



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 present report seeks to inform the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, at its eighth session, about 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.

2. The Trafficking in Persons Protocol has a total of 169 parties. Since the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties, in October 2014, Barbados, the Czech Republic, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the Sudan have become parties to the Protocol.

* CTOC/COP/2016/1.



3. The following key achievements were made through the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings from October 2014 to April 2016:

(a) Thirty-six technical, legislative assistance and/or capacity-building activities were organized or contributed to at the global, regional or national level;

(b) Twenty countries were directly provided with technical assistance at the national level;

(c) Over 900 practitioners, governmental officials and civil society representatives in over 60 countries were beneficiaries of technical assistance activities;

(d) Four standard-setting and practitioner-oriented technical tools were developed;

(e) Regional agreements continued to be developed, including a regional strategy for combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in West and Central Africa for the period 2015-2020;

(f) Some 179 case briefs were added to the case law database, which now provides details and analyses of 1,311 trafficking-in-persons cases from 94 jurisdictions.

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

4. UNODC implements a comprehensive strategy to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, focusing on the following areas: (a) provision of technical assistance for the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; (b) support for intergovernmental and inter-agency cooperation and coordination; (c) research and data collection on trafficking in persons through the biannual *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*; and (d) management of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

5. On the basis of this strategy, UNODC continued to provide significant and diverse support to Member States in their efforts to implement the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, especially by advancing normative work and implementing technical assistance activities.

A. Normative work, servicing intergovernmental bodies and inter-agency cooperation and coordination

6. UNODC provided strategic and substantive support to intergovernmental bodies and processes and continued to cooperate closely with other United Nations agencies, as well as regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in promoting the objectives of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and fostering synergies and partnerships to that end.

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

7. UNODC serviced and provided substantive support to the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, established by the Conference of the Parties. Three technical background papers were developed to facilitate policy discussions during the sixth meeting of the Working Group, held in Vienna from 16 to 18 November 2015, on the following topics: the role of recruitment agencies and recruitment fees in trafficking in persons (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2015/2); national coordination mechanisms against trafficking in persons (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2015/3); and key concepts of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, with a focus on UNODC issue papers on abuse of a position of vulnerability, consent and exploitation (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2015/4). UNODC also assisted by preparing a consolidated paper containing all previous recommendations of the Working Group (CTOC/COP/WG.4/2015/5 and Add.1).

2. Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

8. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its twenty-fourth session, recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council a draft resolution on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. That draft resolution was adopted by the Council as its resolution 2015/23.

9. Also at the twenty-fourth session of the Commission, UNODC co-organized with the Government of France a side event to address effective cooperation between governments and civil society organizations to enhance national and regional criminal justice responses to trafficking in children in South-Eastern Europe. In addition, the Office co-organized with the European Union, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the International Labour Organization a side event focusing on the exploitation of migrant workers in the European Union and beyond.

10. The *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014* was also presented at a side event. Launched in November 2014, that report provides an overview of patterns and flows of human trafficking at the global, regional and national levels, as well as a national-level analysis for each of 128 countries.

3. General Assembly

11. During the reporting period, UNODC provided substantive support to Member States in the discussion leading to the development and subsequent implementation of General Assembly resolutions relating to trafficking in persons, in the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and in response to the increase in demand for related technical assistance.

12. At its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/149, on trafficking in women and girls, in which it urged Member States to consider ratifying or acceding to the Organized Crime Convention and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and to fully and effectively implement them, along with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Assembly also called on Governments to criminalize all

forms of trafficking in persons and bring offenders to justice. Together with the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNODC was encouraged to promote a global campaign urging travellers to support the fight against trafficking in persons, especially women and girls.

13. Also at its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/167, on protection of migrants, in which it called on States to ensure that their laws and policies for combating transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, fully respect the human rights of migrants and encouraged them to cooperate effectively to protect the victims in cases of trafficking in persons, as well as witnesses, regardless of their migration status. The Assembly also encouraged Member States to enact national legislation, to take further effective measures to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and to strengthen international cooperation to prevent, investigate and combat such crimes.

14. At its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 69/197 and 70/178, on strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity. In its resolution 69/197, the Assembly called upon Member States to strengthen national efforts to combat all forms of trafficking in persons and to protect and assist victims, while requesting UNODC to continue to provide within its mandate related technical assistance to Member States, upon their request.

15. At its seventieth session, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 70/179, on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons, in which it urged Member States to consider ratifying or acceding to and to fully implement the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, and called on Member States and other stakeholders, including the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, to continue to contribute to the full and effective implementation of the Global Plan of Action. The Assembly also decided to convene a high-level meeting, in October 2017, to appraise the progress achieved in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. In the same resolution the Assembly expressed support for the activities of UNODC, encouraged further cooperation with relevant international organizations and invited Member States to make voluntary contributions to UNODC for the purpose of providing assistance to Member States upon request. The Assembly requested that the Secretary-General submit a report to it at its seventy-first session on progress made in the implementation of the resolution, which UNODC is currently drafting.

16. Further to its mandate under the Global Plan of Action, in November 2014 UNODC held for Member States a high-level interactive launch of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014*, in collaboration with the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

4. Security Council

17. On 16 December 2015, the Security Council held its first-ever meeting on trafficking in persons, which resulted in the issuance of presidential statement PRST/2015/25. Discussions focused on trafficking in persons in conflict areas, particularly those where terrorist groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and the

Levant, the Lord's Resistance Army and Boko Haram are involved. It was highlighted that the Organized Crime Convention and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol provided a framework to effectively combat trafficking in persons, and the Security Council called on Member States to consider ratifying or acceding to and effectively implementing those instruments. The Council also called for the continued support of UNODC in providing technical assistance to Member States upon request and took note of the recommendations made by the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons established by the Conference of the Parties to the Organized Crime Convention. Additionally, the Council urged relevant United Nations agencies operating in armed conflict and post-conflict situations to build their technical capacity to assess conflict situations with regard to instances of trafficking in persons, proactively screen for potential victims of trafficking and facilitate access to needed services for identified victims, and underscored that certain acts associated with trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict could constitute war crimes. The Council requested that the Secretary-General submit a report to it in 12 months on progress made in this regard; that report is being coordinated by UNODC.

5. Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons

18. UNODC acted as the coordinator and secretariat of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons throughout 2014 and 2015. As of 1 January 2016, owing to a lack of dedicated funding, including for a secretariat, participating agencies had agreed to continue the work of the Group in a more limited manner and prioritize its use as a joint policy-producing mechanism. In 2016 UNODC assumed the chair of the Group, which rotates on an annual basis.

19. In the reporting period, the activities of the Group were guided by an annual workplan developed and implemented jointly by six of its member entities, which together form the decision-making body of the Group referred to as the "working group". They are as follows: International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund and UNODC. In January 2015, those six agencies hosted a consultative briefing for permanent missions at United Nations Headquarters in New York on the Group's work and priorities in 2015 and beyond. At the briefing the Group expressed its intention of holding such events on a regular basis.

20. The Group continued to work on developing and publishing a series of policy papers that examine key current issues for the international community in the fight against trafficking in persons. The paper entitled "Providing effective remedies for victims of trafficking in persons" is expected to be launched electronically in June 2016. A policy paper on the subject of developing a shared approach among United Nations agencies in monitoring and evaluating responses to trafficking is due to be launched in mid-2016.

21. A website is being developed with a view to providing easily accessible information to a wider audience on the work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group and its member agencies and to more effectively disseminate its products. The website is expected to be fully operational by mid-2016.

22. Furthermore, the World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July 2015 was marked by the issuance of an advocacy video prepared by the Group's member agencies, in which the heads of eight key organizations issued a joint statement urging that more be done globally to help those who fall victim to this crime.

23. In 2016, the Group aims to publish a series of guidance materials, referred to as issue briefs, including documents on the subject of conflict and trafficking in persons. On the World Day against Trafficking in Persons 2016, the Group and its constituent agencies will also be drawing attention to the issue of vulnerability and the factors that increase people's vulnerability to human trafficking, including in the context of large movements of people resulting from conflict, natural disaster or other factors.

6. Global Migration Group

24. UNODC is a member of the Global Migration Group, a system-wide inter-agency group established in 2006, which brings together heads of agencies to promote the wider application of all relevant international and regional instruments relating to migration and to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better-coordinated approaches to the issue of international migration.

25. As an active and committed member of the Global Migration Group, UNODC contributes to joint statements, papers and events on migration-related issues. UNODC is also an active member of the Global Migration Group Working Group on Migration, Human Rights and Gender, in which it seeks to bring a broader United Nations-system focus to the human rights of smuggled migrants and the right of access to justice for migrants who are victims of crimes, including victims of trafficking.

26. In 2014 and 2015, UNODC contributed to two Global Migration Group reports on crisis-related migration and protection at sea, and to a number of joint communiqués on including migrants and migration issues in the post-2015 development agenda, including at the eighth summit meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 14 to 16 October 2015. Following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNODC has sought to assist the Group in reconciling specific goals with the varied work of Group members, including on issues related to combating trafficking in persons, with the aim of improving coordination between member organizations.

7. Normative and policy guidance

27. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to produce technical publications to help improve understanding of the complex nature of the crime of trafficking in persons, including three issue papers: *The Role of Recruitment Fees and Abusive and Fraudulent Recruitment Practices of Recruitment Agencies in Trafficking in Persons*, *The Concept of "Exploitation" in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol* and *The Role of "Consent" in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol*. In addition, it published an assessment toolkit entitled *Trafficking in Persons for the Purpose of Organ Removal*.

28. In 2015, UNODC also produced the "Regional strategy for combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants 2015-2020", presenting the

response of the UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa to the challenges facing the region in the areas of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

29. On the margins of the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, UNODC conducted a workshop on the topic “Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants: successes and challenges in criminalization, in mutual legal assistance and in effective protection of witnesses and trafficking victims”, in cooperation with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations.

B. Technical assistance

30. With regard to technical assistance, UNODC resources for countering trafficking in persons provide, in response to requests from Member States, expertise in the following key areas: (a) legislative assistance; (b) criminal justice responses and international cooperation; (c) data collection and research; (d) prevention and awareness-raising; and (e) protection and support for victims.

31. Activities supporting the efforts of Member States against trafficking in persons, including mentoring and tailor-made technical assistance, were conducted through field offices across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. From October 2014 to April 2016, UNODC global programmes on trafficking in persons also organized or made substantive contributions to 36 major technical assistance activities, including legislative assistance and capacity-building activities, assisting more than 60 countries and training more than 900 criminal justice practitioners and government officials in effectively investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons while providing appropriate support to victims.

1. Legislative assistance

32. UNODC continued to provide Member States with tailor-made, specialized legislative assistance to help develop effective national legislation in line with the requirements of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. The Office carried out assessments of legislative needs, supported the drafting of legislation to operationalize the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, and trained legal drafters for that purpose.

33. The UNODC approach to providing technical assistance with respect to legislative reform, both at the regional and the national level, often requires sequencing activities during the various stages of long-term policy and legislative reform by national actors. For instance, having received past assistance from UNODC on legislative reform, Cabo Verde and Georgia adopted new legislation against trafficking in persons in 2015, and Ethiopia adopted new legislation against trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

34. UNODC has also supported the development of a number of important regional legal guidance tools for countering trafficking in persons in specific regions. In the Middle East and North Africa region, these have included a legislative assessment on the status of human trafficking legislation in the Arab

world and a report on support mechanisms for victims of trafficking in persons in the Gulf region.

35. In 2015, UNODC also contributed to the efforts of Tunisia to combat trafficking in persons by reviewing and commenting on relevant draft legislation, at the request of the Tunisian Ministry of Justice. In 2016, UNODC supported that country's temporary interministerial National Committee against Trafficking in Persons in the development of a first draft of the national strategy to combat trafficking in persons.

36. Similar activities were carried out in Bhutan, Colombia and the Sudan. In collaboration with the National Commission for Women and Children of Bhutan, UNODC undertook a legal and policy review of responses to human trafficking with a view to harmonizing laws and policies with international standards and provisions. In Colombia, UNODC worked in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, supported by the European Union, to publish a protocol to identify and prosecute trafficking-in-persons cases, to be adopted by the relevant national institutions in 2016. In the Sudan, UNODC supported the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking in drafting the country's national strategy against trafficking in persons.

37. Following an assessment mission to Chad in October 2014, UNODC assisted the Government of that country in drafting a law on trafficking in persons that would be in line with the requirements of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. In March 2015, UNODC organized a validation workshop to endorse the draft law against trafficking in persons in Chad and maintains a dialogue with the relevant actors.

38. UNODC also contributed to a legislative drafting workshop for officials in Djibouti and Ethiopia in May 2015. The workshop was held in the framework of the UNODC Regional Programme for Eastern Africa and National Integrated Programme for Ethiopia, and was organized by the UNODC programme office in Ethiopia, in coordination with the Ethiopian Ministry of Justice, and hosted by the Government of Ethiopia.

39. In collaboration with the Australian Attorney General's Department, UNODC supported the revision of offences of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in the penal code of Viet Nam. UNODC also facilitated various legal dialogues, workshops and consultations with relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in order to ensure that reforms would be aligned with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and other international standards. The revised penal code and regulations, approved by the Viet Nam National Assembly in November 2015, contain substantial changes to the provisions related to trafficking in persons; for instance, penalties for perpetrators of trafficking in persons have been increased.

40. Through a criminal law amendment bill, the Pakistan penal code and code of criminal procedures were amended in early 2016 to include strong sanctions against child abusers and to criminalize trafficking in children and child pornography. The bill also sought to place greater emphasis on preventing internal trafficking of human beings.

2. Strengthening criminal justice responses

41. UNODC offers technical assistance aimed at strengthening the criminal justice response of Member States to the complex and multifaceted crime of trafficking in persons. In line with its holistic approach and in close cooperation with any requesting Member State, UNODC undertakes, if required, an in-depth baseline needs assessment at the outset of any technical assistance activity. Activities are then tailored accordingly, to guarantee the sustainability of the assistance and to strengthen national ownership.

42. UNODC continued to organize regional technical assistance workshops, upon request, to support the strengthening of criminal justice responses through grass-roots activities in all regions.

43. For instance, in December 2015, an expert group meeting on the connection between trafficking in persons and money-laundering was held in the Republic of Moldova, focusing on investigative methods — including financial investigations to disrupt financial flows from such trafficking — the sharing of best practices and fostering inter-agency cooperation.

44. In collaboration with the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking of Bahrain, UNODC also implemented one regional and one national activity focused on strengthening criminal justice responses. The regional workshop dealt with victim support, minimum standards in victim care and national referral mechanisms, while the national workshop focused on the identification of trafficked persons and care for victims. In 2015, assistance was provided to the Ministry of Justice of Bahrain through a national workshop on strengthening the capacity of judges and public prosecutors to respond to trafficking in persons, covering basic investigation and interviewing techniques.

45. In the Middle East, in the framework of the Arab Initiative to Build National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking in the Arab Countries, UNODC held the second expert group meeting on the mechanism for launching the Arab network for combating trafficking in persons, designed to ensure the sustainability of the efforts made by the Initiative; capacity-building activities for law enforcement personnel were also carried out.

46. UNODC continued to support the strengthening of criminal justice responses to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in the Middle East through the provision of technical assistance to Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, the Sudan and Tunisia, among others, on the identification and investigation of cases, the prosecution of offenders and the dismantling of criminal networks, while highlighting the importance of regional and international cooperation to combat trafficking in persons and of the need to uphold the rights of trafficking victims.

47. In Central America, UNODC delivered regional, trilateral and bilateral training-of-trainers workshops focused on the investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons in border areas. Training activities dealt with specific topics such as international law, inter-agency coordination, international cooperation in trafficking cases, identification and referral of and assistance for victims, and types of evidence in trafficking cases which were included in a manual for criminal justice professionals on combating trafficking in persons.

48. In South-Eastern Europe, UNODC organized five national workshops, four of which were part of a programme aimed at developing a multidisciplinary methodology for analysing trafficking cases in South-Eastern Europe, with a focus on trafficking in children. Two workshops were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one in Bulgaria and one in Serbia, for law enforcement and prosecution personnel and representatives of national trafficking in persons coordination committees, Eurojust and international organizations. Another multidisciplinary training workshop on the protection of victims of trafficking in criminal proceedings was held in Montenegro for a group of judges, prosecutors and law enforcement and civil society professionals.

49. In West Bengal, India, UNODC, in close cooperation with the Governments of Bhutan and India, conducted in May 2015 the first Bhutan-India workshop on countering trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, for border guards and customs, police and immigration officials.

50. UNODC also supported the production of strategy documents and training manuals designed to combat trafficking in persons. In this vein, it helped to develop Pakistan's strategic framework to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants for the period 2015-2020, based on pillars addressing protection, prosecution, punishment, prevention and promotion. In the Middle East and North Africa region, UNODC supported the production of a training manual on combating trafficking in persons, entitled *Understanding Trafficking in Persons in the MENA Region: The Causes, the Forms, the Routes, and the Measures to Combat a Serious Violation of Human Rights*.

3. International cooperation

51. A sound criminal justice response to trafficking in persons requires partnerships and effective international cooperation, which are particularly vital for Member States from the same region connected by the flows of transnational crime. International cooperation is a key element of the UNODC criminal justice response to trafficking in persons and is always incorporated into the delivery of technical assistance.

52. Accordingly, UNODC cooperated closely with the regional mechanisms and organizations that address trafficking in persons, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. UNODC organized and co-facilitated workshops and dialogues at the regional level, providing a forum for Member States of the same region to exchange experiences and share knowledge relevant to their situations. In 2015, UNODC and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) signed a cooperation agreement to address organized crime, including trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. UNODC technical assistance provided to Member States was consistently acknowledged by partner organizations.¹

¹ A press release on the French-Bosnian human traffickers arrested following cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, UNODC and Eurojust is available at www.eurojust.europa.eu.

53. International cooperation was also encouraged through the regional conference on “Human trafficking and migrant smuggling held in Karachi, Pakistan, in November 2015, which was organized by UNODC and the Pakistan Federal Investigation Agency. Representatives from 50 countries, as well as 10 Islamabad-based Ambassadors and high commissioners, participated in the high-level conference. The first of its kind in the region, the conference brought together representatives of all relevant source, transit and destination countries.

4. Data collection and research

54. Knowledge and research concerning the specific context of trafficking in persons at the national, regional and international levels are essential for strengthening understanding of the crime and of the human rights violations involved. Moreover, such knowledge and research are prerequisites for the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies to combat trafficking in persons and of evidence-based responses. Research and data collection shape the UNODC tools and materials created to facilitate implementation of the Protocol by States parties and are adapted to meet country-specific needs and train relevant actors in their effective utilization.

55. The *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014* constituted a comprehensive collection and analysis of globally available data on trafficking in persons. UNODC is currently preparing the third edition of the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*. To be published in the last quarter of 2016, it will focus on patterns and flows related to the crime of trafficking in persons at the global, regional and national levels, and will attempt to identify new trends.

56. The Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal is an initiative under the wider Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC) portal, designed to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention, and specifically the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. Since early 2016 the content of the Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal has been available in the six official languages of the United Nations. It hosts a case law database on officially documented instances of trafficking in persons. By creating this portal, UNODC aims to increase the visibility of successful prosecutions and promote awareness of the realities of trafficking in persons. By May 2016, the case law database contained 1,311 cases from 94 jurisdictions and regional courts.

57. In addition, in 2016 UNODC will publish a digest of trafficking in persons cases, which has been designed to address evidential issues typical to trafficking-in-persons cases by using a common normative framework. The digest is currently being edited and formatted.

58. Technical assistance activities focusing on building Member States’ capacity to gather, process and disseminate data were also organized. For example, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, and with the support of the European Union, UNODC began developing the National Information System on Human Trafficking in Colombia and assisted in establishing the Research and Analysis Centre for Pakistan’s Federal Investigation Agency to address the problem of gaps in data and to contribute to the capacity-building of the Federal Investigation Agency.

59. In Mexico, UNODC is finalizing a national information system on trafficking in persons. This Internet-based platform, the only one of its kind today, will allow the authorities and civil society to systematize information on trafficking in persons, identify trends and routes, and plan and implement targeted public policies, as well as to follow up on the services provided to victims. In July 2015, a national assessment of the situation of trafficking in persons in Mexico was officially published by the Ministry of the Interior. UNODC has provided guidance for designing programmes and public policies to counter trafficking in persons in the country.

60. During the reporting period, a number of workshops that focused on data collection and research were held, including throughout South-Eastern Europe. National workshops for the analysis of official trafficking-in-persons cases were held in Belgrade in October and December 2014, in Sarajevo in February 2015 and in Sofia in February 2015. The workshops brought together prosecution, law enforcement and social affairs officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Additionally, a workshop on analysis of trafficking-in-persons cases in South-Eastern Europe was held in Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2015.

5. Prevention and awareness-raising

61. The Trafficking in Persons Protocol requires States parties to undertake prevention measures such as social and economic initiatives, research and awareness-raising campaigns targeting potential victims of trafficking and potential consumers of services provided by trafficked persons. The response to trafficking in persons calls for cooperation among a wide range of actors in designing and implementing such initiatives.

62. UNODC continues to participate in campaigns, exhibitions and other media events related to prevention and awareness-raising, in cooperation with Member States and key international organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other partners. As an example of the latter, in collaboration with the Governments of Bangladesh, India and Nepal, UNODC is developing a comprehensive regional prevention strategy aimed at countering cross-border trafficking in the region.

63. Other projects have included UNODC cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior of Colombia, supported by the European Union's funding of five projects managed by civil society organizations to prevent trafficking in persons in Colombia. In Pakistan, UNODC, in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency, launched awareness-raising campaigns aimed at various groups. A large number of representatives of civil society, as well as policymakers, judges, media and legal experts participated actively in the campaigns. Also in Pakistan, UNODC organized five community forums in areas of Punjab and Baluchistan that experience high levels of emigration, with the overall aim of raising public awareness on the dangers associated with trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

64. On 30 July 2014 and 30 July 2015, UNODC led awareness-raising efforts to mark the first and second annual World Day against Trafficking in Persons. Aided by a multi-year UNODC social media campaign entitled #igivehope, the campaign encouraged people worldwide to express their solidarity with the victims of

trafficking in persons. A Thunderclap — a coordinated message launched collectively across Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr — was sent out on 30 July of both years, reaching an average of 5.6 million people each year.

65. UNODC also runs the Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking, a global outreach initiative established in 2010, which so far has been adopted by 12 countries and which seeks to mobilize and inspire action to combat this crime. In 2014, Peru became the latest country to join the campaign at the national level, while in Colombia it was adopted as part of one of the country's most traditional festivals, the Carnival of Barranquilla, to help raise awareness about trafficking in persons. In March 2015, a re-edited Blue Heart Campaign video was launched at the 30th Guadalajara International Film Festival in Mexico. In Panama, COPA Airlines joined the Blue Heart Campaign and in November 2014 placed the campaign logo on 25 airplanes. In the September 2015 issue of the COPA Airlines monthly magazine, the issue of trafficking in persons was highlighted. In addition, the airline announced that during April and May 2016 it would show a 30-second public service announcement on the Blue Heart Campaign and prevention of trafficking in persons before the departure of all its flights. Also in Panama, the Campaign organized the Blue Heart Concert Gala as part of the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the National Symphony Orchestra of Panama. Participants in the Gala included internationally recognized musicians and approximately 1,000 guests.

6. Victim protection and support

66. A core element of the mandate of UNODC under the Trafficking in Persons Protocol is to increase the level of protection and assistance provided to victims of trafficking in persons, as set out in article 2, paragraph (b), and articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Protocol. As the guardian of the Protocol, UNODC assists countries in fully implementing a comprehensive response to trafficking by ensuring that structures are in place to convict traffickers and to address the realities experienced by the victims of such crimes. Accordingly, UNODC advocates for a human rights-based, victim-centred approach. Victim protection is a key element of the UNODC criminal justice response to trafficking in persons and is always incorporated into the delivery of technical assistance.

67. In the reporting period, UNODC worked closely with other international and regional organizations, relevant national governmental institutions and civil society organizations on safeguarding the rights of victims. A total of 137 non-governmental organizations cooperated with UNODC in 2014 and 2015, on specific responses to trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, mostly in relation to technical assistance work and other activities beyond direct assistance to victims of trafficking, including all types of victim-focused work, capacity-building activities and legislative assistance. Consultation with non-governmental organizations, however, is also crucial for robust normative and policy work. For example, as participants and contributors to the consultation and development of issue papers, non-governmental organizations' experts continued to provide unique insights into the concrete needs of trafficking victims and migrants and the challenges and gaps in national systems, and provided valuable feedback on the practical implementation of the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol at the grass-roots level.

68. Since 2014, UNODC has been providing protection and rehabilitation services to victims of cross-border trafficking at the borders of India, Nepal and Bangladesh, implemented by non-governmental organization partners in the region, and, in collaboration with the Governments of those countries, has undertaken a regional mapping of vulnerabilities and support services and the development of guidelines for a regional referral mechanism.

69. In Kyrgyzstan, a needs assessment mission with a focus on exploitation of minors was conducted from 30 August to 4 September 2015, while in Montenegro a training workshop on protection of victims of trafficking in persons in criminal proceedings was held for a group of judges, prosecutors, law enforcement personnel and civil society professionals from 21 to 25 September 2015.

70. Additionally, in the Middle East and North Africa region, the Arab Initiative has launched a small grants facility to support legal clinics in order to enhance the mechanisms for appropriate legal support and the necessary referral of presumed and actual victims of trafficking in persons.

71. UNODC also continues to manage the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, established by the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Global calls for proposals were issued in 2011 and 2014 to identify specialized projects to provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking in persons. As of March 2016, the Trust Fund had supported 30 non-governmental organization projects in 26 countries, with paid and committed grants worth \$1.75 million. Projects have directly assisted approximately 2,000 survivors of trafficking in persons each year through services including the provision of basic shelter, psychosocial support, legal counselling and representation in court, education and vocational training, primary health care and small stipends.

72. Since its inception, the Trust Fund has received \$2.3 million in paid contributions, with an annual average of \$400,000. Nineteen Member States and over 30 private sector donors have provided funding, with the private sector contributions accounting for almost one third of the funds received. In 2015, the Trust Fund received \$357,701. The overall level of contributions received is significantly below the levels required to provide assistance with the significant impact intended to be achieved when the Fund was established. Currently, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children has a balance of \$50,000 available for new grants. A minimum of an additional \$500,000 will be needed for the issuance of a new call for proposals after the end of the current three-year cycle, in 2017.

III. Conclusions

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

74. 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 will work jointly with Member States, international organizations, civil society and victims to make the fight against trafficking in persons in all its forms ever more effective.
