

1997/27. Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme with regard to the development of crime statistics and the operations of criminal justice systems

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1996/11 of 23 July 1996, entitled "International cooperation and assistance in the management of the criminal justice system: computerization of criminal justice operations and the development, analysis and policy use of crime and criminal justice information", in which it urged Member States to assist the Secretary-General in strengthening the technical cooperation capacity of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network,

Recalling also the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting on Criminal Justice Management and Information Projects: Improving National and International Data Collection and Exchange, held at Buenos Aires from 10 to 13 March 1997,¹⁵⁴

Considering the importance of the exchange of information and technical assistance with regard to the computerization of operational information in criminal justice,

Mindful that the development of adequate national capacities is vital to the reliability of global statistics,

Considering the urgent need for statistics on conventional types of crime and on transnational crime that can be used for comparative purposes,

Considering also that crime and criminal justice statistics that can be used for comparative purposes are an indispensable tool for designing criminal policies,

Taking into account the fact that modern information technologies offer new opportunities both for improved operational information systems and for the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information,

Noting with appreciation the directory of computerized criminal justice information systems¹⁵⁵ published by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, and the draft model of the *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics*, to be published by the Council of Europe,

Noting with appreciation also the interregional training course entitled "The United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network: Providing Information to and from Developing Countries", hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea, which was held at Seoul from 9 to 13 September 1996,

1. Urges Member States to designate offices or bodies responsible for the coordination of data collection at the country level, with a view to improving cooperation with the United Nations, and to communicate information on the designated coordinating offices or bodies to the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the Secretariat;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to provide assistance, upon request, to those Member States that might have difficulties in replying to the questionnaires related to the United Nations surveys of crime trends and the operations of criminal justice systems;

3. Recommends that the Secretary-General carry out the Sixth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems for the period 1995–1997 and that subsequent core surveys be conducted every three or four years and include, when needed, supplementary surveys on selected topics;

4. Urges Member States and the relevant institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network to assist the Secretary-General in establishing an advisory steering group, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/11, drawing upon extrabudgetary resources, to carry out the following operational tasks:

(a) Assisting Member States, at their request, through, *inter alia*, a standing pool of experts, in the review and assessment of experiences in the computerization of criminal justice operations and/or in the implementation of actual computerization projects;

(b) Assisting Member States, at their request, through, *inter alia*, a standing pool of experts, in technical cooperation projects to strengthen national capacities for the collection, analysis and dissemination of crime and criminal justice statistics, including participation in the United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems and the international surveys of victims of crime;

(c) Assisting Member States, at their request, in the training, at the national, regional and interregional levels, of experts in the collection, analysis, dissemination and policy use of crime and criminal justice statistics;

(d) Assisting the Secretary-General in the design of a core questionnaire for future United Nations surveys of crime trends and operations of criminal justice systems and in the design of supplementary questionnaires on extensive ad hoc topics;

(e) Assisting the Secretary-General in the design of an effective framework for the collection of data on transnational crime;

(f) Assisting in the dissemination of statistical and other relevant policy information on crime and criminal justice by means of modern information technologies, in collaboration with the United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network and the United Nations On-line Crime and Justice Clearing House;

(g) Assisting in the training of officials responsible for maintaining national crime and criminal justice statistics in order to improve national data collection capacities;

5. Welcomes the offer of the Governments of Argentina and the Netherlands to support the work of the advisory steering group by hosting regional and/or interregional meetings, and invites other Member States to provide similar support;

6. Also welcomes the offer of the Government of Canada to assist the Secretariat, which will work in cooperation with the members of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and other interested experts, in the preparation of the *Guide on the Development and Analysis of Criminal Justice Statistics*;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to develop, in cooperation with the members of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and other interested experts, an annex to the above-mentioned *Guide* that would include specific examples of basic statistical instruments used for data collection, such as questionnaires, information output, reports, classifications, definitions and victimological issues, with a view to making national approaches to data collecting more compatible, thus making data comparable.

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¹⁵⁴ E/CN.15/1997/5/Add.1, annex.

¹⁵⁵ 1995 Directory: Computerized Criminal Justice Information Systems, HEUNI Publication Series, No. 27 (The Hague, 1995).