

AFRICAN REGIONAL WORKSHOPS ON PRISONS AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

At the African Regional Workshop on Prisons and Correctional Services held in Abuja, Nigeria, 31 March-1 April 2009, with 151 participants from 21 countries, including the following international agencies: ICPA, UNDPKO; UNODC; ICRC and DfID, and organised by Nigerian Prisons Service, ICPA, ACSA and PRAWA, the following declaration was adopted.

“The meeting emphasises the following as central tenets for correctional reform in Africa:

- the change process in Africa should be led from within Africa and international agencies and partners should serve as a support to an African-driven process;
- any programme of reform must be based on an evidence-driven, practical approach that is outcome-focused;
- all steps should be taken to ensure that there is close collaboration between the various agencies working to support justice and security sector reform and, wherever possible, the work of these agencies should be done in partnership; and
- justice sector reform initiatives must acknowledge the crucial role played by correctional agencies in promoting community safety on the African continent.

Accordingly, the meeting requests ACSA, ICPA, UNDPKO and UNODC to undertake the following action:

- along with other partner and stakeholder agencies to form a strategic alliance to advance the development of professional corrections across the African continent;
- to form a Planning Group to arrange a pan African Conference on correctional reform in 2010;
- to report progress on interagency collaboration and present a detailed five-year work plan to the conference;
- to produce a compendium of innovative, best-practice on the African continent related to re-integration of offenders;
- together with other stakeholder and partner agencies, to seek funding to initiate a programme of practical projects to address the key areas of overcrowding, decongestion, human rights training; staff selection recruitment and training; rehabilitation interventions and leadership training;
- to produce a document for circulation to all correctional staff setting out the core components of a system of ethical, human rights-based corrections; and
- to commit to promote internationally the importance (and necessity) of involving correctional professionals in justice sector reform.

Finally, the meeting acknowledges the significant advances made to promote community safety by correctional reform by the formation of the African Correctional Services Association (ACSA), in partnership with the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) and United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO).”