



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



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SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the interconnectedness of contemporary challenges and the need for comprehensive and participatory approaches to address them. UNODC has adopted the same lens to understand the security challenges of individual cities. Building inclusive societies by focusing on city safety and resilient governments lies at the heart of UNODC's work at the urban level.

Moreover, the Office contributes to SDG Target 11.4 on strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. Trafficking in cultural property is a lucrative business. Together with the destruction of cultural heritage, it has been recognized by the UN Security Council as a threat to international peace and security, as well as an impediment to the enjoyment of cultural heritage as a human right. It deprives people of their history and culture and weakens social cohesion in the long term.

Against this backdrop, UNODC, together with INTERPOL and UNESCO launched CATCH (Co-Action Against Trafficking in Cultural Heritage), a pilot initiative aiming to develop a robust, effective and coordinated approach towards the protection of cultural heritage based on the expertise, resources and complementary mandates of the three international organizations, to enhance operational cooperation and criminal justice capacities to tackle the trafficking of cultural property. The initiative will be piloted in the Mediterranean, a region where this crime is particularly prevalent.

Furthermore, in line with Target 11.b, the Office continues to support climate change



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:

11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

resilience in prisons. A new [UNODC Data Matters publication](#) shows that the global prison population is once again rising. An estimated 11.5 million people were detained globally in 2022, 5.5 per cent more than a decade ago. While the link is rarely acknowledged, the climate crisis and the need for prison reform are closely associated: climate change impacts vulnerable people, including prisoners, who are often subject to poor conditions, overcrowding, at risk of food and water shortage and with little means to cope with increasingly extreme weather events.

Without prejudice to its efforts to restrict incarceration as a measure of last resort, UNODC aims to equip prison systems with concrete strategies for climate disruption preparedness and mitigation. The vision is to do this in ways that enhance the prospects of ‘green’ prisons that make greater use of environmentally friendly and energy-efficient management practices while, at the same time, supporting the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners. For instance, in Sri Lanka, UNODC, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), worked with the Department of Prisons to establish [model farms in two prisons](#): the Mahara Maximum Security Prison and the Pallansena Youth Correctional Centre. Equipment, training and technical guidance have supported both prisons in streamlining their agriculture activities while being resilient to various climate conditions, largely flooding. Simultaneously, it has given the opportunity to over 300 prisoners to learn gardening skills that can serve them well in Sri Lanka’s evolving food security situation.

Considering UNODC’s strong experience and knowledge in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice, providing technical assistance in the area of prison and penal reform, creating institutional resilience and capacity building, countering diverse forms of trafficking, promoting education for justice and peace, crime prevention among youth, combatting gender-based violence and promoting gender equality, and preventing and responding to substance abuse, UNODC is well positioned to develop effective and humane responses to urban issues and assist Member States in achieving SDG 11.

