Report of the Third Regional Meeting on Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics held in Chengdu, China, 29-31 October 2019

I. INTRODUCTION

This meeting was organized in the framework of the 'Roadmap to Improve the Quality and Availability of Crime Statistics at the National and International Level' (E/CN.3/2013/11 and E/CN.3/2015/8) that was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission and the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

Building on the work of the "First Regional Meeting on Crime Statistics and Victimization Surveys" in Bangkok, Thailand in 2014 and the "Second Regional Meeting on Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics" in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2016, the "Third Regional Meeting on Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics: *Towards modern and efficient crime statistics systems*" was held in Chengdu, P.R. China, and is the latest regional collaboration in the field of crime and criminal justice statistics.

The meeting brought together national experts of the Asia and the Pacific region to review recent progress on crime and criminal justice statistics and identify ways to improve data quality and availability in the region, specifically related to reporting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators, supporting responses to the UN-Crime Trends Survey (UN-CTS) and implementation assistance for the International Classification of Crimes for Statistical Purposes (ICCS).

The objectives of the meeting were:

1. To obtain a clear understanding of Asia-Pacific countries' crime and criminal justice statistics systems, including national organization and technical capacity to produce and analyse data.
2. To discuss methodological challenges and available tools to strengthen reliability and validity of crime data.
3. To raise awareness of updated tools to monitor the 2030 agenda, particularly regarding SDG16 goals.
4. To develop strategies for strengthening and consolidating national statistical systems for UN-CTS reporting.

5. To develop understanding of the ICCS implementation, promote its use for national crime measuring and coordination and as an important component for UN-CTS responses and SDG monitoring.

6. To exchange best practices and promote regional and international activities to increase capacity to provide information related to the SDG Indicators, UN-CTS and the ICCS.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The event was jointly organized by the Institute for Crime Prevention of the Ministry of Justice (ICPMJ), P.R. China, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in partnership with the UNODC-KOSTAT Centre of Excellence for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific (UNODC-KOSTAT CoE) and the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), with support from the UNODC-INEGI Centre of Excellence for Statistical Information on Governance, Security, Victimization and Justice (UNODC-INEGI CoE).

A. Opening

The meeting was opened by Ms. Gao Zhen, Director General of ICPMJ, P.R. China. Opening remarks were given by Ms. Bai Ping, Inspector of the International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Justice, P.R. China, Mr. Liu Zhicheng, Director General of Sichuan Provincial Department of Justice, P.R. China, Mr. Enrico Bisogno, Unit Chief of UNODC, and Ms. Kes Kyungsoon Choi, Coordinator of UNODC-KOSTAT CoE. In addition, congratulatory videos were given by Ms. Gemma van Halderen, Director of ESCAP and Mr. Kittypong Kittayarak, Executive Director of TIJ.

B. Attendance

The meeting was attended by 50 representatives from national statistical agencies and/or from national ministries/agencies responsible for producing crime statistics from the following countries: Cambodia, P.R. China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lao P.D.R, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. (Annex 2).

III. OUTCOME OF THE SESSIONS

A. Taking Stock: Recent Progress and Current Objectives for Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics in the Asia-Pacific Region

The session discussed the main challenges faced by states to produce and disseminate statistical data on crime and criminal justice. Insufficient data production at national level, often depending on lack of resources, was identified as the first challenge to address. Basic data on crime is often lacking in regional countries and is scarcely disaggregated by relevant characteristics. For example, data on intentional homicide, other forms of crime, crime victimization data (age, sex, victim/perpetrator relationship) and operations of criminal justice system (arrest, prosecution, convictions, prisons) are scarcely available.

The analysis conducted by the UNODC-KOSTAT CoE also indicated that available data is not always reported through existing international channels, such as the UN-CTS and/or for the purpose of SDG monitoring. Also, open data dissemination at national level is still insufficient in the region, where crime and justice statistics is a policy area with lower levels of data accessibility and openness.

A number of national reports gave insight into priorities for states and areas requiring technical assistance. P.R.China provided two reports; the first on crime trends, most notably current patterns such as the rise in "white-collar crimes" including fraud and other economic crimes, while serious violent crimes declined, while the second presentation centred on a recidivism study by ICPMJ. Presentations by Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao P.D.R, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa and Vietnam provided insights into national structures for data collection, annual reports, and administrative and survey data collection.

B. Focus on Indicators for SDGs: What Sources are Available and Used for Reporting on Global SDG Indicators?

The topic was introduced by an international overview of SDG indicator data collection, followed by presentations on national structures required for data collection from Indonesia focusing homicide data and Maldives focusing on prison data. The TIJ presentation focused on the "Fear of Crime Surveys" providing an insight into SDG indicator 16.1.4 (Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live).

During the working group discussion, countries shared their experiences and challenges in producing national indicators for SDGs. Problems were wide-ranging but primarily,

issues centred on the lack of coordination between national institutions. Such limited coordination was also reflected in data gaps, including in administrative records, which is infrequently shared and subsequently affecting reporting. Participants also raised concerns about statistical capacity, suggesting that technical methodological training may be required. A specific concern was echoed in relation to survey-based SDG indicators: crime victimization surveys are still a rare occurrence in countries of the Asia-Pacific region and specific activities and investment is needed in this regard. The burden is higher for low population countries, since samples may represent a substantial portion of the total population.

Participants also highlighted that the topic of crime and criminal justice statistics in some countries is not regarded as a national priority at the political level and therefore activities raising awareness and other advocacy is needed to raise the profile and visibility of this field.

C. Priorities, Capacities and Training Needs on the ICCS; Global, Regional and National Experiences and Perspectives

Presentations focused on the implementation of the ICCS, with a formal presentation given by UNODC, followed by experiences from TIJ, demonstrating the development of ICCS correspondence tables and the Thai translated version of the ICCS and Central University for Nationalities, P.R.China, gave examples of translating terms and other relevant matching issues.

Participants completed a questionnaire based on ICCS benefits, stage of implementation, national awareness and support requirements. Most participants saw the benefits of ICCS in terms of standardisation, both internally and externally. Respondents have achieved a diverse range of ICCS implementation stages, from initial stages of awareness raising, to national matching.

Raising ICCS awareness by engaging stakeholders through information campaigns, meetings and training workshops to demonstrate its benefits ensures support while overcoming challenges during implementation, for example, with definitional issues in national matching. Particularly, engaging with high-level decision makers in the criminal justice and statistical systems to increase level of priority in the political agenda.

Problems emerging from ICCS implementation including matching national laws to the International Classification, low priority of crime statistics in the region and conservative attitudes towards perceived changes to national legal systems, revealed a misunderstanding of the purpose of the ICCS, which clearly does not require any

legislative change. The commitment of resources and acknowledgements related to funding were also raised.

Areas of requested support included training through technical assistance and workshops. States in the early stages of the process requested assistance in work plan development and awareness raising efforts, whereas, states in the stage of matching national laws to categories in the International Classification requested support and training for researchers and legal experts.

Participants specified that the implementation manual of the ICCS should include examples of national strategies and work plans, moreover, specific (and nationally relevant) examples of correspondence tables, definitional issues and how to overcome them.

D. New Developments and Instruments for Modern Crime Statistics

The initial presentation on UNODC developments included publishing the 2018 *Manual on Corruption Surveys* and future research into measuring nepotism. The first national presentation focused on P.R.China's Peoples' Court insight into judicial statistics to increase efficiency, judicial openness, trial management and assisting decision making. The second presentation by Supreme Peoples' Procuratorate, showed the development of an automated statistics system. The Ministry of Justice gave the third presentation which focused on the use of information technology for the advancement of a unified directory of data resources to enhance data gathering and maximise efficiency. Mongolia provided the final presentation which gave insight into the collaborative approach to enhance Mongolia's data gathering and dissemination.

Discussions focused on innovative progress and methods on how to collect data in the criminal justice system and performance assessment, particularly related to facilitating statistical harmonization and inter-agency cooperation at the national level. For example, in China, the central components of this system were related to the automatization process and real-time updates with broad accessibility to the input generated at the prosecution and judicial level.

Participants were informed of the opportunity to take part in a pilot survey on SDG 16 indicators not currently being measured, either to be integrated into pre-existing population surveys or as independent surveys. Participants were encouraged to contact the UNODC-KOSTAT Centre of Excellence for further information and registration.

E. The Role and Planned Activities of the New Centre of Excellence for Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific

The role of the UNODC-KOSTAT CoE was presented and discussed. Building on the successful experience of the UNODC-INEGI CoE, established in Mexico in 2011, the UNODC-KOSTAT Centre of Excellence was founded in 2019 to assist Member States in the field of Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice in Asia and the Pacific. The CoE will develop as a knowledge hub to offer and support technical assistance and training starting from the reporting of SDGs indicators, supporting responses to the UN-CTS and implementation assistance for the ICCS. Accordingly, liaising with the UNODC-KOSTAT CoE also ensures broadening the partnership and an appropriation of the tools set forward by UNODC. Emphasis was placed on regional ownership of the CoE, provided also through the Regional Advisory Group (RAG) to offer suggestions on areas for innovation and strategic direction, comprising national experts, NGOs academia and other relevant research institutes. Member states and all participants were encouraged to engage with the CoE to ensure relevant capacity building and training. Participants highlighted its value to build long-term partnerships and programmes.

F. Capability Assessment on the Production of Crime and Criminal Justice Data

National working groups conducted a summary assessment on their statistical capacity, which highlighted some common assets and challenges. Different practices were reported at national level in terms of coordination mechanisms and, in all countries, the SDG monitoring framework has triggered stronger national joint collaboration. The ICCS has also led to stronger coordination within countries that have started its implementation.

Experiences of countries conducting household surveys are very diverse across the region and some of them indicated possible interest to include dedicated modules on Goal 16 indicators in on-going surveys.

The capability assessment revealed diversity in the region. For example, when asked who coordinates crime and criminal justice statistics, responses included National Statistics Office, General Prosecutors Office and several other agencies. When asked about household surveys, many states said they conducted them but many were part of Census or 5-year household surveys without independent victimization or corruption surveys. Reasons for this included lack of technical capacity and cost of surveys. For prioritisation, participants again provided diverse opinions on whether crime and criminal justice statistics was a priority; however, the general consensus was that SDG monitoring was improving the visibility of the field.

G. Mini Workshop on Corruption Surveys

The topic of corruption surveys was introduced as a consolidated tool for collection of SDG indicators 16.5.1 and 16.5.2. Based on the content of the UNODC Manual on Corruption Surveys, in-depth reflections of benefits and drawbacks were presented as well as details on the collection of this sort through add-on modules and stand-alone surveys.

Participants were separated into 3 working groups addressing the following topics: 1) Stakeholders involved in conducting corruption surveys 2) Topics that ought to be covered in a corruption survey at the national level and 3) Ways to ask for issues of bribery and corruption in a population survey.

The groups enabled a greater focus on specific nuances in issues faced by countries to develop these measurements, but also successful experiences of corruption surveys were shared by the Philippines and Indonesia. More broadly, group reports focused on the need for the involvement of all relevant national stakeholders to ensure collaborative approaches; involvement of the national statistics office was also considered necessary. Topics covered in a corruption survey, should align with those UNODC Manual on Corruption Surveys. Participants also felt that the corruption and bribery should be approached in a gentle way, for example, not using terms such as "corruption" or "bribery" as they be too direct, or people may not realise their actions are either of these things.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD

Participants identified several activities, priorities and good practices at national, regional and international levels, to improve crime statistics.

A. Activities at national level

1. Establishment or strengthening of a single coordinating body for ICCS implementation at country level; this entity could also promote coordination of UN-CTS reporting and production of SDG indicators in the areas of crime, violence, illicit trafficking, access to justice, corruption and criminal justice system (police, courts and prison) statistics. It is important to maintain continuous communication with UNODC about the entity responsible for ICCS implementation and UN-CTS reporting.

2. Improve coordination of national mechanisms to produce crime and criminal justice statistics by identifying all existing data sources, sharing data and harmonizing statistical procedures.
3. Engage in advocacy at country level about the importance of producing crime and criminal justice statistics and use all possible venues, including with SDG monitoring activities, to show the value of crime and criminal justice statistics.
4. Become familiar with national SDG monitoring framework and ensure conformity with existing SDG mechanisms.
5. Consider the development of dedicated surveys or add-on modules in SDG indicators.

B. Activities at regional/international level

1. Support methodological development through innovation, sharing of best practice and a strong network of stakeholders for capacity building in the region.
2. Contribute to the development of online trainings on ICCS Capacity building and development of an ICCS Implementation manual.
3. Raise awareness at the political level during significant events including; International Crime Congress in Kyoto, Japan 2020 and the 5th International Conference on Governance, Crime and Justice Statistics, Mexico City, Mexico 2020.
4. Assist in the development and implementation of a pilot survey specifically targeting indicators on SDG16.
5. Conduct capacity assessments to ensure relevant data can be utilised to most effectively support member states in the region.
6. Establish Regional Advisory Group of the UNODC-KOSTAT Centre of Excellence composed of key experts, practitioners and other relevant stakeholders at regional level.
7. Consider a sub-regional focus when implementing capacity building activities, for example in the Pacific region. Such an approach proves to be beneficial to address the specificities of some countries in a region which is very diverse in terms of statistical infrastructure including countries with very advanced statistical systems while others are at the early stages of development.