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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 [75/196](#). It contains a summary of the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to support 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.

From 7 to 12 March 2021, the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was held in Kyoto, Japan. The Congress adopted the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The report includes the activities undertaken by the Office to address the challenges posed to crime prevention and criminal justice systems by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

* [A/76/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. Since March 2020, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has triggered a decline in human development for the first time since 1990 and has also had an impact on crime and on prevention, investigation and adjudication efforts.

2. As part of its COVID-19 response to support Member States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has prepared research briefs and policy documents on a wide range of crime prevention and criminal justice topics.¹ The research has shown that the pandemic created opportunities for organized criminal groups to provide goods and services outside the law, as shown by the steady rise in trafficking in falsified medical products at the onset of the pandemic. Weaknesses in governing structures encouraged criminal groups to step in to deliver aid packages, which increased the legitimacy of those groups in certain communities. Despite global travel restrictions, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants have not ceased. On the contrary, the economic recession is likely to increase the number of victims trafficked from countries that will be slower to recover owing to unemployment and a stagnant economy. The number of calls to helpline services for victims of violence against women has increased in all regions of the world, while reports of sexual assaults and rape to official authorities have sharply decreased, indicating that lockdown measures have had an impact on the ability of women to report violence. Reported property crime decreased during the first phase of the pandemic (by up to 50 per cent), and homicide underwent a short-term decline (by 25 per cent or more) in some countries, while there was no visible change in others. The serious risk that COVID-19 has posed in prison settings has refocused attention on overcrowding, and since March 2020, at least 700,000 persons have been authorized or considered eligible for release through emergency release mechanisms in 119 Member States.

3. The present report provides information on the implementation of the mandates of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme in this fast-changing context and reflects emerging policy issues and possible responses, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 75/196. It includes the activities undertaken by UNODC to address the challenges posed to crime prevention and criminal justice systems by the pandemic. It also addresses the activities undertaken by the Office in the thematic areas covered by 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.

II. Fourteenth Congress and follow-up to the Thirteenth Congress

4. The Fourteenth Congress was held from 7 to 12 March 2021 in Kyoto, Japan, with a record number of 5,600 participants, of whom 4,200 participated through an interactive online event platform.² The Congress adopted the Kyoto Declaration on 7 March.

5. In ensuring appropriate follow-up to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Doha in 2015, UNODC continued its work under the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration: Towards the Promotion of a Culture of Lawfulness. The activities under the Global Programme directly support the operational, legislative and policy-related work

¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): UNODC updates”. Available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/covid-19.html.

² For further information on the Fourteenth Congress, see documents A/76/119 and A/CONF.234/16.

undertaken by Member States to make progress towards and successfully achieve the relevant goals and targets contained in the 2030 Agenda.

6. Since the inception of the Global Programme, more than 2.5 million people from over 190 countries have benefited from its activities. That figure includes more than 112,000 people who have participated in capacity-building activities, and over 2.3 million who have been reached indirectly, among them more than 1.5 million students. Most of that impact is a result of the use of nearly 200 tools and resources, including university-level modules, games, handbooks, manuals, podcasts and other pedagogical resources developed through the Programme. More than 450 translations of various tools and resources – into 15 different languages – have been prepared, and 84 countries have received direct technical assistance. The Programme has left an imprint on the policymaking arena, as demonstrated by the 347 references to the Programme and the Doha Declaration in official reports of the United Nations.

III. Action taken by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

7. Owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the regular twenty-ninth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, originally scheduled to be held from 18 to 22 May 2020, was postponed. In line with Economic and Social Council decision 2020/230, the Commission held its scaled-down regular and its reconvened twenty-ninth sessions on 3 and 4 December 2020. The Commission held the regular part of its thirtieth session in a hybrid format from 17 to 21 May 2021.

8. In its decision 74/550 B, the General Assembly requested the Commission to give high priority at its thirtieth session to considering the declaration of the Fourteenth Congress, with a view to recommending, through the Economic and Social Council, appropriate follow-up by the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. At its thirtieth session, the Commission considered the agenda item entitled “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” and recommended, through the Council, a draft resolution entitled “Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice” for adoption by the Assembly.³

9. At its thirtieth session, the Commission recommended, through the Economic and Social Council, four additional draft resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly, namely, on reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration, on integrating sport into youth crime prevention and criminal justice strategies, on strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and on preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment. The Commission also recommended to the Council the adoption of one draft resolution on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and adopted one resolution on international cooperation in addressing the smuggling of migrants.⁴

³ E/2021/30-E/CN.15/2021/17, chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution I.

⁴ Ibid., chap. I, sect. B, and sect. D, resolution 30/1.

IV. Action taken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in thematic areas

A. Strategic issues

10. In February 2021, UNODC launched its new strategy for the period 2021–2025. The strategy presents the unique position of the mandates of UNODC across the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. It outlines the normative work, research and technical assistance of the Office in five thematic areas: transnational organized crime, corruption, terrorism, addressing the world drug problem and strengthening criminal justice systems. The new strategy guides the implementation of the substantive mandates of UNODC, including in connection with the 2030 Agenda, through effective multilateral cooperation, and addresses cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights, youth, and partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector.

11. UNODC continued to work with United Nations entities, other intergovernmental and regional organizations, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms, such as the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Office continued its partnerships with the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Other relevant partners include the European Union, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Bank, the African Union, the Organization of American States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

12. UNODC continued to engage non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and the private sector, inter alia, 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 Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the UNCAC Civil Society Coalition, civil society participation was ensured in all intergovernmental meetings in 2020 and 2021, including in the preparations for the Fourteenth Congress, and hundreds of civil society representatives participated in more than 40 activities throughout 2020.

13. On 22 April 2021, the President of the General Assembly, in cooperation with UNODC, convened a high-level debate on the theme “Urban safety, security and good governance: making crime prevention a priority for all”. Participants called for increased involvement of women and youth in order to build resilience, integrate gender perspectives into governance models and provide youth with alternative lifestyles to drug and gang involvement. Participants also stressed the importance of better coordination and strengthened institutional capacity at the local and national levels. They underlined the role of UNODC in promoting the sustainable and inclusive development of safe cities and resilient communities, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals 11 and 16.

14. UNODC currently has a physical presence in 86 countries. In addition, a new programme office in Honduras is expected to become operational in the second half of 2021. A memorandum of understanding was signed by the Government of Honduras and UNODC in December 2019 with a view to strengthening the joint operational partnership to address security challenges related to corruption, violence, organized crime and illicit trafficking, and a joint action plan was developed. That partnership and the opening of the programme office were officially announced during a high-level virtual event held in Honduras in January 2021, in which all

relevant national institutions, civil society organizations, members of the international community and financial institutions participated.

B. Advancing crime prevention

1. Addressing the causes, including the root causes, of crime, and evidence-based crime prevention

15. UNODC continued to support countries in enhancing rigorous evidence collection to support crime prevention. Through global research, countries were provided with knowledge on risk factors related to trafficking in persons, the smuggling of migrants and wildlife crime and were alerted to the impact of COVID-19 on a number of crimes. Through methodology development and national and regional training in Latin America and Asia, UNODC supported countries in strengthening their capacity to collect, process and use crime and criminal justice statistics and firearms seizure data, including in the implementation of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes. Further training was provided to African countries on Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to crime and criminal justice, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), OHCHR and the Office for Disarmament Affairs. Pacific island States received assistance from UNODC in improving data related to trafficking in persons. UNODC also assisted several States in gathering better knowledge of the situation in prisons with a view to assessing rehabilitation strategies and outcomes.

16. UNODC continued to promote effective, community- and knowledge-based crime prevention, including through awareness-raising activities, capacity-building and the provision of policy and legislative advice to countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia. Evidence-based prevention and the use of UNODC tools were promoted through numerous global and regional activities, including events dedicated to the development of indicators for safer cities and the development of community-oriented policing.

2. Addressing the economic dimension of crime

17. Through the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, UNODC continued to support Member States in developing and implementing effective measures to address the economic dimension of crime and deprive criminals and criminal organizations of any illicit gains through, inter alia, identifying, tracing, seizing, confiscating, recovering and returning proceeds of crime, as well as establishing robust domestic frameworks for financial investigations, and to develop strategies to prevent and combat money-laundering and illicit financial flows.

18. Capacity-building activities included tailor-made training for the staff of judicial authorities, financial intelligence units, law enforcement authorities, and customs, immigration and border control agencies. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 13 anti-money-laundering e-learning modules have been widely promoted and used by recipient Member States.

19. Efforts to recover proceeds of corruption were supported by the progress made under the second cycle of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. In accordance with resolution 8/9 of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, the UNODC/World Bank Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative started collecting information on international asset recovery cases related to offences established in accordance with the Convention. That information was elicited through a questionnaire sent to the States parties to the Convention. They were also asked to report on the volumes of assets frozen, seized, confiscated and returned. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery of the Conference of the States Parties will focus its discussions in 2021 on non-conviction-based confiscation, as well as alternative legal mechanisms, non-trial resolutions and settlements that include the confiscation

and return of assets. Under the StAR Initiative, UNODC continued to work on knowledge products and to provide technical assistance.

20. The administration of frozen, seized and confiscated assets is fundamental to the success of asset recovery. Under article 31, paragraph 3, of the Convention against Corruption, States parties are required to adopt systems for the administration of assets. In 2019, the Conference adopted resolution 8/1, in which it decided that the Working Group on Asset Recovery should continue to collect information on best practices from States parties, with a view to completing the draft non-binding guidelines on the management of frozen, seized and confiscated assets (see [CAC/COSP/2019/16](#), annex) and updating the study entitled *Effective Management and Disposal of Seized and Confiscated Assets 2017*. A note verbale was circulated in April 2021 to request information from State parties on their legislation, policies, practices and institutions relating to the management of frozen, seized and confiscated assets. UNODC has also continued to provide technical assistance in connection with the administration of assets, including by developing or implementing targeted projects.

3. Tailor-made crime prevention strategies

21. UNODC provided advisory services to Member States seeking to develop local or national strategies, policies and programmes to prevent crime and victimization. In Ethiopia, the Office contributed to the drafting of the national crime prevention strategy, and in Kyrgyzstan it contributed to the drafting of new legislation on crime prevention. To promote safety at the local level, UNODC and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) joined forces in enhancing the capacity of the city administrations of Querétaro, Mexico, Santiago de Cali, Colombia, and Durban, South Africa, by assisting in the formulation of safety policies with a participatory approach and in measuring progress towards the achievement of safety-related development targets. In Colombia, in partnership with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, UNODC developed a methodology to diagnose risk factors related to crime in 22 municipalities and assisted several local governments in developing local plans. In Peru and Kyrgyzstan, the Office developed training curricula on the use of sport for crime prevention and trained more than 5,000 coaches.

4. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention

22. Through its work on youth crime prevention and sport (see para. 24 below), UNODC promoted the empowerment of women and girls and facilitated youth discussions about harmful gender stereotypes. Through a project on evidence-based policies for improved community safety in Latin American and African cities, UNODC and UN-Habitat strengthened the capacity of city officials in Colombia, Mexico and South Africa to respond to domestic violence during the pandemic. In Brazil, the Office launched the fifth cycle of the Youth Ambassadors Programme, engaging at-risk youth (76 per cent girls) to act as multipliers of the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on gender-based violence, urban crime prevention and community-police relations.

5. Children and youth in crime prevention and youth empowerment for crime prevention

23. Under its initiative on youth crime prevention through sport, UNODC promoted sport in the context of holistic crime prevention approaches, providing life skills training to youth and promoting pro-social behaviour, youth empowerment and social inclusion. The initiative has reached 25,000 young people so far. UNODC organized a series of 16 global, national and regional virtual events under the Initiative, engaging stakeholders from the justice, social, youth, education and sport sectors and underlining the need to invest in social development programmes, including through sport, to address the increased risk of youth victimization and engagement in violence and crime.

24. As part of the initiative, UNODC continued to engage at-risk youth in both face-to-face and online activities through the “Line Up, Live Up” training programme and other sport-based interventions aimed at building life skills and providing opportunities for youth participation, and training has been provided for 15,000 young people and 1,200 trainers and coaches so far. The programme also conducted webinars and workshops to promote sport in crime prevention and developed guidance tools, including the UNODC publication *Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport: Technical Guide*.

25. In Uzbekistan, UNODC organized a national awareness campaign to strengthen youth resilience to violence by engaging athletes as positive role models. The Office also launched online initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the State of Palestine, with a view to empowering young people to develop innovative technology-based solutions to promote social cohesion and the rule of law.

C. Advancing the criminal justice system

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

26. UNODC continued to provide technical assistance in the area of safeguarding victims’ rights. In El Salvador, the Office developed a protocol and a guide on assessing risks of COVID-19 in victim and witness protection shelters. In addition, UNODC provided training for police officials in Punjab, Pakistan, which resulted in increased availability of psychosocial and medico-legal services to victims of abuse and domestic violence. A training-of-trainers workshop was conducted in Nepal to strengthen the capacity of 20 prosecutors in the discharge of their duties in relation to child victims and witnesses and children in conflict with the law. In Viet Nam, UNODC trained 127 police officers and prosecutors on the international and domestic legal framework on child sexual exploitation, focusing on the identification of victims and perpetrators while applying victim-centred responses. The Office also organized ancillary meetings on victims’ rights on the margins of the Fourteenth Congress.

27. UNODC implemented a project to support the Central African Republic in putting the Special Criminal Court into full operation by assisting with the design and implementation of a victim and witness protection programme. Activities were carried out to set up a witness and victim protection unit, to develop, implement and monitor policies, procedures and regulations, to raise awareness of key actors and ensure that standard operating procedures were in place, to provide specialized capacity-building for different actors, to raise public awareness about the services provided to victims and witnesses, and to support the linkages between the Court and other parts of the judiciary for the protection of victims and witnesses.

28. UNODC continued to receive a significant number of requests from States parties to assist in establishing or reinforcing mechanisms for the protection of individuals who report corruption. Under the first cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism, it was recommended to 70 per cent of the reviewed States parties that they strengthen their capacity to protect reporting persons. UNODC provided a wide range of technical assistance to States parties to establish or strengthen their frameworks and mechanisms to facilitate reporting and provide effective protection from intimidation or retaliation. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted even further the need for States to have adequate mechanisms in place to enable the reporting of misconduct and the protection of reporting persons, in particular in the health sector and in the allocation and use of emergency response packages. At the time of reporting, UNODC was supporting more than 25 States parties in the establishment or reinforcement of reporting mechanisms, in particular in the health sector.

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

29. In view of the unprecedented challenges to health and safety in prisons posed by COVID-19, UNODC provided emergency assistance to prisons and correctional

services in 50 States. Technical assistance included the procurement of personal protective equipment and sanitary items, the improvement of prison conditions and health care and basic services available to prisoners, and targeted capacity-building for prison officers and health-care professionals.

30. UNODC launched a global awareness-raising campaign on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).

31. UNODC continued to provide extensive support to States for their training programmes for prison staff, including through the provision of in-person training and webinars, the enhancement of training curricula and the deployment of prison mentors. To meet the strong demand for virtual training solutions during the pandemic, UNODC also promoted its scenario-based e-learning course on the Nelson Mandela Rules.

32. In order to enhance effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the treatment of detainees and prisoners, UNODC upgraded the online network infrastructure of prison and/or prosecution authorities in Egypt, Kazakhstan, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

33. With a view to supporting the social reintegration of prisoners upon release, the Office initiated prison-based rehabilitation programmes and services in several Member States. Recreational, educational, vocational training and work programmes, as well as psychosocial support services, were launched in prisons or juvenile detention facilities in Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Namibia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste and Tunisia.

34. Acknowledging the challenges posed by high-risk prisoners and that prisons may serve as incubators for violent extremism and terrorist recruitment, UNODC provided technical assistance to more than 20 Member States in Africa and Asia with a view to strengthening the capacity of prison services to effectively manage high-risk prisoners, including violent extremist prisoners, prevent radicalization to violence in prisons and implement tailored post-release support and supervision.

3. Mainstreaming a gender perspective into criminal justice systems

35. UNODC supported 21 States in strengthening responses to violence against women, including by supporting the alignment of legislative frameworks with international standards and norms. The Office provided technical expertise in the development of a Southern African Development Community regional model law against gender-based violence.

36. In order to enhance the capacity of criminal justice professionals to prevent and respond to violence against women, UNODC held a global webinar on judicial responses to gender-based violence during the pandemic, bringing together experts from 15 countries. In addition, UNODC trained judges, prosecutors, police officials and public defenders from Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, Egypt, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Viet Nam on the same topic.

37. UNODC developed a guide on gender-based violence for Santiago de Cali, Colombia. Under the Spotlight Initiative, the Office developed guidelines and protocols to guarantee access to high-quality care and provide a safe urban environment for women and girls in the cities of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez in Mexico.

38. UNODC and UN-Women strengthened the capacities of local stakeholders in Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone to provide legal aid services to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, at the same time increasing awareness of COVID-19 prevention strategies.

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

39. UNODC trained 571 practitioners in Kazakhstan on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with terrorist and violent extremist groups and provided legal advisory services to Kazakhstan and South Africa on the same topic. In Indonesia, UNODC held a capacity-building workshop and produced a training manual on justice for children in the context of counter-terrorism. Indonesia endorsed the UNODC “Roadmap on the treatment of children recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups”. UNODC also provided sport-based life skills training to children in a detention facility and children in contact with the law in selected communities in Lebanon.

5. Improving criminal investigation processes

40. UNODC contributed to the development of the new “Principles on effective interviewing for investigations and information-gathering”, drafted by international experts on law enforcement, criminal investigations, national security, criminology and human rights. The Office has also been supporting the Department for Peace Operations in the development of guidance on investigative interviewing for United Nations police officers. In addition, UNODC co-organized events on investigative interviewing methods during the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and during the Fourteenth Congress.

6. Capacity-building in forensic sciences

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 services, laboratory experts and the judiciary. That support included the provision of standardized training courses and tools, guidelines and e-learning modules on security document examination, crime scene investigation, drug identification and the safe and environment-friendly handling and disposal of drugs and of the precursor chemicals used in their manufacture.

D. Promoting the rule of law

1. Access to justice and legal aid

42. UNODC and UNDP jointly developed a guidance note entitled “Ensuring access to justice in the context of COVID-19”. UNODC co-hosted the fourth International Conference on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems, a five-day online event conducted in eight languages. More than 800 participants from over 75 countries discussed topics such as the unprecedented challenges in accessing justice posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, how legal aid can be used to combat intensified inequalities by advocating for the release and protecting the rights of people deprived of liberty, the representation and protection of marginalized groups, and tackling systemic racism and discrimination based on ethnicity, gender or other status.

43. UNODC convened a series of eight virtual expert group meetings, involving more than 100 legal aid managers, practitioners, researchers and representatives of United Nations entities and civil society organizations from all regions, to discuss good practices and challenges in conducting legal aid assessments. The Office also organized a special event on equal access to justice for all at the Fourteenth Congress.

44. Furthermore, UNODC took the lead in the criminal justice pillar of the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities.

2. National sentencing policies

45. In view of the global prison crisis caused by overincarceration and prison overcrowding, UNODC promoted proportionate sentencing policies and the enhanced use of non-custodial measures as alternatives to incarceration, with a specific focus on people with drug use disorders in contact with the law, as well as on women offenders. For example, the Office assisted the Government of Sri Lanka in improving the use of non-custodial measures, including through a series of workshops for criminal justice professionals on sentencing policies and guidelines, with a view to promoting more proportionate and individualized responses to crime and improving the rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders.

3. Effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive institutions

46. UNODC provided a wide range of technical assistance with a view to ensuring the integrity and impartiality of law enforcement and other institutions comprising the criminal justice system, as well as the independence of the judiciary.

47. With regard to law enforcement, UNODC conducted a regional webinar on integrity, ethics and accountability in law enforcement for 100 participants from the Caribbean region, in cooperation with the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and OHCHR. In Brazil, the Office implemented projects at the state level to strengthen oversight mechanisms on police use of force in Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Pernambuco. The UNODC-OHCHR *Resource Book on the Use of Force and Firearms in Law Enforcement* was translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic, and the *Handbook on Police Accountability, Oversight and Integrity* was translated into Spanish.

48. In the context of its anti-corruption efforts (see paras. 51–55 below), UNODC provides technical assistance to States with a view to strengthening the integrity, transparency and accountability of a broad range of institutions. The Office further intensified its efforts to explore the gender dimensions of corruption in its publication *The Time Is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption*. The publication highlights how gender equality and anti-corruption policies could be mutually reinforcing and how diversity and inclusion in the public and private sectors could disrupt well-established, at times collusive and single-sex networks, allowing for more inclusive and transparent institutions.

49. The Global Judicial Integrity Network continued to support judiciaries in strengthening judicial integrity and accountability. The Network created experience-sharing opportunities for judges, such as regular webinars, podcasts and written opinion pieces, and it launched new website features to promote peer support. The Network continued to disseminate its knowledge products, including on the use of social media by judges and on gender-related issues. It also continued its work on emerging areas, such as the use of artificial intelligence and judicial immunity. As of May 2021, over 65 jurisdictions worldwide were implementing the Network's judicial ethics training package.

4. Effective anti-corruption efforts

50. At the time of reporting, there were 187 parties to the Convention against Corruption. The Implementation Review Group established by the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention held its eleventh session in June 2020 and its first and second resumed eleventh sessions from 31 August to 2 September and from 16 to 18 November 2020, respectively. The resumed sessions included meetings held jointly with the eleventh meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption, held from 31 August to 2 September, the fourteenth meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery, held from 16 to 18 November, and the ninth open-ended intergovernmental expert meeting to enhance international cooperation under the Convention against Corruption, also held from 16 to 18 November.

51. The first cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism is nearing completion, with 173 executive summaries of country review reports finalized. Work on the second cycle is advancing, with 51 executive summaries finalized. UNODC continued to provide technical assistance in response to the observations made in the reviews, including through the drafting of action plans, anti-corruption strategies and legislation, capacity-building and other ad hoc activities. During the review process, the Office assisted nine States parties with the completion of their self-assessment checklists. UNODC also supported 18 States parties in the drafting or amending of 16 laws and regulations and nine pieces of policy to prevent and combat corruption.

52. UNODC continued to provide technical and substantive services in the framework of the Implementation Review Mechanism. Those services included the provision of training and assistance to governmental experts from States parties under review and from reviewing States parties, supporting country reviews and producing thematic reports on implementation trends and related technical assistance needs identified during the reviews. The outcomes of the country reviews have had far-reaching policy implications, including by contributing to the preparatory process for the special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation, held from 2 to 4 June 2021.

53. UNODC provided a broad range of tailored technical assistance to 104 States parties through activities at the global, regional and national levels. Assistance included support in the drafting of anti-corruption policies, laws and codes of conduct, the strengthening of asset declaration systems and whistle-blower protection systems, advice on investigating and prosecuting corruption offences, including through international cooperation, and support in identifying and mitigating corruption risks across all sectors of public administration.

54. The UNODC network of field-based anti-corruption advisers continued to provide professional expertise and technical assistance in Latin America, South-Eastern Europe, Eastern and Southern Africa, the Pacific region, South and South-East Asia and West and Central Africa, and a senior global adviser is based in Vienna.

5. Social, educational and other measures

55. Through its Education for Justice initiative, UNODC contributed to crime prevention and the strengthening of criminal justice systems through educational tools and associated activities, with over 2 million beneficiaries in more than 190 countries. The initiative provided direct technical assistance to 84 countries and direct capacity-building support to more than 100,000 people. The educational materials benefited 1.5 million students and 33,000 teachers worldwide. The initiative supports the United Nations Youth Strategy, in particular the first priority (engagement, participation and advocacy) and the fourth priority (youth and human rights), as well as the implementation of article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

56. UNODC also supported social and educational measures under its initiative on youth crime prevention through sport (see para. 24 above).

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

57. At the time of reporting, the Organized Crime Convention had 190 parties, the Trafficking in Persons Protocol had 178 parties, the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol had 150 parties and the Firearms Protocol had 120 parties. The implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto by States parties will be evaluated through the new Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, the

review process of which was launched at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Vienna in October 2020. UNODC updated the *Model Legislative Provisions against Organized Crime* and finalized a toolkit on strategies to prevent and combat organized crime. UNODC also continued to develop the knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) (sherloc.unodc.org), which encompasses resources on 15 types of crime.

58. UNODC continued to provide secretariat services to three judicial cooperation networks, namely the Network of West African Central Authorities and Prosecutors against Organized Crime, the Network of Prosecutors and Central Authorities from Source, Transit and Destination Countries in response to Transnational Organized Crime in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus and the South-East Asia Justice Network. Those networks facilitated direct contacts among central authorities for mutual legal assistance, provided practical tools and advice and enabled the exchange of experience. In 2020, the three networks facilitated 61 mutual legal assistance matters, including interregional requests, involving countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Caribbean region. Two interregional special meetings were held jointly with the European Judicial Network, one with a focus on direct contact between designated contact points (November 2020) and one on the internal functioning of judicial cooperation networks (January 2021).

59. Through the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme, the Office continued to work with Member States to establish port control units and air cargo control units at seaports, dry ports, land borders and airports and along railways. Front-line law enforcement personnel were trained in profiling and inspecting cargo containers suspected of carrying illicit goods.

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

60. UNODC continued to support inter-agency networks for asset recovery in Southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific, West Africa, and West and Central Asia. These informal networks of law enforcement and judicial practitioners support the complete asset recovery process, from the starting point of the investigation involving the tracing of assets, to freezing and seizure, management and finally forfeiture or confiscation, including any necessary asset-sharing between jurisdictions. The various networks are in different stages of development; the network in Southern Africa has demonstrated a particularly positive impact. The 17 member countries of that network have reported more than \$5 billion in forfeited assets since 2017.

61. With regard to tracing, seizing, confiscating and recovering proceeds of corruption, UNODC also works through the StAR Initiative. In 2020, 18 countries benefited from assistance provided through the Initiative, and over 1,000 persons were trained globally. On the margins of the special session of the General Assembly against corruption, UNODC launched the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) with the aim of enhancing informal cooperation among those authorities. To facilitate the launch of the Network, UNODC held a meeting of experts in March 2021 and established three interim task forces.

62. In November 2020, the fourteenth meeting of the Working Group on Asset Recovery and the ninth open-ended intergovernmental expert meeting to enhance international cooperation of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention against Corruption were held.

3. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations

63. In support of the ratification and implementation of conventions and protocols on terrorism, UNODC continued to advocate for universal adherence to the 19 international legal instruments against terrorism. During the reporting period, Cuba and the Netherlands became the fifth and sixth Member States to have become parties to all 19 instruments, joining Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Kazakhstan and

Turkey. As a result of the Office's technical assistance, in 2020, Saint Kitts and Nevis became a party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and Angola and Eritrea became parties to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities and its Amendment.

64. In September 2020, amid mounting concerns over the potential use of biological agents by terrorist groups, UNODC developed and held an online event on the international legal framework against biological terrorism, aimed at raising awareness of the existing international legal instruments and discussing synergies and complementarities between them.

65. UNODC, in cooperation with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, has been implementing a global project aimed at promoting the universalization and effective implementation of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, including by assisting Member States in their adherence to and legislative incorporation and implementation of the Convention.

66. UNODC also supported Member States with technical assistance regarding foreign terrorist fighters. In Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, the Office delivered specialized technical assistance on open-source intelligence and social media-based investigations, interviewing techniques for vulnerable populations, the use of watch lists, biometrics and passenger data, and crime scene management. As a result, law enforcement and criminal justice officials acquired skills to elicit accurate and reliable accounts from victims, witnesses and suspects and avoid false confessions. UNODC also supported responses to the threat of terrorist infiltration in refugee camps and settlements in Lebanon by making the best use of international crime and terrorism-related databases and lists.

67. UNODC published *Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Manual for Judicial Training Institutes – Middle East and North Africa*, available in English and Arabic, to strengthen the investigation and prosecution of terrorism offences committed by foreign nationals and foster related cross-border cooperation in that region.

68. UNODC supported the Central Asian Network for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and delivered assistance to enhance the capacity of government authorities and civil society actors in countries in Central Asia. The focus of the Network is on preventing violent extremism leading to terrorism by providing comprehensive and coordinated prosecutorial and rehabilitative responses to returning foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying families.

4. New, emerging and evolving forms of crime

(a) Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants

69. UNODC leads international efforts to address trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, including in response to increased vulnerabilities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Through its Global Programmes against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants, UNODC supported 56 countries and trained more than 2,600 practitioners in 2020.

70. UNODC advanced efforts to better respond to trafficking in mixed migration flows. In Malawi, UNODC trained front-line responders to combat trafficking in persons at the Dzaleka refugee camp and helped institutionalize practices for the identification and referral of refugee victims by national authorities. In Jordan and Lebanon, UNODC supported the authorities and victim service providers in addressing trafficking in persons among displaced persons, with a focus on victim identification and strengthening coordination for appropriate protection and referral.

71. UNODC published the study *Abused and Neglected: A Gender Perspective on Aggravated Migrant Smuggling Offences and Response*, which contains an analysis of the experiences of smuggled migrants during the migration journey, including episodes of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, in particular for migrant women. In addition, UNODC published a study entitled *The Effects of the COVID-19*

Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons and Responses to the Challenges: A Global Study of Emerging Evidence. The aim of the study was to document how COVID-19 had an impact on trends and patterns of trafficking in persons and the ways in which front-line actors adapted their responses to address increased risk factors and vulnerabilities to the crime, with a view to improving the identification of and assistance to victims, as well as the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators.

(b) Measures against trafficking in firearms

72. Under its Global Firearms Programme, UNODC assisted 36 countries in Africa, Latin America, Central Asia and Eastern Europe with regard to legislative and policy development, preventive and security measures, criminal justice responses, international cooperation and information exchange, the monitoring of illicit firearms flows and emerging threats.

73. Together with INTERPOL, the Office coordinated two law enforcement operations targeting firearms trafficking: Operation KAFO II, with a focus on West Africa and the Sahel, and Operation Trigger VI, in which front-line officers seized 200,000 illicit firearms and arrested more than 4,000 suspects in South America.

74. UNODC also produced several new publications, including the *Global Study on Firearms Trafficking 2020* and the “Guiding templates for firearms-related investigations”. In addition, the Office developed training courses on the detection of firearms trafficking through postal and express parcel shipments and is developing comprehensive record-keeping software that can be used in different national contexts.

(c) World drug problem

75. In 2020, UNODC reported the highest number of drug seizures in the 16-year history of the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme, including a record 106 tons of cocaine, along with other types of drugs, concealed in shipping containers and air cargo. Under its global programme on strengthening criminal justice cooperation along trafficking routes (CRIMJUST), UNODC also continued its work with Member States along drug trafficking routes to promote cooperation in post-seizure drug investigations. Officials were trained in the use of special investigative techniques. In 2020, CRIMJUST facilitated five interregional investigative forums involving countries from Africa, Latin America and Europe, in which 45 drug seizure cases were presented and investigative actions were agreed upon, which were thereafter carried out by the respective Member States.

(d) Violence against children

76. UNODC launched toolkits aimed at building the capacity of police and prosecutors in Viet Nam to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute cases involving the sexual abuse of children. UNODC conducted a national seminar on using electronic devices and modern technologies for the prosecution of child sexual exploitation cases, with the participation of 80 practitioners. In Colombia, UNODC strengthened crime prevention efforts by facilitating a training session for 446 children on techniques to identify sexual exploitation within their communities. In cooperation with other organizations, the Office also rolled out a series of global and regional webinars on the technical package entitled *INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence against Children*.

(e) Wildlife trafficking

77. UNODC delivered a comprehensive programme of support to over 1,500 criminal justice personnel under the Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime. UNODC developed guidance on COVID-19 and wildlife crime, including on the potential risks of zoonotic pathogens associated with wildlife seizures and the risks posed to front-line officers. The Office mentored wildlife crime investigators through secure virtual platforms, supported Member States in

digitalizing criminal justice systems to allow virtual court proceedings, procured equipment to support wildlife authorities in managing surges in poaching and provided personal protective equipment to front-line enforcement officers.

(f) Falsified medical products

78. UNODC continued to provide assistance and capacity-building in relation to trafficking in falsified medical products, in line with resolution 10/5 of the Conference of the Parties to the Organized Crime Convention. Through the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme, and in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, the Office provided training to front-line law enforcement personnel on the identification of falsified medical products, proper factory packaging specifics and legitimate supply channels to address threats in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

(g) Trafficking in cultural property

79. In cooperation with OSCE and the Multinational Peace Support Operations Training Centre, UNODC delivered an online training course on the protection of cultural property in August and September 2020. The Office also contributed to an event organized by UNESCO and the Italian Carabinieri entitled “Fighting the illicit traffic of cultural property”, held in a hybrid format in Venice, Italy, in October 2020, and to a high-level round table on trafficking in cultural property in the framework of the conference on the theme “Cultural heritage and multilateralism: regional and international strategies”, organized by Germany, UNESCO, the European Union and the Council of Europe in November 2020.

(h) Smuggling of commercial goods

80. Through the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme, the Office provided training to front-line law enforcement personnel in profiling and inspecting cargo containers suspected of carrying illicit goods, thus enhancing their capacity to detect smuggled highly taxed goods, such as alcohol, tobacco and motor vehicles, and to counter commercial fraud, such as undervaluation and misclassification.

(i) Precious metals

81. The third meeting of the Informal Law Enforcement Network on Minerals-Related Crime, held in November 2020, was organized by UNODC in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and WCO. Attended by 140 participants, the virtual event provided a platform for discussing law enforcement challenges and cases of illegal mining and minerals trafficking. In addition, UNODC developed a response framework that includes a technical assistance programme to address illegal mining and trafficking in precious metals.

(j) Maritime crime

82. UNODC continued to support States in effectively responding to maritime crime through technical assistance provided to maritime law enforcement, prosecutor’s offices and the judiciary under the Global Maritime Crime Programme. Technical assistance included visit, board, search and seizure training, the facilitation of simulated trials, and prosecutors’ networks. In addition, UNODC strengthened States’ maritime situational awareness by offering technology combined with analytical courses, and the Office provided assistance in securing digital border management and critical infrastructure, including the protection of submarine cables. Moreover, UNODC is strengthening the link between maritime security and the protection of the maritime environment, including addressing crimes in the fisheries sector and ensuring proper maritime law enforcement for marine protected areas.

(k) Cybercrime

83. UNODC continued to support the work of the Expert Group to Conduct a Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime, which held meetings in July 2020 and April 2021. UNODC also provided substantive and administrative support and serviced the organizational session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, held in New York from 10 to 12 May 2021.

84. Through its Global Programme on Cybercrime, UNODC helped to build capacity in preventing, detecting, investigating and prosecuting cybercrime in all its forms, with due regard for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, a total of 2,440 criminal justice practitioners from 105 countries were trained, including on countering COVID-19-specific threats relating to online fraud.

85. UNODC continued to support the work of the General Assembly and contributed to the Secretary-General's Road Map for Digital Cooperation. The Office routinely provided guidance and advice on the impact of cybercrime on cybersecurity, peace and stability to United Nations senior officials, Member States and civil society.

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

86. Information on the governance and financial situation of UNODC is presented in the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation against the world drug problem (A/76/121).

VI. Concluding observations

87. In the Kyoto Declaration, States agreed on concrete actions to advance their efforts for crime prevention, criminal justice, the rule of law and international cooperation. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice took those commitments forward at its thirtieth session.

88. I urge Member States to make appropriate use of the Kyoto Declaration with a view to ensuring that their efforts for crime prevention and criminal justice mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on vulnerable members of society.

Advancing crime prevention

89. The United Nations stands ready to assist Member States in addressing the causes, including the root causes, of crime. I urge all Member States to strengthen, in cooperation with State and non-State actors, the availability and quality of evidence that can support crime prevention policies that are sustainable, community-focused and gender-responsive and that empower young people.

90. I urge Member States to strengthen their domestic legal, institutional and operational frameworks to counter gender-based violence and respond to all forms of violence against children, and to include such measures in any post-pandemic recovery plan. I also urge Member States to take measures to prevent the involvement of children in crime and violence.

Advancing the criminal justice system

91. I urge all Member States to step up measures for safeguarding victims' rights and protecting witnesses and reporting persons. In addition, I draw the attention of all States to the need to ensure that interventions targeting children as victims, witnesses or alleged offenders have as key objectives their rehabilitation, reintegration and their

best interests, and to establish or strengthen fair, transparent and child-sensitive juvenile justice systems.

92. I urge all Member States to mainstream a gender perspective into national policies, programmes, legislation and other actions to prevent and counter crime, inter alia, all forms of gender-related violence, crime and victimization, including gender-related killings. In particular, in the light of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on domestic violence, I call upon Member States to increase their efforts to prevent and counter domestic violence.

93. All criminal justice systems and police services need to address the needs and rights of those at risk of being left behind in order to provide equal access to justice for all and build inclusive, efficient, transparent and equitable institutions. In an effort to build back better, I call upon all Member States to review their sentencing policies and the adequacy and proportionality of their responses to crime, and consider resorting to non-custodial measures, in order to address prison overcrowding and overincarceration. I also urge all Member States to increase their compliance with international prison standards.

Promoting the rule of law

94. I urge all Member States to provide access to justice to all by ensuring quality legal aid systems, addressing discrimination, reforming their police institutions and strengthening restorative justice and victim assistance.

95. Corruption safeguards and responses are integral elements of recovery efforts as the global community responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. I therefore urge all Member States to redouble their efforts to prevent and combat corruption and fully implement the Convention against Corruption.

96. I encourage Member States to fully support the commitments and recommendations made at the special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation, held from 2 to 4 June 2021.

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

97. I call upon States to act against all forms of organized crime, in line with the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto, and encourage States parties to actively participate in the newly launched review process of the implementation of the Convention.

98. I also call upon States to take action against organized crime in mixed migration settings, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including trafficking in persons involving migrants and refugees and aggravated forms of smuggling involving violence, abuse and death.

99. I encourage Member States to prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies pursuant to Security Council resolution [2396 \(2017\)](#).

100. I call upon all Member States to integrate emerging policy issues into their crime prevention and criminal justice policies and into their pandemic recovery plans. In this regard, I encourage Member States to integrate responses to crimes affecting the environment, including wildlife trafficking, into broader agendas on biodiversity, health and climate; find solutions to cybercrime, including through active participation in the negotiation of an international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes, and taking into account the risk of criminal networks taking advantage of the increased use of online technology; and enhance national understanding and capabilities to respond to maritime crime.