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Agenda item 4
Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
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Agenda item 4
Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions

Enhanced support to Member States through the implementation of the United Nations Office at Vienna/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018–2021)

Conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat

Summary

With the adoption of the United Nations Office at Vienna/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018–2021), UNODC has acquired an institutional approach to promoting the global commitments on gender equality throughout its normative, technical assistance and research work. Under the Gender Strategy, UNODC is required to report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on high-level results on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and on the progress in meeting the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, including specific contributions made by the Office to meeting the targets under Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). The present report focuses on how UNODC has integrated gender aspects throughout its five thematic areas and highlights best practice examples implemented since 2018.

I. Introduction

1. Gender equality is a long-standing goal of the United Nations; it is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and further strengthened by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the women and peace and security agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which contains Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). Gender mainstreaming was established as a major global strategy for the promotion of gender equality when the Economic and Social Council adopted its agreed



conclusions 1997/2, on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. Other resolutions, standards and norms have also been adopted in which UNODC is encouraged to assist States in mainstreaming a gender perspective into their legislation and policies and to adopt special measures to promote gender equality and empower women and girls.¹

2. Recognizing the need for the United Nations Office at Vienna and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to implement those commitments in a systematic and comprehensive manner, the United Nations Office at Vienna/UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018–2021) was adopted in 2017. The Gender Strategy established the first institutional framework on gender equality for the United Nations Office at Vienna and UNODC and seeks to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are integral to the work of UNODC in making the world safer from drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism.

II. Gender-related results clustered around the five main thematic areas of UNODC work, integrating both policy and programmatic work

3. With the adoption of the Gender Strategy, an institutional approach to the global commitments on gender equality was adopted. In the 2018 guiding document entitled “Gender-responsive evaluations in the work of UNODC”, it was noted that, at that time, gender was not systematically addressed in all UNODC projects and programmes. It was recognized that, for UNODC to achieve global commitments, there was a continued need to strengthen the capacity of the Office to develop a comprehensive and institutional approach to gender mainstreaming. Since then, UNODC has set up institutional mechanisms to promote Sustainable Development Goal 5, with the Gender Team in the Office of the Executive Director supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Gender Strategy. Under the guidance of the Gender Team, a gender architecture was set up, which includes the Gender Strategy focal point network, coordinated by the Gender Team with representatives both at headquarters and in the field offices. This also includes gender-inclusive programme approval structures and gender-sensitive management instructions. Furthermore, in 2021, UNODC is rolling out a gender marker system that will allow for the reporting on funds allocated to and contribute to promoting gender equality.

4. These measures have and continue to strengthen the work of UNODC throughout its five thematic areas in ensuring stronger analysis of stakeholders and understanding the different impact of criminal justice, organized crime, terrorism and corruption on women and men, boys and girls. The measures also include intersectional factors that have the potential to impede UNODC work. The sections below provide examples of how the Office’s support to Member States has been enhanced.

A. Preventing and countering organized crime

5. 2020 marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime. UNODC supports Member States to take concrete actions and measures to achieve effective and sustainable results in addressing organized crime, while putting gender and human rights at the forefront of its policies and programmes.

¹ These resolutions include, but are not limited to General Assembly resolutions [65/228](#) and [72/194](#) and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3.

6. The Global Programme for Strengthening the Capacities of Member States to Prevent and Combat Organized and Serious Crime is dedicated to supporting Member States in the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and its protocols, as well as relevant resolutions such as Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3, in which the Commission called upon Member States to take a gender perspective into account in the implementation of the Convention and, more specifically, called upon Member States to continue to appropriately mainstream a gender perspective into efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime.
7. UNODC has developed several knowledge products to support relevant stakeholders in combating transnational organized crime. The Office hosts the Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) knowledge management portal, which facilitates the dissemination of information regarding the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and its protocols. SHERLOC offers relevant information, including on gender considerations, for practitioners, civil society and scholars. The case law database currently contains over 650 cases involving gender considerations.
8. In 2021, UNODC will be publishing an issue paper on gender considerations in organized crime. The purpose of the issue paper is to support Member States in mainstreaming gender into the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention. It provides a conceptual framework, with specific examples and policy recommendations to address gender issues in relation to the provisions of the Convention. In addition to the creation of knowledge products, UNODC, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), is developing an online module on gender equality and organized crime, which will be launched at the end of 2021 or in early 2022. The online, self-paced module is aimed at UNODC and United Nations personnel, as well as Governments, development partners, the non-governmental sector and consultancy firms.
9. In line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the Organized Crime Convention, UNODC is involved in the United Nations system-wide and international development of norms, policies and standards on gender-responsive action to effectively address trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, following a human rights-based approach that is gender- and age-responsive, victim-centred and trauma-informed.
10. UNODC has published a series of technical resources to support Member States in implementing national legislative frameworks, including the *Model Legislative Provisions against Trafficking in Persons*, the *Legislative Guide for the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and the *UNODC Toolkit for Mainstreaming Human Rights and Gender Equality into Criminal Justice Interventions to Address Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants*. In addition, in June 2020, the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants developed and launched the Global Action Women's Network of Gender Champions against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling. The Network is an active community of female and male officials, as well as champions of women's rights, working in policymaking, the justice sector, law enforcement, civil society and other relevant areas.
11. UNODC has also carried out country-specific activities to combat organized crime. In 2019, in El Salvador, UNODC supported the Ministry of Education in establishing the cybercrime prevention strategy in public schools, with the aim of reaching over 325,000 girls. This constitutes an integral part of the Office's commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women systematically and effectively in all its programmatic activities and interventions.

B. Crime prevention and criminal justice

12. In line with Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3 and the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNODC supports Member States in mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice policies and programmes. The Office aims to remove impediments to the advancement of women's empowerment in law enforcement and criminal justice institutions and supports the mainstreaming of gender aspects into crime prevention policies, programmes and legislation.

13. UNODC, through its technical assistance, normative and research work, recognizes and addresses the different impact of crime on men and women, girls and boys, and the different roles that men and women play as perpetrators, victims and criminal justice professionals. During the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Kyoto, Japan, in April 2021, several events were organized, such as that entitled "Equal access to justice for all", at which the key role of education in preventing all forms of discrimination and violence related to gender and in strengthening crime prevention worldwide was highlighted.

14. Recognizing that gender-related judicial integrity issues, such as inappropriate sexual conduct, gender bias and unequal gender representation, are multifaceted, the Global Judicial Integrity Network hosted expert group discussions and developed knowledge products on the subject. In 2019, the Network published the report *Gender-related Judicial Integrity Issues*, which is aimed at examining the ways in which gender-related issues may affect judicial integrity and, more specifically, existing safeguards in promoting appropriate conduct and corrective action in cases of inappropriate conduct.

15. Responding to the challenges of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in 2020, UNODC published a thematic brief entitled "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response: UNODC thematic brief on gender-based violence against women and girls", which contains practical recommendations for criminal justice institutions and policymakers. In 2021, the Office conducted a global assessment of the impact of the pandemic on criminal justice system responses to gender-based violence against women and girls. The report includes a qualitative analysis and detailed recommendations based on information from studies and experts from almost 100 countries, with a focus on low- and middle-income contexts.

16. UNODC has strengthened its approach to gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive law enforcement. In 2021, it published the *Handbook on Gender-responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*, which is targeted at middle managers in police forces and provides guidance on gender-responsive police investigations, prevention and survivor-centred approaches. It also looks at ways to promote positive masculinities, enhanced coordination and institution-building and emerging issues such as online and information and communications technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.

17. Efforts at the normative and policy levels have translated into gender-sensitive technical assistance to Member States. In this regard, the Office provided advisory services to the Southern African Development Community to support the ongoing development of a regional model law against gender-based violence. In 2020, UNODC supported the establishment of a new project in the Semarang Female Correctional Facility in Indonesia, in partnership with the Second Chance Foundation and the Directorate General of Corrections of Indonesia. The programme recognizes that women in prison are often at a disadvantage, with few prisons meeting their basic needs or adequately preparing them for release. As a result, the programme offers vocational training to provide prisoners with professional skills and knowledge, while promoting social reintegration.

C. Addressing and countering the world drug problem

18. UNODC is mandated, in several resolutions, including the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”, to effectively address and counter the world drug problem. The outcome document includes operational recommendations on the cross-cutting issues of drugs and human rights, youth, children, women and communities.

19. UNODC has produced a series of knowledge products to provide guidance on how to mainstream gender considerations to ensure the effective and inclusive implementation of its activities. Booklet 5 of the *World Drug Report 2020* was focused on the topic of socioeconomic characteristics and drug use disorders, with a section exploring gender aspects in combating the drug problem. The evidence provided has supported the international community in implementing operational recommendations on cross-cutting issues in relation to drugs and human rights, youth, children, women and communities.

20. Women who inject drugs face a range of gender-specific barriers to accessing services: research, guidelines, training programmes and monitoring remain overwhelmingly gender-neutral or male-focused. Through its technical assistance, UNODC is promoting evidence-based, voluntary community-based treatment, as well as treatment as an alternative to conviction and punishment for people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders, that is designed with women in mind.

21. UNODC also promotes HIV-sensitive and human rights-based law enforcement policies and practices. In sub-Saharan Africa, UNODC provided gender-specific HIV- and hepatitis C-related services for vulnerable groups, with a specific focus on women who use drugs, who are deemed at higher risk of acquiring HIV, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne infections relative to men who use drugs. The Office developed a technical brief entitled “Addressing the specific needs of women who use drugs: prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and C and syphilis”, launched in April 2021, and a technical guide entitled “Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in prisons”, published in 2019.

22. The United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) specifically refer to substance abuse treatment programmes and recommend the provision of gender-sensitive, trauma-informed, women-only substance abuse treatment programmes and that women’s access to such treatment should be improved, for crime prevention as well as for diversion and alternative sentencing purposes. In Colombia, for instance, UNODC implemented specific initiatives in support of women-led actions on drug use prevention. Within the framework of its Life and Leadership Skills Programme, UNODC supported 187 women to improve their knowledge and understanding of the key drivers and risk factors of drug use and its effects on families and communities.

23. Many countries still lack adequate drug prevention and child protection laws, policies and measures aimed at de-escalating the problem of illicit drug use among children. Preventive, restorative and rehabilitative approaches are the recommended means for addressing the issue of children with drug use disorders in the justice system and for ensuring the engagement of the family. The UNODC “Listen First” initiative is focused on increasing support for drug use prevention based on science and is an effective investment in the well-being of children, youth, their families and their communities. It has reached more than 4 million people globally.

D. Preventing and countering corruption and economic crime

24. To support the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/21, UNODC offers a comprehensive range of gender-sensitive anti-corruption

programmes and initiatives, thereby ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of programmes and activities that are tailored to benefit the whole of society. In this context, the Office has adopted a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming in all its anti-corruption work.

25. In September 2018, UNODC organized a meeting in Bangkok with experts from civil society, national anti-corruption authorities, international organizations and academia to take stock of existing knowledge on gender and corruption, propose actionable solutions and identify good practices. Building on the outcome of the meeting, UNODC developed the publication *The Time is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption*. Issued in 2020, the publication delves deeper into the topic of corruption and explores how gender-equality policies can have a positive effect on preventing and countering corruption, and vice versa.

26. In order to promote UNODC findings on gender aspects in corruption, a special event on exploring the gender dimensions of corruption was held on the margins of the eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, held in Abu Dhabi in 2019. Other dedicated sessions on gender and corruption included the international conference on safeguarding sport from corruption held in Vienna in September 2019 and the high-level segment of the regional conference in Southern Africa to fast-track implementation of the Convention against Corruption held in Livingstone, Zambia, in October 2019. Additional notable efforts to raise awareness and to include gender aspects in policy discussions on corruption include a presentation to the Group of 20 Anti-Corruption Working Group in October 2019.

27. UNODC has carried out innovative activities to educate women, girls, men and boys on the gender dimensions of corruption. Through the medium of sport, the Line Up, Live Up programme educates young people on the detrimental impact of gender stereotypes. Through this initiative, UNODC has reached over 1,700 girls in over 10 countries.

28. UNODC has also supported country-specific initiatives to explore the intersection between gender and corruption. In Myanmar, the UNODC Anti-Corruption Programme supported the identification of evidence-based gendered dynamics of corruption and initiated a series of focus group discussions across the country to understand the impacts of corruption on women. The brief entitled “Thematic brief on gender and corruption in Myanmar: initial insights from focus group discussions” created momentum for the raising of awareness on the nexus of gender and corruption and the disproportionate impact of corruption on women.

29. In 2020, UNODC launched the report entitled *Gender and Corruption in Nigeria*, a gendered analysis of the first-ever comprehensive nationwide corruption survey. By presenting the first empirical evidence on gender and corruption in the country, it is aimed at encouraging a debate on whether gender equality in the public administration of Nigeria can contribute to an effective reduction in corruption. The report provides an in-depth analysis of the differences in bribe-paying between men and women, as well as differences in their attitudes and perceptions, with a view to assisting in the improvement of anti-corruption strategies at both the national and the local levels.

E. Preventing and countering terrorism

30. To support the implementation of General Assembly resolutions [68/178](#) and [72/194](#), UNODC assists Member States in shaping, reviewing and implementing all counter-terrorism measures in accordance with the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination, and in mainstreaming gender perspectives into criminal justice responses to terrorism. This is inextricably linked to the women and peace and security agenda and supports the implementation of other relevant resolutions, such as Security Council resolutions [1325 \(2000\)](#) and [2242 \(2015\)](#).

31. To strengthen its efforts, UNODC cooperates closely with UN-Women, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. In particular, UNODC, together with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, is providing assistance in the development of gender- and age-sensitive prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

32. Through its normative, policy and research work and technical cooperation activities, UNODC promotes a comprehensive gender-sensitive understanding of the impact of and the reasons behind terrorism. As a result, the Office has produced a number of knowledge products to provide guidance on the ratification and implementation of the universal legal instruments against terrorism, such as the *Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism*, launched in 2019.

33. UNODC has carried out extensive capacity-development activities for criminal justice and law enforcement officials. In 2019, UNODC developed the *Nigeria Training Module on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism*, tailored to local criminal justice and security sector personnel, to support officials in addressing gender aspects in countering terrorism. In addition, in 2020, through a partnership with the National Association of Women Judges of Nigeria, more than 300 judges and prosecutors from Nigeria received training based on the module. A series of workshops have been hosted, highlighting the critical role that the protection of women's rights and gender equality must play in criminal justice responses to terrorism.

34. UNODC conducted capacity-building activities in the Middle East and North Africa, targeting female officials, parliamentarians, judges, law enforcement officers and other government representatives to encourage and promote women's inclusion in counter-terrorism efforts, in addition to national workshops on the investigation of crimes, in particular sexual and gender-based crimes, committed by foreign terrorist fighters.

35. To further support the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in 2020, at the request of the Government of Indonesia, UNODC shared good practices and case studies from Member States on the prosecution of terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters for terrorism offences and other transnational crimes. The Office provided support on the topics of assisting victims of terrorism, enhancing community policing for preventing violent extremism, and gender mainstreaming.

III. Conclusion

36. Through the adoption of the Gender Strategy, the Office has been successful in promoting an institutional approach to the global commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women. These efforts have had a direct result on the work of UNODC, with the Office taking the global lead on furthering awareness of gender aspects in addressing the world drug problem, organized crime, corruption and terrorism, as well as in crime prevention and criminal justice. The Office has moved away from the approach of simply adding female participants to activities as a technique of gender mainstreaming and instead seeks to promote gender-transformative actions in line with the 2030 Agenda. Even though UNODC has made marked progress in understanding and promoting gender aspects throughout its work, there is still scope for strengthening the gender architecture to ensure that gender mainstreaming is applied comprehensively throughout the Office and that its work assists in minimizing inequality in society, in line with the principle of leaving no one behind. In order to benefit from and feed into United Nations system-wide best practices and lessons learned, UNODC will continue to cooperate closely with

UN-Women and to participate in the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality.

37. With the introduction of the Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2022–2025), UNODC continues to be committed to making gender equality and women's empowerment an institutional norm and thereby to supporting Member States, through continued capacity-building activities, awareness-raising campaigns and the fostering of partnerships among stakeholders.
