



SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls make a crucial contribution to progress across all the SDGs. Understanding the interrelationship between gender and transnational organized crime, drug-related policies, counter-terrorism and corruption is vital in ensuring that policies, programmes and activities are effective for the population as a whole. This means that UNODC programmes need to take into account how men and women, girls and boys, including variations in gender, sexual orientation, or bodily characteristics, are impacted differently by drugs, crime and terrorism.

UNODC supports Member States to reach the targets under SDG 5 by promoting access to justice for women and girls; supporting the development of legislation and policies that protect their rights and prevent as well as respond to violence against women and girls; developing institutional and professional capacities relevant to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of women and girls; and creating the conditions for women and girls to be in a position to claim their rights and be active agents of change. Further, UNODC monitors violence against women by collecting data from Member States and assisting them in conducting surveys on the topic. This data can provide important evidence to address violence against and the intentional killing of women.

The Women in Justice/for Justice campaign, launched on the first International Day of Women Judges on 10 March 2022, takes into account that women have been historically underrepresented in the field of justice, the campaign seeks to highlight the role of women and raise awareness on the importance of greater representation of women across the justice sector. Ensuring equitable gender representation in criminal justice institutions is a crucial step to ensuring women's access to gender-responsive justice.



UN entities work closely together to address the different targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda. UNODC assists Member States in achieving the following target:

5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

It also strengthens the judiciary and its ability to deliver fair decisions and it can lead to more effective, victim-centered responses to crime, as well as greater accountability.

The Office's global work on drug use prevention and treatment of drug use disorders specifically addresses the unique needs of women and girls within a framework of human rights. Its HIV programmes advocate for gender-responsive HIV services for women who inject drugs and women in prisons and address the special needs of women who inject drugs.

Although women remain a minority of the worldwide prison population, their numbers have increased by 60 per cent since 2000 and have grown at a much faster pace compared to men. Incarceration has a particularly negative impact on women and their dependants in terms of safety, exposure to gender-based violence, mental health and stigma. As the custodian of the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), UNODC promotes a gender-responsive approach to prison and offender management and to enhancing the use of non-custodial measures. UNODC's efforts have resulted in, the launch of the first of its kind Gender Responsive Centre for incarcerated women in South Africa in December 2022 at Atteridgeville, Gauteng Region, in partnership with the South African National Department of Justice and Correctional Services.

UNODC also works to improve the protection of women and girls through its work in tackling trafficking in persons, the majority of whom are women and girls. Trafficking in persons is a vicious crime that violates the rights of its victims, but over time and with the appropriate support, some survive their ordeal and are prepared to take action to prevent this crime.

Since 2011, the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking (UNVTF), established by the General Assembly and managed by UNODC, has provided essential funding to more than 155 projects in over 60 countries, directly supporting over 5,000 victims a year, most of whom are women and children. In Kenya, for example, the grant that the NGO HAART received allowed a 32-year-old single mother the opportunity to have a life after trafficking. She now operates a successful chicken rearing business that provides her family with an income and has become a HAART Survivor Advocate, raising awareness among communities on the existence and dangers of trafficking.



Moreover, in 2020, UNODC established the Women's Network of Gender Champions against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling to address the gendered nature of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The network spotlights the active participation of female officials and male champions working to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. Their work is profiled through the "Women Can" campaign. The Office has also produced a toolkit for mainstreaming human rights and gender equality into criminal justice interventions addressing trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants to support States' related efforts.

As an Office, UNODC developed the UNOV/UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2022–2026), which outlines how the Office will contribute to global efforts to promote just, inclusive and resilient societies over the coming five years. The implementation of the Strategy will continue to strengthen the work of UNODC throughout its five thematic areas by ensuring a more robust analysis of stakeholders and improving understanding of the different impacts of criminal justice, organized crime, terrorism and corruption on the whole of society.

The Strategy also recognizes that women are disproportionately underrepresented at the policy, decision-making and managerial levels, particularly in the criminal justice and law enforcement sector and legislative and parliamentary bodies. UNODC will therefore continue to engage with Member States to remedy instances of gender inequality and exclusion.

This Strategy provides an up-to-date institutional framework and priority areas for guiding UNOV/UNODC to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by building on the progress made through the previous Strategy and addressing the remaining gaps.

