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Use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice

Good practices in crime prevention

Report of the Secretary-General**

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** The present report was submitted after the deadline owing to the late submission of replies by Member States.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2003/26 of 22 July 2003, entitled "Prevention of urban crime", the Economic and Social Council requested the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, subject to availability of extrabudgetary resources and with the assistance of the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and relevant United Nations entities, to compile an overview of proven and promising practices in the area of urban crime prevention, including in criminal justice, to develop a practical manual on the use and application of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime and to convene for that purpose an expert group meeting, with participants to be selected on the basis of equitable geographical representation.

2. Pursuant to resolution 2003/26, an expert group meeting to discuss the drafting of a practical manual on the use and application of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime was held in Durban, South Africa, on 28 November 2003. The meeting was held in conjunction with the International Conference on Sustainable Safety: Municipalities at the Crossroads, organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the eThekweni Municipality, South Africa, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in Durban from 25 to 28 November 2003. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN-Habitat served as facilitators and secretariat for the expert group meeting.

3. In its resolution 58/271 A of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly approved the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, section 35 of which, Development Account, includes a project concerning South-South regional cooperation for promoting good practices for crime prevention in the developing world. The project envisages the exchange of information on successful crime prevention programmes between practitioners in the Caribbean and Southern Africa, together with a web site of interesting initiatives and contact information. A first meeting of crime prevention experts from South Africa and from the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization with their Caribbean counterparts was held in Kingston on 13 and 14 February 2004, in conjunction with the Third Caribbean Conference on Crime and Criminal Justice, held in Kingston from 11 to 14 February 2004.

II. Expert group meeting held in Durban, South Africa

4. Experts from Argentina, Canada, Egypt, the Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Republic of Tanzania, together with staff from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN-Habitat, met in Durban, South Africa, on 28 November 2003, after participating in the International Conference on Sustainable Safety: Municipalities at the Crossroads, also held in Durban from 25 to 28 November 2003. There was general agreement that crime prevention approaches and measures could not be divorced from criminal justice activities. Similarly, it was agreed that community-based crime prevention initiatives should be based on clear commitments by different institutions to work together and provide for a constant exchange of information on both positive and negative lessons learned in order to allow for timely adjustments and

cross-fertilization between different initiatives. While the trend towards appropriation by local authorities of strategic crime prevention programmes was welcomed, it was noted that such programmes should be based on accepted international standards, such as those contained in the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime and the Safer Cities Programme, and that they should be part of national crime prevention strategies promoted by central Governments.

5. Participants discussed the issue of the primary target audience. It was agreed that the primary target group should be policy makers, practitioners and other stakeholders in cities and communities. However, it was agreed that the definition of a city or community should be left to the local actors and that the local context defined who the key stakeholders were.

6. Participants agreed that the manual should draw on certain general concepts and principles derived from the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime and the Safer Cities Programme and should focus on selected thematic and topical issues based on the Safer Cities project and other relevant international sources. Each theme and topic should contain a brief narrative part to be followed by selected examples and case studies. The resulting product should be a United Nations manual on the prevention of crime that included a compendium of good practices.

7. There was general agreement that the manual should be a dynamic and interactive resource tool, to be placed on the web sites of both the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN-Habitat and that it would have a capacity for regular updating and searching for specific themes.

8. The following topical issues should be covered in the manual: violence against women and targeted crime prevention projects; neighbourhood crime prevention organizations in different types of residential setting with different socio-economic levels; school anti-gun programmes; school-based drug abuse programmes; programmes against sexual harassment in the workplace; anti-gang programmes; organized crime: linkages between international, national and local manifestations and responses; crime prevention community education campaigns; programmes against corruption in the workplace; street children and the risk of delinquency; children orphaned by the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and the risk of delinquency; private security and its role in safety from crime; electronic and video surveillance for business and urban renewal purposes; migrants and xenophobia prevention programmes at the community level; the role of mediation and conflict resolution and restorative justice at the community level and within the criminal justice system.

9. As a way forward, the experts recommended the establishment of a steering group with representatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN-Habitat and the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. It was agreed that the valuable experience of the International Centre, in particular in connection with the production of its two crime prevention digests, as well as various national crime prevention manuals, tool kits and documented practical experience, should be taken advantage of.

10. If additional resources became available, the steering group might be expanded to include national experts selected on the basis of equitable geographical representation. Depending on the availability of resources, the work of the steering group could take the form of regular meetings or regular Internet-based

communication. Consultants would be needed to assist in the development of the manual and the provision of examples of good practices.

11. The expert group meeting recommended that every effort should be made to finalize the draft manual in time for submission to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in Bangkok from 18 to 25 April 2005, as well as to the Workshop on Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Crime and Youth at Risk, to be held during the Eleventh Congress.

III. South-South regional cooperation to promote good practices for crime prevention in the developing world

12. In February 2004, the University of the West Indies organized the Third Caribbean Conference on Crime and Criminal Justice (see para. 3 above), which attracted over 300 criminologists and criminal justice practitioners. Papers were presented on topics ranging from youth and crime, school violence, community policing, peace-building and conflict management, recidivism, crime and related deprivation, drug policies, gender and crime, domestic violence, civilian oversight of the police to local manifestations of transnational organized crime. Eight crime prevention experts from South Africa and a representative of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization were able to participate in the Conference, as a result of funding made available from the Development Account. Presentations were made on best practices in crime prevention and control, including a critical review of crime prevention in South Africa, gangs in South Africa, crimes against women and children and the role of donors, as well as a presentation of a tool kit.

13. In addition to the conference sessions, two meetings were arranged between the experts from the two regions to discuss the similar causal factors leading to crime and violence, including high levels of unemployment and income inequality, a significant involvement of juveniles in criminal activity, the proliferation of unlicensed firearms and the critical need for police reform. In many cases, high levels of lawlessness were concentrated in particular geographical areas, generally urban ghettos inhabited by the poor. Indeed, in both societies, the poor—being least able to absorb the costs of victimization—were most likely to fall victim to crime.

14. Topics of interest to both regions were community policing, prevention of violence, conflict resolution and reintegration of offenders. Among the projects to be considered for evaluation were the “Partners for Peace” programme in Jamaica; a user-friendly crime prevention manual (South Africa); benchmarking school violence (Trinidad and Tobago); tracking hospital injuries (Jamaica); prevention of young sexual offending (South Africa); victim surveys (South Africa); prevention of domestic violence (Jamaica); gang mediation (South Africa); and reducing prisoner recidivism (Trinidad and Tobago).

15. Ultimately, up to 20 projects from each region would be evaluated and posted on the future South-South web site. Additional information on conferences, survey results and other interesting projects (up to 200) would also be made available. The Institute for Security Studies, in Pretoria, has offered to host and maintain the web site. The University of the West Indies, in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and the

University of Cape Town, South Africa, would be the focal points for collecting information and facilitating exchange. The Caribbean Task Force on Crime and Security of the Caribbean Community has endorsed the project. The Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization have both indicated that they wished to be part of the project. The Minister for National Security of Jamaica has agreed to act as co-chair of the South-South exchange project.

IV. Workshop on the Hungarian National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention

16. In February 2004, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, together with the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations (Vienna), organized a workshop to present and discuss the Hungarian National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention. The Strategy had been adopted unanimously by the Hungarian Parliament in October 2003. The meeting in Vienna was attended by a large number of representatives of Member States, who discussed national and international experience in the field of crime prevention.

17. The Hungarian experts explained that, over the last decade, Hungary and its neighbouring countries had seen a sudden rise in the number of crimes against property, of crimes committed in public places and of violent criminal acts. In spite of all the efforts made by law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, the public's perception of the safety situation had not improved. Over the past three years, a group of Hungarian crime prevention experts had met with various stakeholders to draw up a national strategy for social crime prevention. In addition to improving the feeling of security and the quality of life of the general public, it was felt that such a strategy would also contribute to socio-economic development, while significantly decreasing the material and psychological damage caused by crime.

18. The Hungarian experts noted that social crime prevention could be achieved by addressing the root causes of crime, limiting opportunities for crime and assisting victims to alleviate the consequences to them and to prevent repeat victimization. The implementation of the National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention would rely on the cooperation of various institutions, civil organizations, enterprises and authorities, especially the police, at the local level. Five priority areas were defined in the Strategy: (a) reduction and prevention of juvenile delinquency; (b) improvement of urban security; (c) prevention of violence within the family; (d) victim support; and (e) social reintegration and prevention of recidivism.

19. The experts explained that implementation of the Strategy was conditional on the establishment of partnerships and the rebuilding of public confidence in the police. Changes were required in the present professional and organizational framework for law enforcement and crime prevention, as well as for the collection, assessment and dissemination of important data among all partners. They recommended that local authorities cooperate closely with local police forces to play the active and leading role in shaping local strategies, coordinating risk-signalling systems and ensuring cooperation as well as evaluation of the results

obtained. The central Government would provide the necessary professional, organizational and financial resources and introduce a public tender system to encourage private individuals and organizations to take part in implementation of the Strategy. The experts reported that a government decree containing an programme of action to implement the National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention had meanwhile been adopted, which urged local authorities, professional bodies, associations of residents, enterprises, civil organizations and churches to cooperate with each other as well as to render professional help and to provide data in order to facilitate implementation of the Strategy.

20. The representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime commented on the Hungarian National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention from the perspective of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime. He noted that the Guidelines recommended evidence-based policies and measures for humane and cost-effective crime reduction. He explained that the Hungarian Strategy followed basically the same conceptual framework as the Guidelines by considering early intervention in the development of delinquent careers, situational crime prevention, victim support and reintegration of offenders the main categories of crime prevention. Whereas the Guidelines characterized community-based crime prevention as a special form of crime prevention, the Strategy regarded community-based crime prevention as a special way to organize the implementation of crime prevention.

21. An expert from the Ministry of the Interior of Austria briefed the audience on the latest initiatives taken by the Austrian authorities to tackle juvenile delinquency. Special reference was made to a large awareness-raising programme, conducted by more than 300 law enforcement agents reaching out to more than 120,000 12- to 15-year-old boys and girls over the last three years. Pre-testing had indicated a considerable decrease in acceptance of the use of violence among the young people participating in the programme.

22. The representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported on ongoing projects of the Office in the field of crime prevention, especially in the areas of urban security, juvenile justice, domestic violence and victim support. The projects were intended to yield direct and real benefits for citizens and reflected the importance given to citizens' empowerment, the involvement of civil society and gender mainstreaming in crime prevention initiatives.

23. Participants stressed the importance of giving due attention to organization and management in the implementation of crime prevention, as institutional structures for implementation had in the past often tended to be underfunded, in a state of constant flux and incapable of developing and maintaining specialized expertise. Past experience had shown that, without clear political commitment and funding for large-scale activities as well as for specialized administrative structures, crime prevention could not be effective.

24. The principle of knowledge-based crime prevention was also emphasized, a principle that required thorough assessment of the crime problems at issue before and after interventions were carried out. As crime rates usually reflected only offences reported to the police, victimization surveys were considered to provide better and more complete data on the level and nature of crime and corruption. Accordingly, it was recommended that the International Crime Victim Survey

carried out in the past by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute be repeated at regular intervals in as many other countries in the region as possible.

25. Participants agreed that the Hungarian National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention applied international best practices in crime prevention and could serve as a model for other countries faced with high crime rates. The Hungarian experience might be most valuable to the acceding States, in particular in exploring how to obtain funds from the European Union for crime prevention initiatives. It was noted that the workshop served as a good example of how to implement the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, which called upon Member States to exchange proven and promising practices, to identify elements of their transferability and to make such knowledge available to communities throughout the world.

V. Workshop on Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Crime and Youth at Risk, to be held during the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

26. The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime has agreed to organize the Workshop on Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Crime and Youth at Risk, to be held during the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Workshop will aim to identify the priorities for action; provide practical examples of good projects and tools for urban crime prevention; assess factors that contribute to success or failure; and provide Member States with an opportunity to examine their own progress in relation to urban crime.

27. The specific objectives of the Workshop will be:

(a) To foster the implementation and evaluation of integrated urban safety initiatives and the sharing of best practices in crime prevention programmes at the international level;

(b) To identify best practices for cooperation between different levels of government at the national and international levels in relation to the prevention of urban crime;

(c) To identify best practices in preventing crime among specific groups of young persons particularly at risk (e.g. minorities and both young men and young women);

(d) To facilitate a critical examination by Member States of their urban crime prevention strategies and programmes, in particular in relation to urban crime and youth at risk;

(e) To foster the provision of professional training for urban planners, city managers and others to serve as a basis for future technical cooperation activities that will provide States with best practices in implementing the relevant guidelines.

28. The Workshop will focus on identifying best practices for crime prevention in expanding cities, effective responses to crime facilitators, such as firearms and drugs, as well as obstacles, and will give participants an opportunity to discuss needs for assistance or exchange of knowledge between cities and countries and how the different United Nations guidelines could be better applied.

VI. Analysis of replies received from Governments

29. Replies have so far been received from five Member States on the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/26.

Bahrain

30. Bahrain reported on initiatives taken to protect children at risk in urban areas. It noted that its Decree Law No. 17 of 1976 dealt with delinquents under the age of 15 and provided for preventive measures that could be taken by the juvenile court, including reprimanding, vocational training in specialized centres, attendance at counselling sessions, judicial probation and placement in social welfare institutions attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Bahrain had also established an office, composed of female police and social workers, for the protection of children under the age of 10, whether they were victims, were at risk or had committed a crime. The office was usually notified by the police station concerned, which had the information related to the case in question, and referred the child to the specialized prosecution office concerned with juvenile cases. It also examined the psychological and social condition of the child and prepared a report to be submitted to the competent juvenile judge. Finally, the office also received communications from children's families and provided the necessary counselling, advice and guidance in caring for the children.

Jordan

31. Jordan stressed that its security services had received a significant increase in physical and human resources. However, statistics showed an increase in the crime rate, which required concerted efforts by the various elements of civil society in cooperation with the State, as well as collaboration with regional and international organizations, which could provide expertise and technical and material assistance on crime prevention matters. Jordan believed that there were clear links between urban crime and drug trafficking, organized crime, illegal possession of firearms and terrorism in its various forms and their impact on social development.

32. Jordan also referred to its Penal Code and amendments, its Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and amendments thereto, its Law on Juveniles and amendments thereto, as well as to the action taken by the Directorate of Public Security in response to urban crime. The Directorate had been able to make major advances, based on training and utilization of modern methods and techniques, in detecting a significant number of crimes, through cooperation with all the government services and security agencies concerned. Targeted action was directed according to emerging trends on the basis of research concerning crimes committed and their causes and motives.

33. Jordan described special measures taken in the area of family protection, as well as in that of drug control. As far as urban crime prevention was concerned, reference was made to the lectures organized for university and school students to increase awareness about criminality and the gravity of threats posed by crimes to the individual, the family and society at large. Brochures and posters had been produced with a view to reducing theft, drug abuse and domestic violence and an outreach programme had been set up that covered as many groups in society as possible. Jordan emphasized the important role to be played by the media, the use of feature television programmes that were popular among young people, as well as the organization of appropriate celebrations of international days, such as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, celebrated together with various civil associations.

Netherlands

34. The Netherlands referred to its action programme, “Better protected”, launched in early 2004, whose main goal was to create more effective protection for juveniles, focusing on the services delivered to minors and their parents by youth protection institutions. The programme sought to fill some of the gaps in the field of child protection. It had a dynamic character, which meant that new action would be taken in response to unforeseen shortcomings in the field of child protection. It took an integrated approach, involving the Councils for Child Protection, various agencies for youth care and juvenile judges.

35. Reference was also made to the 2002 action programme on preventing and combating criminality among young people, whose general objective was to prevent first-time offences and to reduce recidivism. As it was generally accepted that the problem of juvenile delinquency required solutions adapted to the particular context, the action programme differentiated according to offender category. The plan emphasized that juveniles must be prevented from developing a criminal “career”, aiming specifically to tackle crimes committed by children under the age of 12 and to reduce the proportion of criminal juveniles belonging to ethnic minority groups.

Switzerland

36. Switzerland reported that it had no special legislation relating to urban crime, but that it was particularly concerned about the prevention of juvenile violence as well as about juvenile justice, both in and outside urban centres. In June 2003 the Swiss Parliament had adopted a new federal law on juvenile delinquency that focused on the prevention of juvenile crime and provided in the first instance for educative and therapeutic measures.

37. Crime prevention in Switzerland was dealt with by the police at the regional level (cantonal police forces) and the federal level (Federal Office of Police) and coordinated by the Swiss Crime Prevention Centre, a specialized coordination organ belonging to the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Justice and Police that organized awareness-raising campaigns and crime prevention projects, in collaboration with the police and other organizations. Moreover, several regional police forces had focal points for crime prevention and worked in increasingly close collaboration with the population (e.g. community policing).

38. The Service for Analysis and Prevention was responsible for crime prevention within the Federal Office of Police and aimed to ensure the preventive protection of the national security, together with its regional counterparts. The Service collected data and prepared strategic analyses in the areas of national security, as well as organized crime, economic crime and money-laundering.

Zambia

39. Zambia reported that crime in urban areas was being committed increasingly by people under the influence of intoxicating substances, such as drugs. It was therefore planning closer cooperation between the Drug Enforcement Commission and relevant law enforcement agencies.

VII. Conclusion

40. The deliberations on crime prevention of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice led to the drafting and adoption of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime at the eleventh session of the Commission. The Guidelines were subsequently accepted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2002/13 of 24 July 2002. Possibly of even greater significance was the inclusion of broad and extensive provisions on preventive measures in both the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I), which entered into force on 29 September 2003, and the recently adopted United Nations Convention against Corruption (resolution 58/4, annex). States parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, for example, must inform the Secretary-General of the name and address of the authority or authorities that can assist other States parties in developing measures to prevent transnational organized crime.

41. It is now widely accepted that the fight against drug abuse requires a balanced approach, combining interdiction (supply reduction) with alternative livelihoods for farmers and demand reduction (treatment and early prevention). Likewise, strategies to counter crime should be comprehensive and balanced. To achieve sustainable results, they must combine law enforcement with preventive measures, focusing on those at risk of becoming offenders and potential victims, as well as on the reintegration of offenders and on victim support. The launching in Hungary in 2004 of a carefully designed and well-funded National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention containing all those elements confirms the wisdom of mainstreaming the concept of crime prevention in national counter-crime policies. Equally noteworthy in that respect is the commitment of several African and Latin American States to enhance urban security through integrated programmes. At the request of the Brazilian authorities, for example, an assessment mission was carried out in June 2003 and a project on inter-agency partnerships for safer *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro is currently being developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Another ongoing project promotes urban crime prevention in the Dakar region of Senegal.

42. Several States are promoting the concept of human security as an analytical tool for the formulation of foreign and/or aid policies. In 2003 the Commission on Human Security, established at the initiative of the Government of Japan with the

support of the Secretary-General, presented its final report, entitled *Human Security Now*. One of the areas of human security currently of most concern to ordinary people in many parts of the world is the interrelated threat of crime, terrorism and corruption. The Commission's general recommendation of a people-centred, integrated, multi-agency approach aiming at early prevention and empowerment of stakeholders is very much in line with the twin concepts of crime prevention and victim empowerment, as proposed in the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime. The concept of "human security" holds great promise as a political platform for the advancement of evidence-based, victim-centred crime reduction policies, for example, in the field of trafficking in persons and the prevention of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDS in the crime-related contexts of drug abuse, prisons and sexual exploitation. Governments promoting the concept may wish to take greater account of United Nations efforts in the field of crime prevention and victim assistance.

43. Work is in progress on activities to promote the use of the Guidelines, such as the preparation of a manual on the implementation of the Guidelines. It is hoped that a draft of the manual will be available for discussion at the Workshop on Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention at the Eleventh Congress (see sect. V above). As in other areas, the contribution of the United Nations complements regional initiatives and may be especially useful if focused on the exchange of best practices between developed and developing nations as well as between groups of developing countries. In that respect, a possible extension of the ongoing South-South cooperation in crime prevention between the Caribbean and the Southern African regions to other regions of the world would seem desirable.
