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**World crime trends and emerging issues and responses in  
the field of crime prevention and criminal justice****World crime trends and emerging issues and responses in  
the field of crime prevention and criminal justice****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The present document was prepared in accordance with the practice established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/18. It provides information on trends and patterns with regard to intentional homicide and other areas of crime, based on preliminary results from the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems covering the year 2011, including data on the challenge posed by emerging forms of crime that have a significant impact on the environment and ways to deal with it effectively, which is the prominent theme of the twenty-second session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The present document also includes available statistical evidence on the functioning of the criminal justice system, including with respect to juvenile justice. Methodological challenges and capacity constraints related to improving crime and criminal justice data are discussed in document E/CN.3/2013/11.

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\* E/CN.15/2013/1.



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## **I. Introduction**

1. The present document, prepared in accordance with the practice established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/18, includes the most recent information available to the Secretary-General on world crime trends and the state of criminal justice operations.

2. It focuses on levels of and trends in conventional crime, on patterns and trends related to homicide and on the response of the criminal justice system, including with regard to juvenile justice. It also presents available statistical evidence on selected crime areas (corruption and environmental crime) and summarizes some of the activities that need to be implemented to address methodological challenges and capacity constraints that prevent sufficient standards of quality and coverage of crime and criminal justice data from being achieved.

3. Data used in the present report are predominantly based on offences recorded by the criminal justice systems of Member States, as reported in the annual data collection through the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems. Different legislative frameworks, varying operational capacities in generating data and diverse statistical standards often hamper the comparability of data among countries. For this reason, such data have to be interpreted cautiously and comparisons, especially among countries and regions, need to be conducted with care.

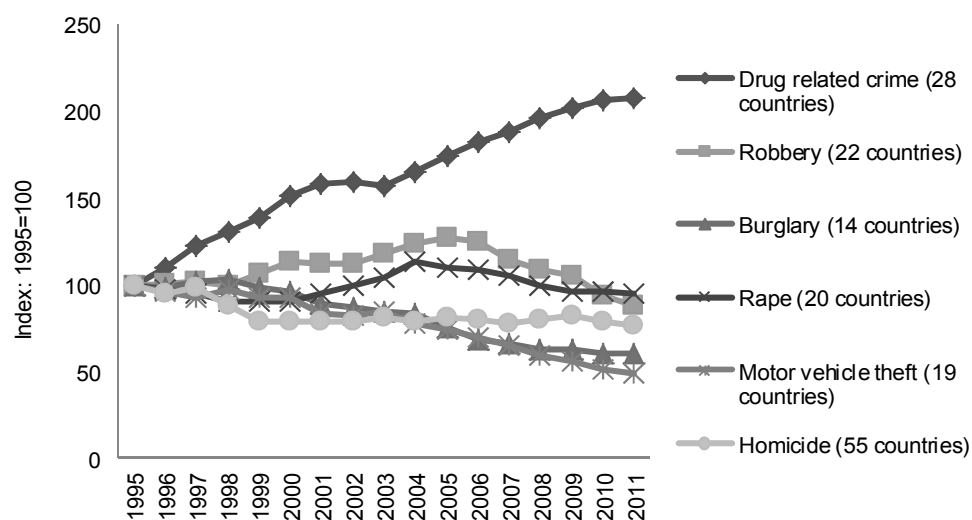
## **II. Long-term trends with regard to selected crimes**

4. Data from 2011 on property-related crime, violent crime and drug-related crime confirm trends observed over the past 17 years. Levels of property crime continue to slowly decrease, while drug-related crime continues to increase (see figure 1). Average trends with regard to violent crimes are stabilizing, with different patterns seen in different regions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Data refer to countries for which long-term trends of police-reported data are available, predominantly countries in Central and Eastern Europe, North America, Asia and Oceania.

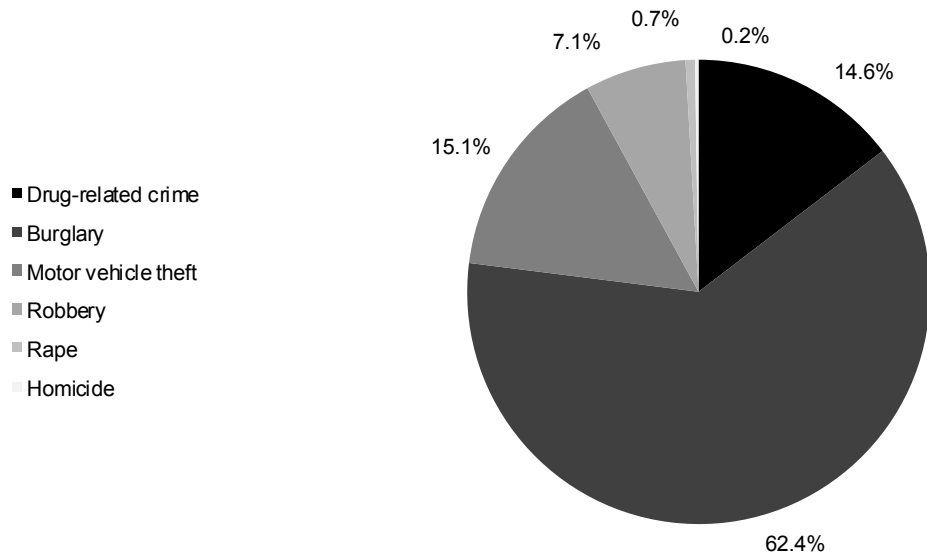
Figure 1  
Trends in conventional types of crime in countries for which long-term trend data are available, 1995-2011



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) homicide statistics; UNODC annual report questionnaire and European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

5. Drug-related crime, as a result of its increasing levels, now accounts on average for 15 per cent of total recorded offences among the six crimes considered, while property crime (burglary and motor vehicle theft) continues to represent the crime most frequently recorded by the police (62 per cent for burglary and 15 per cent for motor vehicle theft) (see figure 2).

Figure 2  
**Percentage distribution of recorded offences for six types of crime, selected countries, 2011**



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems; UNODC homicide statistics; UNODC annual report questionnaire and European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

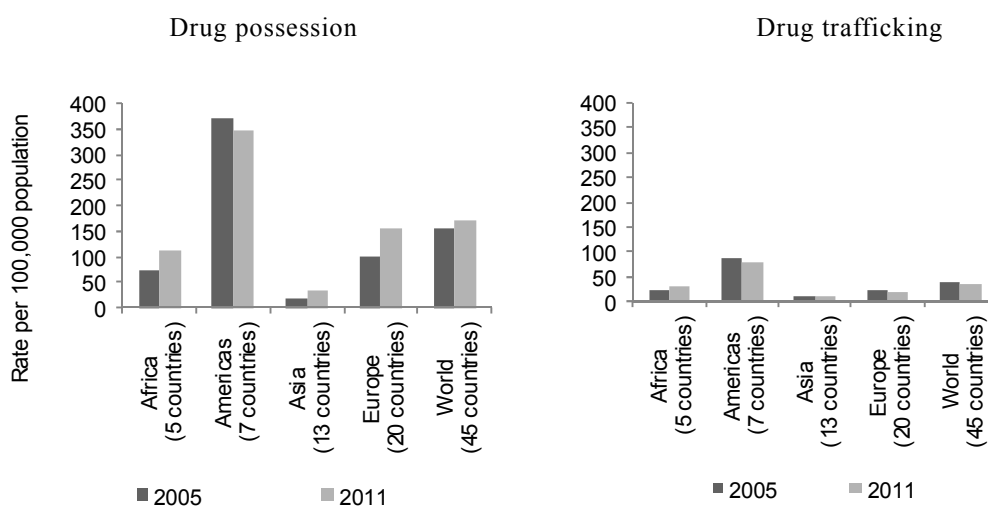
6. Drug-related crime refers to two different types of offences: those related to drug possession for personal consumption<sup>2</sup> and those linked to drug trafficking.<sup>3</sup> The global increase in drug-related crime is driven mainly by a rising number of offences related to drug possession, particularly in Europe and Africa (see figure 3). In contrast, offences related to drug trafficking have remained fairly stable in recent years. As a result of such trends, offences related to drug possession currently comprise 83 per cent of total global drug-related offences, up from 80 per cent in 2005.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Drug offences related to the use or the possession of drugs for personal consumption (see art. 3, para. 2, of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Drug trafficking refers to drug offences committed not in connection with the use or possession of drugs for personal consumption (see art. 3, para. 1, of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988).

<sup>4</sup> The number of recorded drug offences in a given country is influenced by a number of factors, such as the national legislation in force, the intensity of law enforcement activities, the capacity to accurately record offences and the extent of illicit drug consumption and trafficking. For those reasons, data should not be taken as a direct quantification of consumption and trafficking of illicit drugs.

Figure 3  
**Arrests for drug possession for personal consumption and drug trafficking, by region, per 100,000 population, 2005 and 2011**

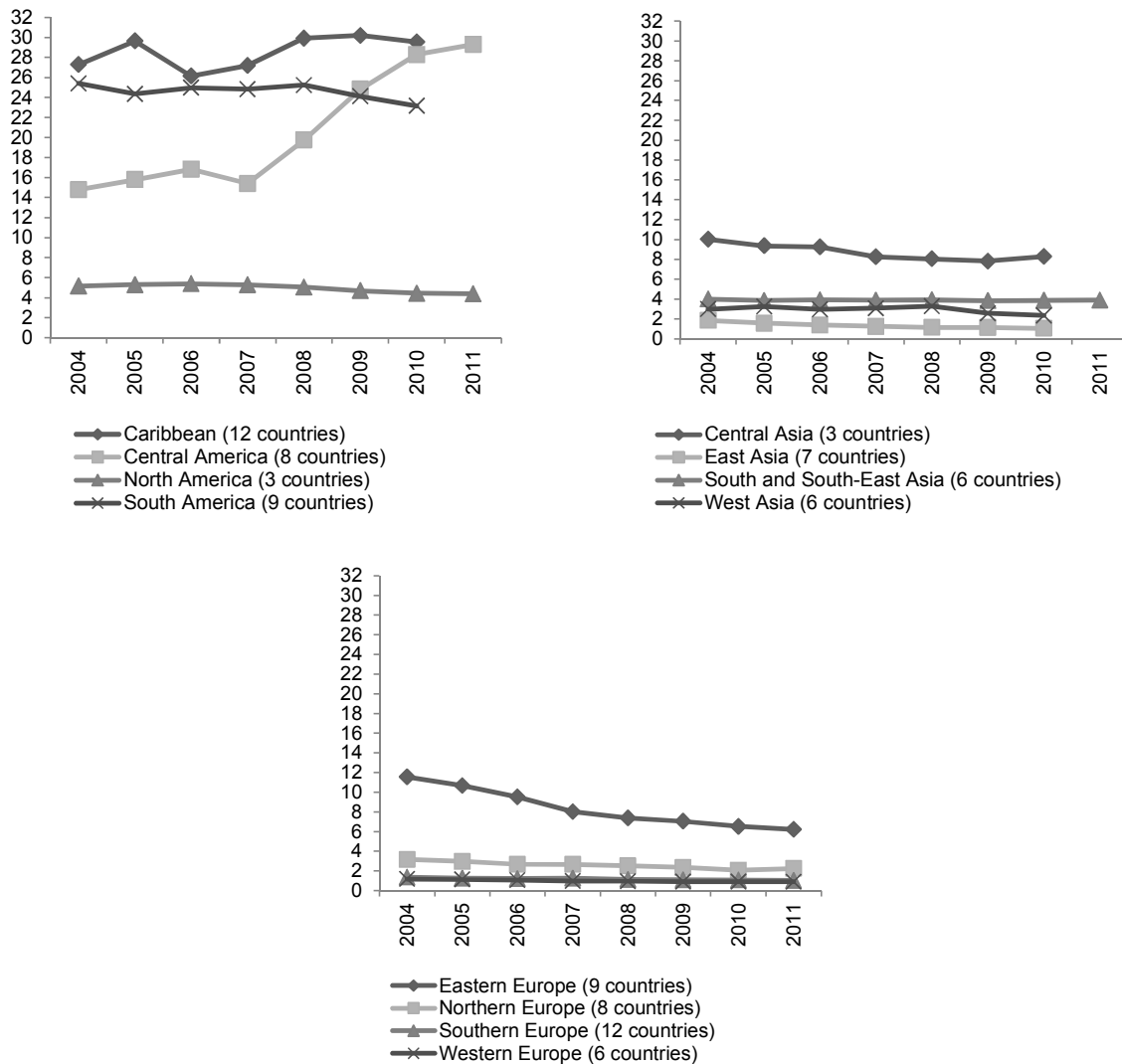


Source: UNODC annual report questionnaire.

### III. Homicide patterns and trends

7. Levels of and trends in homicide rates vary substantially by region: in Europe and Asia, homicide rates are comparatively low and often decreasing, while homicide rates in the Americas are higher and, in some cases, have increased substantially in recent years (see figure 4).

Figure 4  
**Homicide rate per 100,000 population, selected regions, 2004 to 2011**



Source: UNODC homicide statistics (2012).

8. In Central America, the homicide rate doubled between 2004 and 2011, while preliminary data reports for the first part of 2012 indicate that it is stabilizing.<sup>5</sup> Eastern Europe and Central Asia, subregions with homicide rates at a comparatively intermediate level in 2004, have shown a significant decrease over the past few years. In Eastern Europe, the homicide rate has decreased by 50 per cent since 2004. No regional or subregional trends are available for Africa and Oceania.

<sup>5</sup> Preliminary data reports from five Central American countries, covering the first half of the year, indicate a stabilization or reduction of homicide levels in 2012 compared with the previous year.

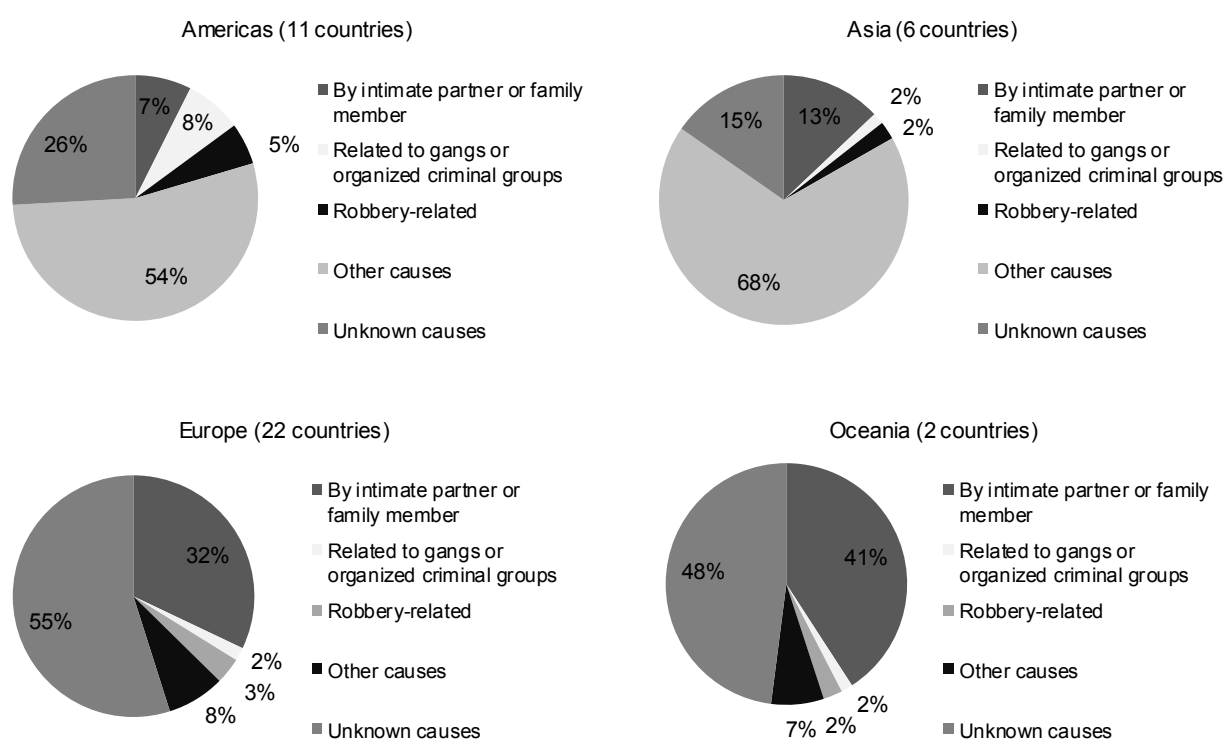


### Drivers of homicide

9. Diverging trends in homicide in various regions reflect differences in the underlying dynamics of interpersonal violence. In countries with high and rising homicide rates, lethal violence is often fuelled by criminal activities committed by gangs and organized criminal groups, a type of violence that is rarely experienced in other parts of the world.<sup>6</sup> In other countries, lethal violence related to acquisitive crime, such as homicides related to robberies, makes up a significant share of homicides, while in countries with lower levels of lethal violence, homicides by intimate partners or family members make up a large share of homicides. Figure 5 shows the situational context of homicide in four regions.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 5

#### Percentage distribution of homicide victims by situational context, by region, 2011 or latest available year



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

10. The link between firearms and violent deaths is often subject to considerable debate. Whether the availability of firearms is an additional factor in driving homicides or whether higher levels of interpersonal violence and homicide lead to

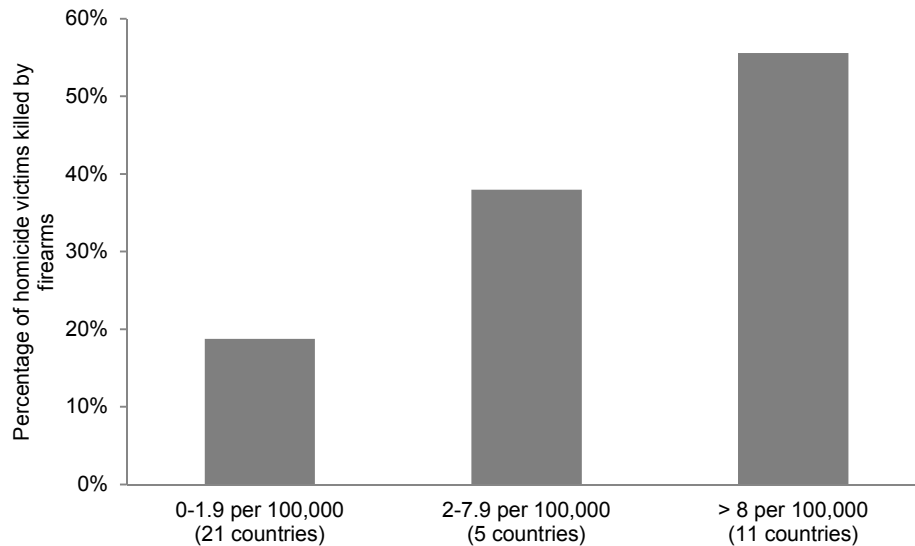
<sup>6</sup> See also United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide* (Vienna, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that available data on the situational context of homicide provide partial information, as in all regions the majority of all homicides are recorded under “other causes” or “unknown causes”.

more people carrying guns cannot be answered with data correlations alone. What is clear, however, is that, from a cross-national perspective, higher levels of homicide are linked to substantially higher levels of firearm involvement in homicides (see figure 6).

Figure 6

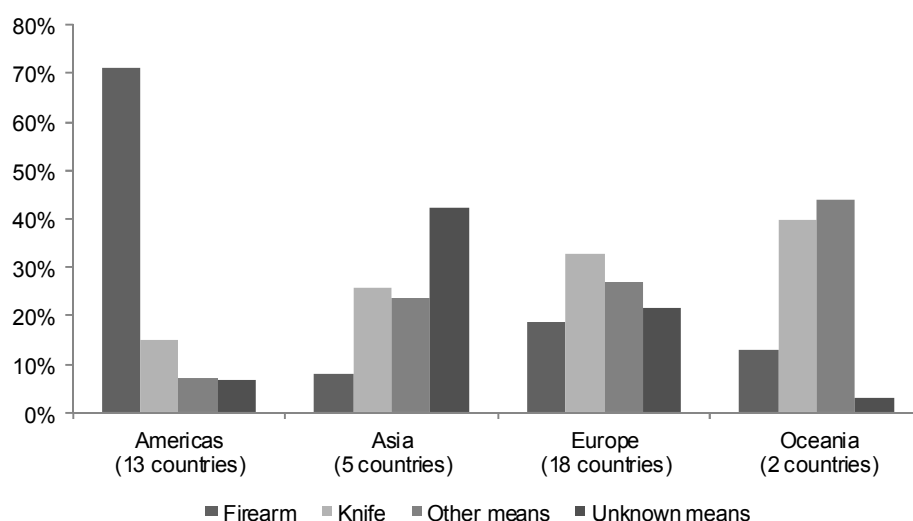
**Percentage of homicide victims killed by firearms, by national homicide rate per 100,000 population, 2011 or latest available year**



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

11. The relationship between homicide levels, situational contexts and mechanisms of killing produces very distinct geographic patterns in the use of weapons for committing homicides. Along with higher homicide rates and greater involvement of organized criminal groups and gangs, countries in the Americas record higher levels of firearm involvement in homicides than typically observed in countries in Europe, Asia and Oceania. On the other hand, countries in Europe, Asia and Oceania have higher shares of homicides that are carried out with knives and means other than firearms (see figure 7).

Figure 7  
**Percentage distribution of homicide victims by mode of homicide, by region, 2011 or latest available year**



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

12. The use of guns in homicides is not the exclusive prerogative of gangs or organized criminal groups. Such murders are often the outcome of other forms of criminal activity, such as the use of firearms in robberies, carjackings, revenge killings, interpersonal disputes, shooting sprees or, less commonly, intimate partner violence.

#### **Intimate partner and family-related homicide**

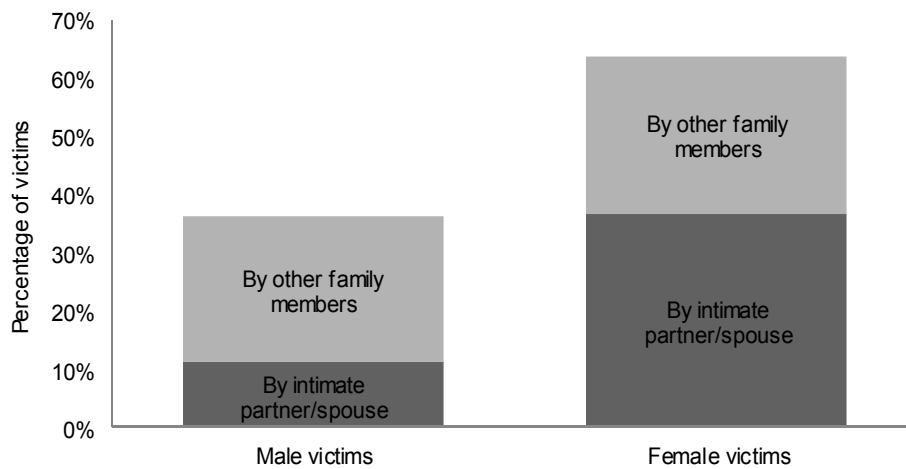
13. Intimate partner and family-related homicide is a criminal phenomenon that exhibits similar patterns around the world. While 81 per cent of global homicide victims in 2011 were male, intimate partner and family-related homicide affected women of all ages much more than men. On average<sup>8</sup> almost two thirds (62 per cent) of all victims of intimate partner or family-related homicide in 2011 were women, many of them killed by their current or former intimate partners or spouses.

14. Additionally, different patterns emerge by sex of the victim for homicides committed by spouses/intimate partners and homicides committed by other family members. Between 2007 and 2011, the vast majority of all female victims of intimate partner or family-related homicide in Europe<sup>9</sup> were killed by spouses or intimate partners, while less than one third of male victims were (see figure 8). On average, 75 per cent of victims killed by spouses or intimate partners were female and 25 per cent were male.

<sup>8</sup> Based on data for 35 countries for which such data are available.

<sup>9</sup> Based on selected countries in Europe. *Source:* Economic Commission for Europe, gender statistics database.

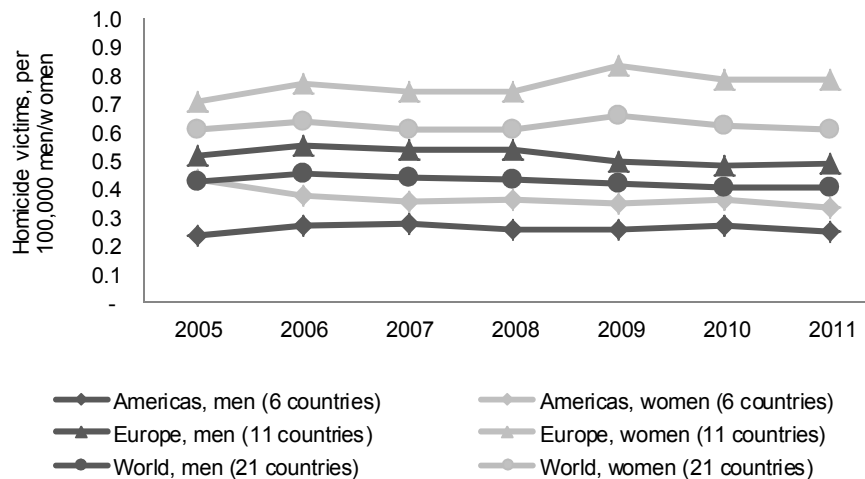
Figure 8  
**Percentage distribution of homicide victims killed by intimate partners or family members, selected European countries, 2007-2011**



Source: Economic Commission for Europe, gender statistics database.

15. In contrast to the rates of other forms of homicide, which may vary significantly from year to year, the rates of homicide by intimate partners or family members are less volatile. While some fluctuations in rates per 100,000 women and men over time can be observed, the trend appears to be relatively stable (see figure 9). For crime prevention policies, this implies that long-term interventions targeting domestic and family-related violence are required, especially to eradicate intimate-partner violence against women.

Figure 9  
**Homicide victims killed by intimate partners or family members, by sex of the victim, selected regions, per 100,000 population, 2005-2011**

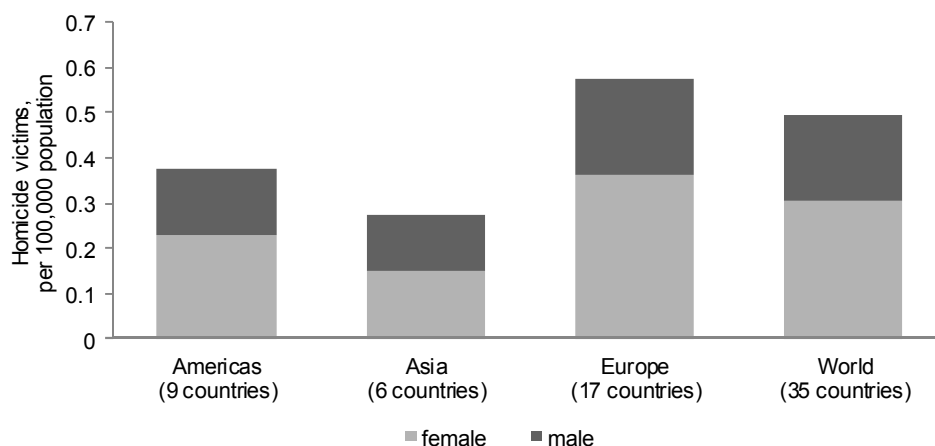


Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

16. Rates of homicide by intimate partners or family members in 2011 were highest in Europe and lowest in Asia (see figure 10).

Figure 10

**Homicide victims killed by intimate partners or family members, by sex of the victim, per 100,000 population, by region, 2011 or latest available year**



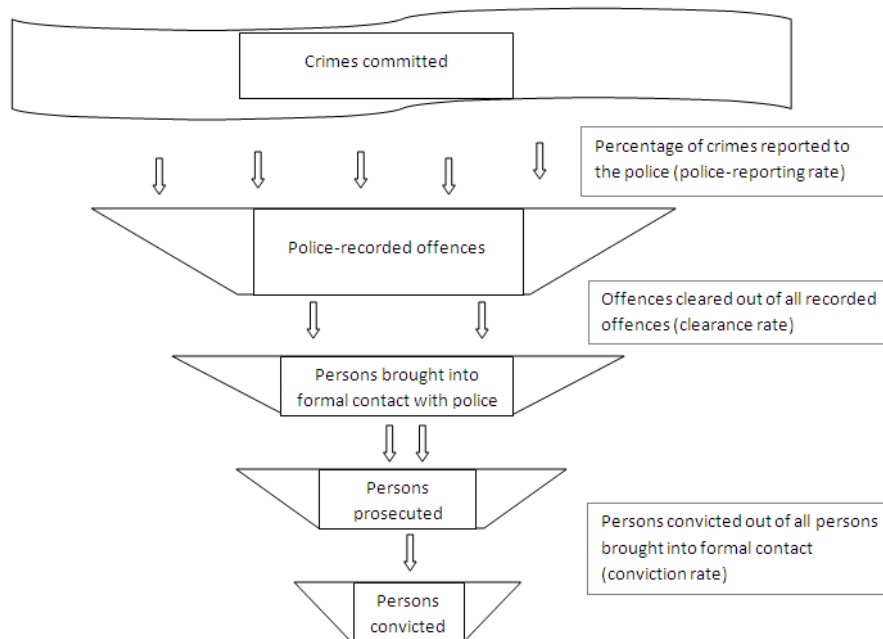
*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

#### IV. Criminal justice response

17. Data on the response of the criminal justice system to crime are important to the monitoring and evaluation of its effectiveness. The response of the criminal justice system to crime can be measured at various points and with the help of survey data, as well as administrative data from the main law enforcement institutions involved (police, prosecution, courts and prison administration).

18. At every stage in the criminal justice process, some attrition is likely to occur; that is, a decreasing number of cases progress from one phase to the next. For example, the police may have identified a crime but cannot find a suspect, or there may be a suspect but not enough evidence to convict that suspect. To measure the rate of attrition at each stage, a specific indicator can be used. This is illustrated in figure 11.

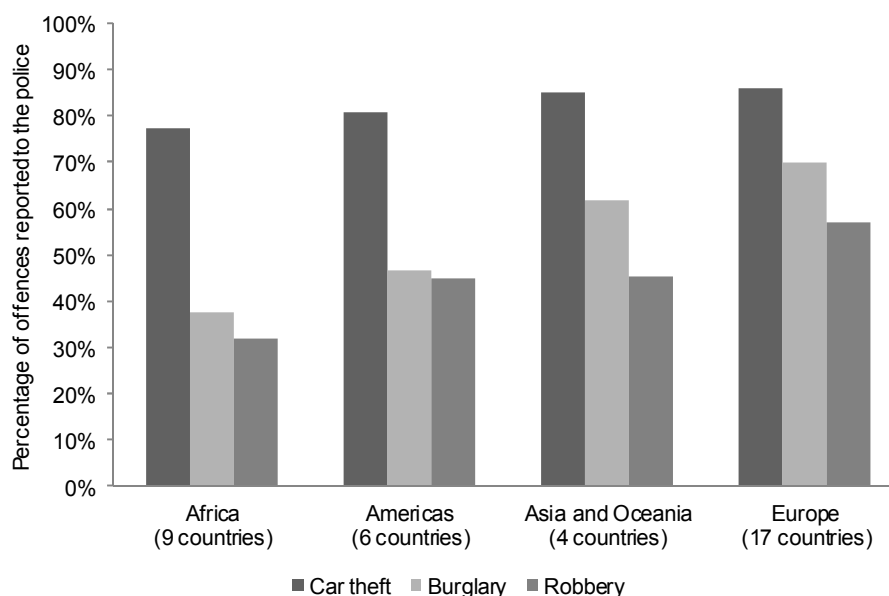
Figure 11  
**Statistical indicators relating to three phases in the criminal justice procedure**



### Reporting of crime to the police

19. Not all crime comes to the attention of the police; a significant part of it remains unreported and unrecorded (the “dark figure of crime”). Data shown in figure 12 are drawn from recent victimization surveys conducted in a number of countries. They indicate that the extent to which crime is reported to the police (“police reporting rate”) varies by type of crime and region. The propensity to report crime is typically higher for more serious crimes, for crimes that involve personal property of high value and for crimes for which a formal police report is required to claim insurance. As such, the police reporting rate for car theft is higher (between 75 and 85 per cent) than for other crimes in all regions. In broad terms, reporting rates also provide an indication of public trust in police capacity to deal successfully with a particular criminal offence.

Figure 12  
Average police reporting rates, by type of crime, by region, 2006-2011



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems; UNODC Data for Africa survey programme, UNODC programme of surveys on corruption and crime in the western Balkans.

### Case clearance

20. The “clearance rate”, computed as the ratio of cases “cleared” (or closed) to the number of criminal cases brought to the attention of the police, is an important performance indicator used by police forces. A case is typically considered “cleared” when the police have gathered sufficient evidence during the investigation to close the file and hand the case over for the prosecution stage.<sup>10</sup> A common pattern observed is that clearance rates are typically higher for serious crimes (such as homicide) than for less serious crimes (such as petty theft), presumably owing to more intensive efforts by police investigators and lower volumes of serious crimes. As shown in figure 13, homicide clearance rates show that countries with low levels of homicide have higher homicide clearance rates than countries with medium or high homicide rates.<sup>11</sup> A number of reasons may account for this difference. A high number of homicides may stretch the capacity of law enforcement institutions to investigate each case properly. Higher levels of homicides are also found in countries where violent crime is often perpetrated by gangs or organized criminal groups, which may be more challenging to investigate. Finally, greater impunity experienced by those who commit homicide may contribute to a higher number of

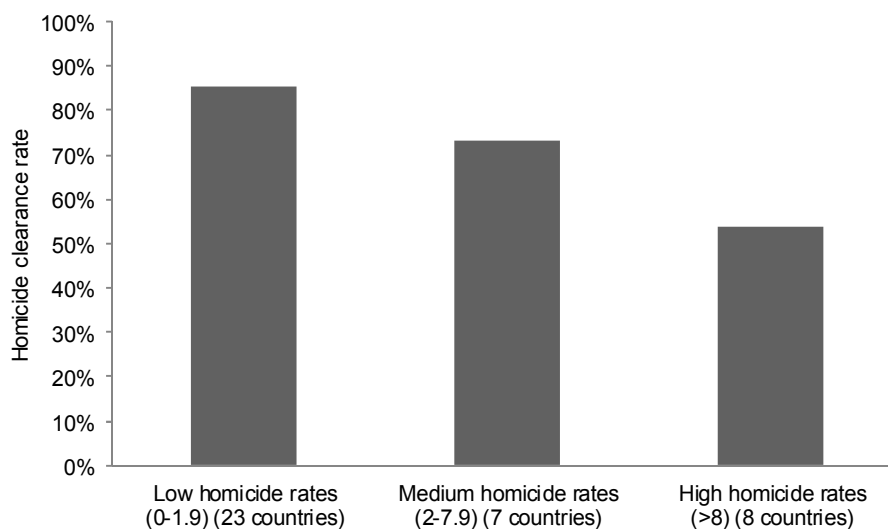
<sup>10</sup> A case will normally be considered “cleared” when a suspect for the crime has been identified by name and charged. In addition, there are other circumstances that may qualify a case as “cleared”; for example, the police may “clear” a case because the suspect has died, the suspect is not criminally liable because of age or mental incapacity, evidence has been found that no crime was committed or an identified suspect has made himself or herself untraceable.

<sup>11</sup> On the basis of available data from 38 countries.

homicides, thus creating a vicious circle of high levels of homicide leading to further homicides.

Figure 13

**Homicide clearance rates, by level of homicide rate per 100,000 population, 2011 or latest available year**



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

**Criminal justice indicators**

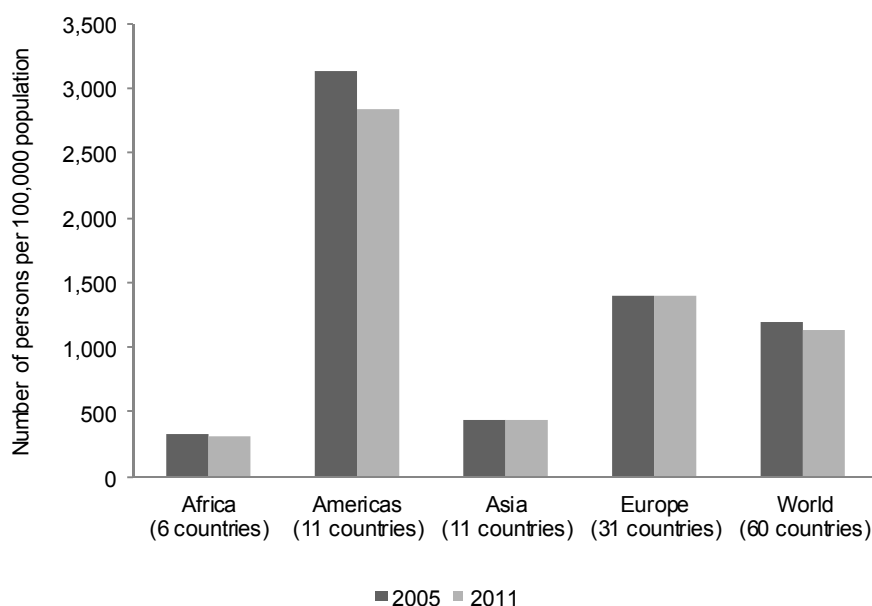
21. In 2011, about 1.1 per cent of the total population<sup>12</sup> was recorded by the police as “persons arrested, suspected or cautioned”.<sup>13</sup> Over the past six years, this percentage has decreased slightly as a result of lower levels in the Americas and Africa (see figure 14). Regional differences are affected by disparities in underlying crime levels, as well as by different counting practices and operational capacities to record and investigate crime.

<sup>12</sup> Based on available data from 60 countries.

<sup>13</sup> At the international level, different definitions and methodologies for counting exist. For example, some countries count only the number of persons arrested, while others also include persons suspected or cautioned. To account for these differences, the concept of “persons brought into formal contact with the police or criminal justice system” is used. It refers to any or all these concepts in combination.



Figure 14  
**Persons brought into formal contact with the police or criminal justice system,  
 per 100,000 population, 2005 and 2011**



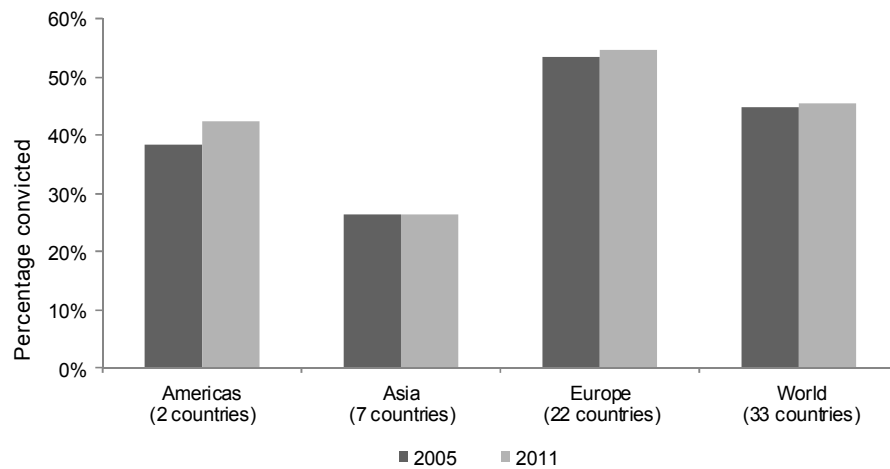
*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

22. At the judicial stage of the criminal justice process, the total conviction rate<sup>14</sup> provides a broad indication of how frequently persons who are arrested or suspected are convicted in court. Globally, average conviction rates for all types of crime stand at about 46 per cent of persons brought into formal contact with the police, with wide differences at the regional level: from 26 per cent in Asia to 55 per cent in Europe (see figure 15). There are a number of possible explanations for the wide disparities: differences in counting methods, statistical counting rules and judicial record-keeping; different approaches by law enforcement agencies in responding to crime;<sup>15</sup> variations in legal systems, allowing various retributive and punitive measures (e.g. diversion and alternative sanction systems); and differences in the capacities of criminal justice systems to effectively prosecute alleged offenders for crimes committed and to adjudicate their cases.

<sup>14</sup> The ratio of persons convicted to persons brought into formal contact with the police (i.e. persons arrested, suspected or cautioned) during the same year.

<sup>15</sup> For example, low conviction rates can be a result of disproportionately high numbers of arrests by law enforcement officials.

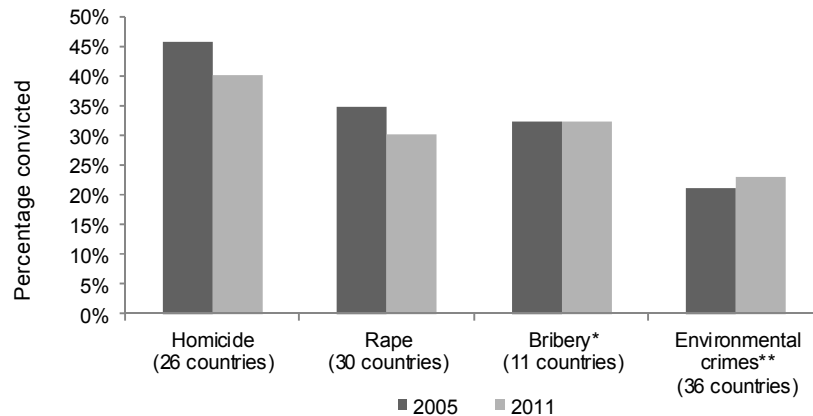
Figure 15  
**Persons convicted as a share of persons brought into formal contact with the police, 2005 and 2011**



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

23. The limited data available to calculate crime-specific conviction rates show that conviction rates for homicide are typically higher than for other types of crime (see figure 16). Conviction rates are lower for rape (at about 30 per cent). Conviction rates for bribery and environmental crimes are among the lowest, probably as a result of the difficulties in proving the constituent elements of the crime in court.

Figure 16  
**Persons convicted for homicide, rape, bribery and environmental crime as a share of persons brought into formal contact with the police, 2005 and 2011**



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

\* Data on bribery refer to 2005 and 2009.

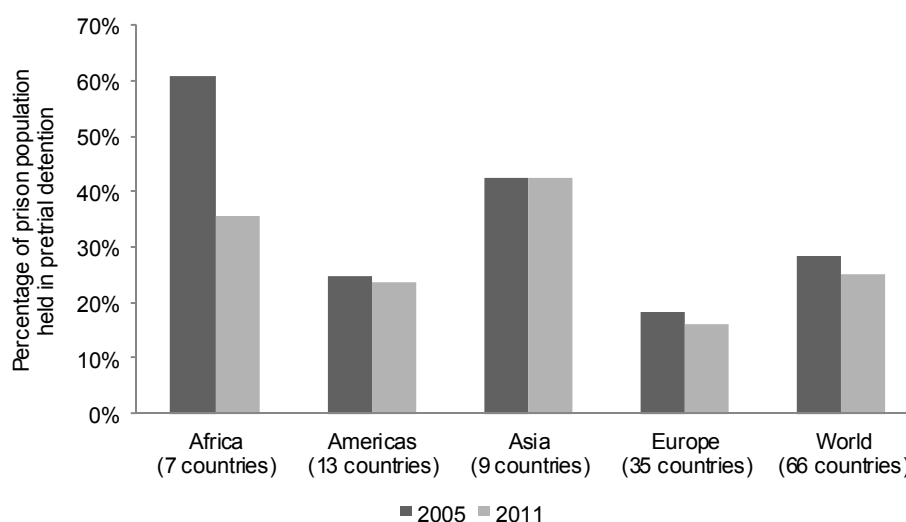
\*\* Data on environmental crime refer to 2006 and 2011.

### Penitentiary indicators

24. The capacity of a criminal justice system to effectively prosecute suspects and to either acquit or convict them in a fair trial within a reasonably short period of time is reflected in a lower percentage of the prison population held in pretrial detention. Countries and regions with a high share of pretrial prisoners are likely to face particular challenges and capacity constraints in conducting trials within a reasonable amount of time. As shown in figure 17, the share of the prison population in pretrial detention worldwide decreased from 29 to 25 per cent between 2005 and 2011.<sup>16</sup> Regionally, the percentage of pretrial detainees fell from 61 to 35 per cent in Africa, from 25 to 24 per cent in the Americas and from 18 to 16 per cent in Europe, while it remained stable at 42 per cent in Asia.

Figure 17

#### Prison population in pretrial detention as a share of total prison population, 2005 and 2011



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

## V. Juvenile justice

25. A particular concern of the criminal justice system is the treatment, care and reintegration of children in conflict with the law.<sup>17</sup> According to international standards,<sup>18</sup> the State response to juvenile delinquency should take into account the

<sup>16</sup> Based on available data from 66 countries.

<sup>17</sup> In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children are persons under 18 years of age unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. In the following section, the terms “children” and “juveniles” are used interchangeably.

<sup>18</sup> There are a number of international standards that apply to the treatment of children in the criminal justice system, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and others.

needs and best interests of the child and attempt to address the root causes of children coming into conflict with the law. To do so, many countries have created special institutions and procedures outside the normal criminal justice system for dealing with persons under the age of full responsibility (usually 18 years but in some countries less than that). These systems often differ widely between countries and can be situated within the criminal justice system, within a separate administrative system of justice related to children or within the general welfare system. They include a set of laws, norms and standards of treatment that are collectively referred to as juvenile justice systems.

26. It has long been recognized that children in conflict with the law face particular needs regarding child welfare, education and reintegration and that, whenever children are deprived of their liberty, they are exposed to heightened risks of abuse, violence and exploitation. To guide the State response to children in conflict with the law, specific information on juvenile justice is particularly important.<sup>19</sup> While juvenile justice information systems in many countries have become quite comprehensive, statistics on juvenile justice at the global level are still scarce, and the number of indicators available remains limited.

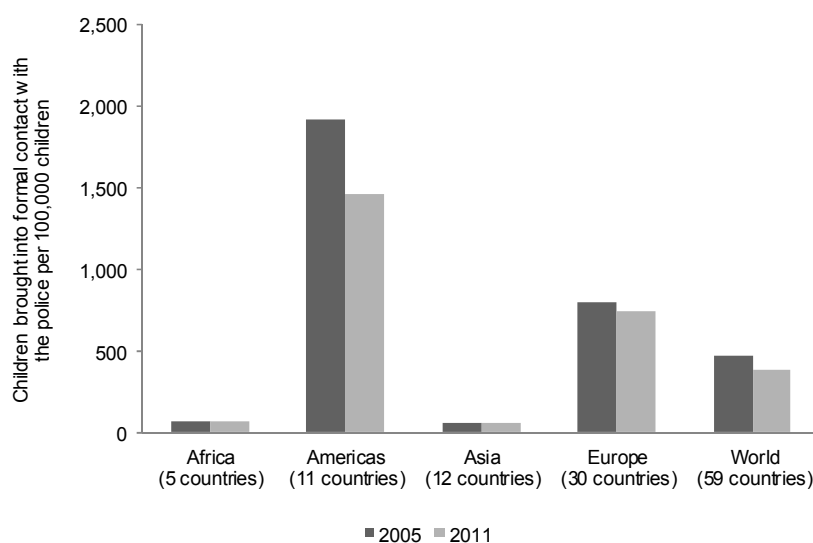
27. Figure 18 illustrates the number of children<sup>20</sup> brought into formal contact with the criminal justice system per 100,000 children for four regions in 2005 and 2011. On average, in 2011 about 0.4 per cent of the total population under 18 years of age were in conflict with the law. When comparing the rates of juveniles in conflict with the law by region, the same caveats as mentioned above with regard to the interpretation of total contact rates (referring to persons of all ages) should be taken into account, namely different counting practices and varying operational capacities to record and investigate crime. When it comes to juvenile delinquency and statistics on juvenile offenders, additional factors come into play, namely disparities in individual juvenile justice systems that may lead to certain categories of offenders under the age of full criminal responsibility not being recorded, or not being recorded to the same extent as in the case of adult offenders.

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<sup>19</sup> Relevant international guidance on specific juvenile justice indicators is provided in the *Manual for the Measurement of Juvenile Justice Indicators* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.V.7). Available from [www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/06-55616\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/06-55616_ebook.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Countries were asked to supply data on children in conflict with the law, that is persons under 18 years of age unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier, according to the definition of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some countries indicated that they use different age definitions for applying juvenile justice.

Figure 18  
**Children brought into formal contact with the police, per 100,000 children,  
 2005 and 2011**

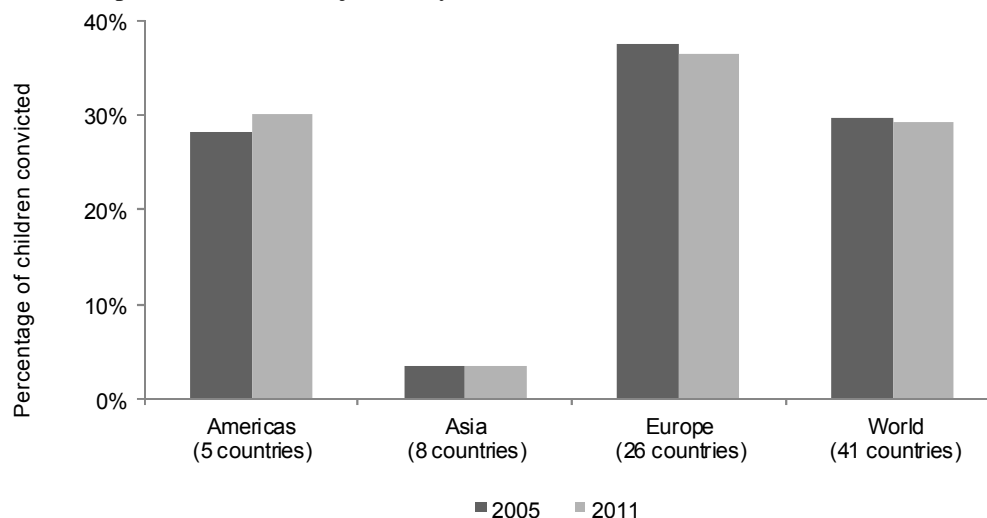


*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

28. The rate at which children were brought into formal contact with the police decreased worldwide by 18 per cent from 2005 to 2011. The decrease was larger in the Americas (24 per cent) and smaller in Asia (7 per cent) and Europe (6 per cent), while the rate increased by 6 per cent in Africa.

29. Once children come into contact with the formal criminal justice system as criminal suspects, they may face charges in a special juvenile court or within the normal judicial system. Data on the outcome of the procedures are available for only a limited number of countries; they show that the average rate of conviction in court for juveniles was about 27 per cent in 2011, a rather stable rate over the six-year period (see figure 19).

Figure 19  
**Children convicted as a percentage of children brought into formal contact with the police or criminal justice system, 2005 and 2011**



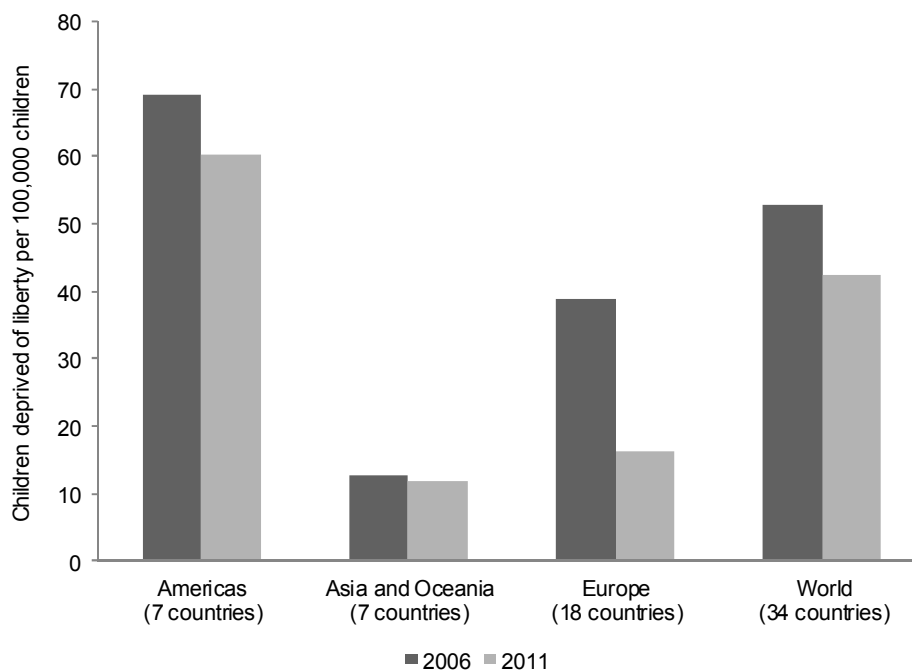
*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

30. Regionally, there appear to be wide differences in the treatment of juveniles by the justice system. Conviction rates in 2011 were 37 per cent in Europe and 30 per cent in the Americas but only 4 per cent in Asia. One possible explanation for this difference is distinctive juvenile justice systems and a tendency to shift the treatment of youth delinquency outside the formal criminal justice system (except in more serious cases), where the use of alternative sanctions and community-based measures are favoured over formal convictions.

31. This trend can also be seen when looking at data on the deprivation of liberty of persons under 18 years of age (see figure 20). Worldwide, the number of children held in prisons, penal or correctional institutions decreased from 53 to 42 per 100,000 children (a 20 per cent decrease) between 2006 and 2011.<sup>21</sup> Rates declined in all regions, but the decrease was particularly pronounced in Europe (from 39 to 16 per 100,000 children), especially in Eastern Europe, while there were also decreases in the Americas (from 69 to 60 per 100,000 children) and Asia and Oceania (from 13 to 12 per 100,000 children). By 2011, the average rate of juveniles being deprived of liberty in the Americas was four to five times higher than average rates in Europe and Asia.

<sup>21</sup> There is not enough information on children who are deprived of their liberty but are held in institutions outside prison administration (such as closed remand homes and reform schools) to provide a global or regional picture of persons held in such settings, though data provided in a special module on juvenile justice in the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems have been included in the totals for the 34 countries presented here.

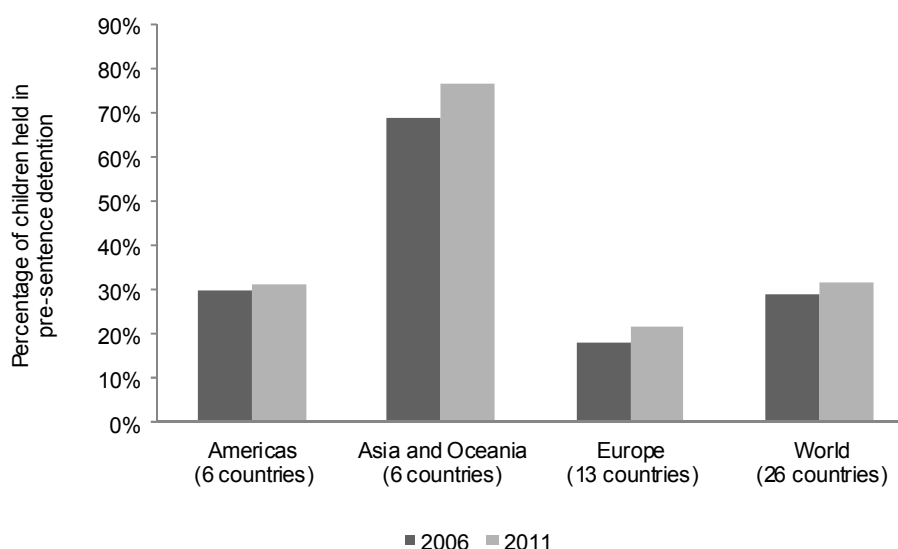
Figure 20  
**Children deprived of liberty, per 100,000 children, 2006 and 2011**



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

32. While the rate of children being deprived of liberty has been reduced substantially, the percentage of children in prison, penal institutions or correctional institutions who are being held in pre-sentence detention remains high, having increased from 29 to 32 per cent between 2006 and 2011 in the 26 countries worldwide for which data are available. As shown in figure 21, the share is highest in Asia and Oceania and lowest in Europe.

Figure 21  
**Children held in pre-sentence detention as a percentage of all children held in prisons, penal or correctional institutions, 2006 and 2011**



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

33. As mentioned above, children deprived of liberty are often at a heightened risk of abuse, violence and exploitation, particularly in prison settings where they are in direct contact with adult prisoners. In this context, international standards call for special arrangements and the provision of separate facilities, such as juvenile prisons or closed remand homes, when children are deprived of their liberty. The percentage of children who are held in detention in prisons and penal or correctional institutions and who are not wholly separated from adults is therefore an important indicator of the treatment of juveniles in detention. Unfortunately, corresponding data at the international level are very limited. Of the 13 countries providing data, 8 indicated that all children deprived of liberty in their countries were held in facilities wholly separated from adults. In contrast, five countries indicated that, on average, 65 per cent of children held in prisons and penal or correctional institutions were not wholly separated from adults.

## VI. Selected findings on corruption

34. Corruption is a heavy burden for the economic and social development of societies; it saps resources, it erodes the rule of law and it reduces public trust in State authorities. In addition, various forms of organized crime are facilitated by widespread corruption, enabling criminal groups to take advantage of the resulting undermining of State control.



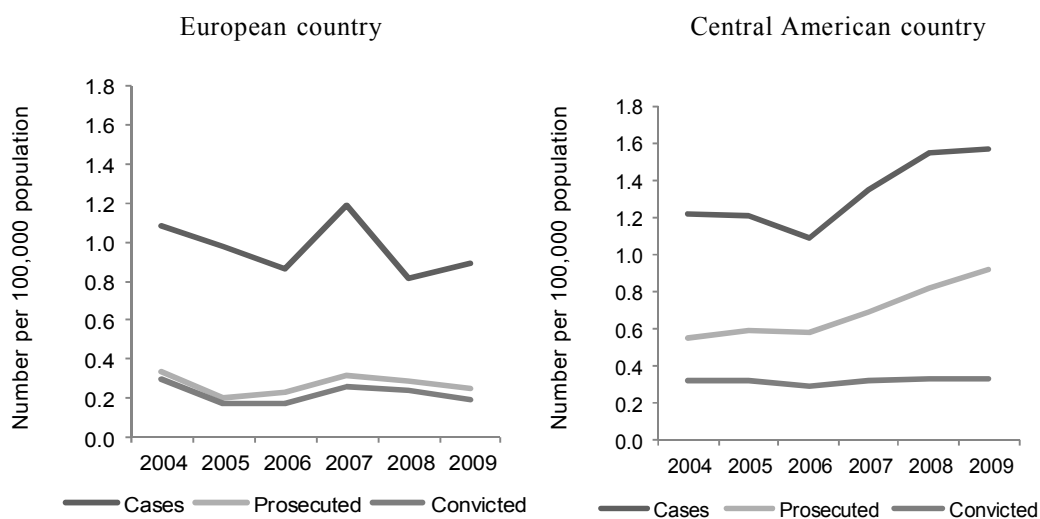
### Data on corruption from criminal justice systems

35. The vast majority of corruption remains undetected and, more so than for other crimes, the number of cases reported by criminal justice statistics should not be understood as a direct approximation of the amount of corruption in a country. A high number of recorded cases may be an indication of a high level of corruption, but it may also be the consequence of intense and effective law enforcement activities or the result of rising intolerance towards corruption and higher reporting rates. Conviction levels for corruption cases can be difficult to interpret owing to the inherent difficulties of investigating complex crimes, such as those of bribery or influence peddling, and successfully bringing them to court.

36. Figure 22 demonstrates some of these issues by showing data on reported cases, prosecutions and convictions in two countries, one in Europe and one in Central America. In the European country, the trend with regard to bribery cases shows some fluctuations, with much lower and stable levels of prosecutions and convictions. By contrast, the increase in bribery cases in the Central American country is followed by a similar increase in prosecutions, while the level of convictions remains flat over the entire period.<sup>22</sup> Such data can be used to analyse the efficiency of the criminal justice response to reported cases of bribery, but offer limited information with regard to understanding real trends and levels of bribery.

Figure 22

#### Recorded cases, prosecutions and convictions for bribery offences, per 100,000 population, in one European and one Central American country, 2004-2009



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

37. The challenges posed by the intricacies of data based on cases, prosecutions or convictions for corruption can be overcome, at least partially, through other

<sup>22</sup> Case recording by the police, the start of prosecution and conviction by a court are successive steps that occur with a considerable time lag. A thorough analysis of these data should account for an appropriate time lag between the various stages.

measurement tools, such as large-scale sample surveys on the experience of corruption. During the period 2010-2012, UNODC assisted national partners in conducting comprehensive and comparable household corruption surveys.<sup>23</sup> The use of sample surveys to measure corruption is increasingly used by national agencies to produce statistics on this topic within the realm of official statistics. The main findings of these surveys, based on the experiences of everyday life in private households, have provided valuable evidence for policymaking — for example, the sectors most affected by bribery, the economic costs of bribery and the reporting rates of bribery. Such empirical evidence can be used to target the sectors most vulnerable to bribery and to improve channels for reporting corrupt practices.<sup>24</sup>

### **Corruption affecting the private sector**

38. Aware that corruption affects not only ordinary citizens in their contacts with public authorities but also the operation of businesses, countries have started to measure the experience of corruption in the business sector with dedicated statistical surveys.

39. For example, countries in South-Eastern Europe have recently conducted, in partnership with UNODC and the European Commission, a representative survey on corruption involving business entities. Provisional results for five countries show that various forms of corruption are widespread and rarely come to the attention of the relevant authorities. Of those businesses which have dealt with official authorities, 8 per cent admitted to having paid a bribe in the 12 months before the survey, compared with 12.5 per cent of ordinary citizens.

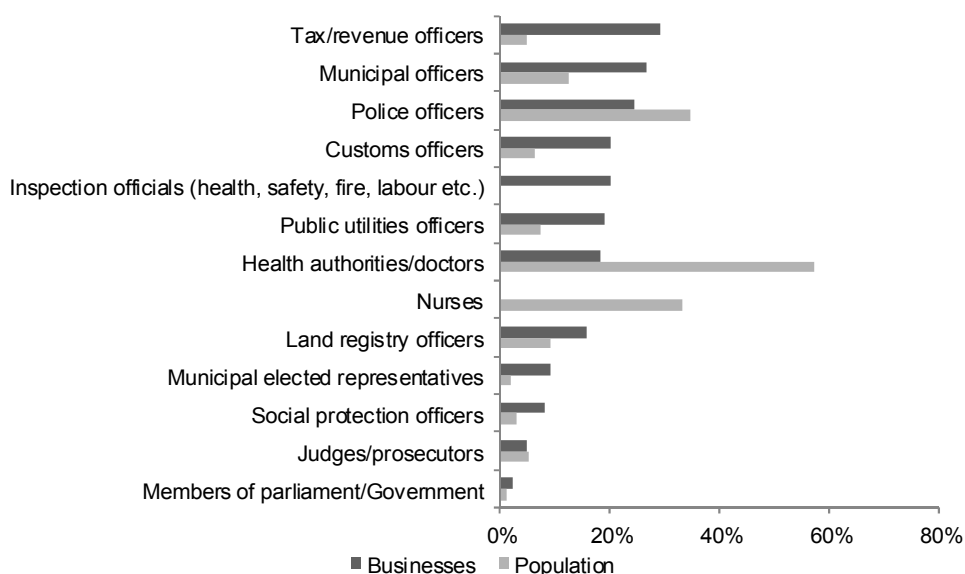
40. Citizens and business entities each deal with different sectors of civil administration, and they provide different perspectives with regard to which public officials are more vulnerable to bribery. Health and police services are typically the sectors that the population of this region reported as being the most affected by corruption, while businesses reported frequent payment of bribes to tax/revenue, police, customs and municipal officers and inspection officials (see figure 23).

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Corruption in the Western Balkans: Bribery as Experienced by the Population* (Vienna, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> For example, findings of the study have been used in one South-Eastern European country as an input to the national judicial reform strategy for the period 2012-2017 and for defining a new anti-corruption strategy and action plan.

Figure 23  
**Percentage of bribe-paying businesses and bribe-paying population who paid to selected types of public officials, South-Eastern Europe, 2010-2012**



*Source:* Preliminary data from the UNODC assessment of corruption and crime affecting the business sector in the western Balkans (2012-2013); and UNODC, *Corruption in the Western Balkans: Bribery as Experienced by the Population* (Vienna, 2011).

41. Given the difficulty of assessing the real extent and modalities of corruption on the basis of data from criminal justice systems (cases, arrests, prosecutions, convictions), conducting statistical surveys represents a viable option for collecting reliable information. The development of an integrated system of statistical surveys targeting the population, the business sector and the civil administration should be considered by Member States as a plausible way to analyse and, ultimately, better fight corruption.

## VII. Environmental crime

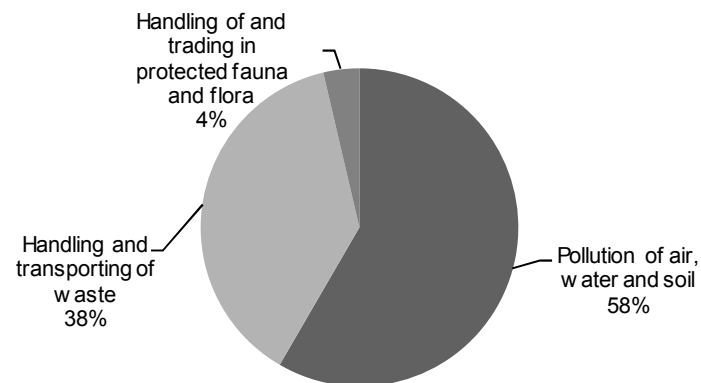
42. As in previous years, UNODC asked Member States to report relevant data on the special theme of the twenty-second session of the Commission: the challenge posed by emerging forms of crime that have a significant impact on the environment and ways to deal with it effectively. Data on environmental crime were collected in a special module of the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems covering the year 2012. In accordance with the mandate of UNODC, special attention was given to data on trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna, including forest products, such as timber, wildlife and other biological forest resources.

43. According to preliminary results from the Survey for 2012, out of 57 countries responding within the timeline, 32 were able to supply at least partial data on

environmental crime.<sup>25</sup> In 2011, a total of 23,882 environmental crime offences were recorded by police in 28 countries. The majority of environmental crimes that came to the attention of the authorities related to pollution offences (58 per cent) and waste offences (38 per cent), while the illegal trade of fauna and flora accounted for less than 4 per cent of all recorded offences (see figure 24). Transnational trafficking in protected species of fauna and flora made up about one fifth of all reported offences related to illegal trade in wildlife, or less than 1 per cent of the total number of offences reported.

Figure 24

**Percentage distribution of police-recorded offences in three categories of environmental crime, 2011**



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

44. As for many other types of crime, official data on recorded crimes are likely to seriously undercount the real number of criminal events, either because certain illegal actions that harm the environment are not criminalized in law or because such actions, while being criminal acts in law, do not come to the attention of the authorities. When interpreting data on environmental crime, an important issue to consider is that in many countries the majority of illegal actions that have a significant negative impact on the environment fall under administrative offences, infractions or misdemeanours under civil law, environmental or health regulations and are therefore not accounted for in crime statistics.

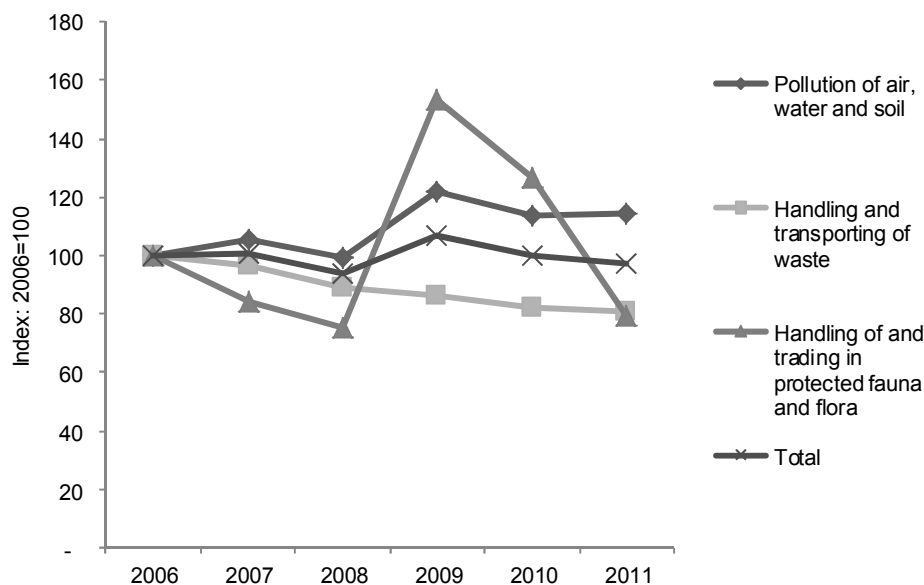
45. Looking at developments over time, there are some noticeable trends in the different categories of offences. As shown in figure 25, over the past six years recorded offences related to the polluting of air, water and soil have increased by 15 per cent, while offences relating to the illegal movement or illegal dumping of waste have decreased by 19 per cent. Offences related to the illegal trade in

<sup>25</sup> Data were collected in three broad categories of environmental crime: offences related to the polluting of air, water and soil; offences relating to the illegal movement or illegal dumping of waste; and offences related to illegal trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora. Among the countries supplying environmental crime data, 26 were able to supply data on at least some types of pollution-related offences, 19 had data on offences related to illegal movement or dumping of waste and 12 had at least some data on offences related to illegal trade in endangered species.

endangered species of wild fauna and flora decreased and then sharply increased before receding to a level that was 20 per cent lower than six years earlier.<sup>26</sup> Taken together, the number of criminal offences against the environment recorded by the police remained fairly stable over the six-year period.

Figure 25

**Trends in police-recorded offences in three categories of environmental crime, 2006-2011**



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

46. In parallel with the total number of offences related to the environment, the number of persons brought into formal contact with the police in one form or another (persons arrested, suspected or cautioned) remained fairly stable over the six-year period covered, increasing by 4 per cent, while the number of persons convicted grew by about 14 per cent. This means that the conviction rate<sup>27</sup> for environmental crime slightly increased, from about 21 per cent in 2006 to 23 per cent in 2011. Despite this increase, conviction rates were still low compared with other types of crime,<sup>28</sup> indicating the difficulty of obtaining convictions in environmental crime cases.

47. Of the seven countries providing specific data on transnational trafficking in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, most indicated that the number of suspects and persons convicted was small. In 2011, for example, five countries

<sup>26</sup> The greater volatility in the number of offences relating to the illegal trade in endangered species of fauna and flora is caused by fluctuations in the number of offences recorded in just two countries: one in Europe and one in the Americas.

<sup>27</sup> The ratio of persons convicted to persons brought into formal contact with the police (i.e. persons arrested, suspected or cautioned) within one year.

<sup>28</sup> In the same period, global conviction rates for homicide were in the range of 40-45 per cent, while for rape they were between 30 and 35 per cent (see section IV).

reported that they had identified a total of 31 suspects and convicted a total of four persons for transnational trafficking in protected species.

## **VIII. Work towards better data**

48. Although many issues still exist with regard to the quality and quantity of statistical data on crime and criminal justice, the international community has recently taken decisive steps to address long-standing challenges. Given the importance of statistical evidence to the improvement of understanding crime and effective approaches for combating it, the Statistical Commission has requested UNODC and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico to prepare a report on a “road map” for the improvement of crime statistics, which will be discussed at the forty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission, to be held from 26 February to 1 March 2013. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice has requested that that report be made available at its twenty-second session (E/CN.3/2013/11).

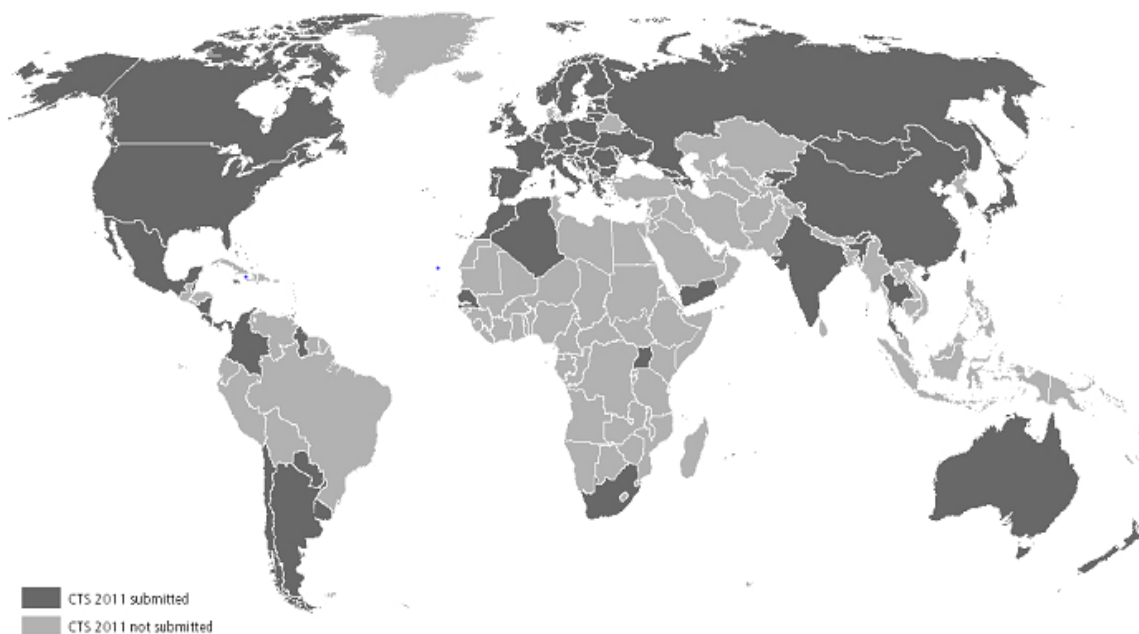
49. The report identifies a number of activities to be implemented in three priority areas:

- (a) Developing new standards and methods to improve crime statistics;
- (b) Improving capacities to produce and disseminate crime data;
- (c) Improving international data collection and analyses on crime.

50. The comprehensive perspective of that report will provide a unifying framework for activities relevant to crime data to be conducted by a number of relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels.

51. While some methodological and operational challenges can be addressed only in the long term, global understanding of crime can be substantially improved if all existing data are made available to the international community. The United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems is the principal tool for collecting and disseminating statistical data from Member States. The response rate, however, is still low. Over the past few years, less than half of Member States have replied to the annual questionnaire and, as map 1 shows, several countries have not replied to the questionnaire sent in 2011. Referring to ongoing data collection, map 2 reflects the status of replies to the questionnaire sent in 2012, as at 25 January 2013.

Map 1  
Countries that responded to the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems covering the year 2011

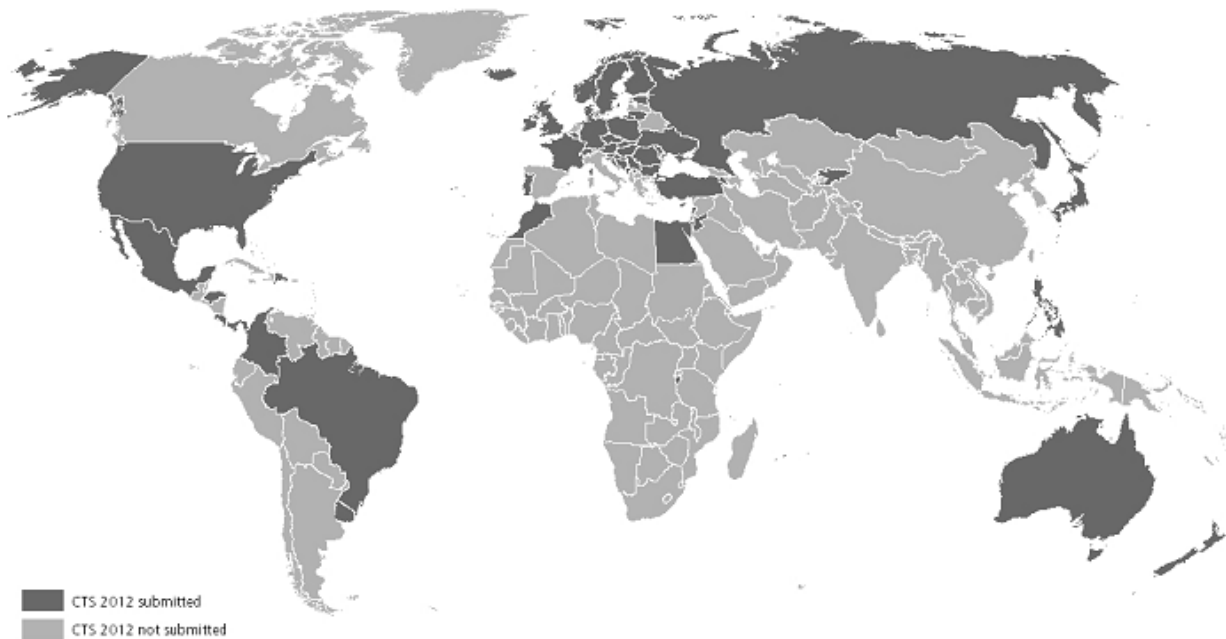


*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

*Note:* The boundaries and names shown and the designators used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 2

**Countries that responded to the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems covering the year 2012**



*Source:* United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.

*Note:* Map reflects the status of replies as at 25 January 2013. The boundaries and names shown and the designators used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

## IX. Conclusions and recommendations

### A. Conclusions

52. Recent crime data confirm tendencies recorded over recent decades. The continued increase in drug-related crime is the result of higher numbers of offences for drug possession, particularly in Europe and Africa. Property crime has continued to decrease but is still the crime most frequently recorded by the police. Violent crime, and especially intentional homicide, continues to show diverse trends and patterns across different regions, owing to different drivers of its evolution.

53. A number of challenges exist to the establishment of better operations of criminal justice systems. Data from crime victimization surveys show that only some of the crimes experienced by the population are brought to the attention of the police; this is also dependent on the level of public trust in law enforcement authorities. Disparities in the so-called “clearance rate” of crime indicate that police effectiveness in identifying perpetrators of homicides varies according to the homicide rate. Information on the efficiency of criminal justice responses, explored through the analysis of conviction rates, indicates that it varies significantly across regions and according to the type of crime. Finally, some decrease in the percentage



of the prison population who are held in pretrial detention suggests that some improvement has been made at the global level in the efficiency of the judicial process.

54. The use of large-scale sample surveys on the experience (not the perception) of corruption provides valuable information on sectors more exposed to corruption, on its impact and on levels of reporting to public authorities. Such data overcome some of the weaknesses of data based on cases recorded by criminal justice systems. Different patterns exist for corruption experienced by the general population and by the business sector: tax/revenue, local, police, customs and inspection authorities represent sectors that are more prone to bribery when dealing with business entities, according to a survey recently conducted in selected countries. Statistics on environmental crime are scarce. From the data available, it appears that the number of environmental offences recorded is comparatively low and has remained fairly stable over the past few years. Low conviction rates for environmental crime may be a result of existing challenges in investigating such crimes. These may also account for the very low number of reported cases of transnational trafficking in endangered species of wild fauna and flora.

## **B. Recommendations**

**55. It is recommended that the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice:**

**(a) Encourage UNODC and all concerned parties, both at the national and international level, to implement activities included in the report of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on a road map to improve the quality and availability of crime statistics at the national and international level (E/CN.3/2013/11);**

**(b) Encourage Member States to actively participate in the annual data collection on crime and criminal justice conducted by UNODC through the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems in order to improve analyses of global and regional crime threats and of the criminal justice response to them, and encourage Member States which have not yet done so to appoint a national focal point to streamline Survey reporting, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/18, entitled “Improving the quality and availability of statistics on crime and criminal justice for policy development”;**

**(c) Encourage UNODC, within available resources, to continue to regularly provide the international community with analyses on crime based on high quality statistical information;**

**(d) Encourage national and international donors to make available resources to implement the activities included in the report of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on a road map to improve the quality and availability of crime statistics at the national and international level, in a concerted effort to**

**overcome current weaknesses to generate data on crime and criminal justice at the country level;**

**(e) Explore further ways to strengthen collaboration with the Statistical Commission to support the capacity of countries to produce crime statistics and to further improve the quality and availability of crime statistics disseminated at the international level.**