

**United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network  
(PNI)**

**Workshop**

***Maximizing the effectiveness of technical assistance provided by  
Member States in crime prevention and criminal justice:  
solutions for the future:  
key components for effective technical assistance***

**On the occasion of the  
Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Commission  
On Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice  
Vienna, 24 April 2006**

A workshop on the theme “Maximizing the effectiveness of technical assistance provided by Member States in crime prevention and criminal justice: solutions for the future: key components for effective technical assistance” was organized by the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network. The workshop was chaired by Shahbaz (Pakistan), First Vice-Chairman of the Commission and Chairman of the Committee of the Whole. Six presentations were made at the workshop, covering two main thematic fields: ways of enhancing the effectiveness of technical assistance and recent experience in technical assistance.

In his opening remarks, the First Vice-Chairman noted that the objectives of the workshop were to outline factors impeding the effectiveness of technical assistance and to consider possible remedies; to provide models and projects exemplifying successful approaches to technical assistance; and to stimulate discussion.

In his introductory statement, the Chief of the Strategic Planning Unit of the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs of UNODC stressed the special role of the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network in promoting knowledge-building, in strengthening national and international policies and in assisting in the implementation of United Nations standards and norms, including the relevant normative instruments. He further indicated that, within the framework of the overall UNODC strategy, the assistance provided to Member States should cover a whole range of issues related to prevention, rule of law, treatment and reintegration and analysis of thematic and cross-sectoral trends for effective policy formulation and operational response. In that respect, it would be important to have in place a number of enabling conditions for rendering such assistance more effective and efficient,

such as diversification of funding, alignment of resources with existing strategies and performance, and coordination among the key players in the field.

The observer for the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime made a presentation on the key components for effective technical assistance and possible future solutions towards revitalizing technical assistance activities in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. Using as an example the incomplete effort to establish and maintain on an ongoing basis a database on international projects in crime prevention and criminal justice in Central and Eastern Europe, she put emphasis on the need to utilize the lessons learned in order to achieve better results and address the new challenges in the field of technical assistance more effectively.

Consideration was further given to certain constraints that rendered technical assistance inadequate and ineffective, such as the lack of sufficient resources; the uncoordinated, fragmented and scattered nature of the assistance provided; the partial failure of existing coordination mechanisms; the failure to take into account the receiving State's needs and interests and, thus, to instil a sense of ownership; the lack of sensitivity to the specific context of the recipient State; the neglect of areas requiring action as a result of the failure to embrace a more comprehensive and integrated approach to technical assistance; the failure to take into account the capacity of the receiving States to implement or benefit from technical assistance programmes; and corruption and abuse. In the speaker's view, recent initiatives at the national, regional and international levels had already shown that a consensus was emerging on a set of approaches and possible guidelines aimed at enhancing the efficiency of technical assistance activities. In that context, she mentioned the following key elements: promotion of comprehensive and holistic approaches to strengthen the crime prevention and criminal justice sector as a whole; country-led programming to stimulate country ownership and sustainability; building on existing strengths and preference for long-term assistance; participation and active involvement of civil society; and research-based and result-oriented monitoring and evaluation.

The observer for the European Commission provided an overview of the European Union's strategy on aid effectiveness. He stressed that the Union had fully endorsed the five partnership commitments of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, adopted by the High-level Forum held in Paris from 28 February to 2 March 2005, concerning ownership by the partner States, alignment of donors with partner countries, harmonization of donor actions, managing for results and mutual accountability of donors and partners. He also made reference to the four additional commitments entered into by the Union: increasing use of multi-donor arrangements in capacity-building assistance; channelling 50 per cent of Government-to-Government assistance through country systems; avoiding the establishment of new project implementation units; and reducing the number of uncoordinated missions by 50 per cent. He put emphasis on the establishment of a joint multi-annual programming framework of the European Commission with

partner States and other donors, as well as on the need to develop operational principles for ensuring coordination and to revise the European Union rules on cofinancing with a view to facilitating joint financing arrangements. In the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, the efforts of the Union were geared towards increasing the effectiveness of technical assistance and included the development of a concept and guidelines on security system reform; the preparation of rules and tools to recruit the appropriate experts; and the identification of commonly agreed indicators on the results of technical assistance in the field of governance.

The observer for the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy focused his attention on technical assistance in small States. He underlined that the effectiveness of technical assistance was dependent on the adaptation of methods to differing country situations, taking into consideration the political and institutional context; geopolitical factors; psychological attitudes, including the level of public support for reforms; economic circumstances; the normative framework; government effectiveness; the commitment to and progress made in controlling corruption; and civil society involvement. Further reference was made to the vulnerabilities of many small States arising from factors such as globalization and transnational crime, as well as to the difficulties they encountered owing to limited capacity and human resources and the inability to participate fully in global regimes and international policies and treaties. The speaker argued that the justice sector was particularly affected in most of those States by the limited capacity of existing institutions and the declining levels of development assistance.

He noted the need to establish priorities and promote regional approaches and underscored that coordination among multiple donors was important for exploring flexible programming options and reducing the transaction costs for small States. Equally important for donors and technical assistance providers would also be to tailor their tools and instruments to suit the institutional capacity of such States, as well as to adopt whole-sector and integrated assistance approaches in consideration of the relatively small scale of the systems involved.

During the presentation of recent technical assistance experience, the observer for the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders provided a brief description of a collaborative partnership with the Philippines on the revitalization of its Volunteer Probation Aide Programme. The key objective of the Programme was to promote community involvement in the treatment of offenders in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules, General Assembly resolution 45/110, annex). The technical assistance project was intended to foster a sense of ownership by the recipient State and was premised on the introduction of the corresponding Japanese model as good and long-standing practice in that area.

The observer for the Norwegian Police Directorate presented the lessons learned from the perspective of a donor country (Norway) on technical assistance programming and policing on the occasion of a specific project to promote bilateral and multilateral police assistance in Serbia and Montenegro. The project was launched in 2002 and focused initially on a small police district, aiming at building capacity, through training, to fight financial and narcotics crime, as well as improving infrastructure, management skills and forensic capacity. The project was later expanded to cover all police stations in the targeted region and led to the identification of general indicators on sustainability and local ownership.

The observer for the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders presented the experience of the Institute in the field of technical assistance on criminal justice and prison reform in Latin America. He listed examples of technical assistance programmes channelled through the Institute, which had managed, despite limited resources, to play the role of a catalytic agent in that field. The speaker also stressed the importance of adopting a cross-cutting diagnostic approach when assessing the needs to be addressed through technical assistance and further favoured the improvement of methodologies used for evaluating the impact of technical assistance.

In the discussion following the presentations, questions were raised about the limited value of piecemeal technical assistance activities that were not integrated into broader reform and capacity-building initiatives and were not fully endorsed and supported at the national level. In that context, the importance of ensuring ownership over the quality of the assistance provided during each stage of the relevant process and over the results and timeliness of such assistance was emphasized. It was also suggested that further action should be taken to meet the specific needs of the recipient States and to address problems related to the evaluation of the effectiveness of technical assistance activities. Moreover, the institutes were encouraged to continue working closely with each other, with United Nations entities and with Member States with a view to defining a more systematic strategy and approach to ways and means of maximizing the effectiveness of technical assistance in the future.

In concluding, the rapporteur for the workshop reiterated the importance of technical assistance as a main element of any effort to address crime prevention and criminal justice issues in the context of sustainable development and human security in an effective manner. However, he recalled that technical assistance activities were often assumed to be ineffective or inadequate and to fail to meet the deeper needs of recipient States. In that connection, and building upon recent developments at the national, regional and international levels, some of which were presented during the discussion, he stressed that consensus could be reached on the way forward and on the criteria that could be established and followed for enhancing the effectiveness of technical assistance. He further linked that issue to the general discussion on the revitalization of the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and pointed out that

consideration should be given to the perspective of making technical assistance a long-standing item on the agenda of the Commission.

He also noted that it might be appropriate to work towards the “formalization” of the above-mentioned criteria through the establishment of a set of guidelines for planning and implementing technical assistance, as well as for measuring its impact and effectiveness.