



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

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Report on the meeting of the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance held in Vienna on 29 and 30 May 2023

I. Introduction

1. The Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance was established pursuant to decision 2/6 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In its decision 4/3, the Conference decided that the Working Group should be a constant element of the Conference.
2. In its resolution 9/1, entitled “Establishment of the mechanism for the review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto”, the Conference adopted the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. According to paragraph 44 of the procedures and rules, the Working Group shall consider the technical assistance needs identified during the review process and make recommendations to the Conference on how to assist States parties in their efforts to implement the Convention and the Protocols.
3. In its resolution 10/4, entitled “Celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and promoting its effective implementation”, the Conference requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), within its mandate, to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to Member States, upon request, to support their capacity to prevent and combat transnational organized crime.
4. Furthermore, in its resolution 11/2, entitled “Implementation of the provisions on technical assistance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime”, the Conference requested UNODC to continue to provide technical assistance to States, including on legislation and strategy development, to prevent and combat organized crime and continue to collect, analyse and disseminate information related to responses to and the nature of organized crime, with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention. It also encouraged UNODC to develop a dissemination plan to raise awareness of the usefulness of the Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) knowledge management portal.
5. Lastly, in its resolution 11/3, entitled “Outcomes of the joint thematic discussion of the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance and the Working Group on International Cooperation on the application of the United Nations



Convention against Transnational Organized Crime for preventing and combating transnational organized crimes that affect the environment”, the Conference endorsed the recommendation that UNODC continue to provide, upon request, technical assistance and capacity-building to States parties to support their efforts in effectively implementing the Convention to prevent and combat transnational organized crimes that affect the environment.

II. Recommendations

6. At its meeting held in Vienna on 29 and 30 May 2023, the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance adopted the recommendations set out below for endorsement by the Conference.

A. General recommendations

7. The Working Group recommended that the Conference consider the following recommendations for adoption:

Recommendation 1

Parties are encouraged to provide UNODC with extrabudgetary resources for the implementation of the technical assistance activities outlined in the dissemination plan for SHERLOC, developed pursuant to resolution 11/2, entitled “Implementation of the provisions on technical assistance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime”, of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

B. Recommendations on matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: challenges, lessons learned and identified technical assistance needs

8. The Working Group recommended that the Conference consider the following recommendations for adoption:

Recommendation 2

Parties are encouraged to make voluntary contributions to UNODC in order to ensure that the secretariat of the Review Mechanism has adequate financial, technical and human resources to effectively support the participation of all parties in the Mechanism.

Recommendation 3

Parties are encouraged to consider paragraph 51 of the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Review Mechanism in order to address challenges relating to multilingualism and translation in the review process.

Recommendation 4

Parties should consider providing extrabudgetary resources to UNODC to support the further development of the secure module of SHERLOC known as “RevMod” to improve its functionalities in order to facilitate the timely and smooth conduct of country reviews online, including through automated notifications of missed deadlines and other key communications.

Recommendation 5

Parties should consider providing extrabudgetary resources to UNODC in order to enable it to respond to requests for legislative assistance to prevent and combat organized crime, including with regard to observations emanating from the Review Mechanism and through information gathering and dissemination by way of SHERLOC.

Recommendation 6

Parties that have not yet done so are strongly encouraged to nominate a national focal point for the Review Mechanism and keep that information up to date. Parties are also encouraged to identify the relevant national experts to ensure the effectiveness and consistency of responses to the self-assessment questionnaires. Parties are further encouraged to make every possible effort in the preparation of their answers to the questionnaires to consult relevant governmental stakeholders and, where appropriate, all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, individuals and groups outside the public sector, non-governmental organizations and academia. Parties and UNODC are invited to consider using bilateral and multilateral forums to encourage those Parties that have not yet done so to nominate focal points.

Recommendation 7

Parties should endeavour to adhere to the timelines contained in the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Review Mechanism to the extent possible, including by ensuring their timely participation in the country reviews in line with the multi-year workplan and by mutually sharing, on a voluntary basis, their experiences to overcome the common challenges identified in the process.

C. Recommendations on technical assistance needs in the prevention of organized crime, including data collection and analytical processes to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and human rights, as well as the development of national strategies to address transnational organized crime

9. The Working Group recommended that the Conference consider the following recommendations for adoption:

Recommendation 8

Parties should consider collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data on organized crime, including on perpetrators and victims, disaggregated by age, gender and other relevant factors, including, if applicable, data from all relevant sources, while respecting human rights and applicable privacy rights. Parties should appropriately strengthen the capacity of their statistical authorities, including for measuring progress in this regard.

Recommendation 9

Parties should consider developing and regularly updating organized crime threat assessments and other strategic analysis products that are able to identify drivers and enablers of organized crime, evolving illicit markets and trends and the criminal infiltration of legitimate markets, and assess vulnerabilities and risk factors. Parties may consider benefiting from data, threat assessments and other strategic analyses developed by other intergovernmental entities.

Recommendation 10

Parties should consider enhancing, and providing appropriate resources for, the training of law enforcement and criminal justice authorities on collecting and

disseminating disaggregated data on organized crime, while respecting human rights and applicable privacy rights.

Recommendation 11

Parties may wish to request technical assistance from UNODC in the formulation of organized crime analyses and strategies, as well as in the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and human rights in the relevant normative, policy and operational responses, and provide extrabudgetary resources to this end.

III. Summary of deliberations

10. The following summary of deliberations was prepared by the secretariat after the meeting, in close coordination with the Chair. The summary of deliberations was not subject to negotiation and adoption during the meeting; rather, it is a summary by the Chair.

A. Matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: challenges, lessons learned and identified technical assistance needs

11. At its 1st meeting, on 29 May 2023, the Working Group considered agenda item 2, entitled “Matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: challenges, lessons learned and identified technical assistance needs”.

12. Given that no list of observations resulting from country reviews had yet been compiled, the Working Group could not consider substantive issues arising from the review of the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and the Protocols thereto. Instead, the secretariat provided an update on the status of the review process, presenting an overview of the main challenges, including delays in the nomination of focal points and in the completion of the review of the first thematic cluster, as well as of the technical assistance needs identified in the first years of the process.

13. With the Chair presiding, the discussion under agenda item 2 was facilitated by the following two panellists: Mauricio Fernández Montalbán, Director of the Specialized Unit on Money-Laundering, Economic, Environmental and Organized Crime at the National Prosecutor’s Office of Chile, and Christopher Smith, Deputy Director and Senior Counsel for Multilateral Affairs, Office of International Affairs of the Department of Justice of the United States of America.

14. The panellist from Chile briefed the Working Group on the Chilean perspective regarding the challenges, lessons learned and identified technical assistance needs related to the country’s engagement in the Review Mechanism. He underlined the importance of establishing a solid and stable national team, composed of the focal point and government experts, to ensure the country’s continued engagement in the Mechanism. He also noted the language barriers, the time zone difference and the lack of familiarity with the use of RevMod as potentially hampering a smooth review process.

15. In his presentation, Mr. Smith addressed the significance of the Review Mechanism in strengthening the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention, emphasizing the support of the United States for the process, including at the financial level. He mentioned the appointment of knowledgeable focal points within relevant departments as playing a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of the process. Finally, he highlighted the multi-stakeholder approach to the review process that had

been adopted by the United States, incorporating civil society input into the responses to the self-assessment questionnaire, with more than 50 non-governmental organizations invited to a virtual round table.

16. Following the presentations, the discussions centred around the effective implementation and sustainability of the Review Mechanism, including the sharing of good practices and lessons learned by States, as well as exploring ways to involve civil society in related national consultations. Several speakers addressed best practices in the coordination of stakeholders' participation in the Mechanism at the national level and in the establishment of a national committee, comprised of competent national authorities, regional-level representatives and representatives of civil society and Indigenous groups, among others.

17. Several speakers expressed appreciation for the secretariat's efforts to facilitate the functioning of the Review Mechanism. Some speakers noted the delays in the review process and acknowledged that the support offered by the secretariat might be limited owing to a lack of available resources, including in terms of staffing. Some speakers also shared their requests for functionalities to be added to the RevMod platform, for example automated notifications of missed deadlines and other key communications. Some speakers called upon States parties to contribute to supporting the secretariat in order to sustain the needs of the review process.

18. Several speakers mentioned the importance of regular communication with their reviewers, while noting the difficulties they faced in reaching out to them, in part because some parties did not maintain permanent missions in Vienna. Several speakers discussed the potential impact of country visits on the country review process, reflecting on their experience with the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, since country visits were not foreseen in the procedures and rules for the functioning of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. In that regard, some speakers noted that country visits could contribute to addressing practical aspects of a review and facilitating its progress for both the reviewing States and the State under review. Some speakers highlighted that country visits could be conducted at the request of the States parties involved, provided that specific funding was made available.

19. Some speakers mentioned multilingualism and the issue of translations as challenges to the review process, with one speaker mentioning her country's funding of translation services to support its review process and how that positively affected the outcome of the process. Several speakers suggested addressing the issue of the limited resources available, including for the secretariat, for supporting the translation of documentation in cases where reviews were conducted in more than one language, so as to overcome the possible challenges related to multilingualism.

B. Technical assistance needs in the prevention of organized crime, including data collection and analytical processes to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and human rights, as well as the development of national strategies to address transnational organized crime

20. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 29 and 30 May 2023, the Working Group considered agenda item 3, entitled "Technical assistance needs in the prevention of organized crime, including data collection and analytical processes to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and human rights, as well as the development of national strategies to address transnational organized crime".

21. With the Chair presiding, the discussion under agenda item 3 was facilitated by the following four panellists: Lucie Léonard, Director of the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Emmanuel Nweke, Minister Counsellor in

the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, Cláudio Dinis Mate, Director of Planning and Cooperation in the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs of Mozambique, and Sarah McAveety, Serious and Organized Crime Governance Adviser in the National Security Directorate of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

22. In her presentation, Ms. Léonard addressed the relevance of solid data collection and analysis in formulating prevention-centred organized crime responses. In particular, she mentioned the importance of collecting gender-disaggregated data in that endeavour, using those data to analyse intersecting societal dynamics and fostering dialogue among all partners and interested parties involved and affected by new data needs. She stressed the importance of mainstreaming gender and human rights in organized crime responses and highlighted in that regard the forthcoming UNODC toolkit on mainstreaming gender and human rights in the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention.

23. Mr. Nweke briefed the Working Group on the methodology and key findings of the organized crime threat assessment for Nigeria, covering a variety of crime types, including drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, the smuggling of migrants, wildlife and forest crime, maritime crime, cultism and kidnapping. He underscored the importance of developing responses to organized crime on the basis of verifiable data and of involving key actors in the data-collection process.

24. Mr. Dinis Mate presented the approach taken by Mozambique to developing its national strategy against organized crime, currently being finalized with support from UNODC. On the basis of critical risks and challenges identified, he underlined key priorities set out in the fight against organized crime under each of the four strategic pillars: (a) prevention of organized crime; (b) pursuit of organized criminal groups and their illicit gains; (c) protection and support to vulnerable populations and victims; and (d) promotion of negotiations, intersectoral dialogue and cooperation, including for violence reduction.

25. Ms. McAveety briefed the Working Group on the experience of the United Kingdom in mainstreaming gender into its policy, strategy and programming on serious and organized crime. She underlined the importance of gender-sensitive data, research and analysis in order to better tackle the root causes of organized crime, prioritize responses and ensure that organized crime interventions did not perpetuate or worsen gender inequality. She recalled the commitment and support of the United Kingdom for the development of the UNODC “Organized crime strategy toolkit for developing high-impact strategies” and accompanying issue papers on gender and human rights, used around the world to develop comprehensive strategies against organized crime. In closing, she stressed the importance for States to develop legislation, strategies and programmes against organized crime that mainstream gender considerations and uphold human rights and for UNODC to continue supporting those efforts.

26. The secretariat delivered a presentation on the work undertaken by the Global Programme on Implementing the Organized Crime Convention: from Theory to Practice to support the development of strategies and policies to prevent and counter organized crime, as well as to mainstream gender and human rights considerations into normative responses to organized crime. Tools previously developed and currently under development (i.e. the “Organized crime strategy toolkit for developing high-impact strategies”, the accompanying issue papers and the forthcoming toolkit on mainstreaming gender and human rights in the implementation of the Convention) were highlighted, as was the impact of the project to date.

27. After the presentations, the panellists and the secretariat exchanged additional information with participants in response to their questions and comments on specific challenges and examples of good practices. Some speakers also shared information on their countries’ or organizations’ strategic frameworks to prevent and counter organized crime, as well as on the mainstreaming of gender and human rights in the

implementation of the Organized Crime Convention and, more broadly, in responses to organized crime. In that context, a speaker recalled the importance of Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3, on mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice policies and programmes and into efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime.

28. Several speakers provided examples of measures that could be used to mainstream gender and human rights into responses to organized crime. Among those mentioned were the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data on organized crime, the bolstering of gender representation in the criminal justice system and at all levels of decision-making on organized crime-related matters, the provision of specialized training for law enforcement units and the organization of activities aimed at preventing and curbing violence against vulnerable groups. Various speakers highlighted the importance of receiving technical assistance from UNODC in that area, including for the formulation of gender-responsive and human rights-compliant analyses and strategies against organized crime, as well as for gaining access to international funding and support for the implementation of strategies. As some speakers highlighted, such assistance should be timely, sustainable and delivered on the basis of countries' needs.

29. Several speakers emphasized the importance of cooperation at the national, regional and international levels for the successful implementation of strategies against organized crime. Whole-of-government responses, multilateral networks and cooperation with relevant international organizations, such as UNODC and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), were highlighted as best practices. A few speakers stressed the role of technological advancements in law enforcement as well as the importance of enhancing international cooperation and technical assistance in that area. Some speakers referred to the important role played by civil society in the processes of data collection, policy development and implementation, as well as the need to respect human rights and applicable privacy rights throughout those processes. A speaker also highlighted the importance of robust systems for the regular monitoring and evaluation of policies and interventions against organized crime.

C. Other matters

30. At its 3rd meeting, on 30 May 2023, the Working Group considered agenda item 4, entitled "Other matters". Under the agenda item, representatives of the secretariat delivered a presentation on the SHERLOC knowledge management portal and the dissemination plan for the portal, developed pursuant to Conference resolution 11/2. The secretariat also delivered a presentation on the conference room paper entitled "Strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife" (E/CN.15/2023/CRP.3), prepared pursuant to resolution 31/1 of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. On the margins of the meetings of the Working Group, the secretariat offered online and in-person consultations on SHERLOC to participants who wished to find out more about the portal or obtain assistance from the secretariat in reviewing their countries' legislative or other records in the portal.

31. In response to the presentations delivered by the secretariat, several speakers highlighted the high utility and importance of SHERLOC for gathering and disseminating information on normative, policy and operational frameworks against organized crime. Several speakers also thanked the secretariat for providing an overview of the compilation of views contained in the aforementioned conference room paper.

IV. Organization of the meeting

A. Duration of the meeting

32. The Working Group met on 29 and 30 May 2023, holding a total of four meetings. As agreed by the extended Bureau of the Conference of the Parties by means of a silence procedure on 21 April 2023, the meeting was held in a hybrid format.

33. The meetings were co-chaired by Thomas Burrows (United States) and Carlos Alberto Sánchez del Águila (Peru).

B. Statements

34. Representatives of the secretariat provided introductory remarks under agenda items 2, 3 and 4.

35. With the Chair presiding, the discussion under item 2 was led by the following panellists: Mauricio Fernández Montalbán (Chile) and Christopher Smith (United States).

36. Under agenda item 2, statements were made by representatives of the following States parties to the Convention: Algeria, Canada, China, Colombia, Czechia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). A representative of the European Union, a regional economic integration organization that is a party to the Convention, also made a statement.

37. With the Chair presiding, the discussion under item 3 was led by the following panellists: Lucie Léonard (Canada), Cláudio Dinis Mate (Mozambique), Emmanuel Nweke (Nigeria) and Sarah McAveety (United Kingdom).

38. Under agenda item 3, statements were made by representatives of the following States parties to the Convention: Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Honduras, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Paraguay, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States. A representative of the European Union, a regional economic integration organization that is a party to the Convention, also made a statement. Statements were also made by the observers for the Islamic Republic of Iran and INTERPOL.

39. Under agenda item 4, statements were made by representatives of the following States parties to the Convention: Canada, Colombia, Russian Federation and United States.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

40. At its 1st meeting, on 29 May 2023, the Working Group adopted by consensus the following agenda:

1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Opening of the meeting;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Matters pertaining to the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto: challenges, lessons learned and identified technical assistance needs.
3. Technical assistance needs in the prevention of organized crime, including data collection and analytical processes to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and human rights, as well as the development of national strategies to address transnational organized crime.

4. Other matters.
5. Adoption of the report.

D. Attendance

41. The following parties to the Convention were represented at the meeting, including those connected remotely: Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

42. The Islamic Republic of Iran, a signatory State to the Convention, was represented by an observer.

43. The United Nations Environment Programme was represented by an observer.

44. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers, including those connected remotely: Asset Recovery Network of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America, Council of Europe, European Border and Coast Guard Agency, INTERPOL, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

E. Documentation

45. The Working Group had before it the following:

(a) Annotated provisional agenda ([CTOC/COP/WG.2/2023/1](#));

(b) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat on the 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 ([CTOC/COP/WG.2/2023/2-CTOC/COP/WG.6/2023/4](#));

(c) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat on technical assistance needs in the prevention of organized crime, including data collection and analytical processes to support the mainstreaming of a gender and human rights perspective, as well as the development of national strategies to address transnational organized crime ([CTOC/COP/WG.2/2023/3](#));

(d) Conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat on the dissemination plan for the knowledge management portal known as Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) ([CTOC/COP/WG.2/2023/CRP.1](#)).

V. Adoption of the report

46. At its 4th meeting, on 30 May 2023, the Working Group adopted the present report.