

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
(CSTD)**

Twenty-fifth session

Geneva, 28 March to 1 April 2022

**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2021 to
implement the outcomes of the WSIS**

Submission by

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 25th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

UNODC inputs to the Secretary-General's report on progress made in 2021 in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

Part One

In 2021, UNODC continued to support Member States to prevent and combat cybercrime in a holistic manner through the delivery of crime prevention and criminal justice technical assistance and tailored support on framework development, capacity building, awareness raising and international cooperation on cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crimes.

UNODC published an analysis on trafficking in persons and internet technologies, analysing court cases involving traffickers making use of internet technologies and focusing on different types of internet usage, changing modus operandi of traffickers and the emergence of new forms of exploitation based on digital technologies. UNODC is currently working on developing a new research initiative on online sexual exploitation of children, on the increased risks of navigating online forums and exploring how child sexual abuse links with trafficking in persons in online domains and on the darknet. UNODC's Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants launched in 2021 addresses the issue of the use of information technology by migrant smugglers and smuggled migrants and refugees.

In light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the intensified need for the use of ICT-based solutions in the provision of technical assistance has been met through the holding of webinars and online meetings and consultations. UNODC in support of the Global Judicial Integrity Network, has continued to produce and disseminate judicial-integrity content through websites, social media, online events, e-learning or podcast platforms. The work of the Network in 2021 included areas such as the institutional use of social media or the ethical use of artificial intelligence in the judiciary.

In 2021, UNODC developed and distributed educational resources for children and youth to learn about challenges they might encounter while using ICT, understanding the risks they may face online and how they could use ICT to advance peace, justice and sustainable development. UNODC's activities also strengthen the capacities of teachers and community workers to integrate related contexts when teaching.

UNODC continued to strengthen its online knowledge management portal that includes information on criminal law, case summaries, treaties, and other legislative provisions (SHERLOC) on issues such as transnational organized crime, cybercrime and trafficking in cultural property. UNODC also launched the Electronic Evidence Hub, which aims to promote better integration of electronic evidence into the investigation and prosecution of cross-border serious crimes, including terrorism.

UNODC has been using satellite imagery, georeferencing, drones and applying AI when working on several initiatives related to monitoring illicit crop cultivation and on impact assessments of alternative development projects. UNODC is also integrating ICT-based tools in its efforts to prevent and combat crimes that affect the environment. For instance, in Colombia, UNODC is supporting authorities in developing new ICT-based tools aimed at integrating data on illegal deforestation from over 15 official sources. These tools have played an instrumental role in ensuring that relevant stakeholders understand the context and the dynamics of the phenomenon, contributing to the improvement of criminal investigations.

Part Two

In 2021, UNODC provided increased support to Member States in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns that led to an increased use and importance of ICT in both legal and illegal activities. In the context of cybercrime, UNODC provided capacity building, training and mentoring support to Member States in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Central and Western Africa and Central and South America in adapting legislation, standard operational procedures and strengthening the ability of the justice

system to attend cyber-enabled and cyber-dependent crimes, including digital evidence handling, and criminal activity in the Clear and Darknets. UNODC is supporting Member States in managing complex emerging risks, including those resulted from darknets and the misuse of crypto assets for criminal purpose, including illicit flow of assets, online child sexual exploitations and other cybercrime offences that create new opportunities for crime, and prevent the action of justice.

The research on trafficking in persons and use of internet technologies was presented in the [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020](#), published in 2021. The research was based on 79 court cases, covering over 30 national jurisdictions. As part of the research process, a dataset was compiled, containing information on 491 victims, with sex- and age-disaggregated information. New research initiatives on online child sexual exploitation are in the development phase with a research structure being formulated and external funding sources identified. The research on child sexual exploitation in online domains intends to gather input from law enforcement, the private sector and subject matter experts, as well as national statistics, court cases and review of secondary literature. The above-mentioned activities contribute to the implementation of SDG targets related to trafficking in persons (5.2, 8.7 and 16.2).

The [UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants](#), launched online in May 2021, is a web-based platform that presents the findings of primary data collection and research in an accessible narrative to policymakers and practitioners. The initial research focus is on West Africa, North Africa and Southern Europe. According to the findings of the Observatory's research so far, the use of internet-based technology, including social media, by smuggled migrants and refugees from West Africa is very limited, with a continuing strong reliance on word-of-mouth and personal contacts, as well as mobile phone technology.

In the context of COVID-19, UNODC ramped up efforts to support Member States ensure the continuity of critical processes within their criminal justice institutions such as the timely processing of case files, thereby contributing to the achievement of SDG 16. As an obstacle encountered, resources that were typically dedicated to counter-terrorism and other law enforcement efforts were, in many cases, re-allocated to manage the COVID-19 pandemic response, which opened many new opportunities for terrorist and criminal groups to capitalize on. The pandemic led to increased internet use which has, in turn, led to a global manifestation of crimes involving electronic evidence. Increased reliance on information and communication technologies have heightened the risk of digital environments and Internet to be exploited by terrorists and terrorist groups.

Due to the initial and temporary disruption of in-person technical assistance, UNODC was especially reliant on its online Counter-Terrorism Learning Platform. Due to the increased reliance on information and communication technologies during the pandemic, the preservation, collection and utilization of essential electronic evidence in terrorist cases has become even more critical.

In response, UNODC conducted virtual trainings on cross-border cooperation in criminal cases involving electronic evidence with a specific focus on challenges regarding the investigation and prosecution of firearms offences committed using the internet and electronic means of communication. Furthermore, new online courses on open-source intelligence and social media investigations were launched.

Part Three

Education for Justice (E4J) initiative

The E4J initiative continued to involve youth, community workers, teachers and academics, in utilizing the benefits of ICT to implement innovative ideas for educational resources and materials. Through 'Lockdown Learners', a special series of interactive dialogues with students and educators in India on topics pertaining to the SDGs, peace and the rule of law with a special focus on engaging economically disadvantaged

students and educators from rural and low-income groups, the series has applied innovative approaches to reach students with limited internet access, for instance by interacting with groups of students through WhatsApp, using voice notes, audio recordings and images.

E4J has been scaling innovation for the rule of law through the Justice Accelerator programme where young teams received the support to develop tech solutions tackling issues they have encountered in their communities. The winning teams were awarded seed funding to further develop their solutions. Through the podcast series “Voices of Academia the knowledge on SDG 16 related topics has been advanced.

Peer-reviewed material to support lecturers teaching at higher education institutions on issues related to ICT, ethical use of ICT, rule of law and prevention of cybercrime, continued to be developed and disseminated. The E4J Library of Resources, an online knowledge portal, continued to be populated with additional material using ICT to increase access to relevant educational resources on the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, 5 and 16.

E4J has developed over 170 materials across the primary, secondary and tertiary levels on many crime-related issues that have reached over 1.5 million students. Materials include non-electronic games, video lessons, online games and comic books. In cooperation with Mexico City’s public transport system, the Zorbs cartoons and the E4J game “Chuka, Break the Silence” that helps children develop ways to respond to gender-based violence, was showcased across 66 metro stations visited by more than three million people daily. Secondary and primary students use a E4J developed mobile telephone application to learn about rule of law issues. The Zorbs Reloaded is a city building strategy game with an RPG mission component. Players are tasked to rebuild a destroyed planet called Zorb, while preserving some core values including integrity, fairness and acceptance.

Judicial Integrity initiative

In 2021, UNODC has continued to maintain and populate the dedicated website of the Global Judicial Integrity Network. The website features an extensive pool of resources on judicial integrity, including several knowledge products and tools developed by the Network, such as the use of social media by judges or gender-related issues. The Network’s online library covers 183 countries and 42 languages and contains over 2,200 resources, including numerous resources linked to judiciaries’ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. With a view to promoting multilingualism, the website also has homepages available in Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish, which link to translations of other website content.

The package of Judicial Ethics Training Tools continues to be a popular tool among judiciaries, with currently over 65 jurisdictions committed to rolling out training activities based on the package as the official training sites. The e-learning course of the package is available in several languages on UNODC’s Global e-Learning Platform, and has been increasingly popular among judges, particularly during the ongoing pandemic. To date, nearly 7,000 judges have been involved in national and regional training activities based on the training tools.

One of the key purposes of the Global Judicial Integrity Network is to create networking and experience-sharing opportunities for judges and judiciaries. In 2021, in light of COVID-19, UNODC organized a series of thematic webinars and online events. The Network continues to collect resources and address topics that are of relevance to the present report, such as the ethical considerations of the use of artificial intelligence in the judiciary, the use of social media by judges or open justice and transparency.

Youth Ambassadors Programme

In 2021, UNODC continued its efforts to strengthen meaningful youth engagement to prevent crime and violence amongst youth. For instance, in Brazil, the Youth Ambassadors Programme has been training at-risk and vulnerable young people between 18 and 25 years of age to act as multipliers of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in social and political spaces. In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the need for the use of ICT-based solutions to build capacity amongst youth has been intensified and the initiative has been extensively engaged in the organization of alternative strategies to continuous support the capacity-building and the meaningful engagement of youth. Bearing in mind the interconnected nature

of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNODC's Youth Ambassadors Programme has been addressing, through technological solutions and ICT-based mechanisms to build capacity amongst youth and to reach a wider range of beneficiaries across the country, particularly through social media. Goals 4, 10, 16 and 17 are reflected in all activities implemented, with particular attention to Targets 4.7, 10.2 and 16.1.

Moreover, the Programme has enhanced partnerships through a digital application that connects young leaders and potential partners interested in financing and supporting SDG-oriented projects and initiatives. The virtual platform, as part of UNODC's efforts to use ICT applications to build capacities towards the 2030 Agenda, has empowered end beneficiaries to strengthen skills and to partner with local and international stakeholders to promote the sustainable development of local communities.