

**Report on the Consultation meeting for the
International Crime Classification Framework
Mexico City, October 17th-19th, 2012**

I. Background and objectives

The international community has raised awareness to create an International Classification of Crime, due to the lack of comparability between crime statistics. Thus, since 2009, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) created a Task Force responsible for developing a set of principles for the international classification of crime. This draft was approved in July 2012 by the Conference of European Statisticians. Since then, this draft has been sent to several countries with the purpose of being tested. As a result of the request made by the UN Statistical Commission together with the Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to UNODC and to INEGI (The National Statistical Office of Mexico); the Center of Excellence in Statistical Information on Government, Crime, Victimization and Justice (CoE) organized a consultation meeting to discuss the feasibility of an International Crime Classification Framework (ICCF) in Mexico City.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- a) To discuss the findings of the first testing phase concerning the feasibility of an international classification of crime for statistical purposes;
- b) To discuss the overall structure of an international classification on crime;
- c) To identify the steps needed to develop a complete classification and to prepare a draft roadmap to be included in the UNODC-INEGI paper on crime statistics to be submitted to the 2013 UN Statistical Commission.

II. Expected results

The expected results for the meeting were mainly concerned with the feasibility of the ICCF developed by the Task Force. In this sense, it was very important to raise awareness between the participants of the difficulty that the Classification represents.

Hence, based on several classification exercises and the results of the testing phase, discussions on the suitability and the content of the classification framework were held. Discussions particularly focused on the following issues:

- If level 1 and level 2 categories were comprehensive and consistent
- Which other level 1 categories should be added
- Which other level 2, 3 and 4 categories should be added
- Which attributes and tags should be included and which ones should be eliminated

III. Participants

A broad range of participants from countries around the world were invited to attend the meeting. The following participants attended the meeting in person:¹

Country	Name	Last name	Position	Institution
Brazil	Isabel Seixas	Figueiredo	Director of the Department of Research, Information Analysis and Public Safety Staff Development	Ministry of Justice
Chile	Martha	Sepúlveda	Chief of Information, Analysis and Research Unit	Ministry of the Interior
Colombia	Martha Elena	Ariza	Coordinator for the Group on Classifications and Nomenclatures	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE)
Ecuador	Livino	Armijos	Director of Analytical Statistical Studies	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC)
Ecuador	Santiago	Gavilánes	Project coordinator	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos
Finland	Kauko	Aromaa	Director	European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI)
Indonesia	Hendry	Syaputra	Director of Social Resilience Statistics	Badan Pusat Statistik
Italy	Maria Giuseppina	Muratore	Senior Officer	National Institute of Statistics of Italy
Luxembourg	Stephen	Clarke	Crime and criminal justice statistics team leader	Eurostat
Mexico	Adrián	Franco	General Director for Government, Public Security and Justice Statistics	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía
Mexico	Edgar	Guerrero	Director for Government Information Policies	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía
Mexico	Carlos	Vilalta	Research Professor	Center for Research and Economics Teaching
Netherlands	Frits	Huls	Senior Researcher	Statistics Netherlands
Republic of the Philippines	Regina	Reyes	Director	Policies and Standards Office
United States	Allen J.	Beck	Chief of Corrections Statistics	US Bureau of Justice Statistics
CoE	Salomé	Flores Sierra Franzoni	Coordinator	CoE
CoE	Guillermo	Castillo	Consultant	CoE
UNODC	Angela	Me	Chief of the Statistics and Surveys Section	UNODC Statistics and Surveys Section
UNODC	Michael	Jandl	Research Officer	UNODC Statistics and Surveys Section

¹ Fiona Dowsley, Director of the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics; Paolo Valente, from UNECE and Ralf Becker from UN Statistics Division participated via skype call.

IV. Topics covered

During the meeting the following topics were discussed:

- a. Relevance of the ICCF principles
- b. Revision of Statistical Standard Classifications by UNSD (Ralf Becker)
- c. Level 1 categories
- d. Level 2, 3 and 4 categories
- e. Tags and Attributes
- f. Feasibility of the ICCF
- g. Next steps for creating an International Crime Classification

V. Principles for developing an international classification of crime

In the first part of the meeting, participants were joined by teleconference by Mr. Ralf Becker from the United Nations Statistical Division in New York who gave an introduction to relevant principles for building international classifications for statistical purposes.

International classifications are required for providing a basis for internationally comparable data, and to establish agreed common concepts for data collections by national statistical offices and other data providers. The following general principles for developing classifications, elaborated by UNSD, directly relate to developing a statistical classification of crime:

- a. **Ownership:** From the beginning it should be clear who the custodian of the statistical classification is to ensure maintenance of the classification over time, organize revisions, translations and other follow-up issues. The custodian of the crime classification could be UNODC, which is the only UN agency charged with collecting worldwide crime statistics.
- b. **Relevance:** Classifications should be up-to-date and relevant and robust enough to last for a certain period of time. Classification revisions should be clearly labeled as subsequent versions and should consider time series comparability. The levels and sub-levels in the classification should group items which are relevant for the users of the classification.
- c. **Sufficiency:** The classification should meet the needs of its primary users. This will be addressed by consulting with a wide range of experts and data providers in worldwide consultation meetings.
- d. **Statistical feasibility:** When building a classification, the feasibility of data collection should be taken into account, therefore a classification should not contain too many details. This will be taken into account when building the classification.
- e. **Underlying concepts:** In developing the classification, several concepts should be considered and distinguished. For crime classification, these concepts can be summarized as follows
 - a. Scope: The classification should provide appropriate room for any act that is considered a criminal act anywhere in the world; it should be valid for all actors in the criminal justice system (police, prosecution, courts, prisons) and for victimization survey-based statistics.
 - b. Classification variable: The criminal act (event/activity) is the main classification variable

- c. Statistical units: Statistical units used when applying the classification are offences (criminal acts), offenders and victims.
- d. Reporting units: police, prosecution, courts, prisons and survey data providers
- f. **Classification Structure**. The following considerations have been made regarding the structure of the crime classification:
 - a. Type of structure: A hierarchical structure with a limited number of categories on Level 1 (around 10-12)
 - b. Coding system: A digit code serves to identify single categories and levels (e.g. 1.1, 2.4.1, 3.2.1.3)
 - c. Coding structure and level of detail: An important consideration is that the level of detail and the number of levels must be supported by the level of detail that countries can provide data for.
Mutual exclusivity: This is taken into account when building and defining each category at all levels
 - d. Exhaustiveness: The crime classification aims at covering a large part of criminal acts defined as crimes around the world, while including residual categories to capture other criminal acts not yet defined or classified, as well as future criminal acts.
 - e. Statistical balance: The structure has been designed to avoid an undue concentration of reported criminal acts under a few categories
- g. **Application rules**: Basic rules are needed on how to apply the crime classification in practice, how to interpret descriptions and what procedures shall be followed if there are conflicting interpretations or classification rules (e.g. priority rules when two or more categories apply at the same time, or where there are mixed criminal acts). This will be covered in a manual to be developed together with the crime classification. The manual could also contain an alphabetic index for user convenience.

VI. Pending issues

Some of the pending issues of the meeting were:

- a. Discussion of subcategories within categories 7-11 of Level 1
- b. Further discussion on the tags and attributes of the offences is needed, such as:
 - b.1 How to include motivations for the assault (i.e. hate crimes)?
 - b.2 How to include crime on business?
 - b.3 How to apply the event, victim and perpetrator disaggregations?
 - b.4 What sort of relationship between the victim and perpetrator should be considered in the descriptive characteristics?
 - b.5 Is it possible to describe violence against women as such?
- c. All participants recognized the need to encourage the participation of more countries in order to broaden the discussions to reflect experiences from other legal and criminal justice traditions, particularly to regions absent during the meeting (Africa and Middle East, former USSR and Asia).

VII. Results

The main results of the meeting were:

- a. Participants agreed that the ICCF represents a feasible and useful approach to the international classification of crime. Based on the discussions in the consultation meeting, the proposed ICCF has been modified and revised, while there are further details to be developed and refined.
- b. The list of level 1 categories consists now of 11 categories based on a more user-friendly and policy-relevant hierarchy. Out of those 11 categories, 3 were renamed and one was added. The proposed level 1 categories are now the following:

Categories for Level 1	
1	Acts leading to death or intending to cause death
2	Acts causing harm to the person
3	Injurious acts of a sexual nature
4	Acts against property involving violence against a person
5	Acts against property only
6	Acts involving controlled psycho-active substances or other drugs
7	Acts involving fraud, deception or corruption
8	Acts against public order or authority
9	Acts against public security
10	Acts against the natural environment
11	Other criminal acts not elsewhere classified

- c. Subdivisions for categories 1-6 of Level 1 categories were revised and complemented with additional sub-categories. New offence categories were added to levels 3 and 4². Preliminary discussions on revisions required for categories 7 – 11 of Level 1 categories were held that are reflected in the revised classification.
- d. The participants agreed to identify a number of disaggregating variables for criminal offences, victims and perpetrators that would apply across all or several crime categories:
 - d.1 disaggregate victims and perpetrators by sex, age and minor/adult distinction
 - d.2 disaggregate the victim-perpetrator relationships for certain crimes where this has policy relevance (such as homicides and sexual crimes)
 - d.3 disaggregate certain offences into 5 variables where this has policy relevance: type of weapon used; location of crime; organized crime related; attempts; cybercrime.
- e. The participants agreed to modify the proposed system of ‘tags’ and to integrate several descriptive characteristics (‘horizontal attribute tags’) into the vertical classification scheme for selected crimes where they are relevant (e.g. attempted murder; aggravated assault). Additional information on statistical inclusions/exclusions are to be provided in data descriptions on inclusions/exclusions with the purpose of clarifying what type of data a country includes in some categories (e.g. whether attempts; threats; aiding/abetting; conspiring/planning; incitement; accessory/accomplice are included in the relevant categories).
- f. The participants recognized the importance of developing a user manual for the ICCF.
- g. Ecuador volunteered to elaborate the first draft of the manual.

² A revised draft of the ICCF is in the attachment.

- h. In addition to Ecuador's effort, each country will be tasked with elaborating a specific part of the manual (for example, a list of inclusions/exclusions for a particular crime category).

VII. Road map

The participants proposed the following steps in order to further develop a full International Crime Classification for Statistical Purposes:

	Steps	Expected time for completion	Participants
1	Send out the report of the Consultation Meeting to all members of the Task Force	November 2012	UNODC, INEGI, CoE
2	Enlarge the Task Force by inviting Regional Commissions and representatives from Africa, Middle East, former USSR and Asia	January 2012	UNODC, INEGI, CoE, Regional Commissions
3	Organize a second consultation meeting to discuss some of the pending issues	February 2013	UNODC, CoE
4	Prepare a revised, enlarged and agreed crime classification by all countries and participants	mid-2013	Task Force, UNODC, CoE
5	Send crime classification to countries asking for their feedback	July 2013	Task Force, UNODC, CoE
6	Elaborate the revised international crime classification	November 2013	CoE
7	Elaborate the first draft of the Manual	November 2013	Countries volunteered, CoE
8	Test the final draft international crime classification	December 2013 – February 2014	Task Force, UNODC, CoE
9	Circulate and receive feedback on the Manual	December 2013 – February 2014	Task Force, UNODC, CoE
10	Organize a final meeting	First half of 2014	UNODC, INEGI, CoE
11	Elaborate the report on the final meeting	mid- 2014	UNODC, INEGI, CoE
12	Disseminate the report	mid- 2014	UNODC, INEGI, CoE
13	Present the report, proposed classification and Manual to the UN Statistical Division	February 2015	UNODC, INEGI