



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

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Item 2 of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto**

## **Status of the functioning of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto**

### **Report of the Secretariat**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. In October 2018, in its resolution 9/1, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime established the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. The procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism are annexed to that resolution. Following a two-year preparatory phase, the Conference, in its resolution 10/1, launched the review process of the Mechanism. The guidelines for conducting the country reviews are contained in annex I to that resolution.
2. In accordance with paragraph 12 of the procedures and rules, in which it is stated that the Conference of the Parties and its working groups are to add the review process to their agendas as an item consistent with their areas of expertise and without prejudice to their respective existing mandates, an item relating to the review process has been included in the agenda of the twelfth session of the Conference.
3. The present report was prepared in accordance with paragraphs 6 and 7 of the procedures and rules, in which it is stated that the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto and the Mechanism are under the authority of the Conference, in accordance with article 32 of the Convention, and that the Conference, without prejudice to the guiding principles and characteristics of the Mechanism, may conduct an evaluation of the organization, functioning, funding and performance of the review process, so as to amend and improve the existing Mechanism at any time. The report contains an overview of the performance of the Mechanism from October 2020 to May 2024.

\* CTOC/COP/2024/1.



4. Pursuant to paragraph 12 of the procedures and rules, the review process is to be composed of a general review that will be undertaken in the plenary of the Conference of the Parties and of country reviews that will be conducted through desk reviews. The present update, provided by the secretariat to the Conference, is focused on the progress of the country reviews.

## II. Preparatory work and pairing of participating parties

5. A total of 189 parties are taking part in the Mechanism: 188 States and one regional organization. Their engagement in the country reviews has been gradual, with one third of the reviews starting each year over a period of three years, from 2020 to 2022.

### A. Drawing of lots

6. Pursuant to paragraphs 17 and 28 of the procedures and rules, the parties were divided into three groups to start their reviews in a staggered manner over three consecutive years. The selection of parties participating in the country reviews and their reviewing peers was conducted by drawing lots at relevant joint intersessional meetings of the working groups of the Conference of the Parties, held without interpretation services, at the beginning of the review process. The pairing of States parties is valid for the entire duration of the review process unless a party requests a redraw. States parties may request that the drawing of lots be repeated up to four times.

7. As a result of the drawing of lots, 130 parties were selected to participate in 62 reviews as part of the first group, 131 parties were selected to participate in 63 reviews as part of the second group and 134 parties were selected to participate in 64 reviews as part of the third group. Following a request by some States parties to repeat the drawing of lots in accordance with paragraph 28 (d) and (f) of the procedures and rules, the secretariat organized five joint intersessional meetings of the working groups for the purpose of repeating the drawing of lots, most recently on 5 December 2023.

8. The updated results of the drawing of lots have been circulated to States parties and can be found on the website of the Mechanism.<sup>1</sup>

9. Since the launch of the review process, two States have become parties to the Convention,<sup>2</sup> and nine States parties to the Convention have become parties to the Protocols thereto.<sup>3</sup>

10. Pursuant to paragraph 9 of the procedures and rules, the Mechanism is applicable to all States parties to the Convention and to each of the Protocols. The Conference of the Parties may wish to consider the approach to be taken for the inclusion of new parties in the Mechanism, such as the timeline for the completion of country reviews by new parties and matters relating to country pairings.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/review-mechanism-untoc/home.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/review-mechanism-untoc/home.html).

<sup>2</sup> Bhutan and South Sudan acceded to the Convention on 20 February 2023 and 20 October 2023, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Andorra acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, on 21 September 2022; Bhutan acceded to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol on 20 February 2023; Chad acceded to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air on 23 September 2022; China ratified the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition on 19 December 2023; the Comoros acceded to the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol on 15 December 2020 and acceded to the Firearms Protocol on 4 June 2021; Germany ratified the Firearms Protocol on 14 October 2021; Luxembourg ratified the Firearms Protocol on 9 May 2022; Pakistan acceded to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol on 4 November 2022; and Uganda ratified the Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons Protocols on 27 March 2024.

## B. Status of nominations

11. Pursuant to paragraph 18 of the procedures and rules and paragraph 5 of the guidelines for conducting the country reviews, the nomination of focal points and governmental experts represents the first essential step towards allowing a country review to commence. Each State party is to appoint, within two weeks of the start of the review, a focal point to coordinate its participation in the review.

12. As at 21 May 2024, the secretariat had received the nominations of 175 focal points from 163 States parties; 53 focal points (30 per cent) were women. Most of the focal points were affiliated with the respective country's ministry of justice (28 per cent), while 23 per cent were affiliated with the ministry of foreign affairs and 20 per cent with the ministry of the interior.

13. Among the parties that nominated focal points, most nominated only one focal point to coordinate their participation in all country reviews, while 5 per cent (eight States parties) nominated more than one focal point, generally one for their own country review and another for their role as a reviewer in other reviews.

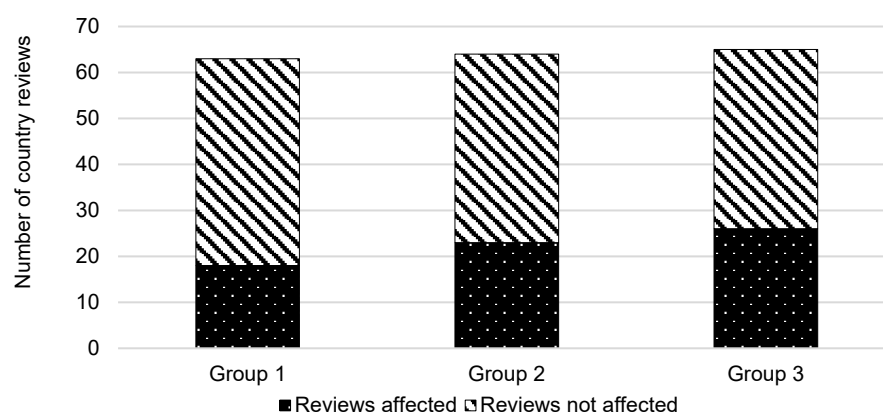
14. A total of 45 per cent (74 out of 163) of the States parties that had already nominated a focal point have changed their focal points at least once since the beginning of their engagement in the review process. In some cases, such substitutions delayed the progress of the reviews, while in other cases they helped to advance reviews that were not progressing because of the unresponsiveness of previous focal points. In cases of substitution, the internal handover of responsibilities among focal points and timely communication through permanent missions are key to preventing further delays in the progress of the country reviews affected by such changes.

15. As at 21 May 2024, of the 189 parties participating in the Mechanism, 13.8 per cent (26 States parties) had not yet nominated their focal points. The pending nominations by those 26 States parties are affecting the commencement of 67 country reviews. Despite the decreasing number of pending nominations, at the time of reporting, a total of 111 country reviews had not yet commenced. In that regard, the secretariat has continued to follow up and send out reminders through all available channels.

16. Figure I shows the number of reviews within each group that are affected by pending nominations.

Figure I

### Reviews affected by the pending nominations of focal points



17. Special efforts have been made by the secretariat to follow up with States parties on pending nominations by contacting and holding briefings for permanent missions and reaching out to relevant national counterparts through the field offices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as needed. In some instances, the UNODC field office network has been pivotal in facilitating the nomination of a focal point and governmental experts. Additional efforts have been undertaken by the

President of the Conference of the Parties to remind States parties to adhere to their obligation to nominate focal points and governmental experts for the review process in a timely manner.

18. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of the guidelines for conducting the country reviews, States parties should also designate, within four weeks of the start of their participation in the review process, governmental experts to conduct the country review. As at 21 May 2024, 1,006 governmental experts (of which 345, or 34 per cent, were women) had been nominated by States parties to take part in the review process.

19. In addition, 15 States parties had nominated observers as at 21 May 2024. Observers are individuals designated by States parties in the context of their own country reviews who are granted read-only access to the online platform “RevMod”, the secure module of the Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) knowledge management portal, that is, access without the possibility of performing any actions or modifying any content.

20. General information on the appointed focal points is available in the country profiles section<sup>4</sup> of the website of the Mechanism, and the contact details of focal points and governmental experts are available to registered users on the “RevMod” platform.

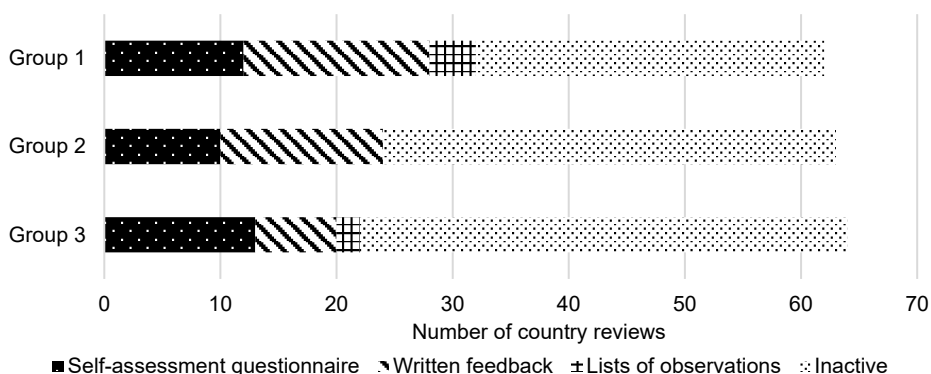
### III. Progress of the review of the first thematic cluster of articles

21. In its resolution 9/1, the Conference of the Parties decided that the Mechanism would progressively address all the articles of the Convention and the Protocols thereto. To facilitate that approach, the articles have been divided into four thematic clusters. The review of the implementation of each cluster was set to last for two years, which is regarded as a review phase. The first thematic cluster under review includes the provisions of the Convention and the Protocols thereto pertaining to criminalization and jurisdiction.

22. In accordance with the multi-year workplan for the functioning of the Mechanism and the guidelines for conducting the country reviews, by November 2022 all three groups of participating parties had started their country reviews of the implementation of the articles included in the first thematic cluster: the first group started on 1 December 2020, the second group on 1 November 2021 and the third group on 1 November 2022.

23. As at 21 May 2024, only 78 out of 189 reviews were advancing. Thirty-five reviews had reached the stage of preparation of answers to the self-assessment questionnaire, 37 reviews were at the stage of written feedback and 6 reviews had reached the stage of drafting lists of observations, as illustrated in figure II.

Figure II  
Status of country reviews, by group



<sup>4</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/review-mechanism-untoc/country-profile.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/review-mechanism-untoc/country-profile.html).

24. According to the timeline for each review phase contained in the procedures and rules, the first group of States parties under review was due to have concluded its first review phase within two years, namely, by December 2022. However, at the time of reporting, none of the States parties had concluded their country reviews under the first thematic cluster.

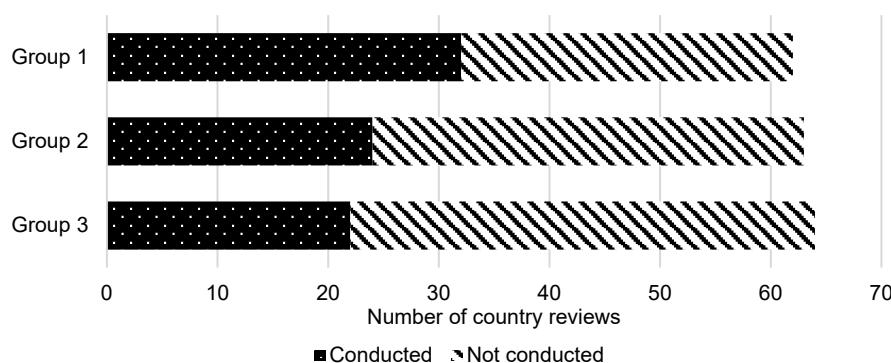
25. In order to start the review of the next thematic cluster of articles, which will be focused on international cooperation, mutual legal assistance and confiscation (fourth thematic cluster), 70 per cent of the reviews in the first group must be completed, unless the Conference decides otherwise.

## A. Preparatory and initial steps of a country review

26. Once the three focal points involved in a country review – one representing the State party under review and the other two representing the two reviewing States parties – are nominated, the State party under review is to undertake consultations with the reviewing States on the establishment of time frames and the requirements of the country review, including the working language or languages. In this regard, as at 21 May 2024, only 41.3 per cent of all country reviews (78 in total, with the largest number in the first group) had been initiated through a preliminary consultation among the parties involved, as shown in figure III, despite multiple attempts by the secretariat to facilitate the organization of such meetings.

Figure III

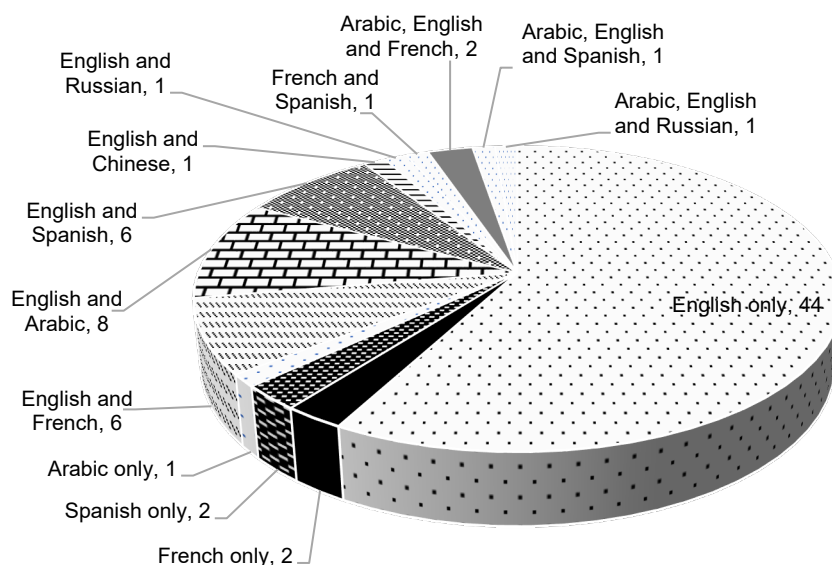
### Number of country reviews for which preliminary consultations have been conducted



27. At the start of each country review, the parties concerned agree during the above-mentioned preliminary consultations on the languages of the review, considering that, pursuant to paragraph 50 of the procedures and rules, one, two or, in exceptional circumstances, three of the six working languages of the Mechanism may be used.

28. As at 21 May 2024, States parties had agreed on the use of only one language in the majority of the preliminary consultation meetings that were held (49 reviews, or 62.8 per cent of the total). Forty-four reviews were to be conducted only in English, two in French, two in Spanish and one in Arabic. In four cases, parties agreed to conduct the review in three languages (from among Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and, in the remaining preliminary consultation meetings, States parties agreed on the use of two languages. Six of those reviews were to be conducted in English and French, eight in Arabic and English, six in English and Spanish, one in English and Russian, one in Chinese and English and one in French and Spanish. In other cases, States were unable to reach an agreement on the languages to be used in the country review and a decision in that regard is still pending. Figure IV illustrates the languages selected for the reviews.

Figure IV  
Languages selected for the reviews



29. Despite being formally ready to begin, as at 21 May 2024, 46 country reviews (24.3 per cent of the overall number) had not yet started, as the preliminary consultation meeting had not yet been held, although the secretariat had made multiple attempts to organize such meetings. The challenges identified by the secretariat in that regard include: (a) unresponsiveness of focal points; (b) frequent changes in focal points; and (c) inability to find a suitable date for the meeting due to the tight schedules of focal points.

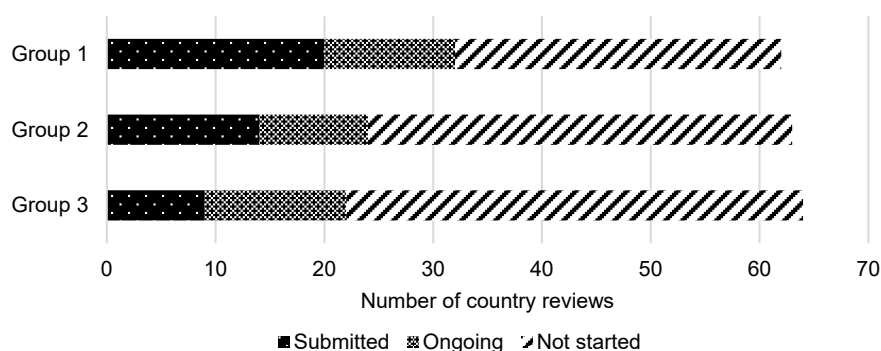
## B. Self-assessment questionnaires

30. In accordance with paragraph 34 of the procedures and rules, each State party under review is to provide to its reviewers its responses to the self-assessment questionnaires (one for each instrument under review) within a reasonable time frame, not exceeding six months.

31. According to the indicative timeline contained in the guidelines for conducting the country reviews, by the time of reporting, all self-assessment questionnaires for the reviews of the implementation of the first cluster should have been completed. However, only 43 parties under review had completed and submitted their questionnaires. The completion time of the questionnaires varies significantly among States. In 16 cases, States submitted the self-assessment questionnaires by the deadline agreed during the preliminary consultation meeting. In six reviews, the submission was within 10 days after the agreed deadline, while 12 reviews experienced delays of up to three months. Notably, in nine reviews, there were significant delays of more than six months, with four of those reviews experiencing delays exceeding one year. The frequent delays in completing the self-assessment questionnaires underscore the need for continued efforts to streamline coordination at the national level to ensure the timely submission of the documents.

32. In addition to the parties that have completed their self-assessment questionnaires, 35 parties are currently in the process of preparing their responses to those questionnaires. Coordination and information-gathering challenges, clearance processes and the “digital gap” were cited by focal points as common reasons for delay. Figure V reflects the progress of country reviews in each group with regard to the self-assessment questionnaires.

Figure V  
State of progress of the self-assessment questionnaires, by group



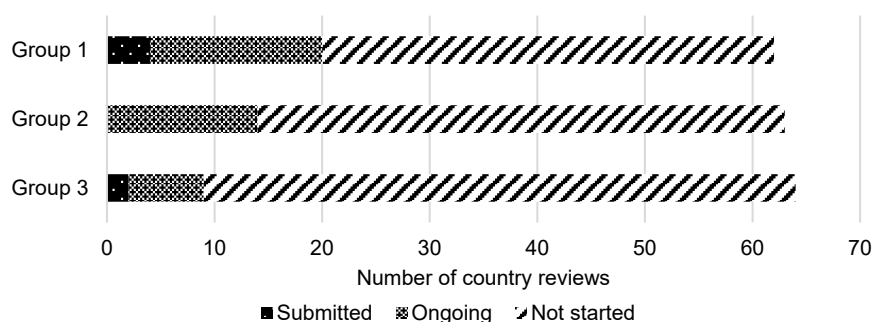
33. To address those challenges, strengthen cooperation and provide learning opportunities for and among States parties, the secretariat made the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires available to participating parties through the “RevMod” platform, in accordance with paragraph 40 of the procedures and rules. In addition, in line with paragraph 41 of the procedures and rules, at the time of reporting, two States parties had decided to publish their responses to the self-assessment questionnaires in the country profiles section of the website of the Mechanism.

### C. Written feedback

34. Pursuant to paragraph 35 of the procedures and rules, the two reviewing States parties are to submit to the State party under review their written feedback on the measures taken to implement the provisions under review, including successes and challenges in implementation, within a reasonable time frame, not exceeding six months from receipt of the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires. The reviewing States parties are to work jointly to conduct this stage of the review. To facilitate collaboration between the reviewing States parties, the secretariat routinely suggests that they hold discussions on the possible distribution of tasks at the very outset of the review. Reviewing States parties are also advised to inform the State party under review and the secretariat if foreseen delays require an extension of the originally planned timeline.

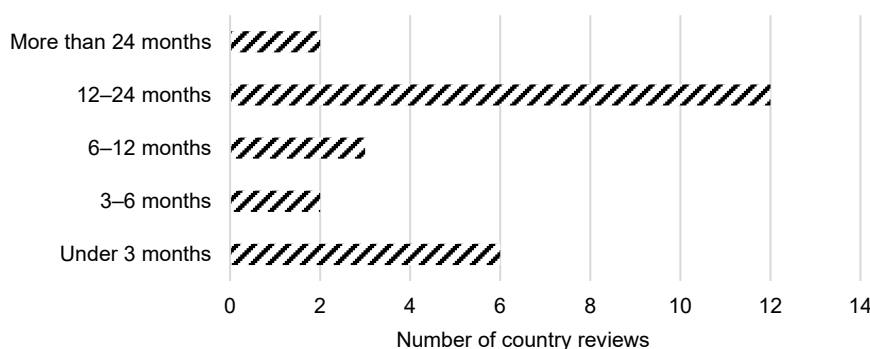
35. As at 21 May 2024, only 6 out of 78 active reviews had concluded the stage of written feedback, while that stage was still in progress in 37 reviews (see figure VI).

Figure VI  
State of progress of written feedback, by group



36. Although according to the procedures and rules, the written feedback step is to be completed within a time frame not exceeding six months, the process is often taking longer than expected. To date, more than 68 per cent of the reviews that are currently in the written feedback stage are registering delays compared to the timeline agreed during the preliminary consultation meeting. Fifty-six per cent of those reviews are facing a delay of over a year, as shown in figure VII.

Figure VII  
**Delayed submission of the written feedback**



#### D. Lists of observations and summaries of lists of observations

37. Each country review concludes with the preparation and publication of lists of observations (one for each instrument under review) on the implementation of the articles included in the thematic cluster under review and their related summaries. The reviewing States, in close cooperation and coordination with the State party under review, and with the assistance of the secretariat, are to prepare such lists indicating any gaps and challenges in the implementation of the provisions under review, best practices, suggestions and any technical assistance needs identified with a view to improving the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto.

38. As at 21 May 2024, no lists of observations had been finalized, despite the presumption under the indicative timeline contained in the guidelines for conducting the country reviews that the first group would have concluded the lists of observations and their summaries by the end of May 2022, the second group by the end of April 2023 and the third group by the end of April 2024. The preparation and submission of lists of observations and their summaries is the last step in the desk review of the country review process. Delays in any previous steps will have an impact on its progress. For example, the significant delays in submitting the written feedback indicated in section C above continue to delay the advancement of reviews to the steps related to the lists of observations and their summaries. As at 21 May 2024, only 4 out of 62 country reviews in the first group had reached the stage of the list of observations. In the second group, no reviews had reached that stage, while in the third group, two reviews had progressed to that stage.

39. The procedures and rules provide for a completion time of six months for both the lists of observations and their summaries combined. In the vast majority of cases, States parties have agreed to allocate four months for the preparation of the lists of observations and two months for their summaries. Nonetheless, parties have required extensive time to reach consensus on the lists of observations, exceeding the indicative time frame in four out of the six country reviews currently in that stage. In one country review, parties have been working on the lists of observations for more than two and a half years, in another review for more than one and a half years. In two cases, the parties started working on the lists of observations in November 2023. In the remaining two cases, parties started to work on the lists of observations in May 2024.

40. As a result, it has not yet been possible to hold the thematic discussions envisaged for the working groups of the Conference of the Parties or to refer to the lists of observations in preparing recommendations for the Conference, as indicated in the procedures and rules.

41. Despite the fact that no country reviews had been completed at the time of reporting, an analysis of the trends and patterns identified during the review process, based on the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires submitted by States



parties, is contained in document CTOC/COP/2024/9, submitted by the secretariat to the Conference at its twelfth session.

#### **IV. Support provided by the secretariat**

42. In accordance with paragraph 54 of the procedures and rules, the Mechanism is funded under a mixed funding model combining the existing resources of the regular budget allocated to the Conference of the Parties with voluntary contributions. UNODC, as requested by the Conference in the procedures and rules, established the Global Programme to Support the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto to manage voluntary contributions to the Mechanism that ensure its effective operation, including through the provision of secretariat services and support that are not covered by existing regular budget funds. A detailed account of the financial status of the Global Programme is contained in document CTOC/COP/2024/8, submitted by the secretariat to the Conference at its twelfth session.

43. The secretariat has continued to provide support for the country reviews at each stage, including by systematically following up with permanent missions and focal points, providing technical guidance on the review process and its requirements, facilitating communication and meetings among parties, monitoring the progress of the reviews according to the agreed timelines and languages, and advising on the effective use of the “RevMod” platform. Upon request, the secretariat has also provided general guidance on the completion of written feedback to several reviewing States parties.

44. The secretariat has continued to explore synergies with other UNODC activities to facilitate the in-person exchange of information and capacity-building. As at 21 May 2024, the secretariat had participated in a total of nine activities at the national and regional levels, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia (January 2022), Mexico (May 2022), Côte d’Ivoire (September 2022), Pakistan (September 2022), Kenya (August 2023), North Macedonia (January 2024), Angola (April 2024) and Iraq (June 2024).

45. The secretariat has also continued to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices acquired by focal points from conducting the country reviews. In that regard, high-level side events were held on the margins of relevant intergovernmental meetings, including the participation of government representatives, intergovernmental organizations, criminal justice practitioners and civil society stakeholders.

46. In February 2024, the secretariat organized a briefing on the functioning of the Mechanism that was attended by 193 representatives from permanent missions accredited to the United Nations in Vienna, as well as by focal points and governmental experts from a total of 89 States Members of the United Nations. At the event, the secretariat provided information on the status of the review process, giving both a global overview and five regional snapshots, and highlighted the achievements and challenges encountered so far in the process. Examples of collaboration with other UNODC global programmes and with UNODC field and liaison offices were also presented, to underline the synergies that the secretariat has been developing to further strengthen its capacity to support States parties in the context of the Mechanism. During the briefing, Member State representatives participated in a voluntary feedback survey on their assistance needs with regard to their participation in the Mechanism.

47. The secretariat also started to collect information on States parties’ needs related to their participation in the Mechanism. This was done through surveys conducted during the aforementioned briefing, as well as during the eleventh meeting of the Working Group on Firearms, held in April 2024, and during the fifteenth meeting of the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance and the

fifteenth meeting of the Working Group on International Cooperation, both held in June 2024. Through those surveys, the secretariat received requests for support from 44 officials from 29 States parties. Those requests pertained to the following: general training on the functioning of the Mechanism to facilitate better understanding of and involvement in the process (30 requests); training on the use of the “RevMod” platform, including through national or regional workshops (29 requests); facilitation of coordination and communication with counterparts (23 requests); regular briefings on the status of the Mechanism (20 requests); training on the self-assessment questionnaires for the Convention and/or the Firearms Protocol (16 requests); and training on the provisions of the Convention included in the first cluster (11 requests).

#### **A. Training and capacity-building provided by the secretariat**

48. Since 2020, UNODC has organized briefing sessions and delivered training and other forms of capacity-building (mostly online) to more than 3,500 government officials from 164 States parties, in the six official languages of the United Nations and in Portuguese, through the Global Programme to Support the Mechanism. Focal points and governmental experts of States parties under review and reviewing States parties have thus had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the methodology of the review process and the use of the “RevMod” platform.

49. Focal points and governmental experts have been provided with assistance in setting up their accounts to access the “RevMod” platform and have been advised on substantive and procedural aspects of the review process.

#### **B. Tools, resources and new features of the “RevMod” platform**

50. To support focal points and governmental experts in the review process, the secretariat has developed and made available numerous resources,<sup>5</sup> in particular:

(a) An e-learning module on the Mechanism and the use of the “RevMod” platform, in all official languages of the United Nations;

(b) Manuals on the use of the “RevMod” platform for focal points and governmental experts;

(c) A guide for focal points on preparing for the preliminary consultation meeting;

(d) A compendium of basic documents that provides comprehensive information on the functioning of the Mechanism, available in all official languages of the United Nations;

(e) A compilation of recommendations on the Mechanism made by the working groups of the Conference of the Parties and of observations by the Chairs of the constructive dialogues on the review process.

51. In addition, the secretariat provided focal points and governmental experts with access to a range of tools and materials developed by the Office relating to the interpretation and implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto, including model legislative provisions and legislative guides for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols.

52. In response to relevant requests by and comments from focal points, a new email notification system was deployed in “RevMod” through which regular emails containing information on new developments in the various review stages, and monthly emails containing summaries of recent developments, are sent automatically to facilitate the work of focal points and governmental experts.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/review-mechanism-untoc/resources.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/review-mechanism-untoc/resources.html).

53. In response to relevant requests and comments made during meetings of the working groups of the Conference of the Parties, a new function entitled “Submissions” was introduced in “RevMod”, enabling users to download completed self-assessment questionnaires that have already been submitted and lists of observations and their summaries once they have been submitted and are available.

54. To enhance its capacity to analyse information and to produce statistics for the preparation of mandated reports, the secretariat added a new statistics function to “RevMod”. The function, which is exclusively available to the secretariat, enables the production of basic quantitative data analyses of the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires provided by States parties under review.

55. To uphold multilingualism in the framework of the Mechanism’s working languages, support from the secretariat in the form of automated machine translation was made available to focal points who requested it, as an interim solution to address the need of some States parties for working translations of documents generated in the country review process, mainly the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires, the written feedback and the lists of observations. The solution allows unofficial translation into all official languages of the United Nations. To date, the secretariat has responded to five requests, facilitating the translation of self-assessment questionnaires and of written feedback.

## **V. Constructive dialogues and engagement with relevant stakeholders**

### **A. Constructive dialogues on the review process with relevant stakeholders**

56. To promote fruitful engagement with relevant stakeholders in the review of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocols thereto, constructive dialogues with relevant stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, private sector entities and academia, were held after the conclusion of the meetings of the working groups of the Conference of the Parties, in line with paragraph 53 of the procedures and rules. The constructive dialogues were held in English without interpretation, in a hybrid format to facilitate the participation of all relevant stakeholders, and were also open to States parties and signatories, non-signatories, private sector entities and intergovernmental organizations. The first cycle of constructive dialogues on the review process, held in 2022, was attended by more than 200 relevant non-governmental stakeholders, as well as States parties, signatories, non-signatories and intergovernmental organizations. The summaries by the Chairs of the constructive dialogues were made available to the Conference at its eleventh session in the form of a conference room paper.<sup>6</sup> The second cycle of constructive dialogues, held in 2023, was attended by 328 non-governmental stakeholders, representing 299 non-governmental organizations, 15 academic institutions and 14 private sector entities, as well as representatives of 72 Member States and one intergovernmental organization. For the third cycle of constructive dialogues, conducted in four meetings held in 2024, more than 1,200 applications were received from non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and private sector entities. The summaries by the Chairs of the constructive dialogues have been made available to the Conference at its twelfth session in the form of a conference room paper.<sup>7</sup>

57. In 2023, the Chair (or Co-Chairs, as applicable) of the constructive dialogues started recording, in their summaries of the meetings, observations deriving from the discussions held.

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<sup>6</sup> CTOC/COP/2022/CRP.3.

<sup>7</sup> CTOC/COP/2024/CRP.3.

58. In the 22 observations recorded in 2023,<sup>8</sup> the Chair (or Co-Chairs) highlighted several important aspects related to multi-stakeholder collaboration in the responses to organized crime, including: improving data collection and analysis related to the impact of organized crime on societies; leveraging emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence in mapping and identifying victims of crime; prioritizing human rights and victim protection in combating organized crime; and increasing efforts to provide education, foster entrepreneurship opportunities and create employment for young people, thus contributing to the reduction of crime.

## **B. Engagement with non-governmental stakeholders**

59. UNODC continued to foster the capacity of non-governmental stakeholders to engage in the review process through its project on stakeholder engagement for the Convention, known as “SE4U”, which complements the activities conducted under the Global Programme Supporting the Mechanism.

60. At the time of reporting, under the SE4U project, UNODC had trained more than 3,300 non-governmental stakeholders from 136 countries on the review process and on avenues for cooperation with Member States through workshops, self-paced online courses and additional materials.<sup>9</sup> To facilitate cooperation and networking among relevant non-governmental stakeholders working on combating organized crime and corruption, the multi-stakeholder knowledge hub “WhatsOn” has been developed as part of the SE4U project and currently includes 535 members working in 136 countries.

61. As at 21 May 2024, UNODC had facilitated the launch of four government-led multi-stakeholder engagement processes, known as “voluntary pilot initiatives”, in four countries (Angola, Kenya, Mexico and Pakistan), and is in the process of launching a fifth (Chile) and conceptualizing a sixth process (South Africa), with the agreement of the States parties under review, to encourage the participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the country reviews, in accordance with paragraph 23 of the procedures and rules.

## **VI. Topics for consideration**

62. Building on relevant discussions as reflected in the reports on the meetings of the working groups of the Conference of the Parties held to date, the Conference may wish to focus its deliberations on the following topics:

(a) Sharing, in accordance with paragraph 42 of the procedures and rules, good practices and experiences related to the completion of the self-assessment questionnaires;

(b) Identifying practices to promote the in-person participation of focal points and governmental experts at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its working groups to share information on good practices and challenges related to the review process, in accordance with the guiding principles of the Mechanism;

(c) Identifying challenges and possible responses to enable the timely completion of each step of the country reviews and for progressing from the first thematic cluster to the subsequent clusters;

(d) Identifying efficient practices to ensure the timely participation of all parties involved in the review process;

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<sup>8</sup> The observations have been collected in the relevant compilation, available at [www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/reviewmechanism/UNTOC\\_RM\\_Compilation.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/reviewmechanism/UNTOC_RM_Compilation.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Toolkit on Stakeholder Engagement: Implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)* (Vienna, 2020); and UNODC, *Guide for Civil Society Community Engagement with the UNTOC Review Mechanism* (Vienna, 2020).

- (e) Identifying and responding to technical assistance and capacity-building needs in relation to the functioning of the Mechanism;
- (f) Ensuring or facilitating multilingualism throughout the review process, including the constructive dialogues with relevant stakeholders;
- (g) Sharing national experiences, including challenges and lessons learned, in the review of the implementation of the articles included in the first thematic cluster, on criminalization and jurisdiction;
- (h) Collaborating with non-governmental stakeholders, in particular as related to their engagement in the preparation of the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires;
- (i) Ensuring the continued operation of the Mechanism and its secretariat, including in facilitating the progress of the review process without further delays and the implementation of the observations emanating from the completed country reviews.

## VII. Proposed guiding questions for the discussions

63. When discussing the agenda item related to the functioning of the Mechanism, the Conference may wish to consider the guiding questions below:

- (a) What practices proved effective in the communication and collaboration within the national reviewing team as well as between the State party under review and its reviewers?
- (b) In the course of preparing the responses to the self-assessment questionnaire on the Convention and/or the Protocols thereto, what arrangements were effective and what challenges did focal points and governmental experts encounter in discharging their respective functions?
- (c) Was the national reviewing team prepared to work in a foreign language? Was this factor considered in the selection of the focal point or of the governmental experts?
- (d) Were there any particular sections or questions within the self-assessment questionnaire on the Convention and/or the Protocols thereto that posed challenges? If so, how were those challenges addressed?
- (e) What difficulties were encountered, or good practices identified, while reviewing the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires on the Convention and/or the Protocols thereto provided by the State party under review?
- (f) Was civil society involved in the preparation of the responses to the self-assessment questionnaires? If yes, in which thematic areas was the contribution of civil society most impactful?
- (g) How was coordination between the two reviewing States parties ensured during the written feedback stage? What arrangements were effective and what challenges were encountered in drafting a joint document?
- (h) How should the information included in the lists of observations and in their summaries be prioritized?
- (i) How could the secretariat further support parties' participation in the process?