Main submitter: United States of America.

Co-submitter: Ecuador, Morocco.

Topic: Exposing illicit drug economies as hidden employment networks in economically vulnerable communities.

Deeply concerned by the exploitation of vulnerable communities through illicit drug employment networks,

Recognizing the need for stronger legal frameworks and international cooperation to combat organized crime,

Emphasizing the importance of alternative employment, victim protection, and rehabilitation programs,

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF DRUGS AND CRIME,

1. *Calls upon* Member States to introduce or strengthen domestic legislation criminalising the recruitment of individuals into employment networks controlled by transnational criminal organisations, particularly where recruitment is used to expand trafficking, drug distribution, or territorial control, through measures including, but not limited to:
    a. Defining criminal recruitment to include:
        i. Offering employment under false pretences to involve individuals in drug production, transportation, distribution, or money laundering,
        ii. Using threats, debt, financial dependency, or coercion to compel individuals to work for criminal organisations,
        iii. Recruiting minors through online platforms, social media, schools, or informal employment networks,
    b. Requiring law enforcement agencies to prioritise the prosecution of recruiters, supervisors, and financiers who organise or profit from these networks,
    c. Encouraging Member States to establish specialised investigations into businesses knowingly used by criminal organisations to conceal recruitment, distribute payments, or disguise illicit employment,
    d. Distinguishing between individuals who knowingly facilitate criminal activity and those recruited through coercion, threats, or economic exploitation, with minors involved in such networks being treated primarily as victims requiring protection and rehabilitation,
    e. Requesting UNODC to provide technical assistance to Member States seeking to introduce legislation and strengthen their capacity to investigate organised crime recruitment;

2. *Urges* Member States to adopt measures allowing the identification, restriction, and seizure of

financial assets belonging to commercial entities that knowingly sustain the employment, production, or distribution networks of designated transnational criminal organisations, including, but not restricted to:

a. Establishing a national designated process through which businesses, financial intermediaries, and commercial entities may be identified as materially supporting illicit drug economies where credible evidence demonstrates that they:
    i. Employ individuals to carry out drug production, transportation, storage, or distribution on behalf of designated criminal organisations,
    ii. Provide payroll services, commercial premises, transport infrastructure, or financial services knowingly used to sustain criminal employment networks,
    iii. Conceal the ownership, revenue, or employment activities of businesses controlled by criminal organisations through shell companies, false contracts, or undisclosed beneficial ownership,
b. Authorising competent national authorities, subject to applicable domestic law, to impose immediate interim restrictions on the financial activities of designated entities while investigations are ongoing, including:
    i. Freezing accounts and financial assets reasonably suspected of containing proceeds derived from or intended to support illicit drug economies,
    ii. Suspending access to government contracts, public procurement, and state-supported commercial programmes,
    iii. Requiring financial institutions to terminate or restrict services to entities confirmed to be facilitating the operations of designated criminal organisations,
    iv. Encouraging Member States to permit the confiscation of assets demonstrated through judicial proceedings to have been derived from or used to facilitate organised drug-related criminal activity, even where the beneficial owners are not themselves convicted of drug-trafficking offences,
c. Recommending that confiscated assets be directed towards:
    i. Compensation for workers subjected to coercion, exploitation, or unpaid labour by criminal organisations,
    ii. The restoration of legitimate businesses displaced or financially undermined by criminal competition,
    iii. Employment initiatives intended to reduce communities' economic dependence on criminal organisations,
d. Requesting UNODC to provide technical assistance in identifying beneficial ownership, tracing illicit financial flows, and developing procedures for the designation and review of businesses suspected of sustaining criminal employment networks;

3. *Encourages* Member States to establish long-term alternative development programmes in economically vulnerable communities where illicit drug economies function as major sources of employment, with the aim of replacing dependence on criminal organisations with sustainable legal livelihoods, through measures including, but not limited to:

a. Identifying communities requiring priority assistance through assessments of:

i. Unemployment, poverty, school dropout rates, and access to public services,
ii. Economic dependence on illicit crop cultivation, drug production, transportation, or distribution,
iii. Barriers preventing residents from entering legal employment, including inadequate infrastructure, limited qualifications, and lack of access to markets,

b. Developing employment programmes in cooperation with local authorities, educational institutions, and legitimate businesses, including:
   i. Paid vocational training and apprenticeships linked to existing employment opportunities,
   ii. Grants, affordable loans, and business guidance for residents seeking to establish or expand lawful businesses,
   iii. Agricultural assistance enabling farmers to transition towards legal crops through access to equipment, technical training, and reliable buyers,
c. Ensuring that transitions away from illicit livelihoods are economically sustainable by:
   i. Providing temporary income or food assistance to eligible households participating in transition programmes,
   ii. Investing in roads, transport, storage facilities, and cooperatives that improve access to legal markets and fair prices,
   iii. Assessing the profitability and environmental suitability of alternative crops before promoting their adoption,
d. Requiring participating programmes to include safeguards against exclusion, corruption, and criminal interference, including:
   i. Transparent eligibility criteria and independent monitoring of funding and recruitment, ii. Accessible participation for women, young people, Indigenous communities, and residents without formal qualifications,
   ii. Regular consultation with community representatives and confidential procedures for reporting the diversion of assistance,
e. Requesting UNODC, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, to provide technical assistance to participating Member States and support evaluations measuring sustained legal employment, household income, and reduced dependence on illicit drug economies;

4. *Urges* Member States to establish voluntary exit, protection, and reintegration programmes for individuals seeking to leave employment networks controlled by transnational criminal organisations, particularly minors and persons subjected to coercion or economic exploitation, through measures including, but not restricted to:

a. Creating confidential and accessible pathways through which individuals may seek assistance, including:
   i. Dedicated telephone services and secure online reporting channels operated by trained personnel,
   ii. Referral services through schools, healthcare providers, social workers, and trusted community organisations,
   iii. Clear information explaining available assistance, legal rights, and the limits of

confidentiality before personal information is collected,

b. Providing individual assessments to determine immediate protection and support needs, followed, where appropriate, by:
    i. Emergency accommodation, relocation assistance, and measures addressing threats against participants or their families,
    ii. Legal assistance for individuals facing criminal proceedings, threats, or disputes concerning coercion, exploitation, or unpaid labour,
    iii. Voluntary access to healthcare, psychological support, and treatment for substance-use disorders,
c. Developing individual reintegration plans that support lasting independence from criminal networks through:
    i. Assistance obtaining identification documents, returning to education, and accessing recognised vocational qualifications,
    ii. Placement in lawful employment with employers assessed for links to organised crime and compliance with labour protections,
    iii. Continued mentoring, practical support, and assistance securing stable housing,
d. Establishing additional protections for minors, including:
    i. Referral to trained child-protection professionals and access to age-appropriate education and rehabilitation,
    ii. Family involvement where assessed to be safe and in the child's best interests, iii. Measures preventing the disclosure of information that could expose children to retaliation, stigma, or renewed recruitment,
e. Ensuring that access to essential protection and rehabilitation services is not conditional upon providing intelligence or testimony against criminal organisations, while maintaining lawful accountability through individual assessments that distinguish coercion and exploitation from voluntary participation,
f. Requesting UNODC, in cooperation with UNICEF and relevant national authorities, to support professional training, secure information-handling procedures, and voluntary follow-up assessments measuring participants' safety, access to education or employment, and vulnerability to renewed recruitment.