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**Items for discussion and decision: crime and criminal
justice statistics**

Joint report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration on crime statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2024/312 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration on crime statistics, which is submitted to the Commission for discussion and decision.

* E/CN.3/2025/1.



Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration on crime statistics

I. Need for an international classification on administrative data on trafficking in persons

1. In the present report, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) highlight the reasoning for the development of a classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons. It contains a broad description of the classification, while the full structure of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons and its disaggregating variables are contained in an information document provided as a background document to the fifty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission. Furthermore, the report contains an overview of the consultation processes that contributed to the creation and validation of the classification.

2. As more Governments answer the call to take action against trafficking in persons, there has been a groundswell to improve data collection and analysis to help learn more about the phenomenon. As more Governments report on trafficking in persons, it is natural to standardize data collection efforts.

3. In the absence of a common set of indicators with standardized definitions, it is difficult for any Government to take stock of either the local or the global reach of the problem. Without a robust evidence base, it is also unclear how policymakers can shape policy and targeted interventions to combat such trafficking. At the national level, many countries struggle to harmonize disparate data collected from different organizations involved in the counter-trafficking response. Law enforcement agencies, government departments and administrative units, such as states, regions and municipalities, do not always share a clear understanding of what kind of data to collect on trafficking in persons and how; thorough, standardized data collection appears to face particular challenges in countries with more decentralized government structures.

4. In this context, the adoption of a common international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons would facilitate the production and dissemination of high-quality administrative data relating to various aspects of the crime of trafficking in persons. The international classification conceptualizes the characteristics of the individuals, events and organizations involved in cases of trafficking in persons, with a view to producing easily aggregated raw data for a range of government uses and for sharing and reporting at the national, regional and international levels.

5. If adopted, the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons would provide the statistical framework for international reporting on the crime of trafficking in persons. At the same time, it would have a significant impact at the national level. The international classification is an instrument that could also serve as an essential tool for harmonizing the collection and dissemination of data across different institutions, from law enforcement agencies and criminal justice systems to institutions in charge of assisting victims, as well as across subnational entities and their different departments, which may adopt different organizing principles, and across different data sources, such as administrative records and statistical surveys.

II. Mandate, relationship to other international classifications and consultations

6. The development of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons is part of the implementation of General Assembly resolution [78/228](#), in which the Assembly expressed its support for the UNODC trafficking in persons data capacity-building programme and encouraged Member States to provide to the Office evidence-based internationally standardized data on patterns, flows and forms of trafficking in persons, based on the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provides a strong impetus for IOM to integrate migration data as a central pillar of its work, including in its role as coordinator and secretariat for the United Nations Network on Migration. This entails supporting the collection and utilization of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies, across areas of migration governance, including counter-trafficking in persons.

7. Pursuant to the above-mentioned Assembly resolution, the principles of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons are based on the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes and closely aligned with international standards for several related types of administrative data, including labour, economic activity and other crime statistics. These well-established standards have already been rigorously assessed by international communities of experts and in some cases have been updated and reissued multiple times, in order to maximize their robustness and relevance. In addition, the international data classification standards for labour, economic activity and crime statistics are already widely used by Governments; basing the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons on these established standards would therefore facilitate its uptake.

8. The international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons builds on version 1.0 of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes and revision 5 of the International Standard Industrial Classification. It is specifically based on level 0204 of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (on trafficking in persons), which is expanded to provide additional elements and further guidance for Member States on how to collect and register data on trafficking in persons. In addition, as trafficking in persons is connected to economic activity (or productive activity) through trafficking for forced labour, the International Standard Industrial Classification categories of production are used to categorize the industries in which victims are exploited for productive labour.

9. The international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons is the outcome of a joint IOM and UNODC initiative to support the efforts of Governments and other stakeholders to collect, manage and use high-quality, comparable primary data to develop the evidence base on trafficking in persons. The international classification presented to the Commission for its endorsement is the result of extensive consultations. It was informed by a broad desk review of existing documentation, reports and academic articles, including IOM and UNODC resources developed for their respective operations, as well as inputs from Member States and other stakeholders. This includes recent best practices of national and regional data-collection and management processes. The development of this classification was also informed by direct consultations with government institutions involved in collecting and managing trafficking in persons data, and with experts on trafficking in persons data and research. Following an expert meeting held in May 2021, involving experts from different institutions such as national statistical offices, statistical offices in criminal justice institutions, academic experts, international, regional and assistance organizations, the first draft of the international classification was completed in 2023. This was then distributed to all national statistical offices and relevant regional and international organizations as part of a global consultation. All comments

provided by 28 Member States from five continents and three international organizations were addressed in the final version of the classification presented to the Commission. This version was approved by the Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications.

III. Main features of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons

10. Similar to the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, which relies on event-based characterizations rather than criminal offences as central units, the approach used in the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons adopts the trafficking in persons event as the unit of analysis. Different attributes are considered for this criminal event that help to further describe the event itself (such as the time and location) or to describe the victim, perpetrator and reporting entity. Those attributes are treated as disaggregating variables, in line with the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, and are further described in the metadata. The three categories of victim, perpetrator and reporting entity are referred to as units of description.

11. The characterization of the victim is needed in order to establish the profiles of people who are at risk of trafficking and to inform essential victim services. Disaggregated data on perpetrators are useful in order to better target prevention programmes and law enforcement action. Information on the data reporting entities is another important added feature of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons. These entities may include institutions that are involved in the production of statistics on trafficking in persons, including national statistical offices, police forces, prosecutors' offices, courts, civil society organizations, social administrations and entities assisting victims or otherwise involved in the response to trafficking in persons. Such data can be used for statistical reporting on service provision, on the victims' assistance and potential revictimization. Information on the different reporting entities can also inform a process to centralize data on trafficking in persons. Knowing the characteristics of reporting entities can be highly useful in the data-management and quality-control processes, especially when sourced from multiple national civil society organizations.

12. The list of disaggregating variables is arranged in three steps, from the most-needed information to more aspirational disaggregation, the latter being potentially better suited for specific organizations or for exploring specific samples rather than for systematic implementation. The steps were established from a set of criteria resulting from government expert consultations. The criteria adopted were feasibility, capacity, need and utility. Step 1 includes core disaggregating variables that are the most feasible to collect, most needed and most useful to have. They are considered standard for collecting the basic evidence needed to enhance understanding of the national situation for the purposes of policymaking and service provision. In step 2, the disaggregating variables provide an additional layer of information needed to enhance the national response to trafficking in persons within and across national borders. That disaggregation is designed to paint a more complex picture that can further inform the anti-trafficking response. The optional step 3 includes information that extends beyond the first two sets of information on the primary event. In step 3, optional disaggregating variables are added on individual experiences that occur before and after the trafficking event. The remaining levels of classification are the disaggregating variables and subvariables, each of which is accompanied by a description of its statistical classification. Variables defined by other classification standards, such as the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes or the International Standard Industrial Classification, are accompanied by an attribution.

13. The unit of classification and the core disaggregating variables (step 1) are layout in the table below.

<i>Unit of classification and core disaggregating variable</i>	<i>International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes reference</i>
Trafficking in persons	0204
1: Trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation	02041
2: Trafficking in persons for forced labour	02042
2.1: Forced/bonded labour (including servitude and indentured servitude)	
2.2: Slavery or similar practices ^a	
3: Trafficking in persons for organ removal ^b	02043
4: Trafficking in persons for forced begging ^c	020329
5: Trafficking in persons for forced criminality	
5.1: Theft	
5.2: Other property crimes	
5.3: Drug offences	
5.4: Fraud (including online scam operations)	
5.5: Other type of crimes	
6: Trafficking in persons for other forms of exploitation	02044
6.1: Trafficking in persons for forced marriage	
6.2: Trafficking in persons for forced military service (by non-State actors)	
6.3: Trafficking in persons for surrogacy	
6.4: Trafficking in persons for illegal adoption	
6.5: Trafficking in persons for other exploitation ^d	
7: Trafficking in persons for purposes not recorded ^e	
8: Trafficking in persons for mixed forms of exploitation ^f	

^a In line with the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons classifies trafficking in persons for slavery or similar practices under trafficking in persons for forced labour.

^b As explained in the UNODC assessment toolkit, “organ trafficking” and “trafficking in persons for organ removal” are two different concepts, even though they are used interchangeably. In the latter case, the object of the crime is the person; in the former, it is the organ. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children encompasses “trafficking in persons for organ removal”, not “organ trafficking”. See UNODC, “Trafficking in Persons for the Purpose of Organ Removal” (Vienna, 2015).

^c Forced begging is included as a separate category as it falls outside the System of National Accounts (SNA) scope and is not necessarily considered as a form of labour. The same applies for forced criminality. The corresponding categories can be found in step 2.

^d It is recommended that this category include a space for free text, to check if any new category of exploitation should be included as an additional subcategory to 6.

^e This category refers to cases in which the exploitative purpose is clear but the type of exploitation is not known. It can be used when records are missing.

^f This category refers to cases in which multiple forms of exploitation suffered by the same victim are recorded.

14. The core disaggregating variables in step 1 are presented in the table below.

<i>Event</i>	<i>(code)</i>	<i>Victim</i>	<i>(code)</i>	<i>Perpetrator</i>	<i>(code)</i>	<i>Reporting entity^b</i>	<i>(code)</i>
Status	<i>sta</i>	Sex ^a	<i>svx</i>	Sex ^a	<i>spx</i>	Reporting entity that registered the event	<i>rer</i>
Geographical location where the event was recorded	<i>geo</i>	Age of victim	<i>agv</i>	Age of perpetrator	<i>agp</i>	Type of reporting entity that made the decisions	<i>ret</i>
Date and time the event was recorded	<i>dat</i>	Age status of victim	<i>stv</i>	Age status of perpetrator	<i>stp</i>	Status of decision-making entity	<i>dem</i>
Country of exploitation	<i>coe</i>	Citizenship	<i>civ</i>	Citizenship	<i>cip</i>		
No (consummated or known) exploitation	<i>exp</i>						

^a This is in answer to the question “What is the sex marker on your official document?” It may or may not coincide with gender identity.

^b These are organizations that assist victims, collect data and are otherwise involved in reporting the trafficking in persons event.

15. The enhanced disaggregating variables in step 2 are presented in the table below.

<i>Event</i>	<i>(code)</i>	<i>Victim</i>	<i>(code)</i>	<i>Perpetrator (code)</i>	<i>Reporting entity (code)</i>
Means of control	<i>moc</i>	Last country of residence	<i>lcv</i>	Role in the process	<i>rpp</i>
Criminal case status	<i>ccs</i>	Marital status	<i>msv</i>	Relationship to victim	<i>rvp</i>
Criminal code article	<i>cca</i>	Number of children	<i>ncv</i>		
Cybercrime-related	<i>cyb</i>	Language (primary)	<i>lpv</i>		
Sector of sexual exploitation (added level of granularity ^a for sexual exploitation)	<i>ssc</i>	Language (secondary)	<i>lsv</i>		
Sector of trafficking for forced labour	<i>fls</i>	Level of education	<i>lev</i>		
Date the event began	<i>dab</i>	Relationship to trafficker	<i>rtv</i>		
Date the event ended	<i>dae</i>				

^a These are fields that can be used to build on some of the information collected as part of Step 1.

16. The full structure of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons, as well as its disaggregating variables and their definitions, are contained in the above-mentioned background document, including an introduction to the international classification, the classification units, a list of the disaggregating variables for each of the three steps considered and their definitions.

IV. Implementation plan

17. After its adoption at the international level, and pending the availability of resources, UNODC and IOM plan to roll out capacity-building and dissemination initiatives to ensure a wide integration of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons in national administrative statistical systems.

A. Information campaign

18. At the outset, UNODC and IOM would widely disseminate the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons in electronic format. To facilitate implementation in the global context, and subject to funding availability, UNODC and IOM would translate the international classification into the six official languages of the United Nations.

19. Dissemination would take place through formal and informal channels, targeting all relevant national authorities that are involved in the production of statistics on trafficking in persons, including police forces, prosecutors' offices, courts, civil society organizations, social administrations and national statistical offices.

20. Dissemination would also target users of trafficking in persons statistics, including researchers and academia, policymakers, non-governmental organizations and the media, which would be made aware of the advantages stemming from a widespread adoption of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons.

B. Technical assistance and capacity-building

21. A methodological guidance manual has been developed to accompany the implementation of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons. The purpose of the manual is to support the efforts of Governments and other stakeholders to improve data collection, management, sharing and use, so that more high-quality data can be leveraged to inform policy and programming. While the manual will be useful for all stakeholders dealing with administrative data, it specifically targets central government agencies or other organizations with a coordinating role at the national level that use administrative data on trafficking in persons from multiple sources to produce evidence to address the phenomenon. The aim of the manual is to outline useful considerations, describe the pitfalls to avoid, list best practices and give concrete examples to help establish or improve all data-related processes for national administrative data on trafficking in persons.

22. Training modules, both e-learning courses and in-person modules, have been developed and adapted to national and international contexts. A number of training courses will be implemented by the two guardian agencies, individually or jointly, pending the requests from national authorities and the availability of resources.

23. Capacity-building will be carried out, giving priority to regional-level activities, to optimize the use of resources and facilitate the exchange of expertise, and UNODC and IOM have already developed partnerships with regional organizations such as the African Union Institute for Statistics, STATAFRIC, in the testing and implementation of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons.

V. Maintenance of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons

24. Trafficking in persons as a criminal phenomenon continues to evolve; similarly, national legislation and jurisprudence capture new and old forms of exploitation relating to trafficking in persons. Similarly to any other international classification, the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons would need to be maintained and reviewed to capture such developments. The decision to undertake revisions of the international classification would depend upon a number of indicators derived from lessons learned during the implementation phase. The custodians would rely on feedback from national and international experts, as well as information gathered during their own operations, to gauge when a revision is necessary.

VI. Action to be taken by the Statistical Commission

25. **The Commission may consider the following actions:**

(a) **Endorse the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons as the standard international classification for the production of administrative statistics on trafficking in persons;**

(b) **Endorse the plan that will facilitate the implementation of the classification at the national, regional and international levels;**

(c) **Invite regional organizations to partner with UNODC to develop regional programmes on the implementation of the international classification for administrative data on trafficking in persons;**

(d) **Appoint UNODC and IOM as the custodians of the international classification;**

(e) **Invite Member States and donors to provide the resources necessary to support countries to successfully implement the international classification.**