skills to contribute to their communities and fellow human beings.