

14th CCPCJ Congress March 7-12, 2021
Wholesome Approaches to Juvenile Justice
By Dominicans for Justice and Peace

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates:

Dominicans for Justice and Peace represents a Catholic Religious Order (Order of Preachers) **comprising of men and women** who are present and active in 120 countries. We have over 800 years history of service to humanity worldwide, and in a variety of social, pastoral, and educational institutions, including the formation of young people to be responsible members of their communities.

The 14th Crime Congress provides a pathway to engage modern criminal justice challenges. Juvenile offenders are getting younger and younger. This points to something beyond the child-offender. It points to the society designed by adults, who also provide guidelines and models of behaviour.

It is in recognition of the responsibility of adults, that in many traditional African societies, when a child commits a crime, the first question they ask is: Where did we (**adults**) go wrong? Rather than point to the child-offender. Putting the focus on the the community, allows for a wholesome approach to the problem. **We can learn from that.**

Unfortunately, rather than focus on the community, many countries invest valuable resources to incarcerate juvenile-offenders, and victimize our children twice over.

In line with the recommendations of the 14th Crime Congress, the Dominicans for Justice and Peace **advocates for, and directly supports** initiatives that ensure a better criminal justice system aimed at restoration and integration.

Through resources in education, justice ministry, community services, and pastoral care and counselling, the Order of Preachers provides integrative approach to solving this problem.

Justice that is focused on the wellbeing of the offender, offers the potential to find better, non-punitive, and restorative ways that are just, and ensure that the rights of young offenders are not violated.

Our children do not belong in prison, they need to be educated and integrated in their communities.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates, Thank you for your attention.

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