Preface

The United Nations has actively studied the phenomenon of organized crime and its transnational manifestations for the last two decades. The work it has done at the technical and political levels has been significant and merits attention by governments and experts.

Recognizing, however, that the various United Nations reports and resolutions are not easily available, though much has been done to disseminate them and make computerized access available, this compilation includes all relevant documentation on the subject of organized crime. The hope is that such a comprehensive compilation organized in a reverse chronological and sequential order will be a useful research tool, as well as a reference source for governments, experts and all persons interested in this subject of significant contemporary concern.

This is also an effort to clarify some of the characteristics of the phenomenon of organized crime that can be helpful in understanding it, and thereby enhancing prevention and control of this serious threat to so many countries, and to the international community.

Because of the challenges posed by organized crime to contemporary societies, and to the international community, the International Association of Penal Law will concentrate on this single subject in its Sixteenth International Penal Law Congress, which will be held in Budapest, Hungary, in 1999. In preparation for that Congress, four preparatory colloquia will be held in 1997-98 in Naples (Italy), Utrecht (Netherlands), Alexandria (Egypt), and Guadalajara (Mexico). These colloquia will respectively focus on four different aspects of the criminal law problems and legal challenges posed by organized crime. They are: the general part of criminal law, the special part of criminal law, the procedural part, and the international aspects of penal cooperation. Some 35 countries will be involved in this comparative study through their national rapporteurs who will cover these four aspects. Each one of these aspects has been prepared by a questionnaire which will guide the national rapporteurs in making their national reports. For each preparatory colloquia, a general rapporteur will present a general report consisting of a synthesis of the national reports based on the respective questionnaire. The national rapporteurs attending the colloquia will also prepare draft resolutions for submission to the congress. The national reports and general reports will be published in four separate issues of the Revue Internationale de Droit Penal. All four issues will be made available to the members and subscribers of the Revue before the Congress takes place. At the Congress, those in attendance will review the four general reports and the four sets of draft resolutions and make final resolutions on the four aspects mentioned above. The general reports and resolutions of the Congress will then be published in the Revue’s first issue of the year 2000 as well as in the Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress in Penal Law.

For the four different aspects of the Congress’ theme The Challenge of Organized Crime to Criminal Justice System, see 96 Revue International de Droit Pénal, No. 3-4, P. 533 (1996). The Association International de Droit Pénal was founded in Paris in 1924. It is the continuation of the International Union of Penal Law founded in Vienna in 1889. This makes the AIDP one of the world’s oldest scholarly organizations. The Association has over 3,000 members and affiliates in 97 countries and has 48 national groups. Its official publication, Revue Internationale de Droit Penal, is now in its 72d year of publication and has some 1,500 subscribers.
As President of the Association, it is with great pleasure that I present this compilation which has been prepared with my friend and colleague, Eduardo Vetere, the Director of the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the United Nations and with the cooperation of Dimitri Vlassis, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer at the Centre.

Many of the experts' meetings convened in preparation of the Congresses, and other United Nations activities reflected in the documents presented in this volume and whose history is described in the Introduction, were held at the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences (ISISC, Siracusa), and that is one of the reasons that ISISC sponsored this research and publication project.

As the Introduction describes the United Nations involvement in this area, it may be relevant to mention that both Eduardo Vetere and I have been involved in that work since its inception in 1975, Eduardo more so because of his official position. In fact, it was at the Fifth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders held in Geneva, 1975, when Eduardo was first involved in such a Congress and where I had the honor of being elected honorary vice-president, that we started our long-standing cooperation and friendship.

We dedicate this book to our late friend, Judge Franco Di Maggio, who spent the better part of his career fighting organized crime in Italy, and who died while holding a post in Vienna with the Italian Permanent Mission to the United Nations. While in Vienna, his work was focused on the United Nations efforts to combat crime and, more particularly, organized crime. We are proud to dedicate this book to his memory and present it to his family as a token of our admiration and friendship for Franco.

We are also pleased to be able to offer its contents to those interested in the subject, in the hope that it will enhance the work of governments, experts and other interested persons and make the United Nation's work on this subject more widely known.

M. Cherif Bassiouni and Eduardo Vetere

** The views presented therein represent only those of the authors. They do not represent the views of the United Nations. The authors wish to make it known that this book has been essentially completed in July 1997, but that its publication has been held pending the availability of documents 1-6.