

PREFACE

Overcrowding in correctional facilities is one of the gravest problems occurring in many parts of the world, and affects both developed and developing countries. On the basis of this recognition, the Workshop on “Strategies and Best Practices against Overcrowding in Correctional Facilities” was convened on 16 April 2010, Salvador, Brazil, within the framework of the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Congress).

The United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), established in 1962 by agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Japan, located in Tokyo, which has the longest history of all the institutes comprising the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network, was responsible for the administration of this Workshop as an official component of the Congress, and played an active role in its organization and preparation.

The Workshop aimed to describe the nature and extent of prison overcrowding, to analyse the reasons for it and to propose what can be done to relieve it. Many countries have adopted measures to address the multiple problems created by overcrowding in correctional facilities and to mitigate the effects of overcrowding. The Workshop, consisting of four Presentations and three Panel discussions, offered an opportunity for government representatives, experts and practitioners to exchange information on strategies and best practices for reducing overcrowding in correctional facilities, and it ended by addressing how to build political, judicial and public support for reducing overcrowding and limiting the use of imprisonment.

The present publication is a compilation of the summary of all the presentations and discussions of the Workshop, and all the reference papers made available to the Workshop. It is our great pleasure to publish this comprehensive report of the Workshop to further disseminate its outcomes for countries afflicted with prison overcrowding.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the moderators, presenters and panellists of the Workshop, 16 prominent experts from all over the world who are active in various international fora, without whose strenuous contribution the Workshop would not have been such an outstanding success. Furthermore, I owe my gratitude to the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy for its co-operation in organizing the Workshop, and to all the individuals whose unselfish efforts behind the scenes contributed significantly to the realization of both the Workshop and this publication.

Finally, I am convinced that this publication is essential reading material for all those who are interested in prison overcrowding, including criminal justice practitioners, policy makers, and academics. I am also confident that it will serve as a valuable reference source for international, as well as local, training activities.



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