



Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

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**Review of the implementation of the United Nations
Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
and the Protocols thereto: Protocol to Prevent,
Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons,
Especially Women and Children**

Activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote and support the implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Report of the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The purpose of the present report is to inform the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, at its eleventh session, of the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to promote and support the implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, since the tenth session of the Conference, in October 2020.
2. The Trafficking in Persons Protocol has a total of 178 parties, with no additional States having acceded to the Protocol since the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties.
3. UNODC implements a comprehensive strategy to combat trafficking in persons, promoting and supporting the implementation of the Protocol through normative and policy work, knowledge development, inter-agency cooperation and coordination, as well as technical cooperation. Technical cooperation activities include providing legislative assistance to States, developing national strategies and coordination, research and data collection on trafficking in persons, supporting States in strengthening criminal justice responses, promoting international cooperation, advancing crime prevention and awareness-raising, and enhancing protection and support for victims.

* [CTOC/COP/2022/1](#).



4. The work carried out by UNODC was acknowledged by the Conference at its tenth session with the adoption of resolution 10/3, on the effective implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, in which the Conference called on UNODC to continue to perform its mandated work relating to the Protocol, including through the provision of tailor-made, accessible and effective technical assistance.

5. In 2021, UNODC, through its Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons, trained 2,776 criminal justice practitioners (1,138 female and 715 male, plus 919 persons at events for which no gender breakdown was available) and provided at least 49 countries with targeted technical cooperation activities at the national level. The main focus of the assistance was to strengthen national capacities to reach sustainable results and improve the effective prevention of and fight against trafficking in persons. The short-term impact of such assistance was shown in Colombia, for example, where a training series on the use of a national mechanism for identification and referral of cases of human trafficking, affecting Venezuelans in particular, led to three operations by law enforcement officials and one labour inspection that in turn led to the arrest of 17 suspects and the rescue of 63 victims of trafficking in persons, of whom 40 had been subjected to labour exploitation and 23, including 7 children, to sexual exploitation. Further examples of the impact of the various UNODC initiatives and projects are provided throughout the report.

6. Through its Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants, UNODC has trained, to date, 1,488 criminal justice actors (553 female, 933 male, 2 persons for whom gender information is not available) through technical assistance initiatives reaching six countries. The focus on advancing women's representation and promoting gender-responsive criminal justice ensures that women are placed more frequently at the forefront of combating crime and protecting rights.

7. As a result of the Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Combat Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows regional initiative to strengthen the criminal justice response to human trafficking among mixed migration flows across South America and the Caribbean, 12 investigations were initiated into trafficking in persons and 22 victims were rescued in 2021.

II. Activities to assist States in the implementation of the Protocol

A. Normative and policy work, knowledge development and inter-agency cooperation and coordination

8. UNODC continued to provide guidance and knowledge-based support to intergovernmental bodies and processes, United Nations agencies and regional and non-governmental organizations in promoting and implementing the objectives of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and fostering related synergies and partnerships.

1. Support for intergovernmental bodies

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

9. In resolution 10/3, the Conference called upon UNODC to continue its work related to the Protocol and requested UNODC to prepare, and submit to the Conference of the Parties, for consideration at its eleventh session, a report on effective national criminal justice responses, the tracing of illicit financial flows and victim-centred approaches. Although UNODC has not received the additional resources necessary to produce a stand-alone report on those matters, it has sought to include information on its recent related work in the present report.

10. To support the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons at its eleventh meeting, held in Vienna on 12 and 13 October 2021, UNODC drafted substantive background documents on successful strategies for addressing the use of technology to facilitate

trafficking in persons and for preventing and investigating trafficking in persons (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2021/2), and on measures to strengthen procurement policies at the national, regional and international levels (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2021/3).

11. To support the Working Group at its twelfth meeting, held in Vienna on 29 and 30 June 2022, UNODC prepared substantive background documents on guidance on the issue of appropriate criminal justice responses to victims who have been compelled to commit offences as a result of their being trafficked (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2022/2) and on best practices in joint investigations and specialized prosecutions (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2022/3).

12. To raise visibility of the anti-trafficking agenda and support related efforts by States, UNODC sought to maintain a consistent focus on priority issues, including those addressed by UNODC in advocacy events in the margins of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties. Those included the thematic topics of the non-punishment of victims of trafficking in persons, trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced labour and emerging trafficking trends, which were then emphasized in targeted advocacy efforts in 2021 in submissions for the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and during the negotiations of Member States on the Political Declaration on the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action (General Assembly resolution 76/7, annex).

13. Following the launch of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, UNODC has worked to strengthen the engagement of non-governmental stakeholders in the process, for example by providing briefings to civil society organizations on the review process. UNODC also incorporated a section on trafficking in persons into the *UNODC Toolkit on Stakeholder Engagement: Implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, which aims to increase the understanding of non-governmental actors of the review process and was subsequently piloted at a series of regional training sessions.

14. Furthermore, UNODC contributed to the promotion of the participation of civil society stakeholders in the first-ever constructive dialogue, following the conclusion of the twelfth meeting of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, on 1 July 2022, in accordance with the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Implementation Review Mechanism. The constructive dialogue gathered a significant number of non-governmental stakeholders, facilitated an interactive discussion on the provision of services to victims who have committed offences as a result of being trafficked and on the provision of civil society support to specialized investigations and prosecutions, as well as on the role of civil society in supporting the review of the implementation of the Protocol. The Chair's summary will be made available to the eleventh session in a conference room paper (CTOC/COP/2022/CRP.3).

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

15. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its thirtieth session, held from 17 to 21 May 2021 and reconvened from 8 to 10 December 2021, recommended a draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 76/7).

16. To promote the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and share promising implementation practices, UNODC co-organized and contributed to several expert briefings in the margins of the session, including events entitled "Addressing increased protection and assistance needs of refugees and displaced persons vulnerable to trafficking in persons in Jordan and Lebanon"; "Strengthening the capacity of criminal justice practitioners in the Americas to combat human trafficking in the context of migration flows: how to incorporate international standards in the national response"; and "Enhancing capacities of the security and criminal justice

sector to Human Trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean: a multisectoral response”.

17. During the thirty-first session of the Commission, held from 16 to 20 May 2022, UNODC once again co-organized and contributed to several expert briefings and high-level events, including those entitled “Operationalizing engagement in the Blue Heart Campaign” and “Promoting the role and voice of women in countering human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Asia and the Middle East”.

United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

18. The Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Kyoto, Japan, from 7 to 12 March 2021, led to the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Declaration, in its paragraph 81, expressed the commitment of States to strengthen efforts to prevent, counter and combat trafficking in persons, including by supporting data collection and sharing, as appropriate, through technical assistance by UNODC, addressing factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking, detecting and dismantling trafficking networks, and discouraging demand that fosters exploitation leading to trafficking. To support the thematic discussion of the Congress, UNODC prepared a background paper on current crime trends, recent developments and emerging solutions, in particular new technologies as means for and tools against crime ([A/CONF.234/11](#)).

General Assembly

19. In the reporting period, UNODC provided substantive support to Member States in discussions leading to the development and adoption of General Assembly resolutions related to trafficking in persons and to the implementation of both the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

20. At its seventy-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution [75/158](#), on trafficking in women and girls, in which it called upon all Governments to criminalize all forms of human trafficking, urged Governments to strengthen measures to eliminate sex tourism demand and called upon Member States to take into consideration the challenges presented by new methods of recruiting victims of human trafficking, such as the misuse of the Internet by human traffickers, and to take measures to develop targeted awareness-raising campaigns.

21. Also at its seventy-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution [75/195](#) on strengthening and promoting effective measures and international cooperation on organ donation and transportation to prevent and combat trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal and trafficking in human organs. In the resolution, the Assembly urged Member States to consider strengthening legislative frameworks to prevent and combat trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal and trafficking in human organs, including the criminalization of those practices and provisions to ensure the accountability of the perpetrators.

22. At the same session, the General Assembly adopted resolution [75/283](#), on the modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. In the resolution, the Assembly set the dates, modalities and proceedings for the third appraisal of the Global Plan of Action, which would include two interactive panel discussions to focus, respectively, on persistent trafficking issues such as the trafficking of women and children, particularly girls, for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and on emerging issues, such as the misuse of information and communication technologies to facilitate trafficking in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

23. At its seventy-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution [76/7](#), entitled “2021 Political Declaration on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons”. In addition to reaffirming its strong support for the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and recognizing the important role played by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons in the United Nations system, the Assembly acknowledged that the gaps between the Global Plan of Action and its implementation by Member States should be closed, and recognized that arrangements were needed to ensure the systematic follow-up and review of all commitments made during that same high-level meeting.

24. Also at its seventy-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution [76/141](#), on violence against women migrant workers, in which it recognized the importance of exploring the link between migration and trafficking in persons in order to further efforts towards protecting women migrant workers from violence, discrimination, exploitation and abuse and to provide appropriate care, assistance and services for victims, regardless of migratory status. The Assembly encouraged States to protect women migrant workers, including domestic workers, from becoming victims of trafficking in persons, through the implementation of programmes and policies that prevented victimization and through the provision of protection and access to justice, as well as medical and psychological assistance, where appropriate.

25. At the same session, the General Assembly adopted resolution [76/186](#), on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons, in which it called for the universal ratification of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and underlined the importance of the full implementation of the Global Plan of Action. It also called upon Member States to take into consideration new methods of recruiting those at risk of being subjected to trafficking in persons, such as the misuse of the Internet by traffickers, in particular for recruiting children. Furthermore, it called upon Member States, international organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, through partnerships, as appropriate, to increase and support prevention efforts in countries of origin, transit and destination by focusing domestically and globally on the demand and supply chains that foster all forms of trafficking and the goods and services produced as a result of trafficking in persons.

26. UNODC contributed significantly to the preparation of the third appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, held in November 2021, including supporting its co-facilitators with the provision of expert advice. As co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons in 2021 with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNODC also led the preparation of a joint submission by the Group on the appraisal, proposing key action-oriented recommendations to Member States to enhance effective responses to priority issues concerning trafficking in persons.

27. UNODC supported and participated in the first International Migration Review Forum, held from 17 to 20 May 2022, including jointly hosting with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) a formal round table that addressed, among other objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, preventing, combating and eradicating trafficking in persons in the context of international migration. The Office also convened a side event on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons on an issue brief on addressing vulnerability to trafficking in persons. UNODC also contributed substantive recommendations regarding trafficking in persons for the Progress Declaration of the Forum, which was unanimously adopted by all Member States.

28. During the reporting period, the Office also continued to provide substantive input and drafting support for relevant reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on issues related to trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, including on

international migration and development (A/75/292), on women and peace and security (S/2021/827), on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2022/63) and on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2022/272).

Security Council

29. In October 2020, the Security Council adopted resolution 2546 (2020), concerning migrant smuggling and human trafficking into, through and from the Libyan territory and off the coast of Libya. In that resolution, the Council reaffirmed the necessity to put an end to the ongoing proliferation of, and endangerment of lives by, the smuggling of migrants and trafficking of persons in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya. Subsequently, in its resolution 2570 (2021), adopted in April 2021, the Council reiterated its grave concern at the smuggling of migrants and refugees and human trafficking through Libya.

2. Participation in inter-agency and regional coordination and cooperation mechanisms

30. UNODC collaborates closely with other intergovernmental organizations, both within and outside the United Nations system, and is active at both the international and regional levels. The Office has signed several memorandums of understanding with organizations with key mandates and expertise in preventing and combating trafficking in persons. The Office also extensively engaged with relevant civil society organizations and academia to advance anti-trafficking strategies, and continued to contribute to international and regional forums, including the twenty-first conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, held by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons

31. During the reporting period, UNODC led efforts to develop, expand and coordinate the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, including acting as co-chair in 2021 and 2022 (respectively with UNHCR and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development). Under the coordination of UNODC, the Group enhanced policy coherence across diversified and specialized international organizations and supported States, civil society and practitioners in mobilizing multi-stakeholder responses, with the Group's extensive network and coverage being instrumental in creating synergies among entities, including at the country level. UNODC maintained a secretariat to ensure coordination within the growing membership, as well as the productivity of the Group. Between 2021 and 2022, four new entities joined the Coordination Group, namely, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (2021), the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (2021), the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences (2021) and the United Nations University (2022).

32. Following the first meeting of the Coordination Group at the level of principals of the relevant United Nations agencies and organizations, held in May 2018, UNODC continued to act as permanent coordinator of and secretariat to the Group. On 15 December 2020, at the second principal-level meeting, the first Plan of Action of the Group was unanimously endorsed. The Plan of Action was based on six pillars: building the evidence base, addressing the core drivers, ensuring a rights-based approach, implementing existing measures and holding traffickers accountable, discouraging demand, and systematizing cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Plan of Action informed the Group's workplan for 2021–2022, and furthered UNODC efforts to enhance policy coherence and cohesion in anti-trafficking work.

33. On the twentieth anniversary of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, the Coordination Group published an analytical review of the global implementation of the Protocol over the past two decades. The report aimed to serve as a blueprint for the broader anti-trafficking community to help identify key achievements and main shortcomings in responding to the crime, and areas where impact could be generated towards the eradication of the crime, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

34. In line with its mandate, the Coordination Group continued to contribute to relevant intergovernmental processes. In 2021, it played a key role in supporting the third appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, mobilizing participation during the multi-stakeholder hearing on the appraisal. The Coordination Group also provided a joint submission to States on the appraisal, which included recommendations to address the root causes of trafficking in persons, consider the impact of crises on the crime and its victims, and ensure a rights-based and victim-centred approach in all interventions, including applying the principle of non-punishment for victims of trafficking committing crimes as a direct consequence of their trafficking situation.

35. The Coordination Group's Policy Support Group was closely monitoring the impact of the conflict in Ukraine, with a view to coordinating policy guidance on addressing human trafficking by its member institutions. That had led to the joint raising of concern about the potential increase of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation (considered to be conflict-related sexual violence), as well as online exploitation and abuse. The Coordination Group also issued a joint press release containing key facts and recommendations for States regarding coordination and strengthening both prevention and counter-trafficking responses.

United Nations Network on Migration

36. In the reporting period, UNODC continued to engage as a member of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Network on Migration. As the leading United Nations entity on objective 10 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, namely preventing, combating and eradicating trafficking in persons in the context of international migration, the Office's Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section provided expert advice and related inputs on trafficking in persons for Network outputs, including policy statements, position papers, technical tools and instruments, in consultation with relevant functions within UNODC headquarters and field offices.

37. In addition, UNODC ensured coherent representation of the Office in networks on migration being established at the regional and country level, and supported regional reviews during 2020 and 2021.

38. UNODC also contributed towards the establishment and functioning of the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, which was currently the only funding mechanism fully dedicated to supporting collective action on migration and ensuring that the mutual trust, determination and solidarity among States and with other stakeholders could be fostered to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration.

39. Furthermore, UNODC made significant efforts to prepare the first global review of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration at the International Migration Review Forum, held from 17 to 20 May 2022, building on the regional reviews undertaken in the previous period. In particular, UNODC supported the organization of multi-stakeholder consultations in the lead-up to the Forum on, among others, trafficking in persons in the context of international migration, while providing substantive expertise towards the drafting of a multilateral Progress Declaration on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration and the way forward.

40. The Progress Declaration was adopted at the International Migration Review Forum and included specific reference to trafficking in persons, regarding the need to

intensify bilateral, regional and international cooperation to investigate, prosecute and penalize trafficking in persons and to ensure the effective identification, protection of and assistance for migrants who had become victims of trafficking in persons.

Cooperation with regional organizations and processes

41. In Europe, UNODC collaborated closely with OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe. UNODC is a member of the Alliance Expert Coordination Team, led by OSCE, and actively participates in its annual meetings, as well as the related annual conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons.

42. In Latin America, UNODC participated in the protection cluster for Response for Venezuelans, the regional coordination platform for migrants and refugees from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, led regionally by IOM and UNHCR.

43. In the Asia-Pacific region, UNODC continued to contribute to the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. Along with 48 other members, UNODC actively participated in high-level policy dialogue and practical capacity-building activities, including through the Regional Support Office, its working groups and the Task Force on Planning and Preparedness. In April 2021, UNODC and the Regional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific, in partnership with the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process, published a new research brief on corruption as a facilitator of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons in the Bali Process region with a focus on South-East Asia. The report identified ways in which corruption was prevalent in a range of contexts, from the recruitment and initial interactions with victims of trafficking, to enabling movement through immigration controls at land, sea or air borders, and to impeding criminal justice proceedings.

44. In West Africa, to strengthen collaboration and build a platform for cooperation between the members of the Economic community of West African States to combat transnational organized crime in the region, UNODC organized a peer exchange activity for law enforcement agents from Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria working on trafficking in persons and in illicit drugs. The week-long activity, held from 8 to 12 November 2021, was part of a project entitled "Organized crime: West African response to trafficking". More effective cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria is expected for arrests, extradition and recovery of proceeds of crime, such as through the establishment of a platform for effective cooperation, including in the area of trafficking in persons.

45. In Southern Africa, during the reporting period, UNODC partnered with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in three key areas: in the collection of data on trafficking in persons to inform evidence-based policies for Member States; in forming partnerships for the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, including support of intelligence-led operations through the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL); and in convening and strengthening professional networks of prosecutors, immigration officials, judges and magistrates with the aim of sharing knowledge and experiences. UNODC and SADC also convened joint meetings at the regional level to ensure that the issues, which were mainly transnational in nature, were addressed in a coherent and collaborative manner.

3. Development of knowledge, normative and policy guidance and tools

46. UNODC continued to produce standard-setting, specialized materials for practitioners that provide guidance on how to detect, investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking in persons, as well as on how to provide protection and assistance to victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants.

47. The Office also expanded the Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal, within the knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) that consists of three databases: a case law database, containing, as at July 2022, 1,575 trafficking in persons cases from 115 jurisdictions; a legislation database, containing 621 pieces of legislation from 156 countries; and a bibliographic database, with 135 entries. SHERLOC serves as a practitioners' tool for police investigators, prosecutors and judges; a monitoring tool for government policymakers; an awareness-raising tool for the public and the media; and an information tool for researchers and all those responding to trafficking in persons.

48. During the reporting period, UNODC also developed the first Knowledge Centre on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, a specialized virtual knowledge hub and a global tool that seeks to enhance knowledge management by enabling the global virtual delivery of technical expertise and fostering the wide community of practice nurtured by UNODC. It provides opportunities to better retrieve, store and share knowledge towards promoting collaboration, learning and embracing innovation.

49. In December 2020, UNODC published a case law analysis, *Female Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation as Defendants*. The analysis enhanced knowledge of fair judicial treatment and provided human rights-based and gender-informed analysis of female victim-defendants. It was based on a desk review of available jurisprudence and literature, covering 42 cases from 14 countries, and covered the modalities of the relationships of victim-defendants with the principal traffickers, diverse motives for perpetration, and the roles played by victims and offenders.

50. In October 2021, UNODC published a *Compendium of Promising Practices on Public-Private Partnerships to Prevent and Counter Trafficking in Persons*. The Compendium highlighted opportunities and challenges in the establishment and functioning of public-private partnerships to counter trafficking in persons, and was a useful tool for Governments and private sector entities interested in developing such initiatives.

51. The UNODC Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants initiative developed a *UNODC Toolkit for Mainstreaming Human Rights and Gender Equality into Criminal Justice Interventions to Address Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants* and piloted it across partner countries. The Toolkit was launched on 17 February 2021 and guides criminal justice experts as to how to adopt a human-rights and gender-equal response to trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

52. UNODC, in partnership with the Supreme Court of Thailand, translated the *Evidential Issues in Trafficking in Person Cases: Case Digest* into Thai and launched it on 30 October 2020, following the training of 35 Thai judges.

53. In March 2022, the UNODC Regional Office for Southern Africa published *Typical Issues in Trafficking in Persons Cases: Regional Case Digest – Southern Africa*, a compilation and in-depth analysis of over 80 ground-breaking trafficking in persons cases from across the SADC region. The Digest was developed during 2021 using contributions from experts both from and outside the region. It addresses pertinent issues confronting practitioners in the region, including labour exploitation, harmful cultural practices, sexual exploitation, types of evidence and other evidential issues.

54. UNODC also expanded the knowledge base for responses to trafficking in persons, leading research and knowledge development relating to current major events at the global and regional level affecting trafficking patterns, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. In 2021, UNODC published *The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons and Responses to the Challenges: a Global Study of Emerging Evidence*, which was fully translated into Spanish, and whose executive summary was translated into all of the official languages of the United Nations; and an issue paper, *The Concept of "Harbouring"*

in the *Trafficking in Persons Protocol*. In May 2022, as a result of the Regional Initiative on Trafficking in Persons in South-Eastern Europe, UNODC published *Exploitation and Abuse: the Scale and Scope of Human Trafficking in South-Eastern Europe*, which offered key facts and recommendations on the most pressing challenges encountered by practitioners in the region.

55. UNODC Brazil is planning to launch, in August 2022, a national study on trafficking victims exploited for drug transport. The study will examine jurisprudence relating to defendants, identified as “mules” in the context of international drug trafficking, whose position of vulnerability was exploited, and will address the implications of the failure to implement the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking in persons.

56. UNODC continued to publish biennial editions of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, which provided an overview of trafficking patterns and flows at the global, regional and national levels, with the fifth edition being published in April 2021. The report is based on data collected by means of a questionnaire sent to Member States every year, and the replies include officially recorded information on cases of trafficking, detected victims and detected offenders in their respective countries.

B. Promoting and supporting the implementation of the Protocol through technical cooperation

1. Legislative assistance and development of national strategy and coordination

57. UNODC continued to provide assistance to the Dominican Republic to revise its law on trafficking in persons. The law has been revised in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is currently being reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General.

58. During the reporting period, UNODC field offices, with expert support from UNODC headquarters, provided legislative assistance to draft trafficking laws in the Comoros, India and “Somaliland”.

59. In June 2021, UNODC, under its Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants initiative, organized a workshop on the legal and judicial requirements for the protection of victims of trafficking in persons in Cairo, where investigative and trial judges from Iraq exchanged experience and challenges with Egyptian judges on victim protection. The workshop led to the development of a guidance note for adoption by judges in Iraq, detailing application of legal provisions for protection to be offered to trafficked victims in court.

60. In Pakistan, UNODC, under its Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants initiative, began work in December 2020 with the Federal Investigation Agency to revise and update the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, covering the period 2021–2025. Three consultative meetings were held to review the plan, which was launched in July 2021.

2. Strengthening criminal justice responses

61. Under Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants – Bangladesh, UNODC provided support to the seven newly established specialized anti-trafficking in persons tribunals in the country. The process began with technical assessment visits to the anti-trafficking in persons tribunals in Dhaka and Chattogram, in October 2021 and January 2022, respectively, to determine the substantive and logistical support needed by the courts, and ways in which the project could help to make the tribunals more efficient and victim-friendly. Bespoke training was carried out in March 2022 for all judges of the seven tribunals, as well as judges of the prevention of women and children repression tribunals, which also handle trafficking cases. Under the same initiative, UNODC provided training to prosecutors working on trafficking in persons cases in the dedicated tribunals and other courts.

62. During the reporting period, UNODC, through Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants – Pakistan, trained and coached 25 female law enforcement officers from the Federal Investigation Agency on investigative techniques related to human trafficking and migrant smuggling cases. The initiative sought to ensure female specialist investigators played an operational role in the Federal Investigation Agency’s dedicated Anti Human Trafficking Circles. The support began with week-long specialist training in November 2020 for those female officers, followed by three coaching sessions in 2021 and 2022, affording participants the opportunity to examine in greater depth the complexities they faced in practice when handling human trafficking and migrant smuggling cases, and to receive sustained expert guidance in challenging areas.

63. UNODC continued its work in Malawi, including delivering training at the Dzaleka refugee camp in December 2020 and then developing and adopting a protocol on trafficking in persons, including guidelines for the identification, rescue and referral of victims at the camp. Between January and May 2021, the trained officials identified 18 victims and conducted three investigations into suspected cases of trafficking.

3. Promoting international cooperation

64. On 2 and 3 March 2022, UNODC convened a regional expert group meeting on financial investigations and asset recovery for trafficking in persons, including compensation of victims, in South-Eastern Europe. The workshop provided the opportunity to exchange examples of good practices and challenges related to illicit financial flows and asset recovery in cross-border responses.

65. The Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Combat Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows regional initiative supported a bilateral meeting of focal points for the application of a protocol for the investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons between Ecuador and Peru. The meeting was held on 30 September and 1 October 2021 and gathered representatives of the judiciary, supreme court judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers from the two countries. As a result, Ecuador and Peru signed an inter-institutional cooperation framework agreement that enhanced liaison of national coordination mechanisms, law enforcement agencies and specialized prosecutors from Ecuador and Peru with the Ibero-American Network of Specialized Prosecutors against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants.

66. In Central Asia, the UNODC Regional Adviser on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants provided key mentoring support for State officials, including for the Prosecutor General’s Office of Kyrgyzstan on evidence collection in its trafficking in persons case with Turkey and Italy (23 April 2021), and, in Uzbekistan, for investigators at the regional office of the Ministry of the Interior on collection of evidence for a case of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation in Turkey (23 June 2021).

67. In March 2021, UNODC participated in both the opening operational phase and closing of the INTERPOL White Sand Operation in the Caribbean, targeting smuggling and trafficking networks active in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Aruba and Curaçao. UNODC facilitated a coordination meeting between the INTERPOL Specialized Operational Network against people smuggling, delegates of participant countries and specialized prosecutors, and provided support for the initial meeting. The Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Combat Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows regional initiative facilitated the participation of prosecutors from Trinidad and Tobago and Aruba.

68. UNODC organized an inter-regional workshop on combating trafficking in persons by air on 1 and 2 September 2021, which brought together 62 participants from 15 countries (24 per cent of whom were female) to discuss the latest trends in trafficking in persons by air and to strengthen communication and cooperation means and capacities of the relevant law enforcement officers and prosecutors of countries

in East Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf for detecting, intercepting and investigating such cases.

69. Also in 2021, a three-year investigation supported by INTERPOL and UNODC concluded with police in Colombia arresting six individuals suspected of the trafficking and sexual exploitation of Colombian and Venezuelan women. UNODC played a critical role in supporting the investigation by facilitating intelligence exchange and coordinating police and judicial actions, including victim hearings.

70. The Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants initiative conducted the first Women's Network of Gender Champions annual general meeting in Dubai focusing on the latest developments and challenges in partner countries from the gender perspective, to allow members to take stock, facilitate cooperation, identify further synergies and plan for the year ahead. More than 35 Network members and technical experts participated in the hybrid event, which was held from 9 to 11 November 2021.

4. Data collection and research

71. During the reporting period, UNODC continued work on a regional study on illicit financial flows derived from trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants covering Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan. The study was a joint initiative of the Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants initiative and the Office's Research and Trend Analysis Branch, aimed at mapping trends and patterns of illicit financial flows from trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, and deepening understanding of business and payment models of trafficking and smuggling enterprises. The study was currently being finalized, with a planned launch in the last quarter of 2022.

72. In 2021, under the Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Combat Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows regional initiative, UNODC produced seven country situational reports on mixed migration flows, including on the risks, modus operandi and current trends of criminal networks that were associated with human trafficking of Venezuelans among populations migrating within the region. The reports provided law enforcement and prosecution authorities in the beneficiary countries with reliable information on the modus operandi of criminal networks that were associated with human trafficking among the Venezuelan population migrating within the region.

73. In the first quarter of 2022, the UNODC Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants initiative launched a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis of the impact of the situation in Afghanistan on trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants in neighbouring countries. The final report contained specific recommendations for immediate and mid-term responses to the situation.

5. Crime prevention and awareness-raising

74. In June 2021, UNODC and the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime organized "DataJam Against Exploitation", an online competition to develop technology-based solutions to identify and protect victims of human trafficking and support prosecutions of the crime which included entries from university students and recent graduates from 19 higher education institutions. The winning entry was a web-based application that could support police investigations into human trafficking rings by analysing thousands of advertisements to find indicators of trafficking, organizing the relevant information and making it easily available to police investigators.

75. During the reporting period, UNODC launched the "Women Can" campaign under the framework of the Global Action against in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants Women's Network. The campaign provided profiles of women and men in leadership positions in Asia and the Middle East and focused on sharing advice for

women from female and male leaders in the criminal justice sector. It also sought to mobilize leaders of institutions that addressed human trafficking and migrant smuggling to promote institutional-level reform to ensure better representation and promotion of women.

6. Protection and support of victims

76. As a result of UNODC mentoring and training events in Malawi, the first shelter for trafficking victims in the country was established, 43 victims rescued and 5 suspects arrested in the first half of 2020. In addition, between 19 and 31 November 2020, 81 victims of trafficking in persons (57 women and 24 men) were rescued and 13 suspects were arrested as a result of the mentoring sessions in Blantyre, Mwanza, Lilongwe, Mzuzu, Karonga and Chitipa. The mentoring also led to the establishment of links, cooperation and lines of communication between enforcement officers, social workers and shelters for referral of victims to end practices of sheltering victims in police cells and prisons.

77. Under the Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Combat Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows regional initiative, five countries took action to strengthen existing national referral mechanisms: Brazil produced a booklet on its national trafficking in persons institutional framework, including hotlines and referral mechanisms, and international cooperation procedures; Colombia launched a strengthened mechanism for the identification and referral of cases of human trafficking for forced labour; Ecuador continued to develop standard operating procedures for referrals; Peru developed a manual of operating procedures for the identification and referral of cases of human trafficking, and continued to update its Intersectoral Protocol for the Prevention and Prosecution of the Crime and the Protection, Care and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking of Persons; and Aruba established a Humanitarian Organizations Platform.

78. In 2021, UNODC partnered with authorities in Jordan and Lebanon to address the protection and assistance needs of refugees and displaced people in those countries, including through workshops on the identification of victims of trafficking among refugees and ways of responding to the crime. The workshops brought together law enforcement officers, labour inspectors, representatives from social services, the healthcare sector and non-governmental organizations from the Irbid Governate.

79. UNODC conducted a workshop in Baghdad in June 2022 entitled “Access to justice and reparations for victims of trafficking in persons in the post-conflict period”. The workshop explored issues of access to justice and reparations for Yazidi and other minorities targeted by Da’esh, as many were also victims of trafficking. The workshop explored positioning the trafficking in persons agenda in post-Da’esh criminal justice, civil and restorative justice processes, as well as entry points for potential technical cooperation with the Government of Iraq on the issue.

III. Conclusions

80. In promoting the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, in particular by providing technical assistance to Member States and fostering inter-agency cooperation, UNODC has consistently sought the active participation of all relevant stakeholders at the international, regional and national levels.

81. Despite the progress made, trafficking in persons remains a pressing global problem, victimizing people and affecting all regions. UNODC will continue its efforts to promote and support the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and work jointly with Member States and international organizations, civil society and victims towards increasing the effectiveness of the fight against trafficking in persons in all its forms. The work, despite its continued success and increasing impact globally, remains underresourced, and so the Conference’s invitation, in its resolution 10/3, for Member States to provide extrabudgetary resources for those purposes remained pertinent.

82. The timely implementation of the Implementation Review Mechanism, early preparation by States parties for their own review and their related efforts to benchmark their national implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol are key to strengthening global efforts in response to human trafficking, including formal identification of gaps and shortcomings. Similarly, increased engagement by all States parties in the exchange of thematic challenges and experience through the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons will enhance evaluation and lessons learned in relation to trafficking in persons.

83. In all its work on trafficking in persons, UNODC continues to work directly with a broad range of expert stakeholders, including victims of trafficking in persons and those who work closely with them in civil society, and encourages States parties similarly to engage with all those who have knowledge, experience and the capability to make a positive impact on the response to trafficking in persons.
