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Integration and coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice: other activities in support of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in particular activities of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, non-governmental organizations and other bodies

Report of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Note by the Secretary-General**

1. The report of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was prepared pursuant to a decision of the Board taken at its meeting held on 16 and 17 January 2019 to report to the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The report contains information on the work of, and the results achieved by, the Institute, in accordance with its Statute (Council resolution 1989/56, annex).
2. The report also contains substantive information on the UNICRI Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022, as approved by the Board of Trustees. On the basis of the report, the Commission is requested to welcome the implementation of the Strategic Programme Framework, which contains the tools and approaches used by UNICRI to carry out its activities, as well as the Institute's six strategic priorities, and to invite Member States to cooperate with UNICRI on and make voluntary contributions to various activities for the implementation of the Framework.

* E/CN.15/2019/1.

** The present note was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



Results achieved by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Report of the Board of Trustees

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) was established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1086 B (XXXIX) of 1965. The Institute is an autonomous institution of the United Nations and is governed by its Board of Trustees, which provides strategic direction and contributes to the setting of priorities. The Board reports periodically to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
2. Within the broad scope of its mandate to develop and implement improved policies in the field of crime prevention and control, the mission of UNICRI is to advance justice and the rule of law in support of peace and sustainable development.
3. UNICRI works in specialized niches and selected areas within the fields of crime prevention, justice, security governance, and the risks and benefits of technological advances. UNICRI provides a vital foundation for United Nations policy and operations through its cutting-edge and specialized training and capacity-building programmes. The Institute serves as a conduit for channelling innovative ideas from within and outside the United Nations system.
4. In 2018, UNICRI continued to deploy a wide range of tools through partnerships and the provision of technical assistance to multiple actors worldwide, tailoring its approach to the particular dynamics of specific countries, regions and local contexts.

A. Strategic Programme Framework

5. Relying on the information it has accumulated through research, needs assessments and analyses of evolving trends, as well as on feedback received from partners, academics, civil society actors, policymakers and practitioners, UNICRI has identified the following threats and challenges to be addressed:
 - Radicalization and violent extremism: the lack of context-specific responses, weak criminal justice systems, and gaps in national and transnational cooperation
 - The involvement of transnational organized criminal groups in licit and illicit markets: shadow economies, illicit financial flows and possible links with terrorist networks
 - Weak security governance and rule of law and lack of institutional accountability in post-conflict areas
 - High-tech security: encompassing global threats and solutions
 - Threats to crowded spaces and vulnerable targets
 - Vulnerabilities to criminal exploitation, gender inequalities and human rights violations against vulnerable populations
 - Emerging trends in crimes impacting the environment: illegal extraction, the use of and trade in environmental resources and trafficking in hazardous substances
6. To address these threats and challenges, the Institute developed tailored, context-specific interventions based on concrete needs and citizen-centred approaches. In particular, the local dimension of its action was strengthened, as one of the principal challenges in the upcoming decades will be to build secure, resilient and flourishing communities.

7. Reflecting the threats and challenges identified, a new Strategic Programme Framework has been developed by UNICRI for the period 2019–2022, focusing on the following strategic priorities:

- (a) Preventing and countering violent extremism;
- (b) Countering organized crime and fighting all forms of trafficking and illicit financial flows;
- (c) Reinforcing the rule of law in post-conflict countries;
- (d) Security through research, technology and innovation;
- (e) Threat response and risk mitigation: security governance;
- (f) Preventing crime through the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups.

8. The criminal justice, security and governance issues highlighted within the Strategic Programme Framework, along with the strategic priorities of the Framework, have been carefully crafted to support and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. Implementing the strategic priorities established in the Framework reflects the aspirations embedded within the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Institute has the tools and expertise related to research, training delivery, capacity-building, technical assistance and policy support to assist intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations in achieving the goals. The Institute's priorities are aligned in particular with Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which entails the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and building effective and accountable institutions, as well as Goals 2 to 6, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15.

B. Tools and approaches

9. In order to achieve these goals and confront the evolving array of traditional and emerging threats, UNICRI adopted a multisectoral and holistic approach, incorporating applied and action-oriented research, the exchange and dissemination of knowledge, training and the creation of strong partnerships as integral components.

10. UNICRI promoted research to expand the knowledge and understanding of problems and tailor appropriate interventions. Specific research areas in 2018 included a compilation of good practices and lessons learned for a comprehensive approach to rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist offenders, enhancing the understanding of crimes that have serious impacts on the environment, the development of a comprehensive analytical framework to advance the understanding of different types of illicit financial flows, and the evaluation of innovative projects and activities aimed at preventing and countering radicalization, terrorist recruitment and violent extremism. Research initiatives were aimed at providing comparative information on different policy options and their actual or potential success, thus supporting and contributing to an effective programme design and implementation process. Moreover, to support the formulation of targeted social and criminal policy strategies, research carried out by the Institute was also aimed at exploring how crime and violence hinder development. Activities in that area included the collection of qualitative and quantitative data and the analysis of multiple relationships between processes of socioeconomic development, trends in crime and the functioning of criminal justice systems.

11. The Institute's training programme served as a worldwide centre for excellence on issues of security, justice and human rights, and actively contributed to the establishment of sound and sustainable mechanisms for transferring the internal expertise of the Institute. Drawing on a well-developed in-house capacity to design, deliver, manage and evaluate learning activities, UNICRI training personnel took a cross-cutting approach to their work in the various priority focus areas of the Institute. The work included continued technical support for the implementation of the Master's

degree programme and short post-graduate education courses, which were centred around the principles of the Institute's mandate and were focused on crime prevention, criminal justice, security, international criminal law and human rights. That was complemented by tailor-made professional training to develop the capacity of judicial, legislative, law enforcement and prison personnel, psychologists, social workers and media professionals. Training that employed modern and effective training methodologies was developed and delivered to relevant stakeholders, with the support of a highly-renowned network of experts and partnerships. The pool of experts used for training consisted of the Institute's internal subject-matter experts, as well as academics, practitioners and relevant senior United Nations officials, ensuring the provision of diverse insights and perspectives. As in past years, a number of topics related to organized crime and transnational crime, including, but not limited to, drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, environmental crime and the rule of law, were taught by staff members of UNODC. At the same time, UNICRI contributed to the revision of university-level teaching modules on crime prevention and criminal justice within the framework of the UNODC Education for Justice initiative. Two of the modules will be tested during the implementation of the Institute's 2018–2019 Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice programme.

12. UNICRI continued to provide on-the-ground practical advice and mentoring in a multitude of highly specialized crime- and justice-related thematic areas. In addition, UNICRI supported a broad range of actors in the process of designing, planning and implementing medium- to long-term programmes. The Institute also advised counterparts on crime and justice-related issues at both the policy and operational levels, in order to enable them to respond more effectively to specific challenges.

13. Serving as a platform for consultation and cooperation among Member States, local government institutions, research institutions, international organizations, private entities and civil society, UNICRI played a crucial role in organizing and coordinating efforts to identify cutting-edge ideas and up-to-date approaches. In 2018, UNICRI expanded its partnerships and networking efforts in order to successfully carry out its mandate and support the overall mission of the United Nations, working closely with a variety of stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions and international organizations, as well as a range of subject-matter experts. Through participatory engagement, UNICRI brought together policymakers, practitioners and academics to ensure that programmatic efforts were carried out by means of a holistic approach. Moreover, such an approach was taken in the development of the joint UNICRI-UNODC programmes to support Nigeria in preventing and countering violent extremism and in rehabilitating and integrating violent extremist and/or terrorist offenders in prison settings, and to build capacity to address linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime, which were submitted to the Office of Counter-Terrorism Consolidated Multi-Year Appeal for 2019–2020 in December 2018.

14. As part of the unique role of UNICRI, the many good practices and lessons learned arising from its programmes and activities were shared with the international community and served as a global resource. UNICRI employed various methods to enhance learning and raise awareness in the field of crime and justice, such as the organization and hosting of international conferences, workshops, specialized courses for practitioners and the annual Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice degree programme. Furthermore, UNICRI directly supported the professional development of national stakeholders in the field, while also promoting cooperation, knowledge-sharing and increased awareness among them based on the Institute's acquired expertise and international good practices. Those efforts were strengthened by the Institute's serial publications, including the magazine *Freedom from Fear (F3)*, as well as policy papers and specialized materials concerning the Institute's research projects, training efforts and field activities.

15. In 2018, UNICRI celebrated 50 years in advancing justice and security through innovation and dialogue at a side event held in Vienna on the margins of the

twenty-seventh session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the International Organizations in Vienna, the side event focused on the role of civil society in countering radicalization and violent extremism, and on enhancing security, human rights and development through research, technology and innovation. During the side event, in a session on the legacy of Judge Giovanni Falcone in the fight against transnational organized crime, UNICRI nominated Maria Falcone as an advocate for UNICRI.

16. The present report of the Board of Trustees contains a summary of the work carried out by UNICRI in 2018, in line with the strategic priorities of UNICRI described above, as well as substantive information on the Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022, as approved by the Board of Trustees.

17. The work undertaken by UNICRI in 2018 was funded exclusively from voluntary contributions. Its primary donors were Canada, Chile, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Thailand, the United States of America, the European Commission, the European Union, and several private companies, foundations and international organizations.

18. The work of UNICRI made a broad impact at the country, regional and international levels, and the beneficiaries of its technical assistance were wide-ranging. Its programme of activities was delivered through UNICRI headquarters in Turin, Italy, and an extended network of offices, including the Liaison Office in Rome, the project offices in Brussels and Geneva and the centres of excellence on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation in Algiers, Amman, Manila, Nairobi, Rabat, Tashkent and Tbilisi.

II. Preventing and countering violent extremism

19. As a signatory to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, UNICRI contributed to the implementation of coordinated and coherent efforts across the United Nations system to prevent and counter terrorism. The Institute played a key role in supporting Member States in translating the good practices identified within the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy into national policies.

20. Drawing on more than 15 years of experience in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism, UNICRI identified three priority areas for its future initiatives in support of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and related resolutions: (a) enhancing efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders and returning foreign terrorist fighters, both inside and outside prisons; (b) supporting local communities and civil society organizations in preventing and countering radicalization and extremist activity; and (c) working with vulnerable populations, in particular at-risk youth, to strengthen the prevention and countering of violent extremism through empowerment and resilience-building.

21. Throughout 2018, UNICRI worked to enhance understanding of the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism, and assisted Member States in incorporating effective measures into their crime prevention and counter-terrorism strategies. Efforts in that regard included initiatives aimed at improving policies to prevent trafficking in, inter alia, persons, drugs, arms and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, both for profit and operational purposes.

A. Rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders

22. UNICRI has developed considerable expertise in the area of rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders. During 2018, the Institute continued to support Member States in translating into national policies the generalized good practices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum Rome Memorandum, which addresses the rehabilitation needs of incarcerated violent extremists. Cooperation

with Member States (Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, the Philippines and Thailand) was established to develop and implement tailored rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for violent extremist offenders and high-risk inmates in prison settings.

23. Within that framework, support was provided to bridge the gaps between in-prison and community-based care, strengthen cooperation and information-sharing networks among stakeholders, increase capacity and raise awareness among communities in order to promote successful social reintegration.

24. Among the initiatives in that area, a training-of-trainers course for psychologists and social workers was held in Jordan. The course was aimed at enhancing knowledge and capacity in relation to treating violent extremist inmates and at providing instruction on ways to counter violent extremism and employ effective rehabilitation and reintegration strategies.

25. Building on the lessons learned in cooperation and partnership with Member States, UNICRI organized the conference on the theme “Bridging the gaps between prison and community-based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for violent extremist offenders: good practices, lessons learned and a comprehensive way forward”. Representatives of Governments and international and regional organizations from more than 20 countries discussed strategies and challenges with regard to enhancing rehabilitation throughout the criminal justice system, including during the pretrial and post-conviction stages. In that connection, pretrial diversion programmes and national strategies that take into account the potential role of religious leaders, psychologists and family members were considered crucial to better managing prison settings.

26. Data and analysis stemming from the debates held at international conferences and the expertise gained over the past 15 years were consolidated in a publication entitled *Strengthening Efforts to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism: Good Practices and Lessons Learned for a Comprehensive Approach to Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders*.

27. Within the framework of the High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 28 and 29 June 2018, UNICRI and the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations co-organized a side event on the theme “Rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremist offenders”. The side event was focused on context-specific models to support Member States in designing risk assessment tools, implementing customized rehabilitation and reintegration pathways in prison and after release, diverting juveniles from the criminal justice system, strengthening stakeholders’ capacity and engagement in order to sustain cooperation and long-term commitment, and developing national action plans.

B. Countering radicalization and violent extremism in the Sahel-Maghreb region through the engagement of civil society

28. Focusing on the Sahel-Maghreb region, UNICRI supported civil society in the implementation and evaluation of innovative projects aimed at preventing and countering radicalization, terrorist recruitment and violent extremism. Since 2015, UNICRI has been piloting diverse grass-roots projects with the aim of developing a tested methodology for the identification, selection, engagement, monitoring and evaluation of promising grass-roots interventions. The project supports existing research by providing empirical information on what is effective in countering violent extremism and why. It seeks to understand the reasons behind the greater impact of and higher prospects for sustainability of certain activities. The approach taken by the pilot project is applicable to other regions that are affected by similar phenomena.

29. In 2018, UNICRI provided micro-grants to more than 70 civil society organizations to implement small-scale interventions involving a diverse range of target groups composed of young people, women, religious leaders, farmers, journalists and local authorities. The interventions addressed a wide range of themes, such as the promotion of human rights, conflict management, citizen participation, religious tolerance, women's rights, media empowerment and cultural issues.

30. The grantees delivered a variety of outputs, including research papers on the key drivers of radicalization, training and audiovisual materials, and events to raise awareness about community resilience against violent extremism. In addition, UNICRI created a repository database in different languages of all the deliverables produced by the grantees. With the Institute's support, the grantees have empowered community actors in the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives and have increased the capacity of communities to overcome challenges and threats related to radicalization.

C. Assessing the preconditions for developing a pilot programme to divert juveniles from violent extremism

31. On the basis of the results of consultations and the knowledge acquired over the years, UNICRI continued to shed light on the vulnerability of children and juveniles in the context of counter-terrorism.

32. Following a study on foreign terrorist fighters and vulnerable groups at risk of being involved in terrorism activities, UNICRI conducted an analysis of juvenile justice systems and alternative measures and diversion programmes in five selected Member States. In that connection, UNICRI expanded the diversion programme in Kenya with a view to further developing its research and supporting the development of international guidelines to improve probation mechanisms, diversion and alternative measures for the protection of vulnerable groups allegedly involved in terrorism activities.

33. Two workshops were held in Nairobi to review the benefits of diversion and alternative measures in tackling the radicalization cycle. The first workshop involved participants from the probation services and the judiciary and included the sharing of probation models for juveniles with serious crime records developed by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Italy. Other international standards were also discussed and considered within the local context, to better focus the action needed by the national Government.

34. The second workshop involved officers from the judiciary and the probation and social services, who were trained to identify the main priorities of a road map of alternative measures for juveniles allegedly involved in terrorism and other serious crime. Four main areas of intervention were identified: legislative reform, capacity-building, programme development and regional coordination; the key stakeholders to lead the process were also identified.

D. Nexus between terrorism and organized crime

35. Under the umbrella of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and building on its long-standing expertise, UNICRI partnered with the Government of the Netherlands to launch the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism Initiative.

36. The initiative focuses on the regional variations of the nexus, in all its forms and manifestations. In 2018, regional workshops were held in the Balkan region (Tirana, February 2018); the South and South-East Asia region (Singapore, March 2018); and the Horn of Africa and East Africa region (Nairobi, May 2018).

37. A diverse range of relevant stakeholders took part in the workshops, including representatives of government agencies, academia, the private sector, international

and regional organizations, and civil society and non-governmental organizations. The workshops involved close cooperation and coordination between UNICRI and UNODC; UNODC experts attended all of the workshops and contributed actively to the sharing of experiences and lessons learned in relation to the nexus between terrorism and organized crime, as well as to the development of a good practices document. In parallel, UNICRI experts attended several UNODC workshops and training sessions in order to provide an overview of the analytical framework for the concepts related to the nexus and how to address it.

38. On the basis of the information and data gathered during the workshops, and after further consultations with relevant stakeholders, UNICRI, in cooperation with the Netherlands and under the auspices of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, developed a document entitled “The Hague good practices on the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism”. The document was endorsed at the ninth ministerial plenary meeting of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, held in New York in September 2018, and was presented in October 2018 at an open briefing by the Counter-Terrorism Committee on the nexus between international terrorism and transnational organized crime.

39. In order to translate the good practices contained in the document into concrete actions, UNICRI is currently developing a toolkit that is expected to help Member States to better understand and identify the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism and how it is manifested and facilitated in specific contexts, including how the phenomenon works to erode State capacity and overall security, and that is expected to provide Member States with guidance on responding to the links between organized crime and terrorism, as well as on building capacity, in order to further enable them to address the nexus and its associated crimes. The toolkit is expected to be made available in the first quarter of 2019.

III. Countering organized crime and fighting all forms of trafficking and illicit financial flows

40. UNICRI continued to assist Member States in enhancing their capacities to detect, investigate and prosecute all forms of illicit trafficking, including trafficking in precious metals and gemstones, counterfeit products, hazardous waste and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material.

41. Initiatives in that area led to the production and dissemination of advanced knowledge about the evolution of organized crime strategies, the connections between different forms of illicit trafficking, and the illicit financial flows generated by them.

42. Furthermore, the initiatives contributed to the identification of the key drivers behind illicit movements of funds and provided government agencies with up-to-date technical expertise on how to better prevent, counter and predict organized criminal activities and how to better trace, freeze, seize, confiscate and recover assets linked to major acts of corruption.

A. Assisting countries in asset recovery

43. UNICRI continued to assist Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, and the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network, in the establishment of new mechanisms to effectively trace and recover illicitly obtained assets.

44. The assistance included peer-to-peer missions, the delivery of expert technical advice on the drafting of laws and the organization of the Regional Forum on Asset Recovery in Tunis. The Regional Forum was attended by more than 50 participants from key countries of the Middle East and North Africa region, including Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, as well as by participants from Morocco and Jordan, who were invited by EuroMed Justice. Experts from France, Belgium and international and regional organizations also contributed to the Forum. The peer-to-peer missions and

the Regional Forum provided excellent opportunities for sharing information and good practices. Moreover, a new draft guide for forensic financial analysts, the final version of which is expected to be available in 2019, was prepared to assist in the methodical analysis of suspicious financial transactions that are often linked to money-laundering and other serious crimes.

45. In addition, mentoring was provided in specific cases to assist the participating countries in applying their existing laws to recover substantial amounts of funds that had been stolen by former regime officials.

B. Sustainable Development Goal 16: improving the conceptualization and methods of analysis related to illicit financial flows through evidence-based research on target 16.4

46. In order to advance understanding of the phenomenon of illicit financial flows and develop new analytical tools, UNICRI conducted country-level assessments of such flows across different world regions. The research served as an initial context-specific examination of illicit financial flows within a larger research agenda.

47. A key output of the research was a report on drivers and key factors related to illicit financial flows, and obstacles hampering economic and social development and impeding progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16. Existing research recognizes the importance of illicit financial flows for governance, and advocates for greater control over illicit movements of funds. However, the analysis of drivers, or enablers, of illicit financial flows is relatively scarce, with the few exceptions often lacking solid empirical data. The research attempted to fill that gap by focusing on the primary causal factors behind the dynamics of illicit financial flows.

48. Another important output was the development of a report on key tools that facilitates the updating and reclassifying of information. In that regard, UNICRI, with the technical support of the European Organization for Nuclear Research, and in cooperation with the Italian National Anti-Mafia and Counter-terrorism Directorate, tested how visualization technology can support the analysis of organized criminal groups' investments in the legal economy. The tool can support authorities in the identification of infiltration strategies and trends and promotes innovative approaches to estimating and visualizing the magnitude of illicit financial flows and their impact on socioeconomic development.

C. Criminal case studies relating to intellectual property rights

49. In cooperation with the European Union Intellectual Property Office, UNICRI continued to conduct in-depth analyses of case studies on infringements of intellectual property rights. The research was aimed at enhancing knowledge and developing the skills of key legal stakeholders in the fight against intellectual property offences.

50. A set of pilot case studies related to operations and investigations conducted by European law enforcement bodies in selected countries were analysed, with a view to enhancing knowledge and laying the foundation for the development of awareness-raising activities and training sessions for judges and prosecutors.

D. Capacity-building in relation to the involvement of transnational organized criminal groups in the precious metals and gemstones supply chain

51. A capacity-building initiative on the involvement of transnational organized criminal groups in the precious metals and gemstones supply chain was developed for law enforcement agencies and relevant judicial officials, in collaboration with the

National Commissioner of Police of South Africa. Under the initiative, training was provided to 45 senior-level participants representing several law enforcement agencies and the judiciary in different regions of South Africa. Representatives of the security sector of the mining industry contributed to the successful delivery of the training. The training provided an opportunity for informal networking and the sharing of investigative methods to combat organized crime involving illicit mining and the unauthorized sale of precious metals, and included information on relevant regulations and legislation.

E. State of knowledge of crimes that have serious impacts on the environment

52. In 2018, the United Nations Environment Programme and UNICRI published a report entitled *The State of Knowledge of Crimes that Have Serious Impacts on the Environment*. The report reviews the magnitude of the problem of crimes that have serious impacts on the environment, identifying key trends in terms of the main perpetrators and most-affected regions and countries in relation to six types of environmental crime. The report also describes the main gaps identified in relation to tackling environmental crime and the types of responses to such crime at the global, regional and national levels. It is expected that the outcomes of the study will contribute to increasing the capacity of Governments to prevent, combat and ultimately reduce environmental crime.

F. Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice degree programme

53. UNICRI has been expanding its postgraduate education programme, offering a wide range of on-campus and decentralized training programmes to meet a variety of professional needs in the field of international criminal justice and transnational crime. In 2018, UNICRI, in cooperation with the United Nations-mandated University for Peace, implemented the Master of Laws in Transnational Crime and Justice degree programme. The programme was attended by 37 students from 23 countries.

54. The students in the Master of Laws programme, together with five young attorneys, attended the eighth International Criminal Law Defence Seminar to reinforce their capacities in the field of international criminal justice and procedure. The seminar was organized in cooperation with the Office of Public Counsel for the Defence of the International Criminal Court. Thanks to the participation of renowned experts, the seminar represented a unique opportunity to acquire a deep understanding of defence within the framework of international criminal law.

G. Programme of short courses

55. In 2018, UNICRI organized spring and summer short courses on the nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism, and on migration and human rights, in cooperation with John Cabot University. The courses provided the opportunity to examine professional, legal, social and academic perspectives through theoretical lectures, round-table discussions, dynamic case studies and practical exercises. During the intensive one-week courses, 50 participants were guided by eminent experts to critically deepen their knowledge of current issues related to migration, the protection of human rights, gender issues, crimes against the environment and the links between organized crime and terrorism.

IV. Reinforcing the rule of law in post-conflict countries

56. In 2018, UNICRI undertook several initiatives to strengthen sustainable development, peacebuilding and democratic processes, including by promoting accountable institutions and the rule of law and building strong judicial institutions in post-conflict countries.

57. In that connection, the Institute worked to raise national stakeholders' awareness of the needs and gaps identified within their national systems in relation to fully complying with international juvenile justice standards in their counter-terrorism policies and practices.

58. The Institute's support to Member States in tracing and recovering assets linked to corruption and other forms of serious crime contributed to strengthening the rule of law and public confidence, and served as a model for post-conflict countries that are considering undertaking the recovery of stolen assets. UNICRI provided technical advice in the development of appropriate legal frameworks and operational practices in order to help countries resolve cases as quickly, transparently and efficiently as possible, ensuring that recovered assets are directed towards high-priority development needs. Such practices, which demonstrate that the rule of law is prevalent, also bolster the willingness of foreign jurisdictions to return seized and confiscated assets to war-torn countries or countries whose populations have suffered from rampant corruption.

59. In 10 communities in Burkina Faso, Chad and the Niger, UNICRI promoted more transparent management of public affairs. In partnership with the organization Réseau des Organisations pour la Transparence et l'Analyse Budgétaire, the Institute supported municipal authorities in conducting an inclusive and participatory budget development process. As a result, five communities adopted more socially responsible municipal budgets envisaging increased investments in the local economy, infrastructure (electricity, water and roads), schools, public health, agriculture and forestation. The process of democratizing budget development through a more inclusive decision-making process and transparent resource management contributed to building citizens' confidence in local institutions. Through its intervention, UNICRI supported social cohesion and contributed to enhanced security.

60. UNICRI also contributed to the reinforcement of the rule of law in developing and post-conflict countries by providing learning activities at the postgraduate and professional levels. In 2018, out of the 84 participants in UNICRI postgraduate learning activities, 19 were from developing countries, countries in transition or post-conflict countries. Drawing on the knowledge and practical expertise acquired in those activities, participants have played an active role in promoting a culture of peace and respect for the rule of law in their countries of origin.

61. The training expertise of UNICRI and its ability to design courses and develop manuals are well-suited to the purpose of strengthening the rule of law and reinforcing the legal capacities of post-conflict countries.

V. Security through research, technology and innovation

62. UNICRI supported Member States, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, the scientific and academic community, and other relevant stakeholders to enhance their understanding of both the risks and opportunities generated by the latest developments in science and technology. The Institute also promoted awareness of the contribution of technological advances to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics

63. Following the signing of the host country agreement between UNICRI and the Netherlands on the establishment of the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics in The Hague, UNICRI undertook a number of initiatives in 2018 to advance the discussion on the governance of robotics and artificial intelligence and to enhance the understanding of the risk-benefit duality of those technologies through improved coordination, information-gathering and dissemination, training, awareness-raising and outreach activities.

64. Among those initiatives was the first global meeting on the risks and benefits of artificial intelligence and robotics for law enforcement, organized jointly with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and held at its Innovation Centre in Singapore. The two-day event brought together 50 participants from 20 countries, including law enforcement officials and partners from the private sector and academia. A report on artificial intelligence and robotics for law enforcement, co-authored by UNICRI and INTERPOL, was also produced as an output of the event.

65. Moreover, UNICRI and the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies jointly hosted the international conference entitled “Artificial Intelligence – Reshaping National Security” in Shanghai, China. During the conference, 30 experts, including representatives of government, the private sector, academia and civil society, discussed important questions related to the challenges and opportunities that artificial intelligence presents to national security, the malicious use of artificial intelligence, the use of artificial intelligence in law enforcement, current geopolitics in relation to artificial intelligence and the dangers of an artificial-intelligence arms race, the importance of strengthening multi-stakeholder cooperation, and the social and economic impact of automation on national security.

66. In addition, an educational session on using artificial intelligence and blockchain technology for good purposes was organized jointly with the T.M.C. Asser Institute – Centre for International and European Law. The event was attended by over 100 participants, including representatives of embassies and ministries based in The Hague.

67. Lastly, a study on the risks and benefits of artificial intelligence and robotics in crime prevention, criminal justice, law enforcement and national security was commenced and a comprehensive matrix of cases in which such technologies were used by law enforcement agencies was under preparation.

B. International Network on Biotechnology

68. Advances in life sciences and biotechnology are enabling new possibilities in research, medicine and industry. Nonetheless, along with the emergence of these new realities, there are safety, security and ethical concerns that point to the need for responsible life science research and innovation. In that context, UNICRI launched the International Network on Biotechnology, which is committed to advancing education and raising awareness about responsible life science research and innovation.

69. In 2018, leading entities such as the Argentine Microbiology Association and the European Molecular Biology Organization joined the network. Efforts were undertaken to expand the network by including partners from strategically important countries such as China, Japan and Switzerland. Those efforts proved to be successful and entities such as Tianjin University (China), the National Defence Medical College Research Institute (Japan) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Switzerland) also joined the network.

70. Meanwhile, a portal to host and share relevant educational and awareness-raising materials was launched. After conducting a review of those materials, UNICRI updated the portal with improved versions of several resources. Innovative educational resources such as descriptive videos and a virtual tour of a

biological laboratory highlighting its safety and security features were also finalized and added to the portal. The portal has proved to be a very useful and cost-effective means for sharing knowledge and has been greatly appreciated by the network partners.

C. Security Improvements through Research, Technology and Innovation

71. In 2018, UNICRI provided continued support to Member States by analysing and enhancing understanding of the global impact of technological changes and the opportunities and challenges presented by such changes. Through the establishment of the cooperation platform Security Improvements through Research, Technology and Innovation, based in Geneva and involving United Nations entities, international organizations, Member States, the private sector, civil society, the scientific and academic community, and other relevant stakeholders, UNICRI completed a series of reports containing risk scenarios on biotechnology and blockchain technology.

72. The first group of risk scenarios describes how exponential advances in biotechnology, the globalization of biological research and the convergence of technological fields are rapidly giving rise to innovative solutions in medicine, agriculture and industry, but at the same time are posing new security challenges such as the hacking of genomic information and the development of infectious agents on the basis of digital sequence information that is openly accessible online.

73. The risk scenarios on blockchain technology illustrate how criminal groups and terrorist networks can deliberately misuse their knowledge of blockchain technology for money-laundering, fraud, including the counterfeiting of electronic payments, and the financing of terrorism.

74. The reports also contain risk scenarios related to supply-chain security in such areas as illegal fishing (in cooperation with INTERPOL), food fraud (in cooperation with the Federal Police and the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety of Germany), illicit pesticides (in cooperation with CropLife International), trafficking in precious metals and tax fraud related to fuel smuggling.

75. All of the risk-scenario reports were based on case studies and were validated by experts during meetings organized by UNICRI for that purpose. Using the risk scenarios as a basis, UNICRI plans to engage relevant stakeholders to discuss and report on how technology and innovative solutions could concretely contribute to mitigating the risks associated with the different scenarios. Then, on the basis of those discussions and reports, UNICRI plans to develop strategic recommendations and propose concrete follow-up actions for capacity-building aimed at developing and piloting technology-based countermeasures that match the needs of Member States.

VI. Threat response and risk mitigation: security governance

76. In response to the growing range of multidimensional, cross-cutting and cross-border threats to both the stability of Member States and their populations, UNICRI contributed to the mitigation of national risks with a view to increasing safety and security globally. To that end, the Institute continued to support the development of strategies that identify specific and actionable means of preventing, detecting and responding to a wide variety of risks. Additionally, UNICRI invested in the development and testing of innovative ideas and promoted globally the lessons learned and good practices identified locally.

A. Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation centres of excellence initiative

77. The chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation centres of excellence initiative is funded by the European Union and is jointly implemented by UNICRI and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. Carried out by means of coherent and effective cooperation at the national, regional and international levels, the initiative was developed with the technical support of relevant national, international and regional organizations.

78. Now in its ninth year of existence, the initiative is well-established and operating smoothly in eight regions around the world, namely the African Atlantic façade, Central Asia, East and Central Africa, the Middle East, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, North Africa and the Sahel, South-East Asia, and South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. In each of those regions, UNICRI has set up a secretariat that promotes cooperation among countries and facilitates the implementation of initiative-related activities through the work of the UNICRI regional coordinators and national focal points. Through its work in support of the initiative, UNICRI has contributed significantly to increasing the overall effectiveness of international capacity-building efforts and to building stable and sustainable national structures for mitigating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks in its partner countries.

79. In order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and policies and cooperation and to continue empowering the 61 partner countries of the initiative, UNICRI organized several regional round-table meetings and missions. Preparatory meetings for needs assessments in relation to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation were held in Ethiopia, Ghana and Rwanda, and risk assessment exercises were conducted in Cameroon and Togo. Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania completed their needs assessment questionnaires. Algeria established an informal national team of experts that implemented awareness-raising workshops throughout the country. Ghana and Kenya shared their experiences in relation to national response plans with the national chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk-mitigation team of Malawi during a workshop. UNICRI supported the development of the national chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk-mitigation action plans of Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi and Rwanda, the finalization of the national action plans of Afghanistan, Cameroon, the Niger and Uzbekistan, and the national chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risk protection strategy of North Macedonia.

80. UNICRI supported the drafting of a regional action plan for mitigating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks in the Middle East region. In that connection, cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council was strengthened and a four-day training course on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks, involving the participation of more than 40 officials, was delivered jointly by the Gulf Cooperation Council Emergency Management Centre, UNICRI and the European Union. In the Central Asian region, meetings were held to discuss the development of a regional action plan in support of Security Council resolution 1540, and a new regional project to strengthen chemical and biological waste management was launched. Furthermore, UNICRI co-organized a regional radiological detection field exercise named “Lionshield 2018” in Tbilisi involving more than 60 participants, including evaluators and observers from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), INTERPOL, the United States Department of Energy and the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority. In addition, UNICRI worked with counterparts in Morocco, Jordan and Georgia to finalize the signing of three implementing partner agreements.

81. UNICRI assisted the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in the organization of a regional workshop, and also assisted the European Union in developing the agenda and content for an expert meeting on the links between terrorism and organized crime. In South-East Asia, UNICRI contributed to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum workshop on chemical,

biological, radiological and nuclear risk mitigation, co-hosted by the Philippines, Canada and the United States. UNICRI also contributed to enhancing cooperation between countries and partner entities such as the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, Health Canada, IAEA, Japan, the United States Defense Threat Agency, the United States Department of Energy, the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#).

B. Tourism security in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean

82. During 2018, UNICRI, in cooperation with the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States (OAS), provided assistance to more than 15 Member States in Central America and the Caribbean to support the formulation of effective tourism security measures.

83. Efforts in that regard included increasing the professional and technical expertise of public and private security officials of OAS Member States, with a specific focus on building public-private partnerships. To that end, training activities were delivered to representatives of the public and private sectors. The courses were structured to encourage law enforcement officials and other public authorities to coordinate and cooperate with private security managers who work in tourism and recreational facilities.

84. During 2018, integrated tourism security plans were finalized and launched in San José and in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and a final meeting for the approval of the tourism security plan of the Bahamas was held in Nassau.

85. A five-day training course on tourism security was held in Mazatlán, Mexico. During the course, approximately 70 officials from federal and state agencies were trained by seven international experts on issues related to communication, risk management, crisis management, proximity policing, public-private partnerships, major events security and integrated security planning. In addition, three similar training sessions, involving an average of 60 participants and six international experts, were held in Puebla, Mexico, Santo Domingo, Castries and Montego Bay, Jamaica, respectively.

VII. Preventing crime by protecting and empowering vulnerable groups

86. UNICRI works to achieve a context-based understanding of challenges and gaps at the institutional and community levels for the early identification and empowerment of people considered at risk of becoming offenders or victims of crime. During 2018, special attention was given to populations that are more exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation, such as minors, women and people from marginalized communities, in particular in developing, transitioning and post-conflict areas.

87. Efforts in that regard included promoting the use of alternative and diversion measures for juveniles in conflict with the law. In line with international standards and on the basis of the research conducted, UNICRI believes that alternative measures are key to protecting juveniles from the risk of being exposed to and recruited by terrorist and criminal organizations operating within prison settings.

88. In December 2018, UNICRI launched a new research project on the role families could play in preventing and countering drug use among young people. The research is planned to be carried out in three countries of the Mediterranean basin (Middle East and North Africa region) and is expected to assist in identifying what relevant stakeholders consider as essential policy elements in supporting and consolidating the role of families in drug use prevention and recovery. Through the development and use of qualitative research tools and methodologies, the initiative is aimed at determining the difficulties that service providers and institutions experience when

involving families in the processes of raising self-awareness and providing support to reduce drug use. The research is also expected to generate a knowledge base aimed at improving services addressed to families, as well as at refining policies focusing on the needs of families, in particular those who are more vulnerable.

89. With the aim of analysing and addressing the national challenges related to the protection of unaccompanied minors and separated children from the perspectives of crime prevention and justice, UNICRI, together with government officials of Italy and prominent experts, conducted an initial survey to assess the vulnerabilities of unaccompanied minors who escape at the borders or from reception facilities, gaps and needs in coordination mechanisms at the local, national and international levels, including with regard to countries of origin, and the approach and steps to be taken to broaden the protection of unaccompanied minors within the framework of the coherent management and governance of regular migration that is in line with international standards.

90. Through its support to over 70 grass-roots organizations in the nine countries of the Sahel and the Maghreb, UNICRI helped different vulnerable groups enjoy equal opportunities and gain or regain their sense of self-worth, dignity, self-respect and self-recognition. The Institute promoted equal participation in political and local decision-making processes by providing training on and advocating for democratic values and active citizenship. It also promoted equal access to education and income-generating opportunities, as well as social cohesion through peacebuilding initiatives in particularly volatile communities.

91. Such support reached the members of the Soninke ethnic minority and former slaves, the so-called Herratins, in Mauritania. In Mali, members of tribes previously affected by conflict, many of whom are refugees in the Niger, benefited from initiatives promoting their peaceful return or better integration within the host communities. Members of nomadic cattle-breeding tribes in Mali and Burkina Faso were engaged to serve on committees to mediate land disputes and were involved in diverse educational and vocational programmes. Particularly disenfranchised young people living in dire poverty at the outskirts of Nouakchott in Mauritania and Kasserine in Tunisia, as well as in the mountainous regions of Tunisia bordering Algeria, took part in initiatives to prevent the risk of recruitment by violent extremist groups.

VIII. Supporting the Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022

92. UNICRI implements its extensive portfolio of activities primarily with the support of voluntary contributions from Member States, as well as an annual contribution from the Government of Italy, as the host country. UNICRI does not receive funding from the regular budget of the United Nations. The vast majority of the voluntary contributions it receives are in the form of short-term, earmarked and project-specific funds. Although UNICRI actively raises funds and consistently strives to expand its donor base, the receipt of such funding has been intermittent and unpredictable in nature, which has impacted both the stability and sustainability of its operations. In such financial circumstances, successfully implementing the Institute's ambitious Strategic Programme Framework for the period 2019–2022 in a comprehensive manner is likely to prove challenging without the pivotal support of, and voluntary contributions from, Member States.