



Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

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Technical assistance

Provision of technical assistance to States in the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto

Report of the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 8/4, entitled “Implementation of the provisions on technical assistance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime”, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime noted that technical assistance was a fundamental part of the work carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to assist Member States in the effective implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto.

2. Launched in February 2021, the UNODC Strategy 2021–2025 serves as the Office’s strategic road map for the medium term. It outlines key commitments across all UNODC areas of work, focusing on five thematic areas. One of those areas is preventing and countering organized crime, which highlights the Office’s commitment to enhancing the capacity of Member States through the sharing of knowledge and expertise in accordance with the Organized Crime Convention. Central to this thematic area is the commitment to assist Member States in developing solid legal and policy frameworks to tackle transnational organized crime more effectively. This includes sharing good practices and expert knowledge and strengthening the skills of law enforcement and judicial personnel to improve their investigative and prosecutorial capabilities. An additional priority is enhanced international cooperation aimed at facilitating more effective cross-border action against such crimes. Those commitments are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

3. In the present report, UNODC provides States parties with an overview of technical assistance activities that it carried out through its global programmes in relation to the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto between July 2022 and June 2024. The technical assistance activities covered

* [CTOC/COP/2024/1](#).



in the report are divided into activities in support of the implementation of the Convention, activities in support of the implementation of the Protocols thereto and activities concerning serious crime.

II. Technical assistance in the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

A. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

4. In its resolution 9/1, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention established the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. To facilitate the functioning of the Mechanism through, inter alia, acceptance, management and the use of extrabudgetary resources, and to enable the effective participation of States parties and relevant stakeholders in the review process, UNODC established the Global Programme to Support the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto in 2019. The Mechanism was subsequently launched in 2020, pursuant to Conference resolution 10/1.

5. Since the launch of the first phase of the review process, UNODC, through the Global Programme to Support the Mechanism, has supported parties to the Organized Crime Convention by: (a) providing assistance, training and guidance to designated national focal points and experts; (b) facilitating communication and coordination among States parties in the different steps of the review process; (c) answering queries and providing support in relation to responses to the self-assessment questionnaire; (d) promoting consultations with relevant non-governmental stakeholders; and (e) managing and providing access to the secure module of the Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) knowledge management portal, known as “RevMod”, through which the Mechanism is operated. As of June 2024, UNODC had supported a total of 155 countries through briefings and training for over 3,200 governmental officials on the Mechanism and on the use of the “RevMod” platform. In addition, UNODC had facilitated the commencement and advancement of 75 country reviews by organizing and facilitating preliminary consultations and stocktaking meetings. Furthermore, since 2022, UNODC has facilitated the exchange of information between States parties and relevant non-governmental stakeholders through a series of constructive dialogues organized following the conclusion of the meetings of the five working groups established by the Conference. Those dialogues have been attended by a total of 600 participants representing non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector, as well as by representatives of States parties, signatories, non-signatories and intergovernmental organizations. As the country reviews advance, UNODC, which serves as the secretariat of the Mechanism, will continue to support States parties to the Convention and its Protocols, upon request, in drafting relevant documents and outcomes of the country review process, in accordance with Conference resolutions 9/1 and 10/1. The observations generated by the review process will highlight gaps, challenges, technical assistance needs and good practices in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. More information on the status and preliminary findings emanating from the review process is contained in the report of the Secretariat on trends and patterns in the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto in relation to cluster I (CTOC/COP/2024/9).

6. Through its Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention: from Theory to Practice, UNODC has continued to support States in strengthening normative and policy responses to organized crime and in mainstreaming gender and human rights considerations in the implementation of the Convention. After receiving pre-accession support from UNODC, Bhutan and South Sudan became parties to the Convention in 2023. In the past two years, UNODC has

supported more than 3,300 stakeholders (over 1,200 of them women), including policymakers, legislative drafters, law enforcement and judicial practitioners and representatives of civil society, academia and the private sector, in strengthening normative and strategic frameworks against transnational organized crime with a view to promoting the implementation of the Convention. The main workstreams of the Global Programme are: (a) developing legislation on organized crime; (b) designing strategies and policies against organized crime; (c) facilitating international cooperation in criminal justice matters; (d) mainstreaming gender and human rights in normative and strategic responses to organized crime; and (e) managing knowledge and enhancing education on organized crime through the SHERLOC knowledge management portal and its Education for Universities database of teaching module series.

7. In order to support the development of legislation and strategies against organized crime in all its forms and manifestations, UNODC has developed several additional tools under the Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention. Among them are the guides entitled *Responding to Illegal Mining and Trafficking in Metals and Minerals: A Guide to Good Legislative Practices* and *Combating Crimes in the Fisheries Sector: A Guide to Good Legislative Practices*, the annex to the “Organized crime strategy toolkit for developing high-impact strategies” entitled “Building and strengthening resilience to organized crime at times of crisis”, and regional policy briefs accompanying the Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit entitled “An aid to strategic responses to organized crime in East and Southern Africa”, “An aid to strategic responses to organized crime in West and Central Africa”, and “An aid to strategic responses to organized crime in South-Eastern Europe”. Those publications are used to support technical assistance activities on the implementation of the Convention, and over 60 countries availed themselves of UNODC assistance in strengthening normative responses to organized crime during the reporting period.

8. To support the development of comprehensive strategies to prevent and counter organized crime, in accordance with Conference resolutions 10/4 and 11/2, UNODC, under the Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention, continued to disseminate its toolkit entitled “Organized crime strategy toolkit for developing high-impact strategies”, which is currently available in 15 languages. To date, more than 500 stakeholders from 81 jurisdictions, as well as from regional and global organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, have taken part in regional multi-stakeholder meetings on strategies to combat organized crime. In addition, UNODC provided direct support in the development of strategies to Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Uzbekistan, as well as the Pacific Islands Forum. The Office has thus supported a cumulative total of 14 national and regional strategy development processes.

9. Through the Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention, UNODC will continue to promote and support the development of evidence-based responses to organized crime by maintaining the SHERLOC knowledge management portal, which is freely accessible to the public (<https://sherloc.unodc.org>). Serving as a one-stop shop on legislation, case law, national and regional strategies, treaties and bibliographical data on organized crime and terrorism, SHERLOC covers 15 types of criminal activities, namely, participation in an organized criminal group, corruption, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, money-laundering, obstruction of justice, cybercrime, piracy and maritime crimes, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, trafficking in cultural property, crimes affecting the environment, falsified medical products, trafficking in firearms and terrorism. The portal is available in all six official languages of the United Nations, as well as in additional languages through an integrated automated translation tool. SHERLOC also hosts the restricted-access directory of competent national authorities and the Legislative Guide for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In 2022, UNODC added a new Education for Universities database to the portal, hosting tertiary-level teaching modules on

multiple crime types. In recent years, the portal has seen a steady increase in users, with over 390,000 stakeholders using it in 2023, constituting an all-time record.

B. Laundering of proceeds of crime

10. Through its Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, UNODC helps Member States to strengthen existing systems to counter money-laundering and the financing of terrorism and assists them in detecting, seizing and confiscating illicit proceeds, as required under United Nations treaties, in particular the Organized Crime Convention, and other relevant international standards. This is achieved through the development of policies and the provision of in-depth training to national administrations and private sector actors dealing with issues related to countering money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. The beneficiaries of the Global Programme include legislative drafters, parliamentarians, financial intelligence units, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, magistrates, judges, customs and immigration officers, asset forfeiture units and relevant private sector actors.

11. The Office operates globally through the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, through which a total of 75 Member States received tailored capacity-building and training in 2023. Through the mentorship programme, 13 field-based advisers on combating money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism provided sustainable, direct technical assistance and training in Angola, Ecuador, Haiti, Indonesia and Peru, as well as in Eastern and Southern Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, South-East Asia, Central Asia, Central America and the Caribbean, and the Greater Mekong subregion.

12. Seizing the profits from crime and assisting Member States with asset forfeiture and confiscation remain essential elements of crime prevention and criminal justice. UNODC continued to support the asset recovery inter-agency networks for Southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific, West Africa and West and Central Asia. Those informal networks of law enforcement and judicial practitioners support the entire process, from the tracing of assets at the starting point of the investigation, 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, with the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Southern Africa being the most advanced. Moreover, UNODC continued to fortify the rule of law by assisting Member States in establishing effective legislation to counter money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, equipping them with the necessary knowledge, means and expertise to implement national legislation, and increasing their capacity to successfully undertake financial investigations and prosecutions in matters relating to combating money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

C. Law enforcement

13. UNODC, through its Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption, continued to provide operational and case-based support in the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention, with a particular focus on its articles 13, 16, 18–20 and 27–30. Support was provided by: (a) promoting formal and informal criminal justice cooperation (arts. 27), fostering investigative case forums and joint investigation teams (art. 19) and supporting judicial cooperation networks to promote mutual legal assistance (art. 18); (b) delivering capacity-building on special investigative techniques (art. 20); (c) facilitating the collection, exchange and analysis of information on organized crime (art. 28); (d) facilitating parallel financial investigations (art. 13); and (e) providing training and technical assistance to law enforcement personnel (art. 29), including through field-based mentoring on emerging forms of crime.

14. The investigative case forums organized under the Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption have been instrumental in promoting cross-border cooperation by facilitating discussions on trafficking cases, strategy development and coordinated action. Through the Global Programme, UNODC has facilitated the development of intelligence-led and collaborative criminal justice responses in 83 countries. This approach has enabled more targeted border security measures and facilitated law enforcement and judicial cooperation beyond seizures of illicit commodities and towards the disruption of the operations, leadership and financing of criminal networks.

15. Under the Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption, UNODC continued to promote the use of special investigative techniques, especially controlled deliveries, which has helped Member States to trace the movement of contraband across borders and gain insight into the modus operandi of criminal organizations. During the reporting period, the Global Programme assisted law enforcement officials in Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa and Europe by providing capacity-building on special investigative techniques (e.g. controlled deliveries) and enhanced their ability to conduct financial investigations, establish joint investigation teams and detect drug trafficking and concealment methods. Through the Global Programme, UNODC continued to promote integrity and ethical practices through ethics and integrity courses for airport and maritime port border control officials. At the same time, the Global Programme conducted training on effective and human rights-based interviewing for investigations and information-gathering.

16. Through the Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption and other initiatives, UNODC has bolstered the expertise of criminal justice institutions in employing strategies to prevent and counter financial crimes and deprive organized criminal groups of illicit proceeds. Recognizing the evolving and interconnected nature of criminal activities, UNODC continued to support States' efforts to address emerging and traditional forms of crime, such as trafficking in falsified medical products, cultural property and synthetic drugs. During the reporting period, UNODC trained 145 law enforcement officials, and its expert working group meetings benefited from the participation of 98 criminal justice officials and members of financial intelligence units. Those meetings focused on countering methamphetamine and opiate trafficking in Southern and Eastern Africa, India and South Asia, Central Asia and Mozambique and along the southern route.

17. In 2023, Global Programme staff members briefed Kenyan police officials on the evolving operational environment in Haiti as part of its support to the country's pre-deployment programme for officers joining the Multinational Security Support mission in Haiti, authorized by the Security Council.

18. Under the Global Programme, UNODC produced the following analytical documents: "Assessment of the response to illicit weapons trafficking in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea", *The Hawala System: Its Operations and Misuse by Opiate Traffickers and Migrant Smugglers*, "Analysis of opiate stamps seized in the Indian Ocean 2017–2021", "System analysis and disruption planning workbook", and "Afghan women and the opiate trade". In addition, the Global Programme published the "Handbook on the strategic implementation of controlled deliveries in the context of synthetic drug investigations".

19. In 2023, UNODC established the Passenger and Cargo Border Team by merging two existing global programmes: the UNODC-World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme and the UNODC-International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)-WCO Airport Communication Programme. The aim of the new initiative is to improve the capacity of Member States and their law enforcement agencies active at air, sea and land borders to disrupt illicit flows of containers, cargo and mail, to intercept high-risk passengers and to identify victims of trafficking, while facilitating legitimate trade and the movement of people. To achieve that objective, the Passenger and Cargo Border Team supports Member States in targeting illegal cargo and high-risk passengers by building risk assessment and

inspection capacity in specialized inter-agency units composed of officers from customs, police and other relevant law enforcement agencies. In addition, secure communication tools such as the Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform (CENcomm), ContainerCOMM and the I-24/7 global police communications system, developed by the Office's implementing partners WCO and INTERPOL, are provided to the units and utilized to facilitate national, regional and global operational communications and to provide alerts on suspicious cargo or passengers.

20. In 2023, the Passenger and Cargo Border Team provided support for 86 Member States. That assistance led to the establishment of 11 new units, including one in Mauritius, the first unit in the islands of the Indian Ocean. As of June 2024, the Team supported 172 units worldwide, offering structured training programmes. In 2023, a total of 342 training activities were conducted, benefiting 5,109 law enforcement officers, 23 per cent of whom were women.

21. Seizure statistics show the tangible impact of the methodology applied by the Passenger and Cargo Border Team and, most importantly, the efforts of participating countries and their law enforcement agencies. In 2023 alone, UNODC-supported units made 2,238 seizures, including nearly 340 tons of precursor chemicals, 250 tons of cocaine, 905 kg of heroin and 61.2 tons of other opioids, 8 tons of new psychoactive substances, 4 tons of cannabis, 1.5 tons of amphetamine, 210 tons of hazardous waste and 29 tons of products listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Furthermore, operations conducted by those units led to the seizure of other contraband items, such as 212 million cigarettes, 21 million items smuggled to evade taxes and duties, 19 million medicine items (including falsified medical products) and nearly 514,000 items categorized as strategic goods, weapons and explosives. As a result, the Team contributed to the efforts of Member States to disrupt the operations and profits of organized criminal groups, while enhancing security and the rule of law.

D. Gender mainstreaming

22. Pursuant to Conference resolution 11/2, and with a view to further mainstreaming gender and human rights dimensions in legislation and strategies against organized crime, UNODC, under the Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention, launched the *Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights in the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. The publication, which is available in six languages, was disseminated to over 1,000 beneficiaries worldwide through 11 national, regional, and global activities. In addition, UNODC continued its efforts to support policymakers, legislative drafters and other relevant stakeholders in the integration of gender and human rights considerations into normative and policy responses to organized crime. In 2023, through the Global Programme, UNODC launched the regional network of women in law and policy against organized crime in West and Central Africa. The network was established to promote the meaningful participation of female policymakers, legislative drafters, criminal justice practitioners and law enforcement officers in the development of legislative and strategic frameworks to prevent and counter organized crime.

23. Furthermore, in May 2023, UNODC established a gender network for all its border management programmes with a view to empowering women law enforcement officers worldwide by pooling funding and expertise. Among those border management programmes, the Passenger and Cargo Border Team utilizes a three-pronged approach to addressing gender parity and equality. The approach includes women as victims, women as perpetrators and women as law enforcement officers. Regarding women as law enforcement officers, the Passenger and Cargo Border Team Women's Network, for example, works to foster inclusive dialogue and addresses the issue of gender parity through tailored activities. The impactful efforts of the Network were recognized with the United Nations Office at Vienna-UNODC

Gender Award in both 2022 and 2023, underscoring its significant contribution to promoting gender equality and strengthening the representation of women in law enforcement.

24. Programme-specific gender mainstreaming initiatives included the Women in Maritime Law Enforcement Forum, organized semi-annually in South-East Asia by UNODC under the Global Maritime Crime Programme, as well as national and regional initiatives carried out by the Passenger and Cargo Border Team. For instance, the Team organized the first regional meeting of its Women's Network, which was held in the Latin America and Caribbean region to build interregional networks among women officers of port control units. The event brought together 30 women from customs and law enforcement authorities from 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and provided a forum for sharing experiences and good practices.

25. In August 2023, 53 participants representing customs and other law enforcement agencies from Central Asian countries and Pakistan, as well as international organizations, met in Bishkek and discussed the incorporation of gender perspectives in the functions of port and air cargo control units. Organized by UNODC in collaboration with the State Customs Service of Kyrgyzstan, WCO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the event promoted gender equality and leadership opportunities for women officers in a traditionally androcentric sector and provided an opportunity to share good practices in the recruitment and retention of female officers in law enforcement agencies.

III. Technical assistance in the implementation of the Protocols

A. Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Protocols

26. In January 2024, UNODC consolidated the existing global programmes against trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants into a new global programme, known as the UNODC Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants. The new programme is the main vehicle for the delivery of technical assistance, knowledge-sharing and normative and policy work by the Office and features several innovations, including a global forum for trafficking survivors. Below is an account of technical assistance delivered by UNODC during the reporting period under the previous global programmes and under the new, unified global programme. The objective of these programmes remains to support States parties in the prevention and prosecution of trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants while protecting the rights of people who fall prey to the perpetrators of those crimes, and to promote cooperation among States parties in that regard.

27. Through these programmes, UNODC continued to support countries in acceding to and implementing the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the Convention. In this context, UNODC trained and mentored practitioners, assisted countries in developing and strengthening laws, policies and action plans, developed innovative tools to expand the knowledge base, provided substantive expertise to United Nations entities and inter-agency mechanisms working to combat trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, and built networks to promote national and international cooperation to effectively address those crimes and protect the rights of trafficking victims and smuggled migrants.

28. In 2023 alone, UNODC provided training for more than 3,400 criminal justice practitioners, government officials and civil society representatives and reached more than 34 countries with focused technical assistance activities at the national level. As a result of that assistance, for example, UNODC has enabled countries along the transcontinental smuggling routes from South Asia to North America to work together more closely in order to respond to migrant smuggling effectively while protecting

lives and upholding the rights of smuggled migrants. In particular, UNODC trained relevant authorities in the collection of electronic evidence and the extraction of digital data from mobile devices for investigative purposes or for the purpose of documenting the dynamics of migrant smuggling. This approach contributed to the early identification and referral of migrant smuggling cases for investigation and prosecution in many countries.

29. UNODC provided tailored, innovative and demand-driven technical assistance to support accession to and implementation of the Organized Crime Convention, the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan in the framework of the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants – Asia and the Middle East. The Office also provided assistance to Bangladesh as part of a joint initiative with the European Union.

30. An example of the impact achieved under the framework of the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants can be found in the work done in Afghanistan, where, in partnership with civil society organizations, UNODC provided health-care support and assistance in preventing and detecting trafficking in persons. In partnership with the Youth Health and Development Organization of Afghanistan, UNODC operated a clinic in Kandahar that provided free medical services and counselling. Between 700 and 1,000 patients visited the clinic each month for treatment for a variety of medical conditions and counselling.

31. Under its global programmes, UNODC also released a number of key publications, including “The scope of transcontinental migrant smuggling from South Asia to North America”, the *Study on Illicit Financial Flows Associated with Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons from GLO.ACT Partner Countries to Europe*, “Accessing justice: challenges faced by trafficked persons and smuggled migrants”, *How to Conduct Mock Trials and Investigation Simulations based on Trafficking in Persons Cases: Trainer’s Manual* and the accompanying navigation tool and appendices, and “Links between smuggling of migrants and other forms of organized crime along the Central and Western Mediterranean routes”.

32. Through the joint airport interdiction task forces supported by the Passenger and Cargo Border Team, UNODC continued to counter trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants using advanced data sources for intelligence-gathering and risk analysis, including passenger manifests, advanced passenger information and passenger name records. Through strategic partnerships with WCO and INTERPOL, and through seamless information-sharing, including access to the INTERPOL I-24/7 network and the WCO CENcomm system, the airport units were able to respond swiftly to suspected cases, intercepting 56 individuals suspected of trafficking and identifying 43 victims from the inception of the Airport Communication Programme until June 2024.

B. Trafficking in firearms

33. Through its Global Firearms Programme, UNODC continued to provide technical assistance to promote adherence to and implementation of 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. Constituting a comprehensive framework for action, the Global Firearms Programme follows an integrated approach based on the five pillars described below.

34. Under the first pillar, UNODC supports the development and enhancement of national policies and normative frameworks. During the reporting period, the Office provided pre-ratification support to four countries and legislative support to 13 countries to reinforce national firearms control regimes. Two countries adopted new firearms-related criminal offences after receiving support from UNODC.

35. The second pillar of the Global Firearms Programme is the implementation of preventive and security measures. In this regard, UNODC supports the marking and registration of firearms by providing marking machines and record-keeping tools that allow for greater accountability and increase the capacity of national authorities to trace firearms. Notably, the Office completed the development of the software “goIFAR”, an integrated firearms registry system that can be provided to requesting States. Scoping missions to two pilot countries, Senegal and Honduras, were conducted in order to customize the software.

36. Strengthening criminal justice responses constitutes the third pillar, with training activities focused on the detection, investigation and prosecution of firearms trafficking cases and their links to organized crime and terrorist activities. Based on contributions by experts from more than 60 countries, UNODC published the *Guidelines on the Investigation and Prosecution of Firearms Offences* and a *Digest of Firearms Trafficking and Related Crimes Cases: A Review of Cases and Good Practices Emerging from National Jurisprudence*, which provide practitioners with direct guidance in responding to firearms crime. In West Africa and Latin America, UNODC collaborated with INTERPOL and the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) Firearms project to support regional cross-border operations that brought together hundreds of police officers and led to the seizure of more than 9,000 firearms and 307,581 rounds of ammunition. Following those operations, UNODC provided mentoring support and facilitated the establishment of joint investigative teams with the aim of conducting further investigations, dismantling the trafficking networks involved and bringing the perpetrators to justice. UNODC also supported countries in the Western Balkans in preventing and combating the trafficking of firearm parts through postal and fast parcel shipments.

37. Under the fourth pillar, UNODC fosters international cooperation and the exchange of information to address the transnational dimension of trafficking in firearms and, through its community of practitioners, actively promotes the transfer of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned. Under this pillar, UNODC organized three regional and cross-regional meetings and launched a dedicated online portal and a newsletter for the community of practitioners.

38. Lastly, under the fifth pillar, UNODC focuses on research and analysis to enhance the overall understanding of illicit arms flows. Several products were published by UNODC on the topic of firearms, including “Addressing the linkages between illicit arms, organized crime and armed conflict”, in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, “Firearms trafficking in the Sahel”, “Firearms and ammunition trafficking in Eastern Africa”, “Haiti’s criminal markets: mapping trends in firearms and drug trafficking” and *Firearms and Drugs: Partners in Transnational Crime*.

39. The Passenger and Cargo Border Team supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which imposes the responsibility on all Member States to develop and maintain robust border controls and law enforcement mechanisms in relation to commodities associated with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery to non-State actors. In 2023, the Team conducted 25 comprehensive training activities focusing on strategic trade and export control. Those activities significantly contributed to 30 seizures across various regions, leading to the interception of 513,528 items classified as strategic goods, weapons or explosives, and thus highlighting the impactful efforts of the Team in combating illicit trafficking.

IV. Technical assistance regarding serious crime

A. Cybercrime

40. Through its Global Programme on Cybercrime, UNODC provides capacity-building and technical assistance in preventing and countering cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crime. The support provided to Member States is based on four pillars: capacity-building, regulatory frameworks, cooperation and prevention. Through the Global Programme, UNODC expanded its presence to new countries, including Fiji, Mexico and Uganda. As a result, the Global Programme now operates in 16 countries, with personnel based in Austria, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Senegal, Thailand, Uganda and Uruguay. UNODC also provided global and regional support, reaching 65 countries and enhancing their capabilities in this regard.

41. Under the capacity-building pillar, UNODC enhanced the skills, knowledge and abilities of 6,618 criminal justice practitioners in 2023. First responders, investigators, prosecutors, digital forensics experts and judges received advice, mentoring and training in darknet investigations, special investigative techniques, legal standards, digital forensics, digital evidence, cryptocurrencies, malware and ransomware, and the investigation of online child sexual abuse and exploitation, among other areas. Furthermore, UNODC and Qatar established the UNODC Regional Centre for Combating Cybercrime in Doha in 2023. The Centre provides training activities in different areas, as well as mentoring and research, with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa region and beyond.

42. Under the regulatory framework pillar, UNODC supported Kazakhstan in integrating cybercrime risk management and strengthening criminal justice responses in relation to cryptocurrency-enabled crimes. In February 2023, UNODC provided legal advice to Kazakhstan on its Law on Digital Assets, which entered into force in April 2023. In Central America, the Office developed standard operating procedures for the police forces of Guatemala and Honduras and for the Public Prosecutor's Office of Honduras. In addition, the Global Programme launched an e-learning course on cybercrime that consists of seven modules and is directed at delegates participating in the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes.

43. Under the third pillar, UNODC promotes international and inter-agency cooperation. Through the Global Programme on Cybercrime, and in cooperation with INTERPOL, the Office developed a regional task force on vulnerable victims in Latin America that led to the identification of 39 victims of online child sexual abuse and exploitation and 35 suspects, giving rise to coordinated international action across 13 operations to disrupt networks sharing child sexual abuse material and to protect the victims. The Global Programme also supported specialized investigation units in gaining access to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children case management tool and provided specialized hardware and software to facilitate investigations. Through the Global Programme, UNODC trained investigators on the efficient investigation of cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crimes and on digital forensics and the expansion of the work of digital forensic laboratories. In South-East Asia, the Global Programme signed a cooperation agreement with the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center of the Philippines to facilitate international cooperation in addressing the growing misuse of information and communications technology for criminal purposes. Since then, the Global Programme has had a dedicated space in the country's National Cybercrime Hub and provides on-demand mentoring to the staff of the Center and representatives of the national agencies present in the Hub. As a result of the support provided, the national authorities implemented a multinational police operation that led to the rescue of over 2,700 victims from at least 17 countries in 2023, marking the largest-ever raid of its kind in the Philippines.

44. Under the fourth pillar, on prevention, UNODC provides awareness-raising initiatives focusing on persons in vulnerable contexts, including children, young people, women, people with disabilities and the elderly. During the reporting period, the Office sensitized more than 49,000 individuals and engaged 376,690 children in cybercrime prevention activities globally. In Africa, together with the Internet Watch Foundation, UNODC launched the Safer Children Online campaign, developed two nationwide campaigns to raise awareness of child sexual abuse material, and established two reporting mechanisms in Senegal and Ghana that reached a total of 32,526 individuals.

B. Crimes that affect the environment

45. Through its Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment, UNODC assists Member States in preventing and responding to wildlife and forest crime, crimes in the fisheries sector, illegal mining and trafficking in precious metals and waste. Crimes that affect the environment, which are frequently committed by organized criminal groups, have far-reaching impacts on the economy, security, the environment and human health, contributing to biodiversity loss and climate change.

46. Over 40 Member States received support through a “crime scene to court” approach in order to more effectively prevent, identify, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate crimes that affect the environment. In 2023 alone, UNODC training courses reached over 2,400 criminal justice personnel, and more than 100 wildlife crime investigations were supported through a comprehensive approach involving the provision of training and mentorship and the use of DNA analysis. This concerted effort resulted in successful prosecutions. Furthermore, under the Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment, UNODC played a pivotal role in facilitating the efforts of Member States to dismantle transnational and transcontinental criminal networks, marking a significant achievement in disrupting the illicit operations that threaten the planet’s biodiversity.

47. The Office supported the development of essential national guidelines, policies and strategies, exemplified by the creation of a series of legal tools for Eastern Africa, including “decision to charge” guidelines in the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, and sentencing policy guidelines and a disclosure policy in Kenya. Those tools were designed to foster effective prosecutions, enhancing the capacity of national criminal justice systems to prevent and counter crimes that affect the environment.

48. International cooperation has been a cornerstone of success in combating crimes that affect the environment. For example, in 2022 and 2023, 28 countries exchanged investigative information and case files under the Wildlife Inter-Regional Enforcement initiative, which is facilitated by UNODC. As a result, 19 criminal networks were dismantled by Member States in 2023. Under the Global Programme, UNODC collaborated with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and WCO to convene law enforcement network meetings to enhance relationships and promote international cooperation with a view to countering crimes in the minerals sector. UNODC continued its successful collaboration under the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime and fostered new inter-agency partnerships, including with United for Wildlife.

49. UNODC also facilitated the discussion of cases and the exchange of information within the framework of regional initiatives such as the wildlife enforcement networks and the African Wildlife Forensics Network, as well as phases IV and V of Operation Mekong Dragon, which achieved remarkable results, making record-breaking seizures of illegally traded wildlife and illicit drugs within their operational periods.

50. Looking ahead, the Global Programme on Crimes that Affect the Environment will actively work to convene, connect and engage with civil society to enhance coordination and amplify impact, and work closely with national authorities,

encouraging and facilitating intra- and interregional cooperation. By fostering partnerships and promoting streamlined efforts, UNODC envisions a more cohesive and impactful approach to addressing environmental challenges on a global scale.

51. The Passenger and Cargo Border Team supports Member States in bolstering their capacities to detect and deter a wide array of crimes that affect the environment across sea, land and air borders. Through advanced training initiatives, customs, law enforcement and environmental protection authorities gain both general and context-specific knowledge. The Team's initiatives, such as FishNET (aimed at combating crimes in the fisheries sector) and Blue Enforcement (focused on maritime enforcement), have resulted in significant seizures, including record-breaking seizures of ivory in South-East Asia and live animal interceptions in West and Central Africa.

C. Maritime crime

52. Through its Global Maritime Crime Programme, UNODC continues to support Member States in combating maritime crime by enhancing the capabilities of criminal justice systems to prevent, interdict, investigate and prosecute such crimes. This is achieved through a comprehensive capacity development approach that includes tailored training for law enforcement, corrections staff and judicial authorities, as well as day-to-day support from mentors. The Programme also aids in legal reform, conducting legal assessments and improving legal frameworks to prosecute maritime crimes such as piracy and armed robbery. In addition, it supports prison reforms with infrastructure and technical assistance. The Programme fosters international cooperation, exemplified by the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crime, which addresses piracy, maritime drug trafficking, and crime in the fisheries sector and works under Security Council resolution [2713 \(2023\)](#) to coordinate responses against illicit maritime activities and the financing of Al-Shabaab.

53. The Global Maritime Crime Programme supported 83 countries on the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Red and Black Seas. The Programme recently expanded its reach to work with new Member States, namely, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Djibouti, Fiji, India, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Libya, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda and Vanuatu, as well as the Cook Islands. Through its direct and evolving approach to technical assistance and cooperation, the Programme continues to contribute to the work of the United Nations in reducing the impact of transnational organized crime in order to create an environment conducive to sustainable development and peace.

V. Data analysis

54. UNODC collects data and produces research and analyses to inform and strengthen policy and action to prevent and counter different forms of transnational organized crime. Research reports published over the past two years cover organized crime and trafficking at the global, regional and national levels, addressing, among other topics, criminal groups, drug trafficking and crimes that affect the environment in the Amazon Basin (*World Drug Report 2023*); trafficking in persons (*Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022*); the effects of the conflict in Ukraine on risks associated with trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants; firearms, drug trafficking and gangs in Haiti; and trafficking in cultural property. Other recent publications include a series of transnational organized crime threat assessments for the Sahel, covering topics including trafficking in falsified medicines, fuel and gold, as well as an organized crime threat assessment for Nigeria. The *Global Study on Homicide 2023* includes an in-depth analysis of homicide and organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region with the largest number of homicides related to organized crime.

55. UNODC also provides technical assistance to support data collection and the measurement of Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The Office is mandated to collect data through the annual report questionnaire on drug statistics; individual drug seizure cases; the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems; the illicit arms flows questionnaire; and the questionnaire for the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. The Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and its Protocols rests on a series of self-assessment questionnaires. The responses to those questionnaires are expected to be peer-reviewed, and the outcome of the process is expected to generate knowledge of States parties' implementation efforts, gaps, good implementation practices and technical assistance needs. The collection and analysis of that information, when available, will enable UNODC to design and deliver even more focused technical assistance programmes.

56. UNODC and its centres on crime statistics in Mexico and the Republic of Korea are supporting countries in the implementation of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, which provides a comprehensive framework for producing statistics on crime and criminal justice, including recording offences related to organized crime. In 2023, UNODC supported regional and national workshops on the International Classification in the Arab region, as well as in Maldives and Mongolia. On the UNODC eLearning platform, the Office released a course on the use of the International Classification to combat organized crime. UNODC also supported a regional technical assistance workshop on the illicit arms flows questionnaire in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus in 2023.

57. UNODC, along with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, is a custodian of Sustainable Development Goal target 16.4.1, on the total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows, and the Office is developing methodological guidelines for the measurement of illicit financial flows from different manifestations of organized crime, including drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and wildlife trafficking.

58. In addition, through its relationships with its implementing partners, the Passenger and Cargo Border Team gathers a large amount of data. The data are collected through the WCO CENcomm platform and INTERPOL and pertain to seizures and interceptions of high-risk passengers. Available exclusively to customs officers (through WCO) and police officers (through INTERPOL), the data are compiled into reports by analysts in both organizations and shared throughout the Passenger and Cargo Border Team's network of units. The data are used to guide the way in which the Team implements its activities and allow for the development of specialized training.

VI. Conclusion and possible recommendations

59. The technical assistance that UNODC provides to States to implement the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto is embedded in the targets of the 2030 Agenda across multiple Sustainable Development Goals. However, as development is a long-term and continuous process, so is the fight against organized crime.

60. Achieving universal adherence to the Organized Crime Convention is an attainable goal. The main challenges lie in implementing the Convention and its Protocols and addressing the evolving methods and forms of organized crime. Recognizing that the effectiveness of any treaty depends on its implementation, UNODC continues to provide extensive technical assistance through its global, regional and country programmes, which cover a wide range of themes to combat transnational organized crime in all its forms and manifestations.

61. An intersectional, gender-responsive approach to combating transnational organized crime is important to the full implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto. Such an approach allows legislators,

policymakers and practitioners to account for how identity characteristics alongside gender, such as age, disability, ethnicity, class and race, can intersect to increase the likelihood of participating in, as well as being victimized within and by, organized criminal groups, and to account for the different impacts of policies and programmes on different people, thus contributing to more appropriate and effective responses in preventing and combating organized crime.

62. The use of modern technologies, including those referred to as artificial intelligence, can expand and diversify the methods employed by organized criminal groups to commit serious crimes. As the methods of those groups evolve, new forms and manifestations of organized crime appear. Nevertheless, modern technologies also offer new opportunities to prevent and combat the activities of organized criminal groups.

63. The Conference of the Parties to the Organized Crime Convention may wish to consider inviting States parties to increase the level of financial contributions provided to UNODC to support the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, and to facilitate the implementation of the observations emanating from the Mechanism to further promote the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto.
