

UNODC inputs to

SG report titled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations"

UNODC's support to the Caribbean is prioritized in the recently launched [UNODC Strategic Vision for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025](#). The Strategic Vision will support the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in strengthening responses to prevent and tackle organized crime, drugs and corruption and promote greater justice to help achieve greater equality and prosperity, with the aim of addressing longstanding structural inequalities, as well as achieving safety, security, human rights and development in the region.

Pursuant to ***operative paragraph 3*** and acknowledging that *“the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to support and invest in action at all levels to build resilience through, inter alia, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, the sustainable management of ecosystems and the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity”*, UNODC is committed to the safety and security of coastal communities in the Caribbean, including the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea, free from crime. As part of its efforts to combat crimes that affect the environment, UNODC conducted a summary analysis of the wildlife-specific laws covering nine jurisdictions across the Caribbean. This exercise was aimed at providing an overview of the key offences relating to international trafficking, the penalties available and the extent to which the domestic laws afforded protection to critically endangered species as identified under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices. This review was shared with stakeholders and provided a basis for engagement on the necessity of legislative amendment to enhance the power of jurisdictions across the Caribbean to fight crimes that affect the environment. Furthermore, in Suriname and Guyana, UNODC will deliver technical assistance through a new initiative to strengthen regional cooperation to address these crimes.

Pursuant to ***operative paragraph 9***, which *“recognizes the efforts of countries in the Caribbean Sea to create conditions leading to sustainable development aimed at combating poverty and inequality,”* UNODC recognizes that crime and violence represent a serious impediment to sustainable development, by affecting particularly the most vulnerable and exacerbating existing inequalities. As the custodian of Sustainable Development Goal 16, UNODC supports Member States, including in the Caribbean region, in developing comprehensive and robust strategic responses to transnational organized crime in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). As a response to General Assembly resolution [75/196](#) on “Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity”, which urges Member States to develop national, subregional, regional and international strategies in order to effectively address transnational organized crime, the Office has developed and disseminated the [Organized Crime Strategy Toolkit for Developing High-Impact Strategies](#). In this regard, in March 2022, a regional multi-stakeholder event on strategies against organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Panama, with a dedicated session focusing on strategic approaches in the

Caribbean region. The Office also cooperates with relevant organizations on the topic and participated in discussions held during the 2022 IMF/World Bank Spring Meeting on the topic of reducing the costs of crime and violence in the Caribbean. The Office will continue to support Caribbean states in this endeavour, including through national-level support to strategy development upon the request of Member States, as well as the dissemination among Member States of the upcoming supplementary checklist to the Strategy Toolkit focusing on challenges presented by organized crime in disasters and crisis situations, as well as strategic responses to such.

Moreover, to tackle economic crime, which also contributes to the exacerbation of inequalities between the haves and the have nots, UNODC has been supporting the Caribbean region on combating trade-based money laundering to raise awareness of the public security challenges stemming from this threat and strengthen law enforcement capacities to detect, investigate and prosecute money laundering through trade more effectively. Furthermore, to prevent the cross-border movement of illicit goods, UNODC collaborates with the World Customs Organization on the Container Control Programme (CCP), which is active in the region, by building capacity to improve risk management, supply chain security, and trade facilitation in seaports, airports and land border crossings. In this context, with the incorporation of the Regional Coordinator to the region in September 2020, CCP's activities in the Caribbean region have been growing and expanding. Activities include the expansion of CCP to two new ports in Dominican Republic, its implementation in two ports in Bahamas, and the conduction of an assessment and evaluation for its implementation in Haiti. Furthermore, theoretical and practical training, both only and in-person, for Port Control Units were conducted in Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname (in Suriname, the in-person training will take place during 2022). Moreover, in Dominican Republic, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place was expanded to incorporate land border security corps (CESEFRONT) and National Anti-Drug Council (CND). Finally, the country hosted the Regional Conference CCP Caribbean, as well as an exchange visit from CCP's women's network of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Pursuant to ***operative paragraph 10***, which “calls upon the United Nations system and the international community to assist Caribbean countries and their regional organizations, as appropriate, in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships, in particular through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances, and pollution from the illegal dumping or accidental release of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, in violation of relevant international rules and standards, as well as pollution from land-based activities”, UNODC provides legislative technical assistance to Member States, including from the Caribbean region, in implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) to strengthen their response to transnational organized crime. UNTOC is an effective tool and an important part of the legal framework for preventing and combating transnational organized crimes that affect the environment, including trafficking in hazardous wastes and other wastes, as recognized by General Assembly resolution [76/185](#) entitled “Preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment”. As the guardian of the Convention, UNODC has recently developed a guide to good legislative practices in combating

waste trafficking to the benefit of Member States for the adoption of national legislation in line with the provisions of the Convention.

Pursuant to **operative paragraph 24**, which “*invites Member States international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders [...] to develop research aimed at enhancing the food security of Caribbean countries, as well as the sustainable management of renewable marine and coastal resources*”, UNODC will present research finding on the illegal trade in dried seahorses from the Latin America and the Caribbean region in the next World Wildlife Crime Report (due December 2023). The inclusion of this finding on seahorses will make data on illegal global trade available to a variety of audiences involved in local and broader coastal management and conservation. Importantly, the work aims to highlight best practices on how to decrease illegal activity and so increase the conservation of seahorses given their important role in the maritime ecosystem.

Pursuant to **operative paragraph 25**, which “*Calls upon Member States to improve, as a matter of priority, their emergency response capabilities and the containment of environmental damage, particularly in the Caribbean Sea, in the event of natural disasters or an accident or incident relating to maritime navigation*”, UNODC is promoting the ratification of the “Agreement Concerning Co-Operation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime and Air Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs And Psychotropic Substances In The Caribbean Area”¹ as a regionally owned framework fostering security and humanitarian and disaster response efforts. UNODC is working with frontline maritime actors and line security ministries which provide legal advice on the value of the treaty as a force multiplier. In fact, through the treaty’s cooperative frameworks, interdictions within territorial waters and beyond territorial waters can be bolstered. Additionally, through those same provisions an effective and fast response can be provided in case of humanitarian and disaster response by having participating countries providing assets to parties in need. UNODC’s efforts extend to increasing the reach of maritime operations centers (MOCs) for the enhancing of such cooperative efforts, through establishment of a MOC network and increased exchange of operational information among operators. The Office has initiated work with Jamaica on a submarine cables resilience plan to ensure the continuation of economic activities in case of an intentional or unintentional accident.

Moreover, UNODC has been investing in Domain Awareness Capabilities in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic through the provision of technology and fostering cooperation between the air and maritime forces to promote joint search and rescue efforts, as well as to tackle a variety of maritime crime, including crimes in the fisheries sector, which is a destabilizing factor in the region. The Bahamas is soon to join the cooperation initiatives in the North Caribbean, and similar cooperation initiatives are being promoted for Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

¹ Available at:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/organized_crime/CNA%20Directory/English_ebook.pdf pp. 161-174.