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African Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fifteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Addis Ababa, 8–10 April 2025

Draft report

Rapporteur: Khaled Elmenshawy (Egypt)

Addendum

II. Recommendations (*continued*)

B. Substantive items and workshops – Agenda item 5 (c)

3. Addressing and countering crime – including organized crime and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations – in new, emerging and evolving forms (agenda item 5); and getting ahead: strengthening data collection and analysis to better protect people and planet in times of new, emerging and evolving forms of crime (workshop 3)
 1. An introductory presentation was delivered by a representative of the Secretariat introducing the agenda item and workshop.
 2. Statements were made by the representatives of Morocco, Angola, Tunisia, South Africa, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Ghana, Egypt, Kenya, Algeria, Namibia, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania.
 3. A statement was also made by the observer of the United Arab Emirates.
 4. A statement was also made by the observers for the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).
 5. A statement was furthermore made by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime.

Summary of deliberations

6. Many speakers highlighted the globalization of organized crime, its evolving dynamics, and use of new technologies hindering global efforts toward peace, security and sustainable development. Some speakers specifically referred to terrorism as a challenge to peace and security in Africa that undermines sustainable development, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and that fosters an environment where young people are pushed to seek opportunities elsewhere.
7. Speakers noted that as organized crime evolves, adapts, and exploits technological innovations, it is crucial that Member States' strategies also evolve. In



this regard, many speakers called for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to prevent and respond to crime engaging different governmental stakeholders as well as civil society organizations, local communities and the private sector.

8. To effectively prevent and address crime, several speakers stressed the need for enhanced regional and international cooperation, robust legal frameworks, specialized investigation and prosecution units, as well as digital forensics experts and laboratories. Avoiding duplication and promoting synergy between regional and global efforts was stressed and the need for collaboration between relevant international organizations and African organizations was highlighted.

9. Reference was made by a number of speakers to the need for better data collection and analysis to allow for proactive measures. They highlighted the potential of advanced technologies to enhance data analysis capabilities and help identify emerging trends in criminal activities. In this context, it was suggested that law enforcement agencies receive training on these technologies to strengthen their digital literacy and improve their ability to detect, investigate, and respond to criminal activities, while ensuring that such efforts respected individuals fundamental rights and privacy.

10. Reference was also made to the increased intersection of transnational organized crime with other criminal activities, including corruption, which necessitated holistic approaches. In this context, it was mentioned that climate change will create new opportunities for organized crime and that the intensification of migration flows may fuel human trafficking.

11. Several speakers referred to links between transnational organized crime and terrorism, including the financing of terrorist activities through the commission of other types of offences such as migrant smuggling, as well as trafficking in persons, drugs, cultural property, wildlife, hazardous wastes and timber. In addition, several speakers mentioned the challenges they face with regard to illegal mining and trafficking in precious metals.

12. Many speakers flagged the need to prevent and counter terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization and recruitment to terrorism by addressing root causes, as well as by strengthening border control capacities and the need for effective coordination and information-sharing. The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters was identified as a persistent challenge for criminal justice actors.

13. As regards the financing of terrorism, reference was made to the non-binding guiding principles for Member States on preventing, detecting, and disrupting the use of new and emerging financial technologies for terrorist purposes (the Algeria Guiding Principles, S/2025/22) which were recently adopted by the Security Council.

14. Many speakers underlined the increased use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and artificial intelligence by organized crime and terrorist groups, including to launder proceeds of crime. Several speakers mentioned notably the misuse of cryptocurrencies by organized criminal groups, including with the aim of laundering money and the emerging global threat posed by online scams, stressing the need to take action within the African region as well as to strengthen exchange of good practices and international cooperation on this matter. Several speakers mentioned the adoption of the United Nations Convention on Cybercrime as an important step in the efforts to strengthen global cooperation in this regard.

15. The need to strengthen public-private partnerships to address financial crime and prevent the criminal misuse of ICTs was mentioned by several speakers, including the need to establish regional protocols for information-sharing.

16. Some speakers expressed concern about drug-related crimes, including the illicit manufacturing and flows of synthetic drugs, calling for full implementation of all obligations under the three international drug control conventions, effective international cooperation, as well as technical assistance and capacity-building.

17. The transnational nature of crimes that affect the environment was highlighted by many speakers. It was suggested that countering such crimes should be addressed through a holistic approach which takes into account the nexus between these crimes and other criminal offences, including money-laundering. Some speakers called, in this regard, for the negotiation of an additional protocol to the UNTOC to cover crimes that affect the environment falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in order to enable future Parties to it to foster international cooperation frameworks for tackling such crimes.

18. A number of speakers also referred to the issue of illicit financial flows, including those linked to the illegal exploitation of Africa's natural resources and the need to curb these flows and strengthen domestic and regional capacity to monitor, trace and respond to them. Some speakers referred to African instruments related to illicit financial flows and asset recovery; others referred to United Nations resolutions that emphasize the importance of international cooperation to guarantee asset recovery.

19. Speakers highlighted the importance of strengthening national coordination to counter money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, including through enhanced sharing of information among financial intelligence units, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.

20. The need to strengthen international judicial and law enforcement cooperation both within and between regions was emphasized by many speakers. The importance of ensuring effective implementation of existing multilateral instruments containing detailed provisions on international cooperation in criminal matters, including the United Nations Organized Crime Convention, was stressed by a number of speakers, as well as the need for cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union to support data-sharing and avoid duplication of efforts. Reference was also made to existing platforms, including INTERPOL's I-24/7 global police communications system.

21. To strengthen international cooperation targeting proceeds of crime and criminal assets, a number of speakers referred to the use of the new INTERPOL Silver Notices and Diffusions' tool that allows member countries to track and gather intelligence on assets linked to serious crimes, as well as underlined the importance of asset recovery inter-agency networks and other bodies supporting international cooperation and asset recovery.

22. A number of speakers emphasized the importance of addressing hate crime facilitated by means of new technologies and the significant impact it has on women, girls and children. Reference was also made to the importance of countering racism, discrimination and xenophobia, including islamophobia.

23. Several speakers mentioned the importance of ensuring equal access to justice for all and strengthening community resilience to crime and violence and highlighted the need to prevent and adequately respond to gender-based violence and violence against children and to take into account the cultural diversity. Several speakers highlighted the importance of protecting victims, witnesses and whistleblowers within the judicial system.

24. Many speakers emphasized economic development, social inclusion, and education as being important for building resilient societies, stressing that creating opportunities for youth and promoting a culture of peace and tolerance, help to reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies and organized crime networks.

Outcome of deliberations

25. The following recommendations, which were not negotiated by the participants, were identified:

(a) Strengthen regional and international cooperation at all levels to combat terrorism, corruption, cyber-enabled and dependent crimes, human trafficking,

migrant smuggling, drug-related crimes, illicit trafficking of firearms, trafficking in cultural properties and crimes that affect the environment, including by improving information-sharing, exchange of best practices, joint investigations, border control capacities, the provision of technical assistance; promote synergy and avoid duplication between regional and global efforts in this regard;

(b) Create a network of crime regional and global observatories and establishing regional centres of excellence that use scientific research to monitor and map criminal trends in real-time, produce forward-looking analyses, and provide policymakers with reliable data to inform their strategies;

(c) Strengthen international cooperation mechanisms to facilitate extradition, mutual legal assistance, as well as cooperation for purposes of confiscation and recovery of illegally acquired assets across borders, particularly strong South-North cooperation;

(d) Monitor progress and share information on the implementation of existing applicable international crime conventions, including UNTOC and its protocols, UNCAC, the three international drug control conventions and the international counter-terrorism instruments; utilizing the review mechanisms for UNTOC and UNCAC was highlighted in this regard;

(e) Support the entry into force and the operationalization of the United Nations Cybercrime Convention, and encourages constructive engagement in the negotiations regarding the elaboration of a draft protocol supplementary to that convention addressing, inter alia, the detection, disruption, investigation and prosecution of more cyber-enabled crimes;

(f) Improve capacities related to digital forensics, as well as the collection, preservation and sharing of electronic evidence in line with national legislation and requirements, and establish a digital evidence and forensic support network for Africa, in collaboration with UNODC, to support criminal investigations and prosecutions;

(g) Encourage the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and geospatial technologies in crime prevention and justice delivery, while ensuring transparency, privacy and data protection through strong regulatory frameworks;

(h) Strengthen capacities to adopt advanced investigative techniques to counter the use of the ICT and AI technologies by organized criminal groups and terrorist groups;

(i) Enhance efforts to prevent and counter terrorism by improving criminal intelligence analysis, strengthening the investigation and prosecution of terrorism-related acts, as well as boosting capacities to counter the spread of terrorism propaganda on online platforms;

(j) Improve knowledge and skills to prevent and counter new techniques for organized crimes and terrorism financing using virtual currencies and assets, including the use of tools and applications for analysing and tracking suspicious transactions using cryptocurrencies, as well as for strengthening digital forensics;

(k) Enhance efforts to develop and implement effective measures to combat fraud, money-laundering and other financial crimes, including through the development of an African financial intelligence platform, designed to address the economic dimension of related crimes and overcome data fragmentation;

(l) Integrate criminological considerations into climate change adaptation policies as climate change may exacerbate criminal activity; consider the development of a specific African legal instrument on environmental crimes, including early warning mechanisms;

(m) Develop effective measures to combat and address trafficking in persons for the purpose of removal of organs;

(n) Underscore the need for more effective international cooperation, technical assistance and capacity-building to prevent and combat the trafficking in cultural property and suggest in this regard establishing a working group to address all the aspects related to this matter;

(o) Promote victim-centred approaches by, inter alia, enhancing collaboration of national authorities with organizations supporting victims; consider the creation of an African programme for the protection of witnesses and whistle-blowers, inspired by international good practices but tailored to the region;

(p) Explore the use of technology for increasing access to justice for all for while ensuring the protection of human rights; develop secure technologies that help to provide victims with confidential and accessible channels to report crimes.
