Seventy-eighth session
Item 110 of the preliminary list*
Crime prevention and criminal justice

Implementation of the mandates of the United Nations
crime prevention and criminal justice programme, with
particular reference to the technical cooperation activities
of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly
resolution 77/237. It contains a summary of the activities carried out by the United
Nations Office on Drugs and Crime from May 2022 to May 2023 to support, in
cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system, Member States in their
efforts to counter transnational organized crime, corruption and terrorism, as well as
to prevent crime and reinforce criminal justice systems, including with regard to
emerging policy issues.

The report also contains information on developments relating to the
governance and financial situation of the Office and recommendations aimed at
enhancing the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme.
I. Introduction

1. The international community is not on track to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although some progress has been made towards reducing violence in some countries, the current pace of progress will not ensure that the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 16 will be met. Ongoing armed conflicts have led to the displacement of a large number of people, exacerbating their vulnerability to substance use disorders and to certain forms of exploitation. Political and socioeconomic instability have also exacerbated violence. There were approximately 458,000 victims of intentional homicide globally in 2021 – the highest number in the past 20 years – representing 5.8 victims per 100,000 population.\(^1\) Progress has not been made in relation to access to justice, as measured by the number of people incarcerated without a final sentence. In 2021, the global prison population was 11.2 million. That figure remained relatively stable between 2015 and 2021, with the exception of a temporary decline between 2019 and 2020 as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.\(^2\) At the end of 2020, approximately one in three prisoners was unsentenced.\(^3\)

2. Against this backdrop, urgent action is needed to accelerate international efforts aimed at advancing crime prevention and criminal justice towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The present report provides information on the implementation of the mandates of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme and reflects emerging policy issues and possible responses, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 77/237. It is structured around the four thematic pillars of the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and which contains the most recent international policy commitments in this area.

II. Action taken by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, including follow-up to the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

3. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held the regular part of its thirty-second session in Vienna from 22 to 27 May 2023. It recommended to the Economic and Social Council the approval of five draft resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly: (a) “Follow-up to the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Fifteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”; (b) “Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration”; (c) “Enhancing the contributions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”; (d) “Technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime related to counter-terrorism”; and (e) “Equal access to justice for all”. Furthermore, the Commission adopted resolution 32/1, entitled “Taking action against trafficking in persons in business operations, public procurement and supply chains for goods and services”.\(^4\)

4. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 76/181 and 77/231, the Commission held the second thematic discussion on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration in December 2022. The discussion was focused on the second pillar of the

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\(^1\) A/78/80-E/2023/64.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^4\) See E/2023/30-E/CN.15/2023/15, chapter I.
Declaration, on advancing the criminal justice system. More information on the follow-up to the Fourteenth Congress is contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the topic (A/78/159).

III. Action taken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

A. Introduction: strategic issues

5. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Strategy 2021–2025 guides the work of the Office in five thematic areas: (a) addressing and countering the world drug problem; (b) preventing and countering organized crime; (c) preventing and countering corruption and economic crime; (d) preventing and countering terrorism; and (e) crime prevention and criminal justice. The Strategy defines the mission of UNODC as spanning the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development. It sets out commitments to fully embed gender equality, the empowerment of women and young people, and human rights into UNODC programmes covering normative work, research and technical assistance, and encourages integrated programming, effective multilateral cooperation and stronger partnerships with international and civil society organizations and the private sector.

6. In line with the Strategy, UNODC has been working with Member States, United Nations entities and international and regional organizations in the preparation of strategic documents at the national, regional and global levels, and in the implementation of its research products and technical assistance activities. Across all areas of its mandate, UNODC is active in multiple inter-agency coordination mechanisms to ensure collaboration and synergies, including in the areas of trafficking in all its forms, the empowerment of women, drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, corruption, terrorism prevention and access to justice for children.

7. UNODC continued to engage with non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector in multi-stakeholder workshops on the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In close collaboration with the UNCAC Civil Society Coalition and the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, civil society participation was ensured in all intergovernmental meetings and workshops held in 2022, which involved more than 2,100 non-governmental organizations.

8. In the context of implementation of the UNODC Strategy 2021–2025, UNODC has redefined its presence in South-Eastern Europe, moving the Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe from Vienna to Istanbul, Türkiye, and adding Türkiye to the six Western Balkan jurisdictions covered by the Regional Office. Thanks to those measures, UNODC is now closer to field operations and beneficiaries of UNODC technical assistance and support. UNODC is seeking to better contribute to the repositioning of the United Nations development system and to achieve programmatic harmonization across the region and the operational optimization of resources. The Regional Office promotes the exchange and replication of good practices and experiences within and beyond the region, and supports the work of UNODC inspectors under the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports, launched in July 2022.

9. In Ukraine, UNODC has begun the process of reassessing potential areas of intervention. A new UNODC framework document is being developed, outlining the contribution by UNODC to the United Nations in Ukraine Transitional Framework
and focusing on the areas of research and threat analysis, policy support, anti-corruption efforts, organized crime and money-laundering, border management and trade facilitation, the rule of law, drug control and health.

10. In July 2022, UNODC established a programme presence in Port-au-Prince and has been assisting national authorities in responding to border management-related threats at ports and airports. Through its presence on the ground and by partnering with other relevant actors in the country, UNODC has managed to secure financial resources for the implementation of border management, anti-corruption and anti-money-laundering programmes.

11. In continuation of the cooperation with the League of Arab States, the Regional Framework for the Arab States 2023–2028 was signed in March 2023. The Framework sets out how UNODC will strengthen, prioritize, customize and deliver support to the Arab region in order to provide an effective response to some of the most pressing challenges faced by countries in the region, in connection with the Office’s mandates and areas of expertise.

B. Advancing crime prevention

1. Addressing the causes, including the root causes, of crime; evidence-based crime prevention; and tailor-made crime prevention strategies

12. UNODC released its annual World Drug Report and the biennial Global Report on Trafficking in Persons in 2022 and conducted a rapid assessment of and illicit markets in Haiti. The Office also released the Global Report on Cocaine 2023 and published several research briefs addressing various topics, including the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 16, the gender-related killing of women and girls (jointly with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), trafficking in cultural property, illegal wildlife trade and climate change, and the causes of recidivism. UNODC also conducted a regional study on illicit financial flows from trafficking in opiates along the northern route and a study on transnational organized crime in the Sahel.

13. UNODC provided support to countries in enhancing their data-collection activities related to the annual report questionnaire and individual drug seizures, and in improving the quality and coverage of data to measure gender-based violence and progress towards the targets under Goal 16. A series of training events were organized for countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Europe. UNODC released the Guidelines for the Production of Statistical Data by the Police and a manual on monitoring the prevalence of trafficking in persons through multiple systems estimation.

14. UNODC continued to support Member States in implementing crime prevention standards and best practices by providing advice on the design and implementation of strategies, action plans and programmes involving national and local stakeholders. The Office assisted Brazil, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria and Papua New Guinea in shaping crime prevention policies and action plans to target risk factors for crime and violence. In Nigeria, for example, the Office supported the development and implementation of community-based crime prevention action plans by engaging youth and community leaders in town hall meetings, training for law enforcement and community actors, and workshops to facilitate life skills training for at-risk youth. With a view to improving proactive policing and police-community interaction for better crime prevention, the Office organized community-oriented and problem-oriented policing workshops in Cambodia, Kazakhstan and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

2. **Addressing the economic dimension of crime**

15. UNODC, through the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, assisted more than 80 Member States in strengthening existing systems for countering money-laundering and the financing of terrorism and in detecting, seizing and confiscating illicit proceeds. That was achieved by supporting the development of policies on countering money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, legislative and institutional reforms, and operational training and mentoring for financial intelligence units, law enforcement and judicial authorities and the private sector, as well as by supporting the development of strategies to disrupt the financing of criminal groups and terrorist organizations.

16. UNODC continues to support the installation and effective use of, and training on, the goAML application, which is used by financial intelligence units to manage the collection, analysis and dissemination of information from private sector financial institutions relating to money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

17. UNODC continued to support the recovery of proceeds of corruption, including through capacity-building, the development of knowledge products and the second cycle of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. At its sixteenth meeting, the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery addressed issues stemming from two resolutions adopted by the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention at its ninth session, namely, resolution 9/2, on the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly against corruption, and resolution 9/7, on enhancing the use of beneficial ownership information to facilitate the identification, recovery and return of proceeds of crime. UNODC continued to collect and analyse information on international asset returns and to publish the results of the analyses.

18. The need for effective systems for the management of seized and confiscated assets that ensure the preservation of their value in a transparent and accountable manner continues to grow. UNODC continued to support States in that regard, including through the promotion of its study *Effective Management and Disposal of Seized and Confiscated Assets* and non-binding guidelines on the matter.

19. Under the Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative, a partnership between the World Bank and UNODC, work is being carried out on a new knowledge product aimed at complementing the above-mentioned tools. The Initiative continued to support international efforts to eliminate safe havens for corrupt funds. In 2022, technical assistance was provided to 17 countries. In addition, more than 700 professionals worldwide received asset recovery training under the Initiative.

3. **Mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention efforts**

20. UNODC supported Ethiopia in drafting a national policy for preventing and responding to gender-based violence. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Office supported the establishment of a national inter-institutional coordination mechanism and worked with United Nations partners to support a group of 25 young volunteers in their participation in the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign. Within the framework of the United Nations programme entitled “HAYA: Eliminating violence against women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip”, implemented jointly with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNODC conducted an awareness-raising campaign that promoted essential services available to victims and survivors of gender-based violence in the State of Palestine. The Office also organized six awareness-raising workshops for service providers working with survivors and victims of violence in the State of Palestine.
4. Children and youth in crime prevention and youth empowerment for crime prevention

21. UNODC supported 16 Member States in protecting children from violence by strengthening the skills of practitioners in preventing and responding to violence against children. In partnership with the European Union, the Office established national multisectoral steering committees comprising representatives of government institutions, academia and civil society in Indonesia, Iraq and Nigeria. UNODC also highlighted areas of growing concern, such as the need to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse through a multi-stakeholder approach and the need to prevent the recruitment of children by organized criminal groups.

22. Youth empowerment is central to crime prevention strategies, and work has been undertaken with young people in contact with the criminal justice system in order to help them to become agents of change with regard to sustainable solutions. UNODC continued to place emphasis on mainstreaming youth in crime prevention efforts following the high-level debate of the General Assembly on the theme “Enhancing youth mainstreaming in crime prevention policies”, held in June 2022.

23. The Office partnered with Japan to host the Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness in December 2022. It also supported Member States across the Middle East and North Africa region in the design of youth policies that would target risk factors related to substance use and crime, taking into account young people’s perceptions of those issues and involving relevant policymakers.

24. To engage young people in a more meaningful way, UNODC launched the Youth Empowerment Accelerator framework in December 2022, mapping the Office’s youth-focused initiatives and providing key youth mainstreaming actions to accelerate the participation of young people in decision-making and programmatic work.

C. Advancing the criminal justice system

1. Safeguarding victims’ rights and protecting witnesses and reporting persons

25. The protection of and provision of assistance to victims and witnesses is a key element in the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention. In Egypt, UNODC organized two round-table discussions for the judiciary and launched a project on strengthening the capacities of the judiciary to improve access to justice for victims, in particular women, children and persons with disabilities.

26. UNODC continued to assist Iraq in strengthening the criminal justice response to terrorism through the provision of legal and psychosocial support to victims of terrorism, in order to empower them to participate in criminal proceedings and be an active part of their communities. Over 120 victims of terrorism received support, and some were able to address their trauma in a safe setting, with some reporting that the assistance provided had allowed them to enrol in university and establish new support networks.

27. Anti-corruption efforts would be incomplete if the issue of damage arising from corrupt acts remained unaddressed. UNODC continued to contribute to the ongoing debate on the compensation of victims of corruption and to promote the effective implementation of article 35 of the Convention against Corruption.

28. UNODC included the protection of and provision of assistance to victims and witnesses as a fundamental component of the comprehensive strategies that it developed to assist States in combating organized crime. More than 420 key stakeholders were trained on strategies against organized crime, and 10 national and regional strategies and policies were supported. Furthermore, the Office, through the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supported 67 civil society organization projects in 36 countries.
by providing direct assistance, including shelter, health services, access to education, vocational training and psychosocial and legal support, to over 10,000 victims.

29. The Office also continued to support States in strengthening measures to facilitate the reporting of corruption and to provide effective protection for reporting persons. Technical assistance was provided by the Office to more than 15 Member States for the development of legislative and policy frameworks on whistle-blower protection. UNODC also continued to work with States at the institutional level on the development of internal reporting and protection mechanisms.

2. Improving prison conditions and reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration

30. UNODC provided technical assistance to 43 Member States to reduce their overreliance on imprisonment, strengthen prison management, improve prison conditions and improve the social reintegration prospects of offenders.

31. In addition, the Office strengthened the capacity of more than 30 prison and corrections services to ensure safe, secure and humane conditions of custody. Priorities included prison management in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), improved material conditions of imprisonment, individual risk and needs assessments, measures to enhance security and safety, rehabilitation programming, health, the treatment of special categories of prisoners and measures to ensure transparency and accountability in prison settings.

32. UNODC also invested in a more rehabilitative approach to prison- and community-based offender management in 20 countries. In addition to the initiation of education and vocational training programmes, 700 prison and probation officials received training on strengthening their interpersonal skills. In Tunisia, 20 prison officers received a degree in cognitive behavioural therapy following the conclusion of a UNODC-supported partnership agreement between the prison administration and Tunis University. In the Philippines, UNODC launched the Read Your Way Out project, which invested in prison libraries and regulatory reform to enable prisoners to receive “time allowances”, whereby their sentences were reduced through reading books.

33. UNODC concluded a five-year joint European Union/United Nations initiative on the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization to violence in prisons in Kazakhstan, Tunisia and Uganda, under which 4,100 criminal justice officers were trained. In addition, 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America were provided with similar technical assistance relating to the management of high-risk prisoners, including foreign terrorist fighters and members of organized criminal groups.

3. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into criminal justice systems

34. UNODC continued to support countries in implementing crime prevention and criminal justice responses to gender-based violence against women, including through joint United Nations programmes under the Spotlight Initiative, focusing on advisory services to support legal and policy frameworks, capacity-building for criminal justice practitioners and the enhancement of inter-institutional coordination. In Mexico, UNODC trained 17,551 police officers and first responders in the prevention, detection and referral of cases of violence against women and girls, and in promoting the investigation of gender-based violence in order to avoid its escalation to femicide. The Office also continued to strengthen coordination between national institutions in the area of gender-based violence, resulting in, inter alia, the establishment of local intersectoral gender-based violence response teams and a one-stop centre at the district level.
35. Furthermore, UNODC promoted gender-responsive non-custodial measures in line with the Bangkok Rules. The Office developed an e-learning module on the issue and made its *Toolkit on Gender-Responsive Non-Custodial Measures* available in Spanish and Thai. A focus on implementing the Bangkok Rules was also a component of the training provided by UNODC to 300 criminal justice professionals from 12 countries on the use of non-custodial measures, and of the training courses, on-site mentoring and other capacity-building measures for 2,700 prison officers.

36. In addition, UNODC mainstreamed a gender perspective into its technical assistance in the area of policing. In the Sudan, for instance, UNODC organized a workshop on access to justice for all, covering topics that included legal aid and gender-sensitive policing for criminal justice officials.

37. In March 2023, to mark the second International Day of Women Judges, the Global Judicial Integrity Network carried out a series of activities to promote equal gender representation in the judiciary.

4. **Addressing the vulnerabilities of children and youth in contact with the criminal justice system**

38. The Office developed a guidance note on applying a comprehensive approach to the treatment of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups in a Member State in West Africa. The note provided practical strategies for promoting prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration and the protection of children in contact with national criminal justice authorities, in line with international standards and norms.

39. UNODC supported Maldives in the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act (Act 18/2019) and provided 71 professionals with training in the form of three workshops on topics relating to child and juvenile justice, including child assessments and the implementation of diversion measures for children in conflict with the law. In Mauritania, the Office held a training workshop for 45 professionals on the development of regulations governing detention facilities for children in conflict with the law.

5. **Improving criminal investigation processes**

40. UNODC developed three English-language e-learning modules on investigative interviewing, which were translated into Arabic, French, German, Russian and Spanish and contextualized. In May 2023, the Office held a regional workshop in Bangkok on investigative interviewing for practitioners from seven countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific region, as well as an awareness-raising event on investigative interviewing for law enforcement officers and practitioners from Austria, Germany and Switzerland. In Kazakhstan, UNODC provided an e-learning platform and developed two modules, available in Kazakh and Russian, on basic crime scene investigation and good practices in police capacity-building.

41. UNODC continued to support the enhancement of capacities and skills relating to forensic sciences in the work of law enforcement and customs officials, postal service employees, laboratory experts and the judiciary. That support included the provision of standardized training courses in the United Nations Narcotics Laboratory. Manuals, guidelines, e-learning modules, proficiency testing and tools and services for security document examination, crime scene investigation, drug identification and the safe and environmentally friendly handling and disposal of drugs and the precursor chemicals used in their manufacture were also provided. A new specialized module on advanced investigative techniques was added to the United Nations Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs to support countries with practical resources and tools from across the United Nations system, thereby enabling them to comprehensively address various forms of crime related to synthetic drugs.
D. Promoting the rule of law

1. Access to justice and legal aid

42. UNODC supported 25 Member States in the area of access to justice, focusing on gender-sensitive and human rights-based approaches. The Office promoted access to legal aid and continued to support capacity-building for criminal justice actors to enable them to organize, coordinate and provide high-quality legal aid services. The Office contributed its expertise at national events on legal aid reform, including in relation to the choice of legal aid models and the role of the State in legal aid delivery at conferences in Jordan and Qatar. In Ethiopia, UNODC supported and participated in the revision of the draft national legal aid strategy before its submission to the National Council of Ministers. In Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, the Office increased efforts to promote inclusive access to justice, focusing on the rights of groups facing barriers and discrimination, such as LGBTQI+ persons, women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and migrants.

43. In partnership with the Office of the President of the General Assembly, UNODC co-hosted a high-level debate on the theme “Equal access to justice for all: advancing reforms for peaceful, just and inclusive societies”, held on 15 June 2023. Building on the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Kyoto Declaration, the event analysed the strategic importance of equal access to justice for all. Special attention was given to the role of access to justice in addressing the needs of groups facing structural impediments, such as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

2. National sentencing policies

44. In support of and in order to promote the use of proportionate sentencing, and with a view to addressing overincarceration and prison overcrowding, UNODC strengthened the capacity of 300 criminal justice professionals from Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam to use non-custodial measures in line with the Tokyo Rules and the Bangkok Rules. In Maldives, UNODC mobilized criminal justice stakeholders for joint consultations aimed at enhancing alternatives to imprisonment. In Thailand, a regional workshop for eight countries in South-East Asia highlighted the need for gender-responsive measures to foster the social reintegration of women offenders. Probation officers in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan benefited from targeted training on motivational interviewing, diversion and community sentences and the supervision of special categories of offenders. In Indonesia, a UNODC-supported new ministerial regulation on social enquiry reports is aimed at enhancing the prospects for individualized criminal justice responses at the pretrial and sentencing stages.

3. Effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive institutions

45. UNODC continued to support Member States in making their criminal justice institutions more effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive through human rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches. In Kenya, an online training event was held for police officers on how to handle groups with particular vulnerabilities and on human rights-based approaches to managing assemblies. The Office supported Kazakhstan in strengthening organizational policies to modernize the police services and enhance trust with the community, helped to enhance curricula and teaching skills within police training institutions and provided related training to more than 100 police officers. In Thailand, UNODC supported the police in drafting new regulations on the use of force and conducted a pilot training activity for 35 police officers and trainers to ensure the alignment of policing practices with international standards. In Uzbekistan, 20 police academy officials were trained to strengthen human rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches to capacity-building and research. Lastly, an assessment on policing was carried out in Tajikistan.
46. In order to promote transparency and accountability in the management of public finances, UNODC published *Enhancing Collaboration between Supreme Audit Institutions and Anti-Corruption Bodies in Preventing and Fighting Corruption: A Practical Guide*. The Guide, developed in cooperation with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions, was launched at the twenty-fourth International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions, held in November 2022.

47. The Global Judicial Integrity Network played a leading role in promoting the exchange of experiences among judges and judiciaries. The Network continued to raise awareness of emerging topics, including the ethical use of social media and new technologies, linkages between integrity and well-being, and issues related to open justice and transparency.

48. UNODC continued to provide assistance with addressing the gender dimensions of corruption to Member States, including Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Serbia and South Africa. Regional engagements included a virtual intervention for the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions, the co-organization of and in-person participation in the launch of the South-Eastern Europe Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Women Leaders Forum and in-person participation in the thirteenth Regional Conference of the Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa.

4. Effective anti-corruption efforts

49. UNODC has established regional anti-corruption hubs in Kenya and Mexico to strengthen its institutional framework for delivering technical assistance, bringing anti-corruption expertise closer to the point of delivery and ensuring contextualized, demand-driven support linked to regional forums and national frameworks. In November 2022 and April 2023, the Office also supported the establishment of two additional regional anti-corruption platforms to fast-track the implementation of the Convention against Corruption, in West Africa and the Sahel and in Central America. Those two latest platforms were milestones, being the first to include the gender dimensions of corruption both as a transversal element and in the form of specific gender-related activities. Together with the previously established platforms in East Africa, Southern Africa, South America and Mexico, South-East Asia and the Western Balkans, this regional approach covers a total of 55 jurisdictions across seven platforms.

5. Social, educational and other measures

50. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 74/170 and 76/183, UNODC supported Colombia, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Mexico, Nigeria, the Sudan, Tunisia and the State of Palestine in promoting life skills training and related activities through sport, including by providing sport-based education under the Line Up, Live Up initiative. In addition, UNODC and the International Olympics Committee launched a new joint programme known as the “SC:ORE programme” to strengthen the contribution of sport to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and promote the use of sport to prevent youth violence and crime.

51. UNODC, through its Global Resource for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment (GRACE) initiative, launched a series of regional dialogues for civil society organizations, youth and academia to enhance the participation of non-State actors in the implementation of the Convention against Corruption. The first dialogue for Latin America was held in February 2023. The Office also supported educators in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Malawi to advance anti-corruption education. Workshops on teaching integrity and ethics at the university level were organized for academics from Australia, Burundi, China, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. As part of
the GRACE initiative, UNODC organized “Coding4Integrity” anti-corruption hackathons in Brazil and Mexico for young people to develop technological solutions to corruption-related problems affecting their communities.

E. Promoting international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime

1. International cooperation, including through capacity-building and technical assistance

52. In February 2023, Bhutan acceded to the Organized Crime Convention, bringing the total number of parties to 191. UNODC provided support to more than 1,800 stakeholders from 102 Member States in strengthening the effective implementation of the Convention, including its use as a legal basis for international cooperation in criminal matters.

53. UNODC has further enhanced its Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) knowledge management portal and continued to develop tools to support normative and policy responses to organized crime, such as issue papers on the Organized Crime Convention and international human rights law and organized crime and gender.

54. UNODC continued to provide support to judicial cooperation networks and justice operators in Latin America, the Caribbean, West Africa, Asia and Europe with a view to facilitating international cooperation in criminal matters. For example, UNODC supported the Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors, the Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus and the South-East Asia Justice Network in holding their plenary meetings in the first half of 2023.

55. UNODC continued to support the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. With the launch of the third group, in November 2022, 189 parties are now engaged in this peer review process.

56. At its eleventh session, in October 2022, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime endorsed, inter alia, recommendations on the transfer of sentenced persons that had been adopted by the Working Group on International Cooperation.

2. International cooperation to deprive criminals of their proceeds of crime

57. UNODC, through the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, has assisted Member States in establishing asset recovery inter-agency networks across Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and West and Central Asia. These informal networks of law enforcement and judicial practitioners work on asset tracing, freezing, seizure and confiscation and international cooperation.

58. UNODC continued to facilitate the work of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities, a platform for informal cooperation among 161 anti-corruption authorities from 91 Member States and parties to the Convention against Corruption. In 2022, the Network rolled out a secure communication solution for direct peer-to-peer information exchange among its members and facilitated more than 60 bilateral case discussions between anti-corruption authorities.

3. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations

59. UNODC supported Member States in adhering to and effectively implementing the 19 international legal instruments against terrorism, with a focus on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the
Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment of 2005. UNODC offered various forms of assistance, such as a dedicated website on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in all six official languages of the United Nations, legislative drafting and country visits upon request, regional workshops and e-learning modules, a mock trial and tabletop exercises, a manual and other technical assistance tools to enhance understanding and application of the international legal framework against nuclear terrorism. UNODC also organized a high-level event in December 2022 to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

60. UNODC supported countries in West and Central Africa by building the capacity of personnel to identify and interdict foreign terrorist fighters at international airports. In East Africa, the Office conducted simulation exercises, built specialized courts, mentored the Financial Reporting Centre of Somalia and supported the disruption of Al-Shabaab financing. UNODC supported the sharing of knowledge on foreign terrorist fighters to support efforts to investigate terrorist offences and returnees in the Middle East and North Africa region. In South-East Asia, the Office increased understanding of foreign terrorist fighters’ patterns and improved the operational capacities of and information-sharing by Member States. UNODC, a contributing partner of the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, provided legislative assistance with the development of normative frameworks on advance passenger information and passenger name records, in line with international human rights standards.

61. UNODC launched the new Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Terrorism (2022–2027). The aim of the Programme is to help Member States adhere to and effectively implement the international legal framework against terrorism; develop and apply terrorism prevention measures that respect the rule of law and human rights and that involve partnerships, gender-responsiveness and youth empowerment; and improve the capacity of their criminal justice institutions to prevent and counter terrorism, while respecting human rights and cooperating with other countries in criminal matters.

4. New, emerging and evolving forms of crime

62. UNODC continued to support Member States in their efforts to address new, emerging and evolving forms of crime. In 2022, the Office supported 60 countries, trained nearly 5,000 officials and helped 17 countries to develop frameworks to counter trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

63. Trafficking for forced criminality, in which victims are forced to commit online scams and fraud, emerged as a post-COVID-19 trafficking trend. In response, UNODC continued to build capacity to prosecute related crime, identify victims and ensure that the non-punishment principle was applied. UNODC also conducted research to understand trends and the modus operandi of criminal networks, and provided technical and normative support to multilateral forums on those issues.

64. The Office also responded to other emerging and evolving trafficking practices. UNODC developed the “Toolkit on the investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons for organ removal” and published a policy brief on the gendered links between climate-related risks, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, as well as an analysis of illicit financial flows associated with trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants in selected countries.

65. UNODC continued to connect countries along emerging smuggling routes by facilitating investigations, police cooperation and prosecutions. Data collected on interlinkages between the smuggling of migrants and organized crime along the western and central Mediterranean routes revealed a lack of documentation on the arrest and prosecution of smugglers and increased cases of smuggling of migrants by air, and also showed that restrictive migration policies created conditions conducive to the smuggling of migrants. UNODC has launched the Knowledge Hub
on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (KNOWTS), which provides specialized content to more than 723 registered users.

66. To counter firearms trafficking, UNODC continued to assist 21 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Asia and Eastern Europe with regard to legislative and policy development, preventive and security measures, criminal justice responses, international cooperation, information exchange, the monitoring of illicit firearms flows and emerging threats, and provided training for more than 1,400 practitioners.

67. The preliminary results were seen of efforts that had been made to promote more advanced forms of international cooperation on complex cases of firearms trafficking in Africa and Latin America, including through the establishment of joint investigative teams and contact groups. In both regions, national authorities opened transnational investigations against trafficking networks. Such investigations rely on proper record-keeping mechanisms. UNODC developed software for integrated firearms registries and began piloting it in two countries. In order to keep abreast of evolving security situations that could produce future trafficking hotspots, the Office also started developing a firearms information system that will enable monitoring of firearms seizures in real time.

68. In 2022, UNODC reported the highest number of drug seizures in the 18-year history of the UNODC-World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme, including a record 275 metric tons of cocaine, along with other types of drugs, concealed in shipping containers and air cargo. UNODC continued, through the Airport Communication Programme, implemented jointly with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and WCO, to support law enforcement officers at international airports in detecting and intercepting all types of illicit commodities, in particular drugs, as well as high-risk passengers, and to exchange operational information in real time, through the operationalization of inter-agency task forces in 30 airports around the world.

69. Environmental crime is reported to converge with counterfeiting, drug trafficking, cybercrime, trafficking in persons, financial crime, arms trafficking and terrorism. UNODC supported Member States in preventing and addressing crimes that affect the environment, including by training over 4,000 criminal justice personnel in more than 40 countries in 2022, mentoring law enforcement officers and prosecutors, strengthening the capacity of wildlife, forest and fisheries authorities to manage corruption risks, supporting forensic and financial investigations, raising awareness and fostering international cooperation. The Office’s engagement with non-traditional stakeholders took various forms, including the publication of a children’s book with children and teachers and the development of university education modules with academia. During the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, an analysis paper was launched on the links between crimes that affect the environment and climate change. A memorandum of understanding was signed with the World Wide Fund for Nature to increase capacity to counteract crimes in the fisheries sector and promote maritime security.

70. Through cooperation in the context of the Airport Communication Programme and the Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment and Climate, the Office developed a training component for law enforcement officers in West and Central Africa on trafficking in precious metals by air.

71. UNODC also published new legislative guides on combating waste trafficking and responding to the illegal mining of and trafficking in metals and minerals, and it is finalizing a guide on combating crimes in the fisheries sector. The guides provide legislative guidance on how to prevent, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate those crimes. The Office also organized dissemination and technical assistance activities at the international and regional levels in West and Central Africa, South-Eastern Europe, Latin America and South-East Asia.
72. Pursuant to resolution 31/1 of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, UNODC compiled a report on the information provided by Member States on preventing and combating illicit trafficking in wildlife and presented key findings at the thirty-second session of the Commission, in May 2023.

73. With regard to trafficking in falsified medical products, through the Container Control Programme, the Office and the World Health Organization established a mechanism for strengthening the sharing of information between Container Control Programme units, national law enforcement agencies and national medicines regulatory authorities on the detection and seizures of falsified medical products.


75. UNODC, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and INTERPOL launched the Co-Action against Trafficking in Cultural Heritage (CATCH) initiative, a strategic partnership for joint programming, fundraising and implementation to be piloted in the Mediterranean region. The Office also provided support for border management authorities, resulting in seizures that included illicitly trafficked cultural property, and produced a research brief entitled “False trades: uncovering the scale and scope of trafficking in cultural property”.

76. UNODC, under the Global Maritime Crime Programme, built maritime law enforcement capacity and capability through the delivery of training courses and full-time mentorship. Its support also included training in maritime domain awareness skills for more effective and targeted patrolling and monitoring of States’ waters. UNODC provided training to prosecutors, advocates and legal professionals with a view to sharing knowledge and discussing cooperative strategies for prosecuting maritime crimes, such as through the Indian Ocean Prosecutors Network. The technical assistance provided to Member States also included reviews of their legal frameworks, with a view to ratifying relevant international conventions and transposing them into domestic law. UNODC pioneered the introduction of new technology to counter maritime crime, providing advanced technology solutions to enhance communication capability, automate processes, ensure tamper-proof vessel registration, strengthen vessel detection capability and deploy drone technology.

77. The Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/247, held its third, fourth and fifth sessions. At its third session, the Ad Hoc Committee undertook a first reading of the preamble, the provisions on international cooperation, technical assistance, preventive measures, the mechanism of implementation and the final provisions, and exchanged views on the basis of the written submissions by Member States. At its fourth and fifth sessions, the Ad Hoc Committee undertook a second reading of all chapters using a consolidated negotiating document prepared by the Committee Chair.

78. UNODC, through its Global Programme on Cybercrime, built capacities in 67 States to detect, prevent, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cyber-dependent and cyber-facilitated crimes. Among other activities, UNODC organized the second edition of the Africa Digital Forensics Competition, aimed at identifying and increasing local knowledge, including among women. In order to increase understanding of the relationship between cybercrime and drug trafficking, UNODC published a report entitled “The online trafficking of synthetic drugs and synthetic opioids in Latin America and the Caribbean”. The report entitled Darknet Cybercrime Threats to Southeast Asia, produced in 2020, was translated into Thai, Bahasa Indonesia and Vietnamese.
79. UNODC participated as an observer in the Committee of Experts on Hate Crime of the Council of Europe, which is drafting a recommendation on combating hate crime for the Committee of Ministers, intended for member States.

IV. Governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

1. Information on the work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

80. Members of the Bureau of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC were elected at the reconvened sixty-fifth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and at the reconvened thirty-first session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in December 2022. A dialogue with the Executive Director of UNODC was held on 2 February 2023, followed by regular meetings in February and June 2023. More information on the work of the working group can be found in document E/CN.15/2023/3-E/CN.7/2023/3.

2. Information on evaluation

81. Significant achievements in this area include the finalization of 15 evaluations and the first strategic evaluation on gender equality, the results of which were integrated into the United Nations Office at Vienna/UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2022–2026). The revised UNODC evaluation policy was implemented in line with the administrative instruction on evaluation in the United Nations Secretariat (ST/AI/2021/3).

82. Investments were made in innovative tools, enhanced evaluation processes and capacity development with a view to strengthening evaluation results and the nexus between evaluation and UNODC mandates. Two innovative meta-syntheses were finalized and presented. Cooperation with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute led to a joint system-wide meta-synthesis of work under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, enhancing collaboration in evaluation practices for preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

3. Information on fundraising

83. The year 2022 was the first full year in which the UNODC fundraising plan was implemented. The overall pledges made to UNODC reached their highest level to date ($430 million). That growth was brought about through continued outreach to partners, including through strategic dialogues. Pledges in the crime-related mandate areas of UNODC continued to outweigh pledges for the drug-related mandates, with partners opting to earmark resources and limit contributions to the general-purpose fund.

4. Information on the financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

84. The financial situation of UNODC remains precarious. The Office continues to encounter a steady decline in general-purpose income, which is projected to be $8.6 million for the period 2022–2023. Insufficient unearmarked funding poses a significant obstacle to the effective implementation of the Office’s mandates and programmes. The Secretary-General urged Member States to pledge more predictable and flexible funding for the United Nations development system in his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/78/72-E/2023/59).
85. Although the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global events created unprecedented stress on the global economy, the measures taken by UNODC to adapt its programmes to shifting realities and priorities allowed for an improvement in the delivery of technical assistance. As a result of the Office’s efforts, programme delivery is projected to reach $691.0 million in the period 2022–2023, representing an increase of $132.4 million (23.7 per cent) from the $558.6 million recorded for the period 2020–2021.

V. Recommendations

86. I urge Member States to continue their efforts to fully implement the Kyoto Declaration, including with a view to accelerating the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels.

Advancing crime prevention

87. I encourage Member States to step up their efforts, with the support of UNODC as appropriate, to promote evidence-based and comprehensive prevention interventions to help reduce crime and violence, including in situations of conflict and weak rule of law, to empower children and youth, and to strengthen the availability of evidence in this regard.

Advancing the criminal justice system

88. I call upon Member States to invest in sustainable policies and programmes to increase the availability of support, assistance and protection for victims of crime, especially women and youth, including the use of restorative justice programmes.

89. I urge Member States to review the performance management, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and processes used by criminal justice institutions in cases involving women and girls who have been victims of violence or who are in vulnerable situations, in order to ensure that such mechanisms and processes are gender-responsive and based on feedback from survivors.

90. I encourage Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure that children recruited and exploited by armed groups, organized criminal groups and groups designated as terrorist groups are recognized primarily as victims, regardless of recruitment modalities or the group’s designation.

91. I call upon Member States to strengthen their efforts to protect witnesses and reporting persons in accordance with the Organized Crime Convention and the Convention against Corruption, and to develop and implement comprehensive and evidence-based whole-of-society policies and strategies against organized crime and corruption.

92. In order to address the excessive use of incarceration, prison overcrowding and the systemic neglect of prison and offender management, I urge Member States to reassess and diversify their responses to crime with a view to making greater use of non-custodial measures and ensuring safe, humane and rehabilitative prison environments.

93. I call upon Member States to apply evidence-based investigation and interviewing methods for suspects, accused persons, victims and witnesses in order to improve the quality of investigations and ensure human rights compliance.

Promoting the rule of law

94. In order to strengthen the rule of law through equal access to justice for all and achieve the 2030 Agenda objective of leaving no one behind, I encourage Member States to ensure the human rights-compliant use of technology in criminal justice to increase access to justice for all, including those living in conflict areas and those
affected by displacement, and to ensure equal access to sustainable and specialized legal aid services for all.

95. I urge Member States to strengthen the integrity, accountability and fairness of criminal justice institutions, including by implementing human rights-based policing, strengthening independent oversight institutions and ensuring that the criminal justice workforce is representative of the communities it serves and is skills- and strengths-based.

96. I urge Member States to enhance public trust in justice actors and institutions and strengthen efforts to prevent and prohibit discrimination in all criminal justice institutions and practices.

97. In view of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention against Corruption, I call on Member States to continue to strengthen their implementation of the Convention, including through the UNODC regional approach, as appropriate, and by incorporating a gender perspective, the use of technology and youth empowerment-focused anti-corruption education, in the spirit of uniting the world against corruption.

Promoting international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime

98. In view of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Organized Crime Convention, I call upon Member States to continue efforts for its effective implementation, in particular with regard to its provisions on international cooperation, including through the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of comprehensive evidence-based policies and strategic frameworks. Such efforts should be placed in the wider context of promoting the rule of law and better governance structures, gender-balanced approaches and the empowerment of young people and civil society to engage in activities to implement the 2030 Agenda in cooperation with UNODC.

99. I urge Member States to continue to strengthen law enforcement capacity to detect and prosecute new and emerging forms of crime, such as trafficking in persons for forced criminality in order to commit online scams, and strengthen international cooperation to comprehensively address this crime from the perspective of it being a form of transnational organized crime.

100. I urge Member States to establish firearms focal points or integrated firearms centres in order to trace seized firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, develop ballistic or criminal data and expertise, improve situational analysis and strategic reporting on the crimes set out in the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and related crimes, and identify legal loopholes.

101. I call upon Member States to redouble their efforts to establish effective anti-money-laundering systems in accordance with relevant United Nations conventions and internationally accepted standards, including, where applicable, the recommendations of relevant intergovernmental bodies, including the Financial Action Task Force, with a view to fully implementing those standards.

102. I urge Member States to actively expand and reinforce partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders beyond the public sector, including the private sector, civil society and academia, in an effort to advance people-centred crime prevention and criminal justice reform, and to ensure greater inclusivity, innovation and effectiveness.

103. Supporting and protecting the rights and needs of victims of terrorism is a crucial aspect of preventing and countering terrorism, as is promoting peace and justice. I therefore urge Member States to adopt and implement national legislation and policies that ensure the recognition, participation, assistance and protection of
victims of terrorism and to consider referring to the *Model Legislative Provisions to Support the Needs and Protect the Rights of Victims of Terrorism*, developed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and UNODC, as appropriate. I also encourage Member States to provide legal and psychosocial support to victims of terrorism, in order to empower them to overcome their trauma and contribute to their communities.

*Governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*

104. I call upon Member States to provide adequate, predictable and sustainable funding to UNODC for its research, normative work and technical assistance, as well as for independent evaluation at the programme, strategic and system-wide levels, in crime prevention and criminal justice matters.