



General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 July 2022

Original: English

Seventy-seventh session
Item 111 of the preliminary list*
International drug control

International cooperation against the world drug problem

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/188](#). The report provides an overview of the world drug situation and the implementation of the mandates relating to international drug control, taking into account the follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted at the ministerial segment of the sixty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in 2019. The report also provides information on action taken by the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and support provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in close cooperation with other United Nations entities and relevant stakeholders, to assist States in addressing and countering the world drug problem, including the challenges posed by recent international developments, in particular the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

* [A/77/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/188, provides an overview of the current world drug situation and work undertaken to assist States in addressing and countering the world drug problem by implementing the international drug control conventions, as well as all international drug policy commitments stemming from the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem of 2009, the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action of 2009 and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem”, which were reaffirmed in the Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem of 2019.

2. In the light of the unprecedented challenges posed by recent international developments, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, joint actions to address and counter the world drug problem are more crucial than ever to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby addressing key issues in line with the principle of common and shared responsibility. As the world drug problem is multifaceted and closely intertwined with all aspects of sustainable development, cooperation within the United Nations system and with all relevant stakeholders is key to advancing peace and security, development and human rights.

3. The United Nations is committed to supporting States in developing and implementing balanced, comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based, human rights-based, development-oriented and sustainable responses to the world drug problem. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/188, the present report includes information on collaboration and coordination across the United Nations system.

II. Extent of the world drug problem

4. According to the *World Drug Report 2021*, an estimated 275 million people worldwide aged 15–64 had used drugs at least once in the previous year, and some 36 million suffered from drug use disorders in 2019. On the basis of expected population growth alone, the number of people who use drugs is projected to reach 299 million by 2030.

5. Opioid use and injecting drug use are predominant in terms of the negative health consequences associated with drug use today. Taking 2010 as a baseline, in recent years, deaths attributable to drug use disorders have climbed faster than indicators of drug use in general, reaching 128,000 in 2019. That may reflect the use, in particular use by injecting, of opioids such as fentanyl and its analogues in some regions.

6. Cannabis continues to be the most widely used drug worldwide. Diverse cannabis products have become more potent, while the perception among adolescents of the risks associated with cannabis use is declining rapidly, a trend that risks increasing the negative impact of cannabis on younger generations. As of 2019, some declines have been observed in the use of new psychoactive substances in Europe and North America, but the use of those substances appears to be emerging rapidly in some low- and middle-income countries.

7. Global cocaine manufacture more than doubled over the period 2014–2019, reaching an estimated 1,784 tons in 2019. Global opium production remained stable between 2018 and 2020, amounting to 7,410 tons in 2020. Although direct estimates of the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants are not available, the quantities of such drugs seized worldwide rose sharply in 2019, reaching record levels and

exhibiting an almost sixfold increase over a 10-year period. The Internet, including the open web, seems to increasingly serve as an avenue for the advertisement and sale of synthetic substances, including synthetic drugs and chemicals used in the manufacture of a variety of synthetic drugs.

8. Drug markets in most parts of the world were temporarily disrupted during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have recovered quickly, and the pandemic has triggered new trafficking trends, as well as reinforcing some pre-existing trafficking dynamics. These include larger shipment sizes and the increased use of land and waterway routes, private planes, air cargo, postal parcels and contactless methods for delivering drugs to consumers, such as mail delivery. The non-medical use of cannabis and sedatives increased globally during the pandemic, while North America has seen a spike in opioid overdose deaths since the onset of the pandemic. The pandemic has, however, led to innovation in drug prevention and treatment services, including remote counselling, simplified prescribing requirements and greater flexibility in the use of opioid agonist medication.

III. International cooperation against the world drug problem

A. Follow-up to the implementation of international commitments to address and counter the world drug problem, including follow-up to the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly: action taken by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its subsidiary bodies

9. In follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs focused on accelerating the implementation of all commitments made since 2009. In line with the multi-year workplan adopted in June 2019, the Commission continued to hold its annual thematic sessions to discuss how the different challenges identified in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019 could be best addressed through the implementation of existing policy commitments.

10. The thematic discussions held from 19 to 21 October 2021 in a hybrid format brought together over 600 national practitioners and policymakers from more than 100 States, as well as experts from United Nations entities, intergovernmental and international organizations and civil society. The discussions enabled an interactive and inclusive exchange of good practices and lessons learned in addressing the following challenges: (a) increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime and money-laundering and, in some cases, terrorism, including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism, are observed; (b) the value of confiscated proceeds of crime related to money-laundering arising from drug trafficking at the global level remains low; and (c) the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies for illicit drug-related activities is increasing. The discussions were held using a customized conference platform and webcast for interested stakeholders worldwide. The outcome of the discussions was reflected in a summary by the Chair of the Commission (E/CN.7/2022/CRP.1).

11. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission held in 2021, namely, the regional meetings of the heads of national drug law enforcement agencies (for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean) and the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, were held in an online format as extraordinary sessions from 20 to 24 September 2021, with one day scheduled for each subsidiary body. The sessions brought together 660 participants from 99 States and 40 observers from 11 organizations and provided an opportunity for each subsidiary body to discuss the impact of the pandemic on its region in the context of the topics of the 2021 thematic discussions of the Commission. A procedural report on the sessions of the subsidiary

bodies was made available to the Commission at its sixty-fifth session (E/CN.7/2022/9).

12. The thematic discussions in September 2022 will focus on discussing how responses not in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and not in conformity with applicable international human rights obligations pose a challenge to the implementation of joint commitments based on the principle of common and shared responsibility.

13. At its regular sixty-fifth session, held from 14 to 18 March 2022, the Commission adopted the following four resolutions: (a) resolution 65/1, entitled “Promoting alternative development as a development-oriented drug control strategy, taking into account measures to protect the environment”; (b) resolution 65/2, entitled “Strengthening international cooperation to address the links between illicit drug trafficking and illicit firearms trafficking”; (c) resolution 65/3, entitled “Intensifying efforts to address the diversion of non-scheduled chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of drugs and the proliferation of designer precursors”; and (d) resolution 65/4, entitled “Promoting comprehensive and scientific evidence-based early prevention”.

14. In addition, the Commission decided to include buprenorphine and metonitazene in Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol. The Commission also decided to include eutylone in Schedule II of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971. The Commission further decided to include three fentanyl precursors, namely, 4-AP, 1-boc-4-AP and norfentanyl, in Table I of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

15. At its sixty-fifth session, the Commission devoted attention to scaling up the implementation of the international drug policy commitments on improving the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. That is consistent with the “stocktaking” part of the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, in which States identified challenges to the effective implementation of international commitments, including the fact that the availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes remained low to non-existent in many parts of the world. To kick off the initiative, the Chair of the Commission held a high-level event on the opening day of the Commission’s sixty-fifth session, entitled the “Joint call to action on scaling up the implementation of international drug policy commitments on improving availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes”. The joint call to action raised awareness of the critical need to improve the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including in emergency situations such as those occasioned by the pandemic, to ensure that no patient is left behind. Following that, an awareness-raising event was held on 8 June 2022 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on the margins of the management segment of the Economic and Social Council. That event focused on the same theme in the context of building back better in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further awareness-raising events are to be held in Vienna and at other United Nations offices, including a one-day special forum in the second half of 2022, the aim of which is to bring together experts, national practitioners and policymakers to discuss various issues relating to availability and access. The Commission has also started an information media campaign on Twitter using the dedicated hashtag #NoPatientLeftBehind.¹

B. Collaboration and coordination across the United Nations system

16. The multifaceted nature of the world drug problem requires comprehensive responses, and thus the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

¹ More information on availability and access can be found on the UNODC website (<https://unodc.org>).

cooperates closely with other United Nations entities, including through the UNODC-led United Nations system coordination task team on the implementation of the United Nations system common position on drug-related matters and in the context of thematic programmes.

17. To ensure a comprehensive overview of activities undertaken by United Nations entities in support of the practical implementation of drug policy commitments, in 2017, UNODC created a matrix of United Nations initiatives to that end and encouraged entities to update the information on an annual basis. In the first half of 2022, new initiatives were reported by the Department of Global Communications, the Department of Peace Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNODC (see sect. IV below).

18. The Department of Global Communications produced regular news coverage through its multimedia and multilingual news platforms, including United Nations Web TV, to highlight the range of issues, trends and developments relating to the work of the United Nations in addressing the world drug problem. Events such as World Drug Day, the launches of the annual UNODC *World Drug Report* and the sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs were promoted through the Department's multilingual social media accounts. United Nations information centres around the world organized press events to promote the launch of the *World Drug Report 2021*, while the United Nations Information Service in Vienna distributed press releases on the *World Drug Report 2021* as well as on other drug-related topics. In addition, the Department produced an updated multilingual website to promote World Drug Day in 2021.

19. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs continued its cooperation with relevant United Nations entities. For example, experts from the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), OHCHR, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and UNODC contributed, along with national experts and representatives of intergovernmental and international organizations and civil society, to the Commission's thematic discussions in 2021. The Executive Director of UNODC, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the President of INCB participated in the "Joint call to action" organized by the Chair of the Commission on the opening day of the Commission's sixty-fifth session. The event was webcast on Twitter to a global audience of over 13,000 people. In addition, United Nations entities, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), INCB, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UN-Women and WHO, contributed to the event on availability and access organized by the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs held at United Nations Headquarters (see para. 15 above).

20. At its sixty-fifth session, the Commission considered a conference room paper on inter-agency cooperation and coordination of efforts in addressing and countering the world drug problem (E/CN.7/2022/CRP.3) and heard a briefing on the work of the United Nations system coordination task team under the agenda item entitled "Inter-agency cooperation and coordination of efforts in addressing and countering the world drug problem".

IV. Support for States in thematic areas

A. Demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues

1. Prevention of drug abuse

21. UNODC continued to assist States in increasing their capacities to reduce vulnerability to drug use, drug use disorders and other risky behaviours. During the

reporting period, UNODC supported 29 States in establishing and expanding the implementation of evidence-based drug prevention programmes, including family skills training and life skills education in schools. Training was provided to 400 facilitators, and as a result more than 10,000 families, including families in refugee and humanitarian settings, benefited from improved mental health and resilience, which would, in turn, support the healthy and safe development of their children.

22. In the context of current humanitarian crises, UNODC, in coordination with partners, delivered and translated its tools for parents and caregivers in challenging settings to equip families with the right coping mechanisms and increase children's resilience, while providing continuity of treatment, health-care and social protection services for people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders.

23. UNODC continued to promote drug use prevention for the healthy and safe development of children and young people through the "Listen first" initiative. Following the set of materials on parenting to support families during the COVID-19 pandemic, entitled "The science of care", the "Listen first" initiative produced and disseminated a new set of videos and fact sheets on developing children's social and emotional skills, entitled "The science of skills". In 2021, the campaign was disseminated in over 15 States in 10 languages and reached over 5.4 million people worldwide.

24. UNODC organized a technical consultation session to develop a publication in line with the UNODC/WHO *International Standards on Drug Use Prevention* that assists in improving the role of law enforcement officers in drug prevention in school settings.

25. In addition, UNODC mobilized 24,300 young people to meaningfully participate in the drug prevention efforts of their communities through its Youth Initiative, which includes the Drug Abuse Prevention Centre grants and the UNODC Youth Forum. Held in an online format, the Youth Forum recorded its highest-ever participation in 2022, with 74 young people from 43 States. Youth participants embraced key messages on prevention and prepared a statement that was delivered at the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The UNODC–WHO Informal Scientific Network also developed and presented a statement at the session, focused on prevention and treatment and care for women and girls, including through addressing discrimination and stigma and making adequate resources available for effective prevention and treatment in a gender- and age-responsive manner.

2. Treatment of drug use disorders, rehabilitation, recovery and social reintegration; prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne infectious diseases

26. UNODC continued to disseminate the *International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders* through capacity-building activities for 1,600 policymakers and treatment service providers, ultimately reaching an estimated 34,000 people with drug use disorders in 33 States. The dissemination exercise addressed, among other things, evidence-based information on the prevention and treatment of drug use disorders, treatment for children exposed to drugs at a very young age and community-based opioid overdose management through the Stop Overdose Safely initiative.

27. UNODC and WHO launched the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on the Prevention of Drug Use and the Treatment and Care of Drug Use Disorders, bringing together 15 international and regional intergovernmental organizations to increase the impact of inter-agency collaboration and accelerate the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016, as well as target 3.5 of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages). As at 1 January 2022, WHO had operationalized the eleventh revision of the International

Classification of Diseases, which includes a revised section on disorders due to alcohol, drugs and addictive behaviours.

28. At its sixty-fifth session, the Commission considered three conference room papers prepared by UNODC, on the treatment of drug use disorders and associated mental health disorders in prison settings and forensic hospitals (E/CN.7/2022/CRP.9), comorbidities in drug use disorders (E/CN.7/2022/CRP.12) and promoting non-stigmatizing attitudes to ensure the availability of, access to and delivery of health, care and social services for drug users (E/CN.7/2022/CRP.13).

29. WHO conducted rapid assessments of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental, neurological and substance use services and carried out pulse surveys on the continuity of essential health services during the pandemic. Training webinars were held for policymakers on mitigating the impact of the pandemic on the delivery of measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse. WHO continued to implement its Special Initiative for Mental Health, aimed at advancing mental health policies, advocacy and human rights and scaling up quality interventions and services for people with mental health conditions, including substance use disorders. Implementation is under way in Jordan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Ukraine and Zimbabwe, while preparatory activities have begun in Bangladesh and implementation plans have been developed for Ghana and Nepal.

30. UNODC, as the convening agency within UNAIDS for people who use drugs and people in prison, supported 47 States in developing and implementing HIV interventions for people who use drugs and people in prison, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict and humanitarian settings. To address gender inequalities, discrimination and violence that negatively impact women who inject drugs and women in prison, UNODC organized 96 workshops to disseminate a technical brief entitled “Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and C and syphilis” and a technical guide entitled “Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in prisons”. UNODC field-tested a tool for monitoring epidemiological trends in the vertical transmission of HIV in prisons and led the development of an update report on HIV in prison settings, which was presented to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

31. To support States in addressing inequalities related to health services for people who use drugs, UNODC organized consultations with representatives of academia and the community of people who use drugs and presented the resulting recommendations at the sixty-fifth session of the Commission. UNODC awarded 15 grants to civil society organizations that provide HIV responses for people who use drugs and people in prison and that work with law enforcement authorities to facilitate access to HIV responses. To scale up HIV prevention among people who use stimulant drugs, UNODC developed a global training package accompanied by an online outreach platform for Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

32. WHO supported the development and implementation of opioid agonist maintenance treatment in the context of HIV/AIDS prevention and management in Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa. Together with UNODC and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, WHO provided technical support in Afghanistan by providing mental health and psychosocial support to people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders.

33. UN-Women, through the United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, supported women living with and affected by HIV, including those who use drugs, in gaining access to HIV services and confronting violence against women, and thus helped more than 4,000 women in Egypt and Ukraine gain access to stigma-free HIV prevention information, HIV testing, counselling, psychological and legal support and multi-month antiretroviral medicines to minimize COVID-19 risks and strengthen adherence to HIV treatment. Through the Fund for Gender Equality, UN-Women continued to support vulnerable groups of women in Kyrgyzstan, including women who use drugs, by improving their knowledge of health services, including HIV prevention, treatment and care services,

as well as their access to employment and legal services, peer-to-peer counselling, psychosocial support and humanitarian aid. In the United Republic of Tanzania, UN-Women completed the development and implementation of the gender operational plan for HIV response, which benefits networks of women who use drugs and other groups.

B. Ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion

34. UNODC continued to collaborate with United Nations entities, including IAEA, INCB, UNDP and WHO, and with partners to advocate for increased access to controlled medicines. The Office contributed to regional training sessions organized by the INCB Learning global programme and to other capacity-building events organized by INCB in April, May and June 2022. In addition, UNODC continued to serve on the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, partnering with other United Nations entities to ensure access to controlled medicines for persons suffering from such diseases.

35. In September 2021, INCB, UNODC and WHO published a second joint statement on access to controlled medicines, calling on Governments to facilitate access to medicines containing controlled substances in emergency settings, including during pandemics and climate-related disasters.

36. UNODC continued to work with the African Palliative Care Association to expand the capacity of the health-care workforce in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2021, the skills of 40 medical professionals, including nurses, pharmacists and physicians, were strengthened through technical support and capacity-building. That work resulted in improved health-care services, affording patients in need greater access to controlled medicines for pain management and palliative care.

37. UNODC supported efforts by the Chair of the Commission to scale up the implementation of the international drug policy commitments on improving the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes.

C. Supply reduction and related measures; effective law enforcement; responses to drug-related crime, countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation

1. Prevention of drug-related crime

38. UNODC continued to engage at-risk youth in both face-to-face and online activities through the “Line Up, Live Up” programme and other sports-based interventions aimed at preventing youth involvement in crime, violence and drug use. In 2021, the activities reached 15,000 young people across 15 States, of whom 46 per cent were girls. Girl participants were equipped with targeted life skills training specifically geared towards their empowerment. UNODC also created safe public spaces for the positive engagement and development of young people through the provision of sports equipment to schools and sports and community centres.

39. The police components in Department of Peace Operations mission settings continued to support States in building their criminal investigation, crime analysis and forensic and intelligence-gathering capabilities, as well as the capabilities of their rule of law institutions. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo collaborated with the International Organization for Migration, UNDP, the United Nations Mine Action Service and UNODC on a joint support programme for justice in support of the National Police of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and UNODC carried out a joint project to support national law enforcement agencies in increasing their awareness and

understanding of drug trafficking and organized crime. Preparations are under way for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and UNODC to provide joint support to the South Sudan National Police Service.

2. Countering illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

40. Through its flagship global initiatives, including the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) and the Container Control Programme, UNODC partnered with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to assist States in strengthening border security by supporting port control units, air cargo control units and joint airport interdiction task forces at air, land and sea borders along key drug trafficking routes. Technical assistance and capacity-building were provided to front-line law enforcement officers with regard to profiling passengers and cargo used to transport illicit goods. In 2021, over 175 tons of various narcotic drugs were seized through interventions under the Airport Communication Project and the Container Control Programme.

41. In April 2022, UNODC and WCO organized a regional conference on container control for the Caribbean region as part of the basket fund support to the Haitian National Police. The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti participated in the conference and provided financial support for the participation of the National Police.

42. UNODC also supported States in countering drug trafficking by facilitating cooperation across jurisdictions. In 2021, the Judicial Cooperation Network for Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus facilitated seven judicial cooperation requests and issued 15 coordination alerts on drug seizures in collaboration with the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre. Under its global programme on strengthening criminal justice cooperation along drug trafficking routes, UNODC delivered 298 technical assistance and capacity-building activities in Latin America and West Africa, including 44 investigative case forums aimed at facilitating cooperation and information exchange on post-seizure investigations, benefiting over 15,000 law enforcement officers, prosecutors and criminal justice officers.

3. Addressing links with other forms of organized crime, including money-laundering, corruption and other criminal activities

43. Through the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, UNODC continued to support States in implementing the 1988 Convention and in developing and implementing effective measures to address the laundering of drug proceeds and to deprive criminals and criminal organizations of illicit gains. Law enforcement authorities, including border control, customs and immigration agencies, judicial authorities and financial intelligence units, continued to benefit from tailor-made capacity-building activities, which were also delivered remotely and in a hybrid format owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

44. Through its Global Programme on Cybercrime, UNODC continued to support States in Latin America, South-East Asia and West Africa in strengthening their capabilities to investigate and prosecute online drug trafficking carried out by organized criminal groups operating on the open web and the dark web, generally with cryptocurrency. In 2022, UNODC delivered research and technical advice to law enforcement and criminal justice officers in relation to cross-continental cooperation in the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs and synthetic opioids between Latin America and Asia through darknet and social media platforms.

D. Cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, children, women and communities

1. Drugs and human rights, youth, children, women, vulnerable members of society and communities

45. UNODC continued to support States in improving the quality of comprehensive, evidence- and human rights-based treatment and care services by building the capacities of 360 professionals from 24 States and by developing quality assurance mechanisms. Together with WHO, UNODC launched the publication entitled “Quality assurance in treatment for drug use disorders: key quality standards for service appraisal” during a briefing attended by 240 professionals from 80 States.

46. UNODC continued to work with States in implementing Treatnet Family, a capacity-building programme comprising elements of family therapy for the treatment of adolescents with substance use disorders, including those in contact with the criminal justice system. The published results of a feasibility study demonstrated substance use reduction and improved family functioning, communication and mental well-being.

47. UNODC assisted 19 States in enhancing the application of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) in order to improve the situation of women prisoners and their social reintegration. Prison officers from Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Nigeria, the Sudan and Viet Nam received training on the Bangkok Rules and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). As part of its efforts to promote the alignment of national legislation with the Bangkok Rules and related international standards and norms, UNODC provided legislative assistance to Benin, the Gambia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and Zambia, which resulted in revised prison laws and other relevant legislation which are pending formal adoption. In Thailand and Viet Nam, UNODC conducted workshops to roll out the *Toolkit on Gender-Responsive Non-Custodial Measures*, which is focused on, inter alia, the subject of women arrested for drug-related crime.

48. OHCHR continued to collaborate with UNAIDS, UNDP, WHO and other partners to disseminate and promote the international guidelines on human rights and drug policy. In September 2021, the third regional implementation dialogue for the international guidelines on human rights and drug policy was jointly organized by OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP and other partners. A national dialogue with the judiciary of Albania was organized by OHCHR, UNDP and other partners, leading to the integration of the guidelines into the national training curricula for judges.

49. OHCHR produced an information video to advocate for the decriminalization of the possession and use of drugs for personal use. In March 2022, OHCHR facilitated the presentation of the study by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on arbitrary detention relating to drug policies (A/HRC/47/40), prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 42/22, to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Virtual regional events on the study were organized in Africa, Asia and Europe from July 2021 to June 2022.

50. Together with UN-Women and the International Association of Women Police, UNODC published the *Handbook on Gender-Responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*, which includes guidance on reducing stereotyping and discrimination against women who use drugs and on assessing and addressing drug and alcohol problems that may increase the risk of perpetrators committing gender-based violence.

51. In addition, UN-Women, UNODC and other partners organized a side event entitled “Women who use drugs: intersecting injustice and opportunity” on the margins of the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The event explored challenges and highlighted opportunities for reform in terms of addressing

gender inequality, drug policies and other social and structural issues that create intersecting inequalities for women who use drugs and who face challenges in realizing their rights to health.

2. Proportionate and effective policies and responses, as well as legal guarantees and safeguards pertaining to criminal justice proceedings and the justice sector

52. UNODC provided legislative advice to Nigeria in support of its efforts to amend the provisions in its National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Act relating to fair sentencing policies, with a view to aligning them with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules) and related international standards.

53. UNODC, in partnership with the European Union, implemented the project entitled “Response to drugs and related organized crime in Nigeria”, which was focused on the review of human rights standards and the development of relevant training tools for law enforcement officers in Nigeria. The Legal Advocacy Response to Drugs Initiative, which comprises a network of 127 lawyers and legal practitioners across Nigeria, continued to provide pro bono legal services to indigent drug arrestees, drug users and their families, ensuring access to justice for the poor and preventing the stigmatization of persons involved in drug-related crime. In 2021, members of the Initiative defended 73 indigent drug arrestees and concluded 116 cases. Members also participated in the development and implementation of the sentencing guidelines on drugs and related offences of the Federal High Court of Nigeria.

54. UNODC continued to develop technical support material on treatment as an alternative to conviction and punishment during four different stages of the criminal justice continuum. Following the first informal preparatory consultation in May 2021, which was focused on alternatives during the pre-arrest stage and the role of law enforcement officers, the second consultation, in October 2021, was focused on the pretrial stage and covered key principles for enabling the implementation of non-custodial measures that are feasible, accountable and effective from both the health and justice perspectives. Following the third and fourth consultations, to be held in 2022, the publication of a package of resources in early 2023 is envisioned. In addition, a pilot programme on providing treatment as an alternative was launched in Kenya.

E. Cross-cutting issues in addressing and countering the world drug problem: evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats, including new psychoactive substances, in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and other relevant international instruments

1. Addressing new psychoactive substances, amphetamine-type stimulants, including methamphetamine, the diversion of precursors and pre-precursors and the non-medical use and misuse of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

55. UNODC disseminated information on emerging threats posed by synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals used in their illicit manufacture through its early warning advisory on new psychoactive substances, including through more than 26 public messages and three publications. Information on the most harmful, prevalent and persistent new psychoactive substances was provided to WHO for the review of substances at the forty-fourth meeting of its Expert Committee on Drug Dependence and used for the recommendation of three substances for international control.

56. UNODC, through its global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) programme, continued to provide capacity-building and support to

States in generating and analysing data and scientific information on synthetic drugs. Two regional reports on synthetic drugs were published in 2021.

57. UNODC continued to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of national forensic laboratories and law enforcement agencies by providing manuals on recommended laboratory methods and forensic guidelines, developing and delivering virtual and laboratory training courses on the safe handling, investigation and detection of drugs, including new psychoactive substances and their precursors, providing field-testing kits, including handheld Raman spectroscopic devices, providing controlled substances for scientific use from the UNODC reference standards collection, and organizing assistance activities and international collaborative exercises, including a proficiency test for national laboratories in which 310 laboratories from 86 States participated in 2021. In addition, UNODC provided scientific support to law enforcement agencies in Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America and West Africa. Technical capacity-building on the safe handling and disposal of seized chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs continued for States in Central and South America.

58. The use of the United Nations Toolkit on Synthetic Drugs, a joint effort of INCB, UNODC, UPU and WHO launched in March 2019, was promoted during the reporting period. To support States during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Toolkit includes a specialized module on the implications of the pandemic for responses to the synthetic drug problem.

59. In November 2021, in response to the increasing global synthetic drug problem, UNODC launched its Synthetic Drug Strategy, in which four spheres of action are articulated: multilateralism, early warning, health responses and counter-narcotics interventions.

2. Evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats

60. During the reporting period, several activities were implemented to strengthen drug data and analysis, starting with the launch of the revised annual report questionnaire in June 2021. The revised questionnaire was implemented through a web-based instrument, the Data eXchange Platform, and supported by a network of focal points appointed by States.

61. In 2021, 12 technical briefings for focal points and the relevant national authorities were held in order to introduce the content of the revised annual report questionnaire and the new platform. The briefings were attended by over 600 participants from 100 States. At the conclusion of the 2021 annual report questionnaire data campaign, data had been reported by 105 States and territories, a figure comparable to previous years. The nomination of national focal points has proved crucial in facilitating submissions by States.

62. UNODC supported the development of drug use surveys in Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The Office continued to collaborate with UNAIDS, WHO and civil society organizations to streamline international data collection and harmonize standards in drug epidemiology.

63. A new analytical publication series entitled *Cocaine Insights* was introduced by UNODC to deliver the latest knowledge and trends relating to cocaine markets. In parallel, a series of expert meetings involving States in Africa, Europe and Latin America was conducted to foster exchanges of knowledge on cocaine markets and production methods and to share expertise on monitoring and analysis. A pilot data-collection instrument on production sites was launched in States in Africa and Latin America. Through the Afghan Opiate Trade Project, UNODC continued to monitor opiate trafficking from Afghanistan through analysis and expert consultations.

F. Strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility

64. In contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs submitted a substantive contribution to the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development and a text proposal for the ministerial declaration focused on the theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The Commission participated in the Economic and Social Council coordination segment, held in February 2022, with the aim of facilitating coordination in the United Nations system and among subsidiary bodies of the Council. The Chair of the Commission submitted a video message and participated in the segment entitled “Reflections on the work of ECOSOC subsidiary bodies”. The Commission also participated in the management segment in June 2022 and reported on the work of the Commission in preparation for the 2022 high-level political forum.

65. The Commission continued its efforts to enhance vertical cooperation with the Economic and Social Council, its parent body, and horizontal cooperation with other functional commissions of the Council. In support of the work of the Council, a standing agenda item on contributions by the Commission to the work of the Council is included in the agenda of the regular sessions of the Commission. In addition, the Commission has actively contributed to the ongoing review by the Council of the substantive work and working methods of its subsidiary bodies. On 8 July 2021, on the margins of the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, both Vienna-based functional commissions of the Council, organized a joint event entitled “Sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19”.

G. Alternative development; regional, interregional, and international cooperation on development-oriented, balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues

1. Socioeconomic issues and alternative development

66. UNODC continued to provide technical assistance to Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Peru and to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to vulnerable populations affected by illicit drug crop cultivation, drug use, poverty and insecurity. Alternative development programmes are aimed at helping communities cope with adversity by generating and supporting licit sources of income, including by providing assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises and informal sector workers. Licit livelihood support became increasingly important to communities in 2020 and 2021, as it strengthened community resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic.

67. In Afghanistan, the Office’s priority remains supporting the move away from illicit drug crop cultivation and providing immediate assistance to meet basic human needs and save lives and livelihoods. In its initial phase, the UNODC alternative development programme will provide support for 5,000 rural households in the transition from the illicit cultivation and sale of opium poppy to licit entrepreneurial avenues in a sustainable manner with a view to improving their quality of life.

68. An analysis by UNODC of poverty and income changes among beneficiaries of large-scale alternative development projects in Afghanistan and Colombia from 2010 to date showed that beneficiaries tended to be the poorest within their communities. Successful projects involved a comprehensive package of interventions for each beneficiary, including cash resources, quick income generation, food security, long-term productive activities with market access, the promotion of community cohesion and capacity-building.

69. In Afghanistan, UNODC conducted impact assessments of the alternative development projects jointly implemented with UNDP. Those assessments provided statistically valid and robust evidence of the impact of alternative development projects on multidimensional issues related to poverty and illicit drug crop cultivation. In the past year, UNODC has been strengthening its assessment of the impact of alternative development on food security given the current food crisis in Afghanistan.

2. Technical and financial cooperation for comprehensive and balanced development-oriented drug policies and viable economic alternatives

70. UNODC continued its partnership with Germany, Peru and Thailand to increase policy dialogue to promote alternative development. The joint efforts included the presentation of a conference room paper (E/CN.7/2022/CRP.7) and the organization of a side event at the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as well as the organization of an expert group meeting on alternative development.

71. UNODC continued to improve programmes by forging public-private partnerships and strengthening market access and fair trade. In 2021, the Office continued to foster strong cooperation with the Malongo coffee company, which is currently concluding contracts with farming cooperatives in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar and will soon also do so in Colombia.

72. The special trust fund for Afghanistan was established in October 2021 to support United Nations joint programming in the context of the humanitarian crisis. Under the fund, UNODC provides farming communities with effective food security options and licit production alternatives.

73. UNODC continued its technical cooperation with Afghanistan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and other States on alternative development projects to strengthen and harmonize data collection with a view to obtaining robust comparative evidence of what works in reducing poverty and illicit drug crop cultivation and how to optimize and fast-track alternative development results in different local contexts.

H. Governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

1. Information on the work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

74. The standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC continued to play an important role as a forum for discussions of strategic and budgetary matters, evaluation, oversight, programme development and implementation, gender mainstreaming and strengthening human resources governance. At its reconvened sixty-fourth session, in December 2021, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft decision entitled "Improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: extension of the mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime". The Council later adopted the draft decision as decision 2022/316, in which it decided, inter alia: (a) to renew the mandate of the working group for an unlimited period of time; (b) that the working group would be led by a Bureau; (c) that the working group would continue to hold a formal meeting at least once a year that would include a dialogue with the Executive Director of UNODC; and (d) that items under consideration by the working group would be grouped into operational and programmatic parts. The Commission also adopted resolution 64/7, in which it set out the substantive focus of the work of the working group. A dialogue

with the Executive Director was held on 4 February 2022, followed by regular meetings in February and July 2022. Members of the Bureau of the working group were endorsed at the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and at the thirty-first session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

2. Information on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Strategy 2021–2025

75. The UNODC Strategy 2021–2025 takes a people-centred approach and outlines the unique position of UNODC across the United Nations pillars of peace and security, development and human rights, as well as its threefold role encompassing normative work, research and technical assistance in support of States. The Strategy is built around five thematic areas: (a) addressing and countering the world drug problem; (b) preventing and countering organized crime; (c) preventing and countering corruption and economic crime; (d) preventing and countering terrorism; and (e) crime prevention and criminal justice.

76. UNODC established a monitoring and reporting framework for the Strategy to ensure that progress is regularly observed, and updates are shared with States. UNODC provided an update on the status of the implementation of the Strategy to the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the Office in February 2022. Reporting on the implementation of the Strategy will be done through two channels, namely, the report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNODC, which was made available to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its sixty-fifth session ([E/CN.7/2022/2–E/CN.15/2022/2](#)), and the annual results-based progress report, which will be presented to the working group in the second half of 2022.

3. Information on strategic planning

77. In accordance with the UNODC Strategy 2021–2025, UNODC adopted several strategic documents for specific regions and States, in which the main commitments and priorities of the Strategy are adapted to specific needs at the relevant geographical level. In November 2021, the Executive Director launched the programme for Central Asia 2022–2025. In February 2022, the Executive Director, together with the President of Colombia, launched the Strategic Vision for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022–2025. In March 2022, the UNODC Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030 was launched, and the new regional programme for South-East Asia and the Pacific 2022–2026 was finalized in close collaboration with key regional partners. In June 2022, the second United Nations Office at Vienna/UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2022–2026) was launched.

4. Information on integrated programming

78. UNODC continued the transition of its projects and programmes into the Secretariat-wide integrated planning, management and reporting solution in Umoja, which provides a link between programme expenditure and substantive results. The system also allows the linking of expenditures to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and gender mainstreaming targets. Through the adoption of revised management instructions on approval and the revision of global, regional and national programmes, UNODC worked to improve the coordination and integration of programmes and to mainstream cross-cutting commitments on gender equality, youth empowerment, disability inclusion and respect for human rights in its programmatic work.

5. Information on evaluation

79. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNODC finalized 15 evaluations and the first strategic evaluation on gender equality during the reporting period. Those activities included the work of UNODC in Central and West Asia, with a case study on the implementation of the Strengthening Families

Programme. The cluster evaluation of the drug dependence and treatment programmes of UNODC is also expected to be completed in 2022. In addition, UNODC implemented pilot evaluations to increase timeliness and usefulness, in line with the revised evaluation policy.

80. The Unite Evaluations application was used for all UNODC evaluations, facilitating access to evaluation-based knowledge. UNODC also led the first joint system-wide meta-synthesis of evaluation and oversight results under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, thereby effectively informing policy formulation.

6. Information on fundraising and private sector cooperation initiatives

81. The UNODC fundraising plan was developed and approved in 2021 to expand existing partnerships and further diversify the donor base. In 2021, donor interest in UNODC mandate areas was expanded through greater outreach and strategic engagement, with pledges reaching \$370 million. The trend towards increasing partner investments in crime prevention mandate areas continued.

7. Information on the financial situation of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

82. Despite efforts to increase fundraising and partnerships, the financial situation of UNODC remains vulnerable. The Office continues to face a persistent deterioration in general-purpose income and added pressures on its regular budget and programme support cost funds. General-purpose income is projected to be \$9 million for the period 2022–2023, reflecting a stagnant trend. The low level of unearmarked funding is a major challenge to the effective implementation of the mandates and programmes of UNODC and to its ability to manage its operations strategically, exercise effective corporate oversight, fund key activities and launch new initiatives and programmes.

83. The persistence of the pandemic continued to affect programme delivery, although improvements were observed. UNODC continued to review its activities, coordinate the scheduling of activities with donors and national beneficiaries and take measures to support implementation at headquarters and in the field. As a result of the Office's efforts, programme delivery is projected to reach \$585.2 million in the period 2022–2023, an increase of \$26.6 million (4.8 per cent) from the \$558.6 million recorded for the period 2020–2021.

V. Concluding observations

84. Recent international developments, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have posed unprecedented challenges to the world and to well-established processes in the United Nations system. The pandemic has undermined a decade of progress made on sustainable development, entailing a significant setback in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is now more evident than ever that global problems cannot be addressed in isolation; the adoption of a holistic, balanced and coordinated approach based on the principle of common and shared responsibility is of utmost importance.

85. Ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes has become more challenging in recent times and must be prioritized. The pandemic has exacerbated disruptions of the supply chain for controlled medicines in several parts of the world, while some States face emergency situations that make it even more difficult for patients to receive the medicines needed. I therefore call upon all States to honour the commitments made and ensure that no patient or person is left behind.

86. At the same time, it remains important to prevent the non-medical use and diversion of controlled substances. The rapid proliferation of new psychoactive substances and non-scheduled precursors poses a global challenge. Of particular concern is the continued emergence of designer precursors with no known legitimate

use that are used in the illicit manufacture of controlled substances. It is imperative that those substances be placed under international control without undue delay. I call upon States to cooperate and enhance efforts at all levels to address this challenge.

87. International cooperation has become indispensable in the light of the growing links between drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime. To effectively counter drug trafficking and disrupt the activities of organized criminal groups, I call upon States to intensify regional and international cooperation in areas such as capacity-building, financial and technical assistance and joint operations.

88. In addressing the world drug problem, it is imperative that States do not lose sight of those at the heart of the problem. People who use drugs are often afflicted by mental health disorders and other conditions, including HIV and AIDS. As vulnerable members of society, they have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. It is important that States address the health and social consequences of drug use and implement multipronged, multisectoral and humane approaches that cater to the needs of people who use drugs.

89. Despite these challenging times, UNODC and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as one of the governing bodies of UNODC, have ensured business continuity and continued to fulfil their mandates and support States in the implementation of drug policy commitments. The Commission and UNODC have innovatively and skilfully adapted their substantive direction and working methods to address current realities and emerging issues. In line with the “Vienna spirit” of inclusivity and openness, they have continued to engage and collaborate with States, United Nations entities, intergovernmental and international organizations and civil society to address all aspects of the world drug problem. In navigating the complex global tapestry, it is important to recognize and seize opportunities that will enable the global community to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and advance the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
