The UN-CTS data collection on crime and criminal justice: Overview

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Main functions of UNODC on crime statistics

1. To collate, disseminate and analyse country stats
   - United Nations Crime Trends Survey, special data collections (Homicide, TIP, Firearms,...)
   - Data for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

2. To develop and promote methods/standards on crime data
   - International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)
   - Manual on Victimization Surveys, Criminal Justice Statistics, ..

3. To support countries to improve quality & availability of crime data
   - Capacity building projects (victimisation surveys, corruption surveys, etc.) in various regions of the world (on-going projects in the Americas, Nigeria, the UAE)
UN-CTS History and Mandates

• Started in 1977, following a resolution of the General Assembly (GA Res. 3021, 1972)

• Initially every 5 years, then every 3, 2 and now (since 2009) every year

• A number of UN resolutions through the years: e.g. ECOSOC 2009/25 on improved format of UN-CTS; ECOSOC 2012/18 calling for nomination of national Focal Points for UN-CTS

• 17 UN-CTS waves so far
UN-CTS Focal Point

• Appointed by each Member State

• Role: technical point of contact with UNODC regarding the compilation of the UN-CTS questionnaire (since 2010-11)
  – Ideally a national institution, ministry, office or agency with responsibility in the production of statistical data on crime and criminal justice
  – It should ensure a timely, accurate, complete response to UN-CTS by engaging with national counterparts
  – Whenever needed, it can approach UNODC to ask for clarifications and technical support
UN-CTS: The data collection process

As of May 2016, there are 130 nominated Focal Points (not all of them active).
How to increase responses to the UN-CTS?

• Up to 4 May 2016, 100 countries have responded to the UN-CTS 2015, 5+ more late responses are expected

• The potential number of countries that could respond annually is considerably higher – in the past 4 years, a total of 126 countries provided at least one response, while 15 provided exactly 1, 16 provided 2 and 21 three responses; 74 countries provided annual responses.
Expanding the network of Focal Points for the UN-CTS

Response rates to the UN-CTS 2015, Total, with and without Focal Points

Countries with Focal Points have a significantly higher response rate (77%) than those without (8%). The average response rate (50%) could be substantially increased with more Focal Points.
Coverage of UN-CTS (2013-2014)

UN-CTS 2014: coverage of 105 countries (52% of countries, 76% of world population). Gaps in Africa and parts of Asia.
### UN-CTS: contents and indicators requested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of the CJ process</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Data points asked (UN-CTS 2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Violent crime</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Suspects</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Homicide victims</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Homicide perpetrators</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecution</td>
<td>Persons prosecuted</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>Persons convicted</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisons</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisons</td>
<td>Persons held</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisons</td>
<td>Persons held</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization surveys</td>
<td>Victims of crime</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>199</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Different availability of various UN-CTS sections

Some sections (esp. prosecution and courts) are less available in UN-CTS replies.
Paucity of victimisation surveys data reflect lack of such surveys in several countries.
Homicide data have a good coverage, but availability of disaggregated data needs improvement.

For example: for the period 2007-2013 at least 1 data point on victims of homicide by intimate partners or family members is available for 68 countries (34%).
Between the first and the last 3 years of this period, data availability increased by 26% from 57 to 72 countries.
Data quality

- One aspect is *consistency* of data across the criminal justice process:

For example: attrition in the criminal justice process using the example of intentional homicide. While data for both the Americas and Europe look plausible, they do not for Asia (*persons suspected and prosecuted significantly higher than number of homicides*).
Metadata are key to assess coverage and accuracy of data. UN-CTS metadata will be reviewed to make them simpler, but Focal Points should strive to ensure a full response to the metadata.
Counting rules

• Several questions on counting rules asked – 2 examples:

Was a principal offence rule used for counting recorded offences reported in this section?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Police: Offenders (N=69)</th>
<th>Prosecution (N=59)</th>
<th>Courts (N=65)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How is a person who is brought into formal contact for multiple (serial) offences of the same type counted?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Police: Offenders (N=69)</th>
<th>Prosecution (N=58)</th>
<th>Courts (N=67)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>As One Person</strong></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As Two or More Persons</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please Explain)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metadata on counting rules can help to understand the data better. In the long run the question is whether and how to harmonize counting rules (for example units of count)?
Challenges and issues in data collection

Data coverage and quality of UN-CTS

- Responses are often partial or incomplete
- Metadata missing
- Data are not complying with UN-CTS definitions
- Use of various (or unknown) counting rules
- Data are otherwise not accurate, reliable or consistent

Process of UN-CTS

- Data from previous years are not validated/corrected if necessary
- Format of data transmission is sometimes different/problematic (there are countries still sending UN-CTS in pdf, hard copy, or in modified Excel sheets)
Data dissemination

- Since 2015, improved functionality through UNODC data portal: https://data.unodc.org/
- Main update of UN-CTS data by 9 May 2016
- Some series are complemented by external sources (homicide data; prison data)
- New series on prison capacity, prison staff, victimization, etc.
Thank you for your attention

UNODC Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics:

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