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**World crime trends and responses: integration and
coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on
Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of
crime prevention and criminal justice****World crime trends and responses: integration and
coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on
Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of
crime prevention and criminal justice****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

By its decision 2007/251, the Economic and Social Council established “World crime trends and responses: integration and coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice” as an agenda item for the seventeenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The present note contains a summary of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the area of crime trends and responses. In particular, it refers to the collection of data on crime and criminal justice, through the analysis of the Ninth and Tenth United Nations Surveys of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, and a number of relevant international data sources. It provides an overview of specific studies and activities carried out in 2007 in the areas of crime and development, trafficking in persons and corruption.

* E/CN.15/2008/1.



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I. Work towards better data

1. The strategy for the period 2008-2011 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states that “Effective policy must be based on accurate information. Policy and trend analysis is essential to measuring trends, highlighting problems, learning lessons and evaluating effectiveness ... Better data and improved national capacity to collect data are needed to support and enhance the international community’s responses to crime and illicit drugs”.¹
2. In the area of crime and criminal justice, the United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems is the main data-collection instrument, collecting police and judicial statistics from virtually all Member States. Nine Surveys have been concluded so far, representing data for the period from 1976 to 2004.² Further to extensive revision and preparations, the questionnaires for the Tenth Survey were disseminated in 2007.³
3. On the basis of the recommendations of the expert group meeting held in 2006,⁴ UNODC developed a plan to increase and facilitate country responses to the United Nations Survey. This included an analysis of response patterns and a survey of users of the results.
4. The analysis of response patterns was aimed at describing the response behaviour of countries in terms of the time taken to return the questionnaire and the capacity to provide data matching its various sections. The response time analysis showed that the majority of countries that responded to the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Surveys either met the deadline or were less than one month late. This suggests that the deadline currently used provides sufficient time for response.
5. The analysis of responses showed that 19 per cent of countries were able to provide responses to fewer than a quarter of the questions, 23 per cent responded to less than half but more than a quarter, and the majority were able to respond to more than half of the questions (see figure I).
6. As regards the ability to respond to individual questions, it was observed that data on crimes recorded by police were provided by approximately 90 per cent of the responding countries. Prison statistics were provided in approximately 80 per cent of the questionnaires returned. The section with the lowest response rate was the one dealing with court and prosecution statistics, in particular as regards the breakdown of convictions and prosecutions by type of crime.

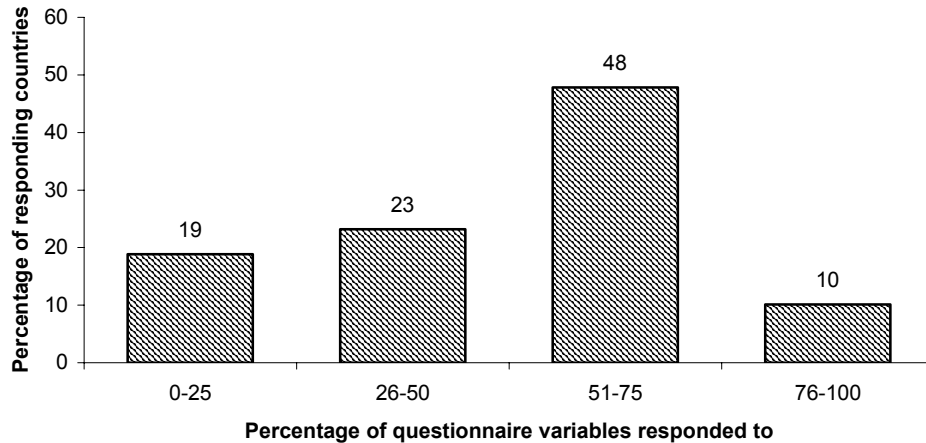
¹ Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/12, annex, paras. 12-13.

² Results and responses are available at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/United-Nations-Surveys-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html>.

³ The questionnaire is available for download in the six official languages of the United Nations at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Tenth-United-Nations-Survey-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html>.

⁴ See E/CN.15/2006/4.

Figure I
Rates of response to questionnaire variables in the Ninth United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems



7. One hundred and twenty users of United Nations Survey on Crime Trends data agreed to respond to a user survey by returning a downloadable questionnaire and providing information on demographics and comments to UNODC.⁵ Academics represented more than two thirds of users, and policymakers 15 per cent. The majority of users were located in Europe and the Americas, while only 15 per cent were from Asia, Oceania and Africa. The type of statistics most frequently perused were those dealing with the police, followed by those on prosecution, prisons and courts.

8. Pursuant to the above findings and the recommendations of the 2006 expert group meeting on ways and means of improving data collection,⁴ as well as follow-up consultations, the questionnaire was entirely revised. Efforts have been made to achieve higher rates of response and to obtain better-quality data by developing a detailed questionnaire that would, at the same time, be more user-friendly.

9. Most changes to the questionnaire are related to crime definitions and to the establishment of a system aimed at eliminating ambiguities of interpretation and solving problems of consistency in the data collected. New crime categories have been added and the definitions of others slightly changed to align them with international instruments or other international data collections. The new types of crimes investigated through the Tenth Survey are presented in the table.

⁵ The user survey form is accessible at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Ninth-United-Nations-Survey-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html>.

New definitions and categories of crime in the Tenth United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems

<i>New definitions</i>	<i>Previous definitions</i>
Intentional homicide attempted with firearm	Intentional homicide with firearm (no subcategory of attempts)
Drug trafficking	Drug-related crime (no subcategory of drug trafficking)
Economic fraud	Fraud
<i>New categories</i>	
Trafficking in persons Smuggling of migrants Participation in criminal organized groups Counterfeit currency offences	Not present in previous surveys

10. An annex to the questionnaire was developed in consultation with the Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat) to collect detailed information on the context in which crimes occur and metadata. For example, respondents are given the opportunity to qualify their responses to questions dealing with complex definitions by indicating whether various subcategories of the definitions apply. In view of the need to collect a large amount of data, this exercise was initially limited to two types of crime, namely, intentional homicide and theft of motor vehicles.

11. The United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems includes a section aimed at establishing a more effective procedure for reaching the appropriate provider of the required information at the country level. In an effort to increase the quantity and quality of responses to the Survey, UNODC plans to maintain closer contact with the providers of information, identify their needs for assistance in responding to the questionnaire or producing the data and provide assistance through training and networks at the regional level.

II. International trends

12. The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI), has prepared a report based on an analysis of the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Surveys on Crime Trends in Europe and North America.⁶ The report was drafted by a number of experts and examines trends in crime recorded by police from 1995 to 2004, sentencing and conviction rates for selected types of crime and trends in prison populations. The report also makes use of additional data sources to provide broader analysis in the areas of juvenile justice, foreigners in prison and the methodology used by police in recording crime events.

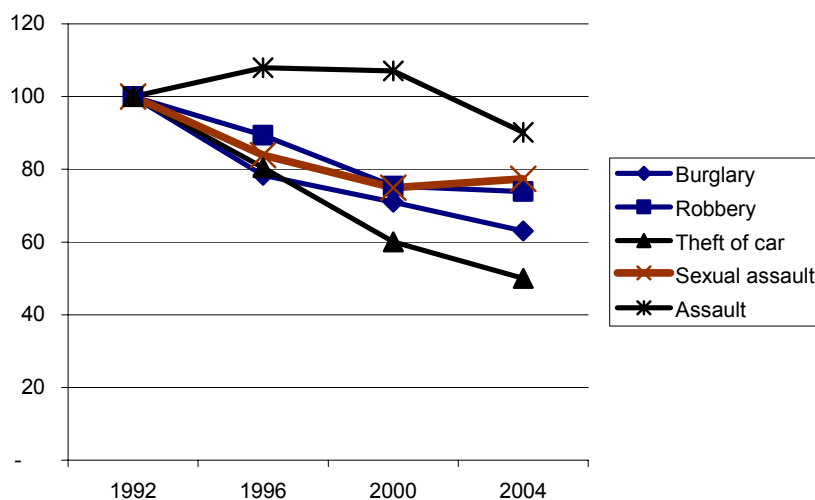
13. Victim surveys are an important source of information about crime. They provide the viewpoint of citizens regarding experiences of crime, thus complementing police records of reported crime. A report covering the results of the

⁶ K. Aromaa and M. Heiskanen (eds.), *Crime and Criminal Justice in Europe and North America – 1995-2004* (Helsinki, HEUNI, 2008).

International Crime Victim Survey for 30 countries and 33 capital or main cities was published in early 2008.⁷ Its results are comparable with those of previous surveys carried out with consistent methodology. The report shows that, in industrialized countries, levels of crimes measured by the survey have significantly decreased over the last decade. On average, 16 per cent of the households interviewed had experienced at least one form of victimization during the year preceding the survey. The rate was much higher in urban areas, reaching an average of 22 per cent. Although only a few of the countries covered by the report were in developing regions, it was observed that rates of violent crime were higher in developing countries. For example, rates of robbery in Latin American and African cities were five times those observed in cities in Western Europe, North America and Australia. Furthermore, as was the case with surveys of previous years, gun-related robberies and assaults were more frequent in cities of developing countries.

14. Figure II shows trends in burglary, robbery, theft of car, sexual assault and assault rates based on the responses of 14 countries to the victim survey. The trends indicate a lesser occurrence of all five types of crime in 2004 than in 1992, including assault, the rate of which had been higher in 1996 and 2000 than in 1992. These trends, although limited to a small number of industrialized countries where crimes were regularly reported, were consistent with those observed in police records of crime.

Figure II
Trends in crimes, 1992-2004, as reported in victim surveys in 14 countries



Source: UNODC elaboration of data from J.J.M. van Dijk, et al., op. cit., and *The Burden of Crime in the EU: A Comparative Analysis of the European Survey on Crime and Safety (EU ICS 2005)* (Brussels, Gallup Europe, 2005). Of the 14 countries with complete data series, 2 were in the Americas, 11 in Europe and 1 in Oceania.

⁷ J.J.M. van Dijk, J. N. van Kesteren and P. Smit. *Criminal Victimization in International Perspective, Key findings from the 2004-2005 ICVS and EU ICS* (The Hague, Boom Legal Publishers, 2008).

15. Upon the initiative of HEUNI, supported by UNODC, the United Nations Interregional Crime Research Institute (UNICRI) and Statistics Canada, an International Survey on Violence against Women was launched in 2002. A report containing the results from 11 participating countries was published in 2007.⁸ The results of the Survey indicate that violence is a common feature in the lives of a large percentage of women. A significant proportion of women in the countries covered by the Survey had experienced physical or sexual violence once or more since the age of 16 or during childhood. Rates of violence (either by an intimate partner or a stranger) experienced over the year preceding the Survey were highest in the two developing countries covered.

16. UNODC data were used for focused analysis to provide inputs to studies on crime, drugs and development. During the reporting period, UNODC continued its series of studies on drugs and crime with the publication of two key reports: *Crime and Development in Central America: Caught in the Crossfire*⁹ and *Crime, Violence and Development: Trends, Costs and Policy Options in the Caribbean*.

17. The report on crime and development in Central America addressed the links between socio-economic conditions, drug trafficking, crime, corruption and gang culture and emphasized the importance of development, justice, good governance and security in breaking the vicious circle.

18. The report on crime, violence and development in the Caribbean was published by UNODC jointly with the World Bank. It identified factors that make the Caribbean vulnerable to crime and violence and highlighted the need for a response at the national, regional and international levels.

19. Recent UNODC reports have also explored the interface between increasing drug demand in Europe, improved security along traditional trafficking routes and the need for rule of law and security sector reform in some countries in West Africa. In *Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The threat to stability and development (with special reference to Guinea-Bissau)*, UNODC highlighted the movement of cocaine from South America via West Africa to Europe. In a region already affected by poverty and pandemics, drug money is found to distort fragile economies and to drive corruption within State structures. The report concludes that an urgent need for regional cooperation and international assistance with policing and counter-narcotics operations is required to prevent organized crime from becoming entrenched in countries such as Guinea-Bissau.

20. In keeping with its strategy of enhancing knowledge about trends in drug and crime issues around the world, in early 2008 UNODC will publish its report on crime and its impact in Balkan and other countries. The report examines the available data on conventional and organized crime relating to South-East Europe. Although recognizing that more work is required in the areas of corruption, reform of the judiciary and rule of law, the report concludes that the situation has improved markedly in recent years.

⁸ H. Johnson, N. Ollus and S. Nevala, *Violence against Women: An International Perspective* (New York, Springer-Verlag, 2007).

⁹ United Nations publication, Sales No. B.07.IV.5.

III. Studies on corruption and trafficking in persons

21. With regard to the development of a questionnaire and an international standardized methodology for crime and corruption surveys for the private sector, a comprehensive survey was implemented for the first time in Cape Verde.¹⁰ The results, published in 2007,¹¹ illustrated the potential of this data-collection instrument as a tool for monitoring attitudes in the private sector towards bribery, corruption, fraud, extortion and several other forms of crime that have an impact on the economic development of a country.

22. A baseline assessment of the integrity and capacity of the justice sector in Nigeria started in 2007.¹² The results of the assessment, coordinated by UNODC and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, will be a vital tool for the Government and donors in improving the justice system in the following key areas: (a) increasing public trust in the courts; (b) improving access to justice; (c) monitoring the timeliness and quality of the trial process; (d) increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the trial process; and (e) improving coordination across the criminal justice system.

23. Questionnaires used for the assessment of corruption within the justice sector have been further refined in the course of pilot justice sector surveys in Afghanistan. Pursuant to a feasibility assessment mission, contextualization of the survey instruments and training, UNODC is in the process of conducting a pilot survey on corruption among judges, prosecutors and lawyers in five provinces of Afghanistan. The report is expected to be completed by mid-2008.

24. UNODC has started a research component within the framework of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, aimed at producing an overview of official data on trafficking in persons currently being collected at the governmental level in all countries. Information is collected on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions of traffickers in the last few years. At the same time, the study tries to assess, where the pertinent information is available, the number of victims officially identified and assisted by the competent authorities during the same period of time; profiles of offenders and victims; and the anti-human trafficking institutional framework, including legislation and specific action plans.

25. It is expected that results will highlight what “real” data on trafficking in persons are available and what major information gaps exist. The research will result in a global overview of the human trafficking situation based on official information. Data collection is planned to conclude in the third quarter of 2008, and a report will be drafted by the end of 2008.

¹⁰ Within the framework of the project “Strengthening the rule of law in Cape Verde” (CAVE JIMLOC – CPV/S30).

¹¹ *Inquérito sobre o crime e a corrupção em Cabo Verde* (Ministry of Justice of Cape Verde and UNODC, 2007). A summary appears in *Study on Crime and Corruption in Cape Verde* (Ministry of Justice of Cape Verde and UNODC, 2007).

¹² Within the framework of the project “Support to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Nigerian Judiciary”, aimed at strengthening judicial integrity and the capacity of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Nigerian judiciary.

26. Within the framework of the ongoing European Union work towards comparable information on crime and victimization, which originates from several legal mandates at the European Union level, including the Amsterdam Treaty and the millennium strategy for the prevention of organized crime, an expert group was established in 2007. Progress included the development of concepts for the collection of comparable information on conventional and organized crime. Within this framework, a subgroup of experts has been formed for the purpose of developing indicators on trafficking in persons.

27. The subgroup decided to adopt a Delphi-method¹³ approach for the selection of indicators for the three forms of trafficking in human beings. In order to select the indicators, a three-round Delphi exercise will be conducted among some 150 European experts in trafficking in persons. UNODC is part of a five-member steering committee guiding the Delphi exercise. It is expected that the results, including the list of indicators, will be available around the second quarter of 2008.

IV. Further work and conclusions

28. UNODC, at the request of interested Governments, contributes to building capacity for crime data collection and reporting, including by promoting crime and victimization surveys. A manual on victim surveys is currently being developed by a task force led by UNODC and the Economic Commission for Europe. The manual will provide methodological guidelines for designing national victim surveys and will include a “core questionnaire”, based on a well-tested range of key policy and research indicators among those most frequently covered by victim surveys. It is expected that the manual and the core questionnaire will be used extensively, along with the *Manual for the Development of a System of Criminal Justice Statistics*,¹⁴ to build institutional capacity to conduct victim surveys and that it will contribute to increasing the quality, availability and international comparability of international comparative statistics.

29. The UNODC project “Collection and analysis of data and trends in drugs, crime and victimization in Africa”, funded from the Development Account, is aimed at strengthening the capacity of existing national institutions by training and assisting them in carrying out victim surveys and developing a system for the collection and analysis of data on drugs and crime. The project is a component of the Office’s Data for Africa initiative. During 2007, preparations for several surveys in African countries were carried out, resulting in fieldwork in Uganda (already completed), Egypt and the United Republic of Tanzania. Further surveys are in preparation in Burkina Faso and Rwanda. Activities within the Data for Africa initiative are coordinated in close cooperation with the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

30. UNODC is working on the identification of core indicators of conventional crime and on developing indicators of transnational organized crime, including appropriate definitions for data-collection purposes and new indicators for such

¹³ The Delphi method is based on a structured process for collecting and analysing knowledge from a group of experts by means of a series of questionnaires interspersed with controlled opinion feedback.

¹⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.XVII.6.

types of crime. Part of this work is being conducted in collaboration with the European Commission, through the participation of UNODC in the expert group on policy needs for data on crime and criminal justice¹⁵ and the subgroups on trafficking in persons and criminal justice statistics. The expert group met twice in 2007 and advanced work in the direction of developing a European Union-level system for the classification of criminal offences. At the same time, methodological work on the indicators selected and data collection has been advanced by a parallel group established at Eurostat.¹⁶

31. With a view to expanding the basis of information on the indicators selected, UNODC is working towards a better understanding of global and regional homicide patterns through research on available homicide statistics from multiple sources. That research will be combined with analysis of the responses to the annex to the Tenth Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems. Results will be analysed within the framework of ongoing research initiatives, such as joint work with Eurostat¹⁷ and the non-governmental organization Small Arms Survey.¹⁸

32. In line with its strategy for policy and trend analysis, UNODC has cooperated during the reporting period with United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations on initiatives to improve crime data and national capacities to collect data. In particular, it has engaged in the United Nations system-wide process of developing indicators to measure violence against women.¹⁹ UNODC participated in an expert group meeting organized by the Statistical Commission, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. UNODC emphasized the importance of developing indicators that relate well to existing work in the assessment and monitoring of crime trends, including the United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and standardized crime victim surveys. Following that meeting, UNODC continues to support the refinement of a proposed draft list of indicators and the development of unified methods and standards for data collection.²⁰

¹⁵ The expert group was established by the European Commission to guide work towards the identification of selected crime indicators.

¹⁶ Working group representing the statistical authorities of the Member States, created by the European Directors of Social Statistics and coordinated by Eurostat.

¹⁷ Joint work between UNODC and Eurostat on strengthening knowledge on the availability and quality of crime statistics at the European Union level started in 2006 with analysis of the annex to the Ninth Survey, on country capacity to collect crime and criminal justice statistics.

¹⁸ Analysis of the database may provide elements for a contribution by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to a baseline report on the global burden of armed violence to be published in 2008 under the auspices of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

¹⁹ In paragraph 18 of its resolution 61/143, entitled "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women", the General Assembly requested "the Statistical Commission to develop and propose, in consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women, and building on the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, a set of possible indicators on violence against women in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women".

²⁰ See the report of the Expert Group meeting on indicators to measure violence against women, held from 8 to 10 October 2007 in Geneva, to be issued.

33. In the area of juvenile justice indicators, further to the publication of the *Manual for the Measurement of Juvenile Justice Indicators*,²¹ UNODC continues to explore with the United Nations Children's Fund ways in which Member States may be supported in gathering systematic data on children who are in conflict with the law.

V. Recommendations

34. **It is recommended that the Commission urge Member States to engage in regular reporting of data on crime trends at the national, regional and international levels, including through systematic participation in the United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems and crime victim surveys. In particular, it is recommended that the Commission encourage Member States to participate in the Tenth and subsequent United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.**

35. **It is recommended that the Commission support and encourage Member States in the process of developing national capacity for the generation and collection of criminal justice statistics, including by the police, prosecutors, courts and penal systems, and the development of population-based surveys. The Commission may also wish to explore ways to enhance statistical and research capacity for the collection of data on the challenging issues of trafficking in persons, corruption, children in conflict with the law, violence against women and transnational organized crime.**

²¹ http://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/06-55616_ebook.pdf.