



Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

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**Making the United Nations guidelines
on crime prevention work**

Workshop on Practical Approaches to Preventing Urban Crime

Background paper**

Summary

The present background paper includes a summary of some key trends in urban growth and crime in cities, and recent crime prevention practices and tools. It outlines the reasons why the international community, Member States and local governments should pay much greater attention to investing in crime prevention in urban areas.

Some of the challenges for urban areas, in particular mega-cities and high-crime cities are outlined, such as the exclusion of segments of the urban population, including slum dwellers, minority and migrant groups and women. Some of the recent achievements and developments in integrated crime prevention policy and practice in urban areas are highlighted, such as participatory approaches to integrating excluded population segments, as well as tools and technological advancements in strategic intervention, learning and capacity-building. Examples are given of good practice in applying international standards and norms in crime prevention.

In keeping with relevant United Nations instruments on crime prevention, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the background paper contains a number of suggestions on enhancing crime prevention in urban settings, as well as suggestions aimed at increasing the exchange of information, experiences and technical assistance at the international, regional and local levels.

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I. Introduction

1. At the regional preparatory meetings for the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/CONF.213/RPM.1/1, A/CONF.213/RPM.2/1, A/CONF.213/RPM.3/1 and A/CONF.213/RPM.4/1), a number of recommendations were made for the Workshop on Practical Approaches to Preventing Urban Crime. They emphasized that prevention required comprehensive and multisectoral responses not only from the criminal justice sector, but also from the urban planning and development, health and education and employment and social development sectors. There was a focus on the need to look at ways to reduce the impact of urban crime and victimization on those living in slums and disadvantaged areas and on migrant families and workers, ethnic minorities and women in particular, as well as ways to increase prevention initiatives to support children and young people through employment, education and reintegration programmes. The active involvement of citizens and the private sector in national and local government initiatives was strongly encouraged, as well as the use of participatory approaches.

2. Over the past two decades, there has been a marked increase in awareness of the need for crime prevention to be an integral part of subregional, national and local government responsibilities. That is well reflected at the international level in the numerous resolutions and recommendations emanating from the sessions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice since 1990.

3. Crime prevention was an important component at the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Bangkok from 18-25 April 2005, which considered a background paper entitled “Workshop 3: Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Crime and Youth at Risk” (A/CONF.203/11 and Corr.1). In the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (General Assembly resolution 60/177, annex), adopted by the Eleventh Congress, Member States stressed the need to consider measures to prevent the expansion of urban crime, including by improving international cooperation and capacity-building for law enforcement and the judiciary in that area, and affirmed their determination to pay particular attention to juvenile justice.

Progress since the holding of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

4. Two sets of normative guidelines have been adopted by the United Nations: the guidelines for cooperation and technical assistance in the field of urban crime prevention (Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/9, annex), and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (Council resolution 2002/13, annex). In its resolution 2005/22, the Council requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to pay due attention to crime prevention, with a view to achieving a balanced approach between crime prevention and criminal justice responses and to further developing initiatives on crime prevention. The Commission at its sixteenth session considered a report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.15/2007/11) containing a summary of the results of a questionnaire sent to Member States on the use and

application of United Nations standards and norms related primarily to the prevention of crime. In its resolution 2008/24, the Council recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/175, had drawn attention to urban crime as an emerging policy issue. In the same resolution, the Council encouraged Member States to integrate crime prevention considerations into all relevant social and economic policies and programmes in order to effectively address the conditions in which crime and violence could emerge. Tools to assist in the application of the norms and standards in crime prevention have recently been developed by UNODC.

5. The above-mentioned resolutions reflect the growth of knowledge and expertise among Governments, international donors, practitioners, researchers and civil society organizations in relation to crime prevention. They also reflect the growth of the exchange and technical assistance work being undertaken by the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network.

6. Some significant shifts in understanding have also been evident over the past few years in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. It is now widely recognized that without ensuring the safety and security of citizens, the eight development goals will not be achieved, and countries will not be able to gain economic and social prosperity. That has been demonstrated in recent reports by UNODC on the impact of crime on countries in various regions and subregions, such as *Crime and Development in Africa*, published in 2005; *Crime and Development in Central America: Caught in the Crossfire*;¹ *Crime, Violence and Development: Trends, Costs and Policy Options in the Caribbean*, published in 2007; and *Crime and Its Impact on the Balkans and Affected Countries*, published in 2008.

7. Recognition of the importance of promoting crime prevention is increasingly evident at the international level. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, for example, now incorporate improvements to local safety and security in their objectives and programmes.² The World Health Organization (WHO), since the publication of its *World Report on Violence and Health* in 2002, has been working to promote a comprehensive approach to violence prevention that includes the work of development agencies.³

8. In its *World Drug Report 2009*,⁴ UNODC placed strong emphasis on the seriousness of the impact of drug-related crime on cities and young people and on the importance of developing prevention and treatment responses. It argued that a breakdown of public order in neighbourhoods where drugs were sold underlined the need for greater investment in making communities less vulnerable to drugs and crime, through improving housing, public services, jobs, education and recreation.

¹ United Nations publication, Sales No. B.07.IV.5.

² See, for example, Mayra Buvinić, Erik Alda and Jorge Lamas, *Emphasizing Prevention in Citizen Security: The Inter-American Development Bank's Contribution to Reducing Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Sustainable Development Department Best Practices Series SOC-141 (Washington D.C., Inter-American Development Bank, 2005).

³ Etienne G. Krug and others, eds., *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002); and World Health Organization, *Preventing Violence and Reducing its Impact: How Development Agencies Can Help* (Geneva, 2008).

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.XI.12.

9. What seems clear, therefore, is that there has been considerable evolution and progress since 1990 in the application of preventive rather than just repressive approaches to crime and violence and that much has been achieved in the actual reduction of crime in a number of countries. Nevertheless, crime is also an evolving phenomenon, closely linked to, among other things, the nature of the growth of countries and cities, and to each new generation of children and young people and their families. It requires the continuing and sustained application of good prevention principles.

10. The Workshop on Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Crime and Youth at Risk, held within the framework of the Eleventh Congress, and the compendium of promising strategies and programmes on urban crime prevention and youth at risk,⁵ provided valuable examples of innovative and effective practices in countries in all regions, including countries emerging from conflict. The Workshop on Practical Approaches to Preventing Urban Crime, to be held within the framework of the Twelfth Congress, will present on opportunities to examine more closely how prevention can be better applied in mega-cities and high-crime cities to counter social exclusion, as well as to identify some of the tools that can be used in that process. Preventing urban crime is a timely topic in that since 2007, for the first time, the majority of the world's population has been living in cities.

11. Over the past decade, there has been a broad trend towards the stabilization of crime in some regions of the world, but it is unequally distributed, and crime and violence continue to be major concerns in urban areas, especially in large cities in developing countries.⁶ Urbanization itself is not the significant factor, but the speed of urbanization, the inability of cities to provide sufficient infrastructure and the widening disparities in income and access to services among their populations create conditions that foster crime. They limit access to adequate housing and health services, education, training and employment, all of which support personal, social and economic development. The Workshop on Practical Approaches to Preventing Urban Crime is also an opportunity to benefit from recent advances in prevention and from some of the technological advancements, tools and practical measures that have emerged in the past few years.

⁵ International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, *Urban Crime Prevention and Youth at Risk: Compendium of Promising Strategies and Programmes from Around the World* (Montreal, 2005).

⁶ See United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements 2007* (London, Earthscan, 2007); International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, *International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety: Trends and Perspectives* (Montreal, 2008); and "World crime trends and responses; integration and coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice: note by the Secretariat" (E/CN.15/2007/2).

II. Challenges for urban areas: mega-cities and high-crime cities

A. The growth of the mega-city and the challenges for developing countries

12. The twenty-first century is the century of the city. The global urban population is currently greater than the entire world population in 1960. Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Oceania have all become highly urbanized, more than 70 per cent of their total populations living in cities since 2005. By 2030, it is expected that 50 per cent of the populations of Africa and Asia will be living in urban areas. Urban areas in developing countries are expected to be the sites of nearly all future population growth worldwide. Cities are hubs in a web of global communication, transport and economic activity; thus, they are focal points for internal and international migration. Domestic migration from rural areas to urban centres is a feature of developed and developing countries, but especially of developing countries. International migrants, whether legal or illegal, tend to gravitate towards major cities.

13. Not only are most people now living in cities, but there are increasing numbers of mega-cities, with populations of 10 million or more. The number of mega-cities with populations of over 20 million is also growing. Most of the world's biggest cities are in developing countries: this includes 15 of the 20 cities with 10 million or more inhabitants, and the figure is expected to rise to 18 out of 22 such cities by 2015.⁷ It is now possible to talk of "cities of cities", and of the importance of considering the impact of city centres on their peripheries, on adjacent cities, and on their regions. Examples of such complex mega-cities include Lagos, Shanghai, São Paulo and Mumbai.⁸ In some cases, mega-cities are also national capitals or administrative centres, which — apart from being engines for economic growth and employment — facilitate the transfer of information and money, with their advanced telecommunications systems, and act as transportation hubs for the hinterland.

14. Thus, while many mega-cities are engines for economic growth and centres of diversity and change, they also pose formidable challenges for Governments in ensuring the safety and security of their citizens and the quality of those citizens' lives. The anonymity provided by cities can allow organized crime to flourish and provide opportunities for corruption through the intersection of organized crime and the political and economic elite. Law enforcement "no-go" areas in some districts facilitate local and organized crime, and slums and informal settlements place their residents at high risk of exploitation and victimization. It is, therefore, the appropriate time to consider at the international level the specific case of mega-cities and the issues facing them in terms of developing and maintaining strategic crime prevention policies. The United Nations Human Settlements

⁷ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *State of the World's Cities 2008/2009: Harmonious Cities* (London, Earthscan, 2008), p. x.

⁸ See *South American Cities: Securing an Urban Future*, Urban Age project (London School of Economics and Political Science and Alfred Herrhausen Society, 2008), available from www.urban-age.net; and Ricky Burdett and Deyan Sudjic, eds., *The Endless City* (London, Phaidon, 2008).

Programme (UN-HABITAT) suggests that good governance involves three basic conditions: effective leadership, efficient financing and effective citizen participation, conditions which are also fundamental to good strategic crime prevention.⁹

B. Growing social and spatial inequalities

15. High levels of inequality in cities can lead to negative social, economic and political consequences that have a destabilizing impact on societies.¹⁰ Cities are becoming more unequal in a number of ways. Cities in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean have some of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, and such inequality is increasing and becoming entrenched. Cities in Asia and North Africa tend to be more equal than those in other regions and subregions. However, in East Africa and North Africa, levels of youth unemployment have risen over the past 10 years and are among the highest in the world. Such inequalities of income, combined with unplanned and rapid growth, have led to a number of related inequalities, including inequalities resulting from spatial patterns of land use and tenure and access to public spaces and transport, as well as social and economic inequalities in terms of decision-making and citizenship, access to health and education, and safety and security.

16. Many mega-cities include a significant slum population. Some 62 per cent of urban populations in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, live in slums and what UN-HABITAT refers to as “slum cities”. It is often the case that slum communities are overcrowded and their inhabitants have no security of tenure, limited access to water and sanitation, poor structures and little say regarding the decisions that affect their lives. In 2001, the slum population of Greater Mumbai accounted for over half the population of the city, and just under half of the land occupied by the slum population was privately owned.¹¹ The experience of the slum inhabitants who were forcibly evicted and resettled in the outskirts of New Delhi suggests that resettlement does not always occur as promised or planned.¹²

17. Urban crime is unevenly distributed and experienced in cities, whether it is violence associated with drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, youth gangs or public spaces. It affects safety in homes, schools, commercial establishments, public transport, and sports and other public venues. Fear of crime affects people’s lives in significant ways and helps increase inequalities. Concern about crime can drive wealthier populations out of city centres into segregated and enclosed private suburbs, creating “fortified enclaves for home, leisure and work”.¹³

18. In all cities, regardless of their size, on the basis of the way it is often publicly reported and discussed, crime is seen as affecting primarily the wealthier residents. In reality, it affects the lives of the most disadvantaged, especially those living in slums and informal settlements, much more than others. Slum dwellers are among

⁹ *State of the World’s Cities 2008/2009*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

¹¹ Indian census 2001, available at www.censusindia.in/Census_Data_2001.

¹² Kalyani Menon-Sen and Gautam Bhan, *Swept off the Map: Surviving Eviction and Resettlement in Delhi* (New Delhi, Yoda Press, 2008).

¹³ Teresa Caldeira, “Worlds set apart”, in *South American Cities*, pp. 54-55.

the most vulnerable: they are less likely to be able to secure their homes and property and often have poor police oversight or access to services; and because they have few resources, any loss or disruption is more costly to them. In São Paulo, for example, the homicide rate in the densely populated peripheries was over 110 per 100,000 inhabitants in the late 1990s, compared with under 15 per 100,000 in the central districts of the city.¹⁴

19. Further, access to safety, security and justice is often unequally distributed in cities. Responses to urban crime have tended to be reactive and repressive, as evidenced by the use of *mano dura* responses to youth violence in some parts of the world. There has also been an increasing tendency in countries in some regions to criminalize behaviour seen as uncivil or antisocial, and to use exclusionary legislation and regulations and other measures to exclude certain segments of the population and privatize public space. The use of “strategies of protection” to preserve the safe and secure character of an area, to privatize space or exclude those who appear to be “outsiders” has become very common in some urban areas. This is in contrast to prevention strategies, which are aimed at increasing safety and security through inclusion and community mobilization, better services and transport and the provision of green and public spaces — not to “keep people out”.

20. For mega-cities, examining the distribution of inequalities in the central part of the city and its surrounding area can lead to some interesting conclusions beyond stereotypes of wealth and poverty. Not all slums are equally dangerous places, nor are all residents of slums and poor areas equally victimized. Looking at some of the differences in terms of community capacity and social capital, the provision of services and access to transport, as well as rates of crime in such regions, can help in identifying a range of responses.

C. The experience of high-crime cities and communities

21. Levels of crime in some developing countries pose very significant problems for municipal governments. The seriousness of the crime, and the rate at which it takes place, make particular demands on governments which most developed countries do not face. Rates of homicide in developed countries generally range from 0.5 to 2 or 3 per 100,000 inhabitants and from 20 to over 50 per 100,000 in some developing countries.¹⁵ High levels of homicide, violent assault, rape, robbery, hijacking and kidnapping, and gang-related armed violence, as well as the level of public fear that they create and their impact on investment or economic decisions, can all lead to sustained demands for rapid and decisive action. This makes it difficult for governments to invest in and implement strategic prevention policies and can lead to a sense of cynicism about the government and the justice system and fatalism, as people begin to believe that little can be done. The media often plays a major role in exacerbating insecurity by referring constantly to violent events, reinforcing stereotypical views of victims and victimizers and poor and

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety* (see footnote 6); and *Handbook on Planning and Action for Crime Prevention in Southern Africa and the Caribbean Regions* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.09.IV.1).

wealthy areas and giving limited attention to any progress made in implementing programmes or to successful project outcomes.

22. As with mega-cities in general, high levels of inequality, together with accelerated privatization of security and public spaces, are often a feature of high-crime societies. Gated communities and semi-public spaces, increasing use of technological security such as closed-circuit television, and the proliferation of private security guards are all common reactions and features of high-crime cities.¹⁶

23. In Central American countries, the increase in rates of homicide has been associated with geographical vulnerability, as those countries are used as transit areas for illicit drug consignments. In other cases, such an increase has been attributed to or linked with high levels of unemployment (especially among people in the most crime-prone age groups), a history of violent conflict resolution and ineffective criminal justice capacity.¹⁷ Impunity becomes a significant issue, for example, when only an estimated 2 per cent of homicides in Guatemala result in conviction, and when prison capacity is saturated. It has been estimated that in South Africa, a country with considerable resources and criminal justice capacity, if all the serious crimes committed were dealt with, the criminal justice system would collapse. The police, prosecution services and court system could not deal with the caseload, and there is already little spare prison capacity.¹⁸ Financially and practically, it is not feasible to respond to crime with deterrent and judicial measures alone.

III. Exclusion, urban unrest and minorities

24. A common concern for all governments in urban areas is how to respond to urban unrest. Protests and demonstrations that become violent, or unrest resulting from perceived infractions by the authorities, for example, can lead to strong and authoritarian responses by the government. Inequalities and perceived lack of action in the provision of necessities such as housing, water and sanitation or transport systems, police brutality or racist attitudes are some of the major contributors to urban unrest. Traditional responses have tended to be reactive and repressive. This has been a common response to protests by slum dwellers faced with eviction for city development plans.¹⁹ Thus many protests in fast-growing urban areas and mega-cities relate to populations excluded from decision-making and meaningful consultation. Corruption and abuse of power and impunity on the part of the police are further factors increasing the sense of exclusion in poorer segments of the population.

¹⁶ Patricia Arias, *Seguridad Privada en América Latina: el Lucro y los Dilemas de una Regulación Deficitaria* (Santiago, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2009).

¹⁷ *Crime and Development in Central America*.

¹⁸ Barbara Holtmann, "Breaking the cycle of violence: essential steps to a safe South Africa", 22 October 2008. Available from www.safesouthafrica.org.za; and Robyn Pharoah, *The Dynamics of Crime: Comparing the Results from the 1998, 2003 and 2007 National Crime and Victimization Surveys*, Occasional Paper 177 (Pretoria, Institute of Security Studies, December 2008). Available from www.issafrica.org.

¹⁹ David Satterthwaite, "The social and political basis for citizen action on urban poverty reduction", *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 20, No. 2 (2008), pp. 307-318.

A. Excluding young people and migrant communities

25. Still forming a majority of the population in many developing countries and cities, young people continue to face exclusion and discrimination. Relations with the police and security forces are often very poor, with little trust in the police among populations in slums and informal settlements. Young people in disadvantaged areas of cities, street children and persons already in gangs have limited access to schools, legitimate employment and alternative lifestyles. Tough sentences and incarceration increase their exclusion and reduce their chances of being reintegrated as productive members of their societies.

26. Given that much urban population growth results from migration, many persons living in the most vulnerable circumstances are likely to be subject to exclusion and victimization, both as newcomers and as ethnic and cultural minorities. This applies to many legal and illegal migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and trafficked persons. The growth of minority populations is a significant feature of cities in developed countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States of America and in Western Europe. Migrant minority populations form a significant sector of the slum populations in South African and other African cities. Yet in Southern Africa, international migrants are generally seen as temporary residents and there are no comprehensive policies to facilitate integration.²⁰

27. Even with the development of anti-discrimination policies, and some policies of integration and inclusion, such minority status can still lead to discrimination, racism and exploitation. A recent European Union survey of discrimination in 27 countries found high levels of racist crime and victimization reported by minority ethnic groups. It was highest among Roma and sub-Saharan Africans (20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively reported victimization) and Muslims from a variety of backgrounds (10 per cent).²¹ Racist victimization (in terms of assault, threats or serious harassment) was widely underreported because of lack of belief that the police could do anything about it, the perception that it was normal or lack of knowledge on how to report such incidents.

28. Another concern in cities in recent years is racial profiling: the tendency among the police in particular to stop and apprehend members of minority groups far more frequently than other members of the population.²²

B. Women's safety

29. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women²³ commits States to undertake measures to end discrimination against women in all its forms. Violence against women is an issue of gender equality and

²⁰ United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *The State of African Cities 2008: A Framework for Addressing Urban Challenges in Africa* (Nairobi, 2008), p. 16.

²¹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *EU-MIDIS European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Main Results Report* (Vienna, 2009).

²² Open Society Institute, *Ethnic Profiling in the Moscow Metro* (New York, 2006); and Open Society Institute, *Profiling Minorities: A Study of Stop-and-Search Practices in Paris* (New York, 2009).

²³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

public health with significant social and economic consequences for women and their families and for cities. It includes physical and sexual violence or threats in the home and in public spaces, as a consequence of trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation or because of migrant and minority status. Recent attention has been drawn to the increase in “femicide”, including that of migrant and indigenous women, and the failure of cities to take action in relation to the disappearance or deaths of marginalized women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1).

30. Trafficking in women and girls has received greater attention in recent years, but it continues to grow and is an activity well-suited to cities and anonymous urban settings. An estimated 50 per cent of migrant workers in cities are now women, and violence against women migrant workers has become an issue of international concern (A/64/152). In African cities many migrants are female heads of households who are discriminated against for cultural reasons and are likely to live in poverty in slums without tenure. Such women are especially vulnerable to victimization.²⁴

31. Surveys of domestic violence against women in 10 countries report rates of violence between 15 and 71 per cent, but in some countries 50-90 per cent of women see domestic violence as acceptable. In Latin America, the majority of women victims do not seek help.²⁵ Thus cultural attitudes towards the treatment of women by both men and women remain a significant issue. Other surveys have shown that 4-31 per cent of women have experienced sexual violence perpetrated by persons who were not their intimate partners.²⁶ Women are more likely than men to have higher levels of insecurity in the city, and this restricts their mobility and access to public space.

32. While many countries have ratified international conventions on violence against women, implementation lags behind.²⁷ Further, most of it concerns criminal justice responses to domestic violence rather than private and public violence, with very little attention being given to prevention.²⁸

33. All of the above-mentioned trends and concerns require cities: to pay much greater attention to the broader social, economic and environmental conditions affecting different areas in their jurisdiction and different populations; to work to increase the safety of women and to reduce the exclusion of young people; and to see the integration of migrant and ethnic groups as part of the proper concern of city governments. A significant conclusion of *State of the World's Cities 2008/2009* is that “inequality is not a natural consequence of economic growth and ... can be controlled or reduced by forward-looking mitigation efforts on the part of governments.”

²⁴ *State of the World's Cities 2008/2009* (see footnote 7).

²⁵ Claudia García-Moreno and others, *Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2005).

²⁶ “An international overview of violence against women: trends, perspectives and lessons for Latin America and the Caribbean”, draft paper prepared for the Inter-American Development Bank, 2009.

²⁷ Holly Johnson, Natalia Ollus and Sami Nevala, *Violence against Women: An International Perspective* (New York, Springer, 2008).

²⁸ Yvon Dandurand, “Women's safety: international technical assistance and the use of best practices”, statement presented to the ICPC 8th Annual Colloquium on Crime Prevention, Querétaro, Mexico, November 2008. Available from www.crime-prevention-intl.org.

IV. Sustainable and effective crime prevention

A. Applying the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime

34. The Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime constitute a set of principles for developing comprehensive and effective crime prevention strategies in urban settings. They emphasize the importance of: government leadership; working in an integrated and multisectoral way across sectors such as housing, environment, employment and education, justice and social services; building cooperative partnerships between government, the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations; ensuring the sustainability of prevention strategies by providing adequate funding and resources and clear accountability; using evidence-based knowledge on crime-related problems and interventions; respecting human rights and the rule of law; taking account of the links between local and transnational crime; and taking account of the different needs of men and women and the most vulnerable members of society.

35. The National Programme for Public Safety with Citizenship (PRONASCI), launched by Brazil in 2007, illustrates many of these principles and targets cities in particular. Allocating 6.7 billion reais over the period 2007-2011, the programme, carried out by the Ministry of Justice in partnership with other ministries, combines significant changes to the existing criminal justice system with funding for a series of targeted local programmes. The overall goals of the programme are to benefit some 3.5 million public safety professionals directly, as well as young people and their families, and to reduce the homicide rate across the country from 29 per 100,000 people to 12 per 100,000 over a four-year period.

36. The programme includes 94 structural actions designed to modernize the police forces and the penitentiary system and to provide training for public safety professionals. To stimulate action at the local level and target resources to areas of greatest need, 11 high-priority metropolitan areas have been identified. Eligible states and municipalities can apply for funding for local programmes (see box 1). One requirement is that they establish offices of integrated city management and partnerships between local services, the police and civil society. Brazil is now developing a national strategy on public security following a comprehensive series of participatory discussions with key stakeholders to support the development of the strategy. It held the first national conference on public security in August 2009, with representatives from Government and civil society (www.mj.gov.br/pronasci).

Box 1

National Programme for Public Safety with Citizenship of Brazil: local programmes

In Brazil, local programmes of the National Programme for Public Safety with Citizenship (PRONASCI) include:

- (a) “Territories for Peace” projects to establish communitarian councils of public safety to increase public knowledge about citizens’ roles and rights; cultural projects by youth at risk; services for women victims of violence; human rights training for judges, prosecutors and public defenders; and projects to establish 10 centres for access to justice and conflict resolution;

(b) Family and youth integration projects for citizenship, leadership, conflict resolution, sports and cultural activities for youth exposed to urban and domestic violence; a citizen reservist project for young people coming out of compulsory military service, to avoid their being lured into crime; a women of peace project to train women living in areas at high risk (of trafficking in persons and violence) in subjects such as citizenship, human rights and leadership skills; a series of projects to raise the educational level of persons in the justice system and in prisons; a “Painting freedom, painting citizenship” project to enable prisoners to manufacture sports equipment for schools and to provide them with job skills;

(c) Safety and sociability projects designed to recover public urban spaces in poor communities, in partnership with the Ministry of Cities; intensive education projects in targeted communities, in partnership with the Ministry of Education; and a series of cultural projects in libraries, museums and meeting places for youth in targeted areas of deprivation.

37. Mexico’s national programme entitled “Recover public spaces” similarly provides support for local communities for the redevelopment of public space (www.sedesol.gob.mx).

B. Learning from mega-cities and high-crime cities

38. Recent examples of the successful reduction of crime in mega-cities and in high-crime cities include the metropolitan area of São Paulo, Brazil, cities such as Diadema and Curitiba, and the Colombian cities of Medellín and Bogotá. They illustrate the importance of strong leadership, efficient funding and effective civil society participation underlying good governance models and utilize technological innovations.

39. São Paulo, and its metropolitan area, with a population of about 20 million, is the largest Brazilian city. It is a mega-city that has grown very rapidly over the past century. Successful economically, it also displays all the problems of unequal distribution of wealth and services, with wealthy enclaves and disadvantaged suburbs, and (more recently) high levels of violent crime. In the 1980s and 1990s, the homicide rate in São Paulo rose dramatically, as in other cities in Brazil; by 1999, the rate was 43.2 per 100,000 inhabitants.²⁹ Primarily this increase was accounted for by the deaths of young men between 15 and 24 years of age. Rates of homicide among the rest of the population remained relatively stable. Since 2000, however, the State and the metropolitan region of São Paulo have experienced a marked reduction in homicides to 22 per 100,000 inhabitants by 2007 — close to a 70 per cent reduction. The city has invested in infrastructure and urban renewal, but also in community mobilization and access and mobility policies (see box 2).

²⁹ United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, *Eliminating Violence against Women: Forms, Strategies and Tools* (Turin, Italy, 2008).

Box 2

São Paulo Metropolitan Forum for Public Security^a

The São Paulo Metropolitan Forum for Public Security was created in 2001 to bring together the 39 mayors of the city of São Paulo and the 38 surrounding cities in the metropolitan area. Their objective was to integrate and coordinate their activities and develop plans to reduce crime and violence in the region. They worked in partnership with the State and Federal Governments which provided a Secretariat, as well as a non-governmental organization to support the process. The State Government provided information on policies and access to geographical data and maps from the InfoCrime system. Meeting on a regular basis, many of the cities created their own integrated local urban security offices, created municipal police forces and enacted legislation on the closure of bars to control alcohol consumption.

^a International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, *Urban Crime Prevention and Youth at Risk: Compendium of Promising Strategies and Programmes from Around the World* (Montreal, 2005).

40. Parts of Latin America have seen considerable delegation of powers to municipalities, as a result of democratic reform and policies of decentralization.³⁰ Investment in the social, cultural and human dimensions of cities is also typical in the subregion.³¹ This has facilitated some of the most sustained and successful examples of crime and violence prevention in recent years. Mayors have played a key role, using innovative approaches to urban governance that apply a comprehensive range of prevention policies, including police reform, conflict resolution, urban regeneration and social development. Cities such as Bogota and Medellin in Colombia (see box 3) have experienced spectacular reductions in their homicide rates through a range of municipal programmes that have helped to break down the geographical and social barriers between sectors and inhabitants of the city.

Box 3

Reduction of crime and violence in Medellin, Colombia

In 1991, the city of Medellin, Colombia, had the highest homicide rate in the world: 381 per 100,000 people. A central problem for the local authority was the control exerted over many areas of the city by armed drug traffickers, paramilitary groups, guerrilla groups and organized territorial protection. As one mayor put it, “during those years in Medellin there was an absence of the State ... and various criminal groups were able to exert territorial control and violence in the majority of areas.”^a Between 2002 and 2007, the homicide rate in the city fell from 174 to 29 per 100,000 inhabitants, as mayors began to institutionalize the notion of collective responsibility and focused attention on areas that had the highest rates of violence and were controlled by armed groups.

³⁰ Paula Miraglia, “Safe spaces in São Paulo”, in *South American Cities*, pp. 56-58.

³¹ David Satterthwaite, “What role for mayors in good city governance?”, *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 21, No. 1 (2009), pp. 3-17.

Negotiations with area leaders under the Peace and Reconciliation programme, as well as Proyectos Urbanos Integrales involving large-scale investment in public services for informal settlements surrounding the city (transport, education, housing and green space), reduced inequality and promoted opportunity for everyone.^b This included a cable car improving access to the city and a large library above the informal settlement. Working with local civil society organizations was key, since they had legitimacy in the neighbourhoods.^c

^a David Satterthwaite, “What role for mayors in good city governance?”, *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 21, No. 1 (2009), pp. 3-17.

^b United Nations Human Settlements Programme and Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile, *Guía para la Prevención Local: Hacia Políticas de Cohesión Social y Seguridad Ciudadana* (2009).

^c Julio Dávila, “Being a mayor: the view from four Colombian cities”, *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 21, No. 1 (2009), pp. 37-56.

41. In Bogota, homicide rates have steadily decreased from a peak of 80 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1993 to 19 per 100,000 in 2007. A series of mayors have applied a combination of initiatives, such as civil society mobilization (to develop a culture of civility), police training and family police stations, better transport, recovery of public space, building of libraries and restrictions on alcohol consumption and gun circulation — all designed to include rather than exclude citizens. Sustainability has been ensured with the development of an observatory (see box 4), long-term funding, a long-term plan and local security contracts.

Box 4

Observatories for crime and social problems

Many countries, regions and cities have developed crime trend observatories to improve information and understanding about crime and the social and economic problems associated with it. Examples include a security observatory in Madrid; an observatory of the city of Bogota; municipal observatories in El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama; the Regional Observatory on Security Policies in Italy; the Observatorio Centroamericano sobre Violencia; and the l’Observatoire national de la délinquance in France. Many observatories (such as the Crime Observatory in Trinidad and Tobago) focus on overall safety issues; others (such as the Canadian Observatory on School Violence Prevention and l’Observatoire français des drogues et toxicomanies in France) are concerned with specific topics.

42. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Citizen Security Programme was initiated by the Ministry of National Security in 2007 to respond to the urgent problems of rising urban violence and homicide. An important component of the programme is that it acknowledges the need for technical assistance programmes to be participatory from their inception, to incorporate local knowledge and to help to build capacity. The six-year programme targets 22 high-risk neighbourhoods. The programme has five main components: institutional strengthening of the Ministry; institutional strengthening of the police; coordination and implementation of community-based prevention strategies; social marketing, public education and media engagement; and programme management, monitoring and evaluation.

C. Inclusion through engaging civil society

43. As shown in the examples above, there have been advancements in the development of urban policies promoting the inclusion of minority groups or of those living in the most disadvantaged areas. These include pro-poor policies and participatory initiatives, such as participatory budgeting, which have been developed by Governments.

44. In a number of regions, networks of national and international groups representing the poorest urban residents have begun to work in what are termed “co-productive” ways with city governments. This is in contrast to autonomous action by civil society groups with little contact with government or those whose main approach has been through protest and demands.³² In India, for example, citizen groups are increasingly using “co-production” approaches with city governments to effect change for slum dwellers. Federations of slum dwellers now exist at the national and international levels and are providing support in working productively with city governments.³³

D. Gender mainstreaming and the safety of women in cities

45. At the international level, there is consensus that gender-based violence should be the focus of initiatives to increase the safety of women in private and public settings. The broader approach of gender-based prevention of violence combines notions of the rights of women to live without violence and the obligations of cities to ensure the safety of all their citizens rather than focusing primarily on women as victims. Strategic plans and programmes at the national, state and local levels need to be based on reliable data and analysis and include a range of services and initiatives aimed at preventing private and public violence, as well as providing services for victims. In some countries, women’s and family police stations have encouraged women to report incidents. Governments need to mainstream gender at all levels of data collection, planning and programme development.

46. The range of approaches that can be used includes increasing women’s participation in decision-making, professional sensitization and public awareness campaigns, working to change social norms about the acceptability of violence, school curriculum programmes on gender relations, workplace programmes, providing alternative lifestyles for men and boys, and innovative transport and urban design to make cities safer for women.³⁴ Mexico, Norway and Spain have recently passed legislation on the right of women to live free of violence. Better international indicators and surveys on violence against women have been developed. The Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (General Assembly resolution 52/86, annex), adopted in 1997 and reviewed at the Intergovernmental Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women held in

³² David Satterthwaite, “The social and political basis” (see footnote 19).

³³ Jockin Arputham, “Developing new approaches for people-centred development”, *Environment and Urbanization*, vol. 20, No. 2 (2008), pp. 319-337.

³⁴ “An international overview of violence” (see footnote 26).

Bangkok from 23 to 26 March 2009, provide examples of innovative initiatives. The revised and updated model strategies, to be submitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its nineteenth session, in 2010, address new issues and reflect the changes and developments that have occurred since 1997. The areas of prevention, implementation, violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations, assistance to and protection of victims have been particularly strengthened.

47. Participatory tools for empowering women include the use of women's safety audits, which help them engage with local governments to increase their safety in urban areas. The United Nations Development Fund for Women regional programme entitled "Cities without violence against women, safe cities for all", used participatory approaches to improve women's safety in cities in Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru. Cities and civil society organizations in Argentina, Australia, Canada, India, the Russian Federation and the United Republic of Tanzania, among others, have similarly used women's safety audits to effect change and raise awareness of city governments about women's safety needs.³⁵ A range of programmes such as "Men as partners" and "Guy to guy", which teach men and boys alternative role models and attitudes to violence, are now being used in countries in many regions.³⁶

E. Problem-oriented and proactive prevention

48. Building safer cities and working to prevent problems of urban unrest all require the kind of proactive multi-partnership approaches that encourage the participation of all sectors of urban populations. Developing good communication between the police and local neighbourhoods and community leaders appears to have been an important factor in preventing an outbreak of race riots in the city of Bradford in the United Kingdom, for example. In the aftermath of riots on the beaches of Sydney, Australia, careful examination by the city of all the factors that facilitated the riots led to the development and implementation of an effective strategy for the management of beach events for the coming decade.

49. Comprehensive integrated programmes to reduce youth gang involvement are resulting in clear reductions in violence and homicides. Community-based programmes that work with gang members and those at risk often work with a range of partners, such as local government, schools, health workers, religious institutions and former gang members, and carefully tailor their responses to individual communities. They include not only police enforcement targeting the highest risk groups, but also effective street outreach programmes that work with young people

³⁵ See, for example, Women in Cities International, *Women's Safety Audits: What Works When and Where?* (Nairobi, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Safer Cities Programme, 2008).

³⁶ Gary Barker, Christine Ricardo and Marcos Nascimento, *Engaging Men and Boys in Changing Gender-Based Inequity in Health: Evidence from Programme Interventions* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2007).

in gang situations.³⁷ Other approaches with youth at risk, or those incarcerated or returning to the community, combine education and sports, leadership and conflict mediation skills, as well as micro-credit and apprenticeship training, and include participatory and youth-led components.

V. Practical training and tools

50. The range of practical tools and technologies that can assist in the strategic planning of crime prevention and the development of efficient and effective interventions has expanded considerably in the past five years. The ability to be able to collect data and share information about the range of social and economic factors associated with crime and victimization forms the basis for assessing problems and their distribution in urban areas and neighbourhoods. Overall, evidence-based crime prevention requires knowledge about the incidence and prevalence of crime-related problems; about the possible causal factors; about the types of interventions that can be used; and about the impact of interventions.

51. A number of guides, manuals and handbooks have recently been produced. Handbooks on the application of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime provide guidance on some of the tools available; on the development of multisector partnerships, strategic plans and their implementation and evaluation; and on working with communities and civil society. The *Criminal Justice Assessment Toolkit* similarly provides guidance on assessing country and city crime prevention needs for technical assistance. There is now a manual (published by UNODC and the Economic Commission for Europe) on developing victimization and fear of crime surveys and numerous other guides on self-reporting delinquency surveys, qualitative interviews and focus groups and participatory data collection approaches.

52. Regional or municipal observatories, or monitoring centres, are increasingly being used by cities (see box 4 above). These specialized centres involve multidisciplinary and multisectoral partnerships, bringing together agencies and data from the public and private sectors, including the police, municipal services, transport, social housing, landlords, businesses and non-governmental organizations. They facilitate the analysis of the incidence and causes of and trends in crime and violence and related problems, enabling resources to be used more efficiently and progress to be monitored with strategic plans over time. A series of methodological guides for the implementation of municipal observatories in Latin America has been developed by the World Bank and the Pan American Health Organization.

53. Geographical information systems (GIS) are one of the major tools being used by governments to map the location of crime-related problems. In Brazil, GIS are a component of the public safety and crime prevention strategic policy of, for example, the city of Diadema, the State of Minas Gerais and the city of

³⁷ National Council on Crime and Delinquency, *Developing a Successful Street Outreach Program: Recommendations and Lessons Learned* (Oakland, California, 2009); and Washington Office on Latin America, *Daring to Care: Community-Based Responses to Youth Gang Violence in Central America and Central American Immigrant Communities in the United States* (Washington, D.C., 2008).

Belo Horizonte. GIS are also widely used in cities in Canada³⁸ and the United States. The police use GIS for operational, tactical and strategic purposes, enabling them to plan proactive measures, such as changing the flow of motor vehicle traffic, introducing street lighting or patrolling. Such mapping can be used by crime prevention partnerships for short- and longer-term planning of prevention programmes.

54. Another tool aiding the systematic analysis of local crime problems and the development of detailed plans is a safety audit or safety diagnosis. Many examples now exist, adapted to different country contexts. An international guide has recently been published (www.fesu.org). The guide outlines who should be involved, the kinds of data to collect and how to use it. Like observatories, the safety audit process helps to build commitment and ownership around crime prevention plans among the range of partners involved.

55. The Internet has greatly facilitated the expansion of the range of teaching and training tools on crime prevention. Educational and teaching tools include online courses; graduate programmes; professional training courses and exchanges; and forums such as the Virtual Forum on Cybercrime developed by the Korean Institute of Criminology. The Internet has also facilitated access to resources on indicators and standards in various countries and regions, as well as the coordinated collection of data on programmes and interventions. An increasing number of university and research centres work with governments, including local authorities, to support project development and evaluation. Regional research organizations in Latin America and Europe, for example, offer similar support. Examples of international e-learning include a police training project developed by the University of Cape Town in South Africa and Ruhr University Bochum in Germany (see box 5).

Box 5

E-learning crossing borders: policing (all around) the world

An English language e-learning course provides a series of teaching modules on the different ways in which societies are policed and on how police services are structured and trained. It includes presentations from over 12 countries, readings and self-study, and presentations on special topics such as policing mass events and police and diversity and private and plural policing. Students earn credits and can interact with presenters and other students.

VI. Conclusion

56. The present background paper focuses on the need to pay particular attention to the development of strategies to prevent crime in mega-cities and to consider the specific problems posed in cities with very high crime rates, in particular how those problems can be addressed. Given the increasing rates of population movement and

³⁸ Josée Savoie, *Analysis of the Spatial Distribution of Crime in Canada: Summary of Major Trends*, Canada, Statistics Canada, Crime and Justice Research Paper Series, No. 15 (Ottawa, 2008).

ethnic and cultural diversity within cities, as well as escalating disparities of income, what are the ways in which cities have been able to put in place policies that work to integrate and secure the quality of life of all their citizens? Cities need to consider the integration of young people and minorities, to take into account gender differences and to work to reduce the links between local and transnational crime.

57. In recognition of the Millennium Development Goals and the guidelines for crime prevention and other relevant international conventions and protocols, workshop participants may wish to consider the following:

(a) All Member States should be urged to adopt and implement the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime and other international standards and norms concerning the rights of disadvantaged and minority groups;

(b) Governments should devolve powers to local governments to facilitate the establishment of integrated management structures that can undertake the diagnosis and development of comprehensive prevention strategies;

(c) Mega-cities should be encouraged to develop their metropolitan and regional structures to enable them to work in an integrated way to tackle infrastructure, housing, transport and other social and economic problems that may facilitate crime and violence, including by developing and training municipal police forces that work in a problem-solving way with local communities;

(d) Urban administrations should be encouraged to invest in planned and practical approaches to preventing urban unrest, including by developing good communication with communities, stakeholders and leaders, and to initiate inclusive processes after such events, with a view to determining how such unrest might be prevented in the future;

(e) All levels of government should be encouraged to place greater emphasis on how the safety of women in private and public settings can be promoted. This requires gender-mainstreaming in all government departments and responsibilities, and in the collection and analysis of data in the provision of services. Cities are encouraged to develop strategic plans to change attitudes towards violence against women in all settings, to encourage the participation of women in decision-making and provide services for victims of such violence;

(f) Cities should give greater attention to the redevelopment of public space with a view to creating safe and accessible places for interaction and recreation and to promoting civility, including by allocating a percentage of building costs to the creation of public space in new housing development projects.

(g) Cities should be encouraged to promote and utilize innovative participatory and inclusive policies and programmes, in order to reduce the exclusion of marginalized groups, including minorities and migrants. Support should also be given to civil society organizations working to promote the greater inclusion of marginalized groups;

(h) All levels of government should be encouraged to develop and implement effective and gender-sensitive crime prevention strategies, including by utilizing urban or regional observatories for the collection and analysis of data, geographical mapping techniques, victimization surveys, safety audits and guides;

(i) All levels of government should be urged to support emerging and innovative training and teaching approaches in crime prevention that respond to the needs of the police and new professions and urban responsibilities in the area of prevention. Those approaches include e-learning and professional and technical courses;

(j) The international community, including donors, should work to facilitate and support local government capacity-building through training and technical assistance and city-to-city exchanges, and in a way that takes into account the recipient countries' unique needs.
