

UNODC inputs to the SG report on oceans and the law of the sea

The present contribution showcases the work carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) between September 2023 and May 2024 to support Member States in the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 78/69, on Oceans and the law of the sea.

II. Capacity-building

*Pursuant to **OP 33**, which “[...] welcomes ongoing activities for capacity-building so as to address maritime security and protection of the marine environment of developing States, and encourages States and international financial institutions to provide additional funding for capacity-building programmes, including for transfer of technology, including through the International Maritime Organization and other competent international organizations”*

- In South Asia, UNODC conducted an assessment on information-sharing mechanisms in the Indian Ocean region, specifically between maritime operations centers in **Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka**, and regional information fusion centers located in **the Indian Ocean**, including the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) in Seychelles. Based on this assessment, UNODC developed a comprehensive training matrix with proposed multi-level capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing the capacity of maritime operations centers in exchanging and sharing information with regional information fusion centers, and vice versa. In line with the document, regular training is being delivered in South Asian coastal states.
- A four-day Expert Group Meeting was held in Vienna in November 2023 to emphasize the critical issue of pollution crimes that affect the marine environment. The discussions aligned with the framework of pivotal international legal conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). Participants focused on defining the roles of flag, coastal, and port states, exploring advanced investigative techniques, and fleshing out the nuances of international cooperation to combat pollution crimes affecting the marine environment. The gathering was instrumental in refining the proposed model legislative provisions, with the objective of finalizing a Legislative Guide and Annex within the first quarter of 2024 after incorporating feedback from the meeting and subsequent reviews.
- In November 2023, in South Asia, UNODC delivered tabletop exercises on Maritime Disaster Management in **Bangladesh and Maldives**, with the aim of reinforcing preparedness and inter-agency response to disaster-related incidents at sea. In Maldives, the maritime incident management training focused on an emergency response and disaster management model for Maldivian national authorities to enhance their capability in addressing minor to medium incidents at sea, given the high number of maritime incidents. The training, therefore, focused on overcoming challenges related to efficiency in inter-agency communication and coordination, as well as deficiencies in command-and-control. In Bangladesh, the exercise provided hands-on experience in responding to maritime and riverine incidents.

- UNODC, with the technical support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), developed a [legislative guide on combating crimes in the fisheries sector](#), published in January 2024 as part of efforts to strengthen legal and policy frameworks. The guide seeks to support States in enacting or strengthening domestic legislation against these forms of crime, focusing on the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and providing national lawmakers with concrete model provisions, national examples, and legislative guidance. Following the publication of the guide, under [FishNET project Phase II](#), UNODC organized the first regional workshop for **anglophone countries in Africa** on the legislative guide to combat crimes in the fisheries sector in February 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya, attended by representatives from **Ghana, South Africa, Namibia, and Kenya**, as well as FAO. During the second phase of the UNODC FishNET project, UNODC has also been updating the publication "[Rotten Fish: A Guide on Addressing Corruption in the Fisheries Sector](#)." This update aims to expand on the challenges encountered in implementing anti-corruption efforts within the fisheries sector. The guide will increase knowledge and awareness of how corruption manifests itself in the fisheries sector and how to effectively address it.

*Pursuant to **OP 34**, which “Recognizes the considerable need to provide sustained capacity-building assistance, including on financial and technical aspects, by relevant international organizations and donors to developing States, with a view to further strengthening their capacity to take effective measures against the multiple facets of international criminal activities at sea, in line with the relevant international instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto”*

- In 2024, UNODC published an issue paper entitled ‘[Flag state jurisdiction and Transnational Organized Crime at Sea](#).’
- In **the Mediterranean**, UNODC conducted a maritime training initiative in **Tunisia** in November 2023. The initiative aimed to strengthen the ability of judges, prosecutors, and maritime authorities to address environmental challenges in the maritime sector. Additionally, in April 2024, UNODC, in partnership with the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) and the Japan Coast Guard, and funded by the Government of Japan, held its annual [Legal Expert Group Meeting \(LEGM\) in Tokyo](#). Experts from academia and practice discussed emerging maritime crime legal issues and produced papers on topics such as coastal state jurisdiction in the contiguous zone, smuggling of migrants by sea, criminal aspects of marine plastic pollution, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) jurisdiction at sea. These papers will serve as background for UNODC's global technical work.
- In **Lebanon**, UNODC strengthened the capacities of the [Visit – Board – Search and Seize \(VBSS\) team](#) by providing IT equipment in December 2023. Lebanese Navy officials participated in VBSS training in Cyprus (October 2023), a VBSS exercise in Alexandria (February 2024), a Nuclear and Radiological detection exercise in Indonesia (March 2024), and a Regional Simulation on Search and Rescue and Maritime Crime in Cyprus (April 2024). Currently, UNODC is seeking feedback from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) Navy on a preventive maintenance and simulation contract for four safe boats, intending to engage a local vendor with expertise in Caterpillar engine maintenance. Furthermore, slings

were delivered in December 2023 to facilitate lifting safe boats from land to water. UNODC has supplied eight workstations to support logistics at naval warehouses. Additionally, UNODC has published and distributed the Operators Manual for Protector Class Vessels and Safe Boats received from the US and continues to collaborate with the Lebanese Navy on maintaining Lebanon's maritime assets.

- In **Libya**, a comprehensive draft has been submitted to the EU, marking a crucial step towards garnering support and resources to further advance the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) project's objectives and enhance maritime safety in Libyan waters. This milestone achievement demonstrated significant progress in strengthening maritime search and rescue capabilities in the region. Furthermore, UNODC initiated and led a high-level roundtable titled "Support for Maritime Safety and Security Management in Libya" in November 2023. The meeting included key Libyan authorities from ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defence, Transport, and Finance, alongside the European Union. Discussions centred on bolstering inter-agency cooperation and upholding human rights in maritime law enforcement, particularly in combating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM). The roundtable resulted in the endorsement of project objectives, a commitment to enhanced collaboration, and a recognition of the importance of human rights in maritime operations.
- In **Morocco**, a discussion was held with national counterparts in February 2024, highlighting UNODC's dedication to addressing environmental challenges in the maritime domain. Through collaborative efforts, the training aimed to equip stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to mitigate the impact of maritime pollution and protect marine ecosystems for future generations.
- In South Asia, UNODC continued delivering maritime law enforcement training programmes, including basic and specialized Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) courses, to national counterparts in **Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka**. These programs aim to enhance the capabilities of maritime officials in conducting law enforcement at sea to tackle drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, and illegal fishing.
- Furthermore, UNODC collaborated with multiple agencies and legal experts in **Maldives** to develop comprehensive Harmonized Standard Operating Procedures (HSOP) among maritime agencies in **South Asia** to serve as a strategic framework to combat maritime crime. The primary objective of this initiative is to provide procedural guidance for law enforcement agencies, with input from the prosecution, ensuring adherence to both national and international laws, the protection of human rights, and fostering effective coordination among agencies to ensure the legal finish of maritime crimes, including illegal fishing, drug trafficking, and acts of terrorism.
- UNODC provided various practical and tactical training sessions for maritime law enforcement (MLE) officers from eleven countries in the **Western Indian Ocean region and Pakistan**. Through its maritime training centers in Seychelles and South Africa, UNODC delivered a series of VBSS training courses, including those on the smuggling of migrants and the safety of life at sea, as well as on pier-side vessel search techniques. UNODC also provided Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) courses for Member States,

as well as the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre, to enhance the ability to detect illicit activity at sea. In support of the regional MLE Exercise Cutlass Express 2024, UNODC provided training on UNCLOS to MLE and MDA personnel from around the Indian Ocean region prior to their participation in the exercise's VBSS and Maritime Operations Centre events. In November 2023, UNODC, with the support of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, officially presented a "ship-in-a-box" simulator to **Mauritius** to support training and provide a facility for local personnel to practice maritime tactics and visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) interdictions in a safe and controlled manner, better preparing them for real-world scenarios.

- UNODC has also delivered training (Tabletop Exercises, in-country workshops, and simulated trials) to actors across the entire criminal justice chain, including prosecutors, judges, and magistrates in the **Western Indian Ocean Region**, to achieve legal finish of maritime crimes. In light of the broadened mandate of the European Union Naval Force Operation (EUNAVFOR) ATALANTA, the Government of Seychelles (GoS) and the European Union (EU) began negotiations in early 2021. The Exchange of Letters outlines modalities for GoS to authorize EUNAVFOR to transfer suspects apprehended in Seychelles' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Territorial Waters (TW), as well as Seychellois suspects and Seychelles-flagged vessels on the high seas. The EU proposes to provide "financial, human resources, material, logistical and infrastructural assistance for the detention, incarceration, maintenance, investigation, prosecution, trial, and repatriation of the suspected or convicted arms traffickers and narcotics traffickers." In close collaboration with the European Union, UNODC will focus on improving the existing infrastructure on Marie Louis Island and enhancing capacity-building efforts to achieve the legal finish.
- In **Somalia**, UNODC provided practical and tactical training sessions for the various Somali maritime law enforcement (MLE) agencies including mentorships, Visit-Board-Search and Seizure (VBSS) courses, sea exercises, boat maintenance and provision of equipment. UNODC further established a maritime law enforcement training centre for the Somali Maritime Police Unit. Moreover, UNODC focused on training the fisheries authorities in patrolling and responding to illegal fisheries in Somali waters. In line with Security Council resolution [2662 \(2022\)](#), UNODC provided technical assistance to enhance the coordination and disruption of Al-Shabaab's revenue streams, through a collaborative approach in information sharing with the Panel of Experts on Somalia, including commissioning an assessment of Al-Shabaab's presence in Ethiopia. UNODC further delivered training on Somali Charcoal Forensic Analysis and launched an eLearning course on the *Charcoal Forensic Guide for Sampling, Examination, and Reporting* to help monitor and disrupt the trade of charcoal from Somalia. In support to regional cooperation, UNODC worked with the government authorities in Kenya and Somalia to counter illicit trade along the Kenya-Somalia border, facilitated information sharing and coordination, including maritime domain awareness training in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region.
- UNODC seeks to promote a similar initiative in **Sri Lanka**. In January 2024, UNODC held a session with senior prosecutors from the Sri Lanka Attorney General's Department to discuss the procedural and legal grounds for upcoming engagements with maritime law enforcement agencies in the country.

- In **South Asia**, UNODC conducted a comprehensive training series entitled “Integrated Training Package to Ensure Legal Finish of Maritime Crimes,” delivering consecutive capacity-building programmes for maritime law enforcement officers and criminal justice practitioners involved in the detection, interdiction, evidence seizing, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of maritime cases. This ambitious training initiative included targeted sessions on evidence handling, prosecutors' mentoring, and simulated trials, ensuring effective case management from the maritime crime scene to the courtroom to secure convictions. Integrated Training Package programs were successfully delivered throughout 2023, with the most recent activity taking place in Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**, in November 2023.
- Furthermore, in South Asia, UNODC conducted assessments in specific seaports in **Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka** to identify threats and challenges in the waterside and anchorage areas. The purpose is to develop capacity-building training programs for port security authorities and other law enforcement agencies to mitigate criminal and security threats in port premises, expected to be delivered in Quarters 2 and 3 of 2024. The assessments involved collecting documents on the protocols, procedures, and regulations employed by the management in each port, participating in meetings with government officials, touring waterfront facilities of the ports, and, when possible, conducting waterborne visits to explore the port boundaries from anchorages to public and private terminals.
- In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, UNODC provided technical assistance in 23 countries, fostering coordinated responses and capacity-building for states to counter transnational organized crime through the criminal justice chain.

VIII. Maritime Safety and Security and Flag State Implementation

*Pursuant to **OP 125**, which “Recognizes the crucial role of international cooperation at the global, regional, subregional and bilateral levels in combating, in accordance with international law, threats to maritime security, including piracy, armed robbery against ships at sea and terrorist acts against shipping, offshore installations, submarine cables and pipelines and other critical infrastructure and maritime interests, through bilateral and multilateral instruments and mechanisms aimed at monitoring, preventing and responding to such threats, the enhanced sharing of information among States relevant to the detection, prevention and suppression of such threats, and the prosecution of offenders with due regard to national legislation, and the need for sustained capacity-building to support such objectives [..]”*

- In 2023, UNODC published an issue paper entitled ‘[Constructive presence in relation to Hot pursuit in the Law of the sea.](#)’
- In October 2023, UNODC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and the Max Planck Foundation for International Peace and the Rule of Law, organized a workshop focused on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) among **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Member States**. The workshop not only provided a platform for regional dialogue on maritime law enforcement but also helped state representatives assess their progress, strengthen

cooperation, and better tackle maritime safety and security issues. It also included tabletop exercises focusing on hypothetical scenarios, particularly drug trafficking at sea, and fostering a shared understanding of challenges and solutions. The discussions highlighted the necessity of adopting a unified approach to UNCLOS implementation across IORA member states to promote cooperation and coordinated action.

- In March 2024, UNODC, in partnership with the Sri Lanka Navy, organized a conference on Maritime Domain Awareness entitled "Charting Unruly Waters: Enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness in the Indian Ocean Region." This initiative convened a diverse array of participants, including international experts, policymakers, security agencies, information fusion centers, think tanks, and other maritime stakeholders from the Indian Ocean to explore challenges and opportunities related to the concept of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in **the Indian Ocean region**.
- UNODC is heavily invested in the development of initiatives and the design of strategic institutional frameworks to support sustainable information sharing. In this regard, in **the Caribbean**, UNODC has supported the **Dominican Republic and Jamaica** in entering into Memoranda of Understanding on Law Enforcement Cooperation and Search and Rescue at Sea. UNODC is providing further assistance to The Bahamas and the Dominican Republic, as well as the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago, and the Dominican Republic and Panama, to enter into similar agreements to institutionalize cooperation and provide solid legal frameworks upon which this cooperation can be fostered.
- UNODC has also supported the establishment of a coastal investigators and prosecutors' network across **Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panama** to exchange operational information and develop strategic investigations. As part of this effort, in 2023, 20 formal investigations into groups that operate at sea have been launched across the participating countries, including two requests for mutual legal assistance.
- UNODC has also developed strategic and operational initiatives to **assist Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Paraguay** in tackling transnational organized crime along shared riverways, such as the Amazon River and the Paraná River.
- UNODC facilitated the organization and substantive discussions at the 2023 plenary session of the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group (G7++ FoGG), held in **Dakar, Senegal**, from December 5 to 7, 2023. The session, which marked the 10th anniversary of the Yaoundé architecture, was the focus of the meeting and attracted over 200 participants both in person and virtually. The plenary provided an opportunity for attendees to assess the current maritime security landscape and review ongoing efforts to address various illegal maritime activities in the **Gulf of Guinea** since the adoption of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct.
- UNODC successfully commissioned the first Ship-In-A-Box Simulator in the **Gulf of Guinea** on February 28, 2024, at Lagos' Joint Maritime Security Training Centre, significantly boosting the operational skills of maritime law enforcement agencies (MLE) of **Zone E member states (Benin, Nigeria, Togo)**. The Ship-in-a-Box, made of stacked cargo containers with internal modifications, simulates the interior of a ship and is designed to train law enforcement agencies on proper ship search techniques. This enhancement in

training infrastructure marks a critical advancement in the region's capabilities to conduct thorough and effective maritime inspections.

- UNODC agreed to support the ongoing adoption process of the Action Plan for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS). The EIMS forms an integral part of the implementation architecture of the African Union Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) and is scheduled for adoption at the end of 2024 during the Summit of the ECOWAS Heads of State. The first ECOWAS Workshop on the development of the Action Plans was organized from March 20-22, 2024, in Abidjan.
- In March 2024, UNODC signed an agreement with the Government of **Denmark** to continue supporting community-based projects focused on crime reduction and prevention. Building on the foundation established by previous support funded by Germany, the new program adopts a multifaceted approach to enhance community resilience against crime. By bringing together community members and law enforcement, the initiative focuses on addressing the root causes of crime and building trust within communities. This not only strengthens local capacities in crime prevention but also complements broader efforts to maintain security and support sustainable development in the region.

*Pursuant to **OP 131**, which “Encourages States to ensure effective implementation of international law applicable to combating piracy, as reflected in the Convention, calls upon States to take appropriate steps under their national law to facilitate, in accordance with international law, the apprehension and prosecution of those who are alleged to have committed acts of piracy, including the financing or facilitation of such acts, also taking into account other relevant instruments that are consistent with the Convention, and encourages States to cooperate, as appropriate, with a view to developing their national legislation in this regard”*

- UNODC released the second edition of "Pirates of the Niger Delta," detailing significant advancements in counterpiracy efforts and highlighting a noticeable reduction in piracy incidents. Despite this decrease, coastal, regional, and international actors maintain a strong commitment to maritime security. They continue to address several vital aspects of maritime safety, including enhancing the livelihoods of communities associated with kidnap-for-ransom piracy and fortifying the regional maritime security framework.

*Pursuant to **OP 150**, which “Notes that transnational organized criminal activities are diverse and may be interrelated in some cases and that criminal organizations are adaptive and take advantage of the vulnerabilities of States, in particular coastal and small island developing States in transit areas, and calls upon States and relevant intergovernmental organizations to increase cooperation and coordination at all levels to detect and suppress the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and illicit trafficking in firearms, in accordance with international law”*

- In November 2023, under UNODC's Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) Integrated Training Package (ITP) to ensure the legal finish of maritime crimes, a comprehensive training series was delivered in **Bangladesh** focused on a trafficking in

persons' case. This series comprised five phases of training: a Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) course; an Evidence Handling Course; an Evidence Package Preparation Course; Prosecutors Training; and a Simulated Trial. Through the VBSS course, 12 Coast Guard officials were trained on various aspects, including techniques to safely board overcrowded vessels. Given the focus on trafficking in persons, UNODC GMCP partnered with UNODC's Global Action against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT) in Bangladesh to deliver special sessions on defining trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, analyzing key aspects of domestic legal frameworks, understanding the role of the Coast Guard as first responders in the identification and rescue of trafficking victims, and exploring the international context through the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

- In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, UNODC has established flagship and nationally-owned initiatives to provide technical assistance at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. An example of this work is the Regional Center of Excellence on Small Boat Handling and Search and Rescue, which UNODC has established in partnership with the Trinidad and Tobago Coastguard to provide standardized skills and human rights-compliant approaches to responding to migration at sea. Similarly, UNODC is supporting **The Bahamas** in establishing a Regional Center of Excellence on Unmanned Systems to provide coherent approaches to the use of technology in the detection of crime.
- In 2023, UNODC published an issue paper entitled '[Jurisdiction in relation to illicit arms trafficking and the law of the sea.](#)'

*Pursuant to **OP 151**, which "Recognizes the importance of enhancing international cooperation at all levels to fight transnational organized criminal activities, including illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, within the scope of the United Nations instruments against illicit drug trafficking, as well as the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and illicit trafficking in firearms and criminal activities at sea falling within the scope of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto"*

- In South Asia, UNODC conducted a dialogue titled "Strengthening Cooperation to Combat Drug Trafficking in the Southern Route" in November 2023 in Sri Lanka, aimed at enhancing international cooperation against drug trafficking in the **Indian Ocean**. This event was conducted within the framework of the IORA's Workshop on UNCLOS and Regional Maritime Law Enforcement from October 30 to November 3, 2023. Key sessions included discussions on drug trafficking trends by experts from UNODC, operational methods of criminal groups, and strategies for effective drug interdiction. Representatives from **Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Mozambique, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania** shared challenges and best practices in maritime drug enforcement. The day concluded with bilateral meetings that fostered one-to-one discussions, enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation among countries to combat drug trafficking effectively.
- To provide enhanced coordination and cooperation, UNODC, in partnership with the **Dominican Republic**, has established the Caribbean Forum on Maritime Crime (CFMC). The CFMC brings together **Caribbean Basin nations** to align and further operationalize

efforts to counter transnational organized crime at sea, focusing on emerging threats, new technology, and best practices. Additionally, to promote interoperability, UNODC has assisted **Jamaica** and its Defence Forces with the planning and execution of a multi-country and multi-domain exercise across the Caribbean Basin. Over ten days, this exercise involved assets and maritime law enforcement officers from over nine countries coordinating efforts to tackle simulated scenarios related to drug trafficking, search and rescue, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response.

- In September 2023, UNODC held the regional bi-annual Prosecutors' Network Forum (PNF) under the aegis of the Indian Ocean Forum on Maritime Crimes (IOFMC) in **Madagascar** for prosecutors from the **Indian Ocean West and Indian Ocean East regions**. The aim of the forum was to enhance the skills of prosecutors, thereby reinforcing the criminal justice chain in the fight against transnational organized crimes at sea. During the five-day forum, the prosecutors discussed legal hindrances they must overcome both at the national and regional levels to increase the likelihood of successful prosecutions. In April 2024, UNODC held a follow-up meeting of the regional bi-annual forum with prosecutors from the Western Indian Ocean. The main focus was on the importance of finalizing a regional strategy to combat drug trafficking. In November 2023, UNODC organized the second edition of the regional annual colloquium in **Seychelles**, regrouping judges and magistrates in the Western Indian Ocean. The aim of the colloquium was to ensure that the region is fully apprised of, and benefits from, maximum available legal resources and judicial reasoning. Judges in the region may consult each other, raise issues that hinder legal processes, and together find solutions capable of strengthening the criminal justice chain. It is therefore imperative that judges in the IOW and IOE regions be aware of all the regional mechanisms set up to assist the states in their combat against maritime crimes.

*Pursuant to **OP 153**, which “Notes with grave concern the recent proliferation of, and endangerment of lives through, the smuggling of migrants by sea, underscores the necessity to address such situations in accordance with applicable international law, and encourages States, acting nationally or through relevant global or regional organizations, as appropriate, to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to flag, port and coastal States, upon request, to enhance their capabilities to prevent smuggling of migrants and human trafficking by sea”*

- Please refer to the paragraph above concerning the Trinidad and Tobago Training Center (p.8).

*Pursuant to **OP 176**, which “Encourages greater dialogue and cooperation among States and the relevant regional and global organizations through workshops and seminars on the protection, and laying and maintenance of submarine cables and pipelines to promote the security of such critical infrastructure”*

- The Multilingual Communication Modality for Maritime Radio Communication in the South China Sea, developed by the Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC,

provides Coast Guard vessels with [pre-recorded voice instructions](#) in eight different languages on MP3 players to avoid misunderstanding or miscommunication at sea.

- After a series of successful Inter-Ministerial Committee meetings held in 2023 and coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maritime Affairs Unit, and facilitated by UNODC's Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) in **Bangladesh**, the Inter-Ministerial Committee has completed the drafting process of the National Submarine Cable Protection and Resilience Framework. The completed draft was handed over for further evaluation after a two-day Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting held in November 2023. The draft framework is currently under revision by the Ministry of Post, Telecommunications, and Information Technology for further evaluation and promulgation.
- UNODC presented the first draft of the National Submarine Cables Protection and Resilience Framework to the Ministry of Homeland Security and Technology of **Maldives** in March 2024. The Ministry welcomed the draft framework and expressed their intent to review it thoroughly for subsequent planning and action.
- In November 2023, UNODC designed and delivered multi-agency training programs to strengthen cybersecurity for maritime law enforcement agencies in **Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka**. By enabling space for multi-agency interactions, this training aimed to foster greater collaboration and coordination among various maritime law enforcement agencies and related stakeholders. Participants developed a common understanding of cybersecurity challenges and solutions and networked to share information and resources to collectively address cyber threats in a more cohesive manner.

IX. Marine Environment and Marine Resources

Pursuant to OP 192, which “Notes the need for actions to support sustainable fisheries and sustainable aquaculture for sufficient, safe and nutritious food, recognizing the central role of healthy oceans in resilient food systems and for achieving the 2030 Agenda”

- In **Maldives**, UNODC conducted a Fishing Vessel Boarding Operations (FVBO) course with evidence handling sessions in November 2023, involving the participation of the Maldives Coast Guard and the Maldives Police. The FVBO course fostered inter-agency cooperation while also aiming to improve the maritime law enforcement skills of the Maldives Coast Guard to tackle crimes in the fisheries sector, including the trafficking of drugs in fishing vessels. Additionally, it enhanced the evidence collection skills of the Maldives Police Service to ensure compliance with local laws and improve the admissibility of evidence in courts, enabling participants to tackle fisheries crimes more effectively.
- UNODC is currently partnering with FAO to deliver a pilot project on Transnational Crime Resilience and Mitigation in Coastal Communities in **the Dominican Republic**. This project aims to foster whole-of-government public security policies and development interventions in communities at risk of transnational organized crime (TOC) due to the lower profitability of fishing activities resulting from climate change and more stringent fishing regulations. Leveraging the Human Security Framework, UNODC and FAO are working with these communities to address the root causes and drivers of insecurity,

criminal infiltration, and poor socio-economic development in the coastal areas of Barahona, Pedernales, and Palmar de Ocoa.

- As part of the first-ever Global Analysis on Crimes that Affect the Environment, UNODC is conducting studies on two crimes that impact the marine environment. One chapter of the Global Analysis is dedicated to ‘Criminal Marine Pollution.’ This chapter explores who is committing these crimes and how illegal discharges from vessels are occurring at sea, and it is planned for publication in September 2024. The second chapter and an accompanying case study focus on illegal fishing as a crime, and it is conducted in partnership with FAO. This chapter investigates who is committing illegal fishing and how it takes place, while the case study delves deeper into the impacts of this crime on people in **the Pacific**. Both are ongoing and scheduled for publication in November 2024.