Welcome to the seventh issue of UNHQ in Review. This quarterly newsletter is intended to provide the latest updates on recent and upcoming events and activities at UNHQ in New York, as well as the work of the UNODC New York Liaison Office (UNODC NYLO), both for colleagues around the globe and the wider public.

UNHQ in Review is intended to be a public document - please feel free to share it widely with your counterparts.

The second quarter of 2023 has involved a variety of events. Between April and June, NYLO has supported the hosting of the General Assembly High-Level Debate on Equal Access to Justice (pictured above), been involved in events as part of the Counter-Terrorism High-level Week, assisted with a briefing by UNODC's Executive Director to the Security Council on Haiti, and organized a presentation of UNODC's 2023 World Drug Report for New York Permanent Missions.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the UNHQ in Review and we look forward to your continued partnership and engagement with our work in the coming months.

UNODC New York Liaison Office Team
HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE

On 15 June UNODC helped to organize a High-Level General Assembly debate on "Equal Access to Justice for All: Advancing Reforms for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies".

A debate on equal access to justice was organized at the request of the General Assembly in Resolution 77/237, adopted in December 2022. The importance of this issue was highlighted by the President of the General Assembly H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, who stated: “Equality is the very thing that makes justice just. And justice is the very thing that makes us human.” UNODC Executive Director Ms. Ghada Waly agreed that selective or slow justice "is no justice at all". Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice H.E. Ms. Mary Wangui Mugwanja and former Attorney General and Minister for Legal Affairs of the Bahamas H.E. Ms. Allyson Maynard-Gibson KC further explained how equal access to justice underpins all other Sustainable Development Goals. Member States then proposed various recommendations to enhance equal access to justice such as e-Justice tools, facilitating Indigenous and community courts, and including stateless and foreign citizens in legal aid eligibility criteria.

Next, an interactive panel featured the Executive Director of Sierra Leone’s Legal Aid Board, the President of the Coalition of Deaf Persons in Mexico, a member of the UN’s Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement, and a digital rights advocate and journalist from the Philippines. They called for improved data collection, analysis, and sharing, and for justice-system staff to be drawn from the communities they serve to build trust and communication. A summary of all the day's insight and contributions was prepared for the President of the General Assembly. In the margins of the High-Level debate Austria, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Thailand, and UNODC co-organized a side-event on emerging evidence in access to justice, fostering an exchange of best practices.

COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK: EVENTS & 8TH REVIEW OF THE UN'S GLOBAL CT STRATEGY

The Third Counter-Terrorism Week (CT Week) took place from 19 to 23 June 2023 at UNHQ in New York. It featured the High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, which was addressed by UNODC's Executive Director, as well as various side-events. Ms Waly also spoke at the High-Level Africa Forum on Enhancing Capacities of African Member States to Prevent Terrorism and Violent Extremism, as well as events on managing Violent Extremist Prisoners and assessing criminal justice interventions in the Lake Chad Basin. UNODC’s commitment to centring victims, and to upholding due process and human rights was repeatedly emphasized.

Developments in the UN Counter-Terrorism Travel Programme, the promotion of the role of women in security and criminal justice responses to terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, and the launch of a UN-EU guide on measuring results in countering and preventing terrorism and violent extremism were among the topics highlighted by UNODC colleagues in other side-events, many of which remain available via UN Web TV. The week culminated in a debate on the eighth review of the UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS). Member States began negotiations back in March, co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Canada and Tunisia, and adopted the resolution on 22 June.
SECURITY COUNCIL BRIEFING ON HAITI

On 26 April, UNODC’s Executive Director briefed the Security Council on the worsening security situation in Haiti. Ms. Waly referenced UNODC’s recent assessment on “Haiti’s criminal markets: mapping trends in firearms and drug trafficking” and expressed concern at levels of firearms trafficking, a rapid rise in homicides, and increased trafficking in drugs amid law enforcement’s diminished capacity. She also identified corruption and money-laundering as priority issues.

She was joined by Ms. María Isabel Salvador, Special Representative for Haiti, in calling for more sustained, comprehensive support to boost local capacity and aid a political, nationally-led solution.

INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON POLICING

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Policing (IATF-P) met at the principals’ level on 15 June. UNODC’s Executive Director praised improved efficiency and quality of policing guidance thanks to coordination among IATF-P members in the first year of its operation. She also emphasized the need to prioritize women's representation in policing. The Secretary General’s Tech Envoy Amandeep Singh Gill highlighted the interactions between the new Digital Compact and policing. The Director of UNDP’s Crisis Bureau Ms. Asako Okai presented work on People-Centered Justice and Security as an integrated approach for policing. Attendees also discussed a new communications strategy and plans for International Day of Police Cooperation on 7 September.

MEETING NEXT GA PRESIDENT

During her visit to New York in June, UNODC’s Executive Director met the President-elect of the 78th session of the General Assembly and Permanent Representative for Trinidad and Tobago H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis. They discussed various topics, including ways to strengthen cooperation in line with UNODC’s Strategic Vision for Latin America and the Caribbean, available here.

WORLD DRUG REPORT PRESENTATION

On World Drug Day on 26 June, UNODC-NYLO held a presentation of the 2023 World Drug Report in New York. UNODC’s Chief of Drug Research Ms. Chloe Carpentier explained key findings such as the 23% rise in the number of people who use drugs in the last 10 years. She also expressed concern that drug use disorders have risen by 45% in 10 years, but only one in five people with a drug use disorder is in treatment, with that figure dropping further for women who face additional barriers to accessing treatment.

Next, a panel of experts from international organizations, academia, and civil society highlighted issues emerging from the Report, including the growing intra-regional disparities in treatment, the surge of synthetic drugs, and the impact of drug trafficking on the environment. Several speakers from the floor including Member States praised the importance of the Report to inform policy-making and address the drug problem in a comprehensive, inclusive, and balanced way. The Report is available here.
SECURITY IN THE SAHEL

On 23 June, the Peacebuilding Commission met to discuss transnational organized crime, terrorism, and violent extremism in the Sahel. Mr. Amado de Andres, Representative of UNODC’s West and Central Africa Office, outlined how UNODC’s transnational organized crime threat assessment offers detail on the often-overlooked threats from transnational organized crime to peace and security - read about the project here.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (10-19 July, New York)
- World Day against Trafficking in Persons (30 July 2023, worldwide)
- 6th session of the Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime (21 Aug-1 Sept, New York)
- 2023 SDG Summit (18-19 Sept, New York) to start off the High-Level week at the General Assembly (18-26 Sept)
I’m Esma, a disability and anti-corruption activist. I’m on UNODC’s GRACE Initiative YouthLED board, a fellow at the Center for Inclusive Policy, a member of the European Democracy Youth Network and of disability inclusion consultative mechanisms for Georgia’s Ministries of Health and Internal Affairs.

NYLO: You spoke at two sessions on the need for accessible cities, and intergenerational dialogue. How did you find it?
Esma: Some of the speakers came back to my remarks at the end, which made me feel like they had really listened, and there was a great sense of equality between youth and high-level speakers. I hope policymakers will refer back to our discussions and we shape future decisions like funding allocations, to drive change with youth-led ideas.

NYLO: Please could you explain your interest in anti-corruption and your work with the GRACE initiative:
Esma: I focus on the intersection of corruption and disability. Disabled people often lack access to reporting mechanisms, and there is little financial oversight of disabled support services. Meanwhile, an idealized view of disabled people or their carers means that corruption may go unnoticed. In Georgia, I helped train police on interacting with disabled victims and suspects, and through GRACE I hope to raise awareness more widely: for anti-corruption efforts to succeed they must consider all experiences, especially those of disabled people. I’ve contributed to a GRACE teachers’ guide to educate youth on anti-corruption, spoken at conferences, and advised on disability inclusion.

NYLO: How do your national and international advocacy efforts intersect and complement each other?
Esma: I don’t think you can separate the two; in Georgia the government is always seeking to reference international practice in its legislation and policy, and international entities like UNODC can help scale up local efforts. Where the networks and policies do not exist on one level, we must build them.