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Workshops: strategies and best practices for crime prevention, in particular in relation to urban crime and youth at risk

Workshop 3: Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Areas and Youth at Risk**

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Background paper

Summary

The present background paper summarizes some key trends and practices in the development of crime prevention and outlines why Member States, other parts of the international community and local governments should give renewed and much greater attention to investing in crime prevention in urban areas, paying particular attention to youth at risk.

The paper outlines the challenges for urban areas and the arguments for investing in strategic integrated crime prevention and in youth at risk in particular. In the subsequent sections, the paper outlines some of the recent achievements and developments in effective integrated crime prevention policy and practice in urban areas and with at-risk youth. They provide examples of good practice from a range of countries, which demonstrate how international standards are being applied.

In keeping with relevant United Nations crime prevention instruments, including the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century and the United Nations Millennium Declaration and Goals, the paper provides a number of action-oriented recommendations seeking to enhance crime prevention, in particular in relation to urban areas and youth at risk. The paper concludes by identifying recommendations for increasing the exchange of information, experience and technical assistance between countries and cities, within regions and internationally.

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I. Introduction

1. The regional preparatory meetings for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice recommended that the workshop on strategies and best practices for crime prevention, in particular in relation to urban areas and youth at risk, pay particular attention to the protection of young people at risk, encouraging community responses rather than the deprivation of liberty for those in conflict with the law, and the inclusion of young people themselves in project development. They recommended that the workshop demonstrate in very practical ways how that was being achieved. It was also recommended that representatives of youth organizations be encouraged to take part in the workshop.¹

2. Since 1990, when the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, under its agenda item “Crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of development: realities and perspectives of international cooperation”, considered a note by the Secretary-General entitled “Inventory of comprehensive crime prevention measures” (A/CONF.144/9), that is, for over a decade, cities have been recognized as a major force in the advancement of crime prevention practice. There is also much greater awareness of the links between crime and victimization.

3. Over the past decade, there have also been major international, regional, national and local advances in crime prevention policies, practice and multisectoral expertise. In 1995, the Ninth Congress, under its agenda item “Crime prevention strategies, in particular as related to crimes in urban areas and juvenile and violent criminality, including the question of victims: assessment and new perspectives”, considered a working paper by the Secretariat on the subject (A/CONF.169/7) and the background papers for two workshops: on urban policy and crime prevention (A/CONF.169/10); and on prevention of violent crime (A/CONF.169/11). In 2000, the Tenth Congress, under its agenda item “Effective crime prevention: keeping pace with new developments”, considered a working paper by the Secretariat on the subject (A/CONF.187/7) and a background paper for the workshop on community involvement in crime prevention (A/CONF.187/11). Finally, the General Assembly, in its resolution 56/261 of 31 January 2001, entitled “Plans of action for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century”, passed after the Tenth Congress, listed a number of follow-up actions concerning crime prevention, including comprehensive international, regional, national and local crime prevention strategies, many of which are relevant to the workshop on strategies and best practices for crime prevention. These advances, addressed and/or pursued in the above-mentioned documents, recognize that Governments and criminal justice systems alone cannot effectively reduce or prevent crime and that there is a need for far greater transversal cooperation and planned responses that include all levels of government, the community and civil society.

4. Many countries have adopted national strategies on crime prevention that place much greater emphasis on what can be done to prevent crime occurring before the intervention of the criminal justice system and to complement the work of the criminal justice system. Such approaches include a focus on what can be done at the local level, closest to the communities where crime takes place, and involve cross-cutting, multisectoral integrated policies and interventions, with support from

national and subregional governments. This has included significant investment in knowledge, research and evidence-based practice. In developing their crime prevention strategies, a number of countries and cities have focused on youth at risk of crime and victimization, since they recognize the importance of investing resources in their health, education and protection.² Such youth include those living in the poorest, most marginal circumstances, those in conflict with the law, street children and those exploited by the illicit drug trade, sexually exploited or affected by HIV/AIDS, war and natural disasters.

5. At the international level, these developments in crime prevention are exemplified in the work of the Safer Cities Programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and supported by international and regional organizations such as the Council of Europe, the European Union Crime Prevention Network, the European Forum for Urban Security, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime and other institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network. They have been reinforced through the adoption of United Nations standards and guidelines, including the guidelines for cooperation and technical assistance in the field of urban crime prevention (Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/9, annex), adopted after the Ninth Congress, and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13, annex), adopted after the Tenth Congress. In its resolution 2003/26 of 22 July 2003, the Council encouraged Member States to draw on the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime when developing, implementing and evaluating urban crime prevention programmes and projects, and to establish policies to protect children at risk in urban areas.³

6. Crime prevention is now recognized as being fundamental to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals since for developing countries poverty reduction and sustainable development must be built upon human security, encompassing economic, health and personal safety and security.⁴ Similarly, developed countries have a responsibility to respect and support these goals.

7. In the context of the workshop on strategies and best practices for crime prevention, there are a number of challenges. The rapid growth of urban areas in all regions of the world, increasing disparities of income and living conditions and the high proportion of children and young people living in conditions of poverty in those urban areas all present major challenges. Rates of crime and violence have increased in developing countries in particular, often in association with firearms and drug trafficking. Increasing numbers of young people are now at risk of crime and victimization in association with poverty, income disparities and the breakdown of traditional socialization mechanisms.

II. Challenges for urban areas in developed and developing countries

A. Increasing urbanization

8. The world is becoming increasingly urban. The urban population is expected to grow from 2.86 billion in 2000 to 4.68 billion in 2030, when some 60 per cent of

the world's population will live in cities. Most of this growth is occurring in developing countries rather than in high-income developed countries; when combined with poverty and destructuralization, it will result in enormous problems.⁵ In 2003, 39 cities had a population of over 5 million and 16 were megacities, with over 10 million people. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 75 per cent of the population is urban. The Asian and Pacific region now includes three of the world's largest megacities—Delhi, Dhaka and Mumbai. Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the fastest rate of urbanization accompanied by a high rate of infant mortality, low life expectancy, low literacy and a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection.

9. Much of the urban growth comes from the increasing migration of the rural population to urban areas and legal and illegal migration across borders and regions. In countries such as the Philippines, the exodus of the rural population to urban areas has been exacerbated by natural and man-made disasters. In North Africa and the Middle East, patterns of migration mean that some 50 per cent of the population and, in some countries, 80-90 per cent of the labour force are international migrants. Countries with economies in transition have experienced increasing population movements and migration to urban areas over the past 10 years, following the collapse of the political system in 1989. In developed countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States of America, apart from increasing immigration, the indigenous population in urban areas, many living in conditions of poverty, is expanding rapidly, having an impact on the rural areas from which they come. The speed of these changes, and their social, economic and political ramifications, has placed considerable strain on cities and countries in many regions, including in Europe.⁶

B. Increasing disparities in income and access to services

10. Cities are vital to the economic and social development of countries, yet the rapid expansion of many cities, especially in developing countries, has not been accompanied by investment in infrastructure and the environment, nor in the provision of services and supports for the increasing populations of urban poor. The majority of their poorest urban dwellers, including a high proportion of migrant and minority populations, live in informal unplanned slum settlements and are faced with long-term unemployment. The urban slum population in Central America, for example, represented a third of the region's total population in 2001, some 128 million people. In Karachi, up to 2.5 million illegal immigrants live in slum conditions. In Asia and the Pacific, while there has been substantial economic growth, cities still house around half of the world's slum dwellers and urban poor. In sub-Saharan Africa, some 49 per cent of the population lives on less than \$1 a day and 70 per cent in urban slums, and their numbers are expected to double, on average, every 15 years.⁷

11. While rates of urbanization in advanced economies, including those of Japan, North America and North-West Europe, are much slower than elsewhere, there are clear discrepancies in population density, cultural and ethnic inequalities and increasing disparities in income.

C. Impact on children and youth

12. Children and youth represent very high proportions of these expanding urban populations, especially in developing countries, and almost half of the urban poor. In developing countries over 50 per cent of the urban population is below 19 years of age and the trends are likely to continue for the next two decades.⁸ The speed of urban growth, coupled with increasing income disparities, has had a major impact on the structure and functions of social institutions, including education and the family. The family as a social unit has also been severely affected by the impact of deaths from HIV/AIDS,

13. In the poorest areas, many grow up in families without fathers, with little or inadequate schooling, few job skills or prospects and inter-generational unemployment. In the Caribbean, for example, unemployment among youth under 25 years ranges from 37 per cent in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago to 50 per cent in Jamaica. Homelessness and an increase in numbers of street children is one consequence of increasing income disparities. Over two thirds of the urban populations in sub-Saharan Africa are between the ages of 12 and 25, and the number of street children has escalated over the past 10 years.⁹ In Nairobi, for example, estimated numbers of street children increased from 4,500 to 30,000 between 1991 and 1994. In Western Europe, rates of homelessness have reached their highest level in 50 years and North America is experiencing a similar phenomenon.¹⁰ Increasing numbers of indigenous youth in Australia, Canada and New Zealand are living in poverty in urban areas.

14. Young people at risk in both developed and developing countries tend to be excluded from society. Those living in the poorest circumstances, including many single mothers, those from ethnic and cultural minorities and recent migrant or immigrant youth are especially vulnerable to such exclusion.¹¹ Youth at risk, including young women, are also vulnerable to exploitation by those involved in transnational organized crime and trafficking in drugs, guns and persons. Youth represent both a major potential market for exploitation and a major asset for the economic development of cities and countries, yet they are largely excluded from the decision-making that affects them.

D. Growing crime and youth violence and victimization

15. A major consequence of the increasing poverty and inequality found in urban areas has been the rising level of crime, especially violent crime.¹² The increase in violence has included general and organized criminal violence and family violence. Only in North America has there been a recent and steady decline in crime rates over the past eight years. In many developed countries, levels of crime are still much higher than in the past. This includes levels of residential burglary, property and street crime, "incivilities", substance abuse and violence against women, and there is more intolerance of crime. Overall, urban violence is strongly linked to social, political and economic inequalities, although it varies from city to city and within cities in terms of manifestations such as youth violence and gender-based violence. It has an impact on the poorest segments of the population far more than on others.¹³ Natural disasters also increase the risk of violence and looting in urban areas.

16. Regarding rates of crime and violence, the Caribbean has the third highest murder rate in the world (44 per 100,000 inhabitants). In Trinidad and Tobago, serious crime, including relatively rare crime such as kidnapping, increased rapidly between 1998 and 2002.¹⁴ In Asia and the Pacific, while overall levels of crime and victimization are lower than elsewhere, the past 10 years have seen increases in property crime, organized violent crime and drug trafficking, as well as growth in child sex tourism.¹⁵ In sub-Saharan Africa, rates of crime and victimization, especially involving violence, have increased over the past 10 years, much of it fuelled by the huge traffic in small arms from the many civil or regional wars.¹⁶ In South Africa, the increase in violent crime was particularly severe from 1994 to 2001: the country has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world, with some 52,000 rapes recorded each year, mostly involving young women 12-17 years of age.¹⁷ In the Russian Federation, the homicide rate increased from 9 to 22 per 100,000 inhabitants between 1990 and 2000. Both Hungary and the Russian Federation have a high rate of youth sentencing. Former Soviet republics are now new major sources for trafficking in humans, to a large extent, young women and children,¹⁸ as well as drug trafficking. Social, economic and political inequalities are associated with the growth of organized and transnational crime, as in Southern Africa, for example, which has one of the highest levels of organized crime in the world.¹⁹

17. In developing countries, much of the increase in crime and victimization involves youth. There are strong links between youth victimization and offending. The majority of victims of youth violence are other youth and nearly all know their assailants.²⁰ Levels of victimization from crime and violence are higher among youth than among persons in other age groups, and are particularly high among youth at risk. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 199,000 youth murders took place in 2000.²¹ In Latin America and the Caribbean, youth have been involved as perpetrators and victims of the rise in violence in the region, often in the poorest *favelas* and slums, and heavily influenced by organized crime and gangs. Some 29 per cent of homicides in the region are youth of 10-19 years of age, a rate that is up to three times higher than national rates. In Brazil, the homicide rate among youth has increased by 77 per cent in the past 10 years, linked primarily to the proliferation of firearms and drug trafficking; an estimated 20,000 children and youth 10-16 years of age act as drug couriers. Children growing up in such poor and violent neighbourhoods are very much the product of those environments; the children themselves are not the problem.²²

E. Increasing pressure on urban governments

1. Breakdown of traditional cultural values, social networks and good governance

18. In many urban areas there is a breakdown or loss of traditional socializing networks and informal controls. Families, many of them headed by single mothers, are weakened by poverty, ill health and high rates of crime and violence. In other cases, deaths from HIV/AIDS, war, conflict and natural disasters have created orphans and child- and youth-headed families. Migrant and immigrant populations find their cultural and ethnic values at odds with existing urban traditions. Together with the lack of schools, problems of school drop-out and economic pressure on local neighbourhoods, all these factors undermine community networks and social

capital and threaten the traditional social controls in neighbourhoods and cities. Among youth at risk, there is a loss of “connectedness” and an absence of anchoring values. There is a need for new ways of working collectively with the increasingly varied family structures and culturally mixed and fragmented neighbourhoods in urban areas. Old conceptions of appropriate family structures or values may need to be revised.

2. Increasing exclusion of youth at risk and minority populations

19. Young people at risk include a variety of different groups—those living in the poorest and most marginal urban areas, street children, those involved in gangs, substance abuse and trafficking, those who are sexually exploited and youth already in conflict with the law or returning from custody to the community. In some countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, they include children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and war and children affected by war in other ways. In a number of regions, youth have been systematically recruited by persons involved in organized crime, especially drug traffickers. Heightened media attention to youth crime in particular has helped demonize young people, while diverting attention from the role of organized crime in exploiting them.

20. Children and youth are especially vulnerable to arbitrary justice at the hands of the police. There has been increasing exclusion of youth at risk, through criminalization, and more general exclusion from urban space, together with lack of access to services and the economic and social benefits of the societies in which they live.²³ Youth tend to be excluded from participation in decision-making affecting them in urban areas. Such exclusion is found in developing and developed countries where concerns about youth “incivilities” have increased.²⁴ This suggests that cities must work to include youth and marginal populations, to train those who work with young people, to recognize youth as a force for change rather than a problem and to facilitate their participation in decision-making.

21. Minority and immigrant populations are similarly more likely to be subject to social and economic exclusion. While countries in North America and Western Europe have recently seen an overall decline in the rates of youth violence and victimization, violence is often attributed to foreigners or “outsiders” and, as with all countries, indigenous, ethnic minority and immigrant youth are all more likely than other youth to be among those most at risk and to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system.²⁵ This suggests that particular attention needs to be given to promoting the inclusion of minorities in crime prevention strategies.

3. Fear and insecurity and public pressure to respond to crime

22. High levels of urban violence and victimization have generated increasing fear and insecurity among urban populations. Even in Europe and North America, where crime has declined in recent years, the level of fear remains high. Public perception of and reactions to urban crime and youth violence tend to demand rapid and punitive responses. There has been increasing resort to tougher criminal justice responses, which criminalize at-risk populations of youth in particular, and burgeoning populations of incarcerated youth.²⁶ There has been a loss of confidence in the ability of the police and criminal justice systems to respond to crime. Yet the use of the criminal justice system to respond to crime is costly and not cost-effective when compared with good strategic prevention programmes.²⁷ The use of

incarceration may bring short-term relief through incapacitation but have costly long-term consequences for young people, their families and communities, as well as itself being very expensive.²⁸ This underlines the importance of investing in prevention. Governments at all levels face a major challenge to shift public opinion towards prevention, through well-planned strategies that balance short- and longer-term responses to crime and insecurity, and towards alternatives to the use of incarceration for youth.

4. Increasing resort to privatization of public space, to private policing and to vigilante and mob justice

23. One response to rising urban crime levels in developing countries in particular has been increasing pressure to privatize and segregate public space. This has been accompanied by increasing use of private and armed security. Private security and the development of gated communities benefit the wealthier segments of the urban population, but may provide only short-term benefits. They also increase the social exclusion of poorer segments of the population and reinforce inequalities between communities. Conversely, many poorer neighbourhoods may feel that they must resort to carrying guns, informal policing and mob or vigilante justice in order to protect themselves from violence. This suggests that local authorities should increase their partnerships with local communities and work to incorporate their concerns into strategies that are more broadly beneficial, as well as regulating the privatization of public space.

5. Corruption, lack of public trust and a culture of lawlessness

24. Corruption, lack of public trust in the police, a history of police repression rather than community service and the vulnerability of urban administrations to organized crime are all factors that militate against the development of safe and secure communities. They also undercut human rights and provide fertile ground for the expansion of transnational organized crime and trafficking. Reforming the police is a long-term process given the problems associated with trying to change the culture of policing. This reaffirms that good governance is among the main prerequisites for effective urban crime prevention and urban renewal.

III. What crime prevention brings to urban areas

A. Benefits and principles

25. As emphasized in the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13, annex, para. 1): “There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries.” They enhance the quality of life and bring long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the criminal justice system, as well as other social costs resulting from crime.

26. The Guidelines recognize that crime has multiple causes and that prevention requires a well-planned strategic approach that attacks those causes through various kinds of intervention. Internationally, the factors that place children and young

people at risk of crime and victimization, or which help protect them, are very widely acknowledged; those factors should be taken into account in developing effective intervention strategies. They include family factors, individual factors and characteristics of neighbourhoods and local environments, including poverty, poor housing, poor schools and lack of recreational and social facilities. In addition, the presence of drugs or guns acts as a major facilitator for crime.²⁹ Prevention means developing programmes that support families and children, strengthen schools, develop educational and job skills, provide recreation for young people and teach mediating and conflict resolution skills to promote a sense of involvement and belonging, for example. Much of what is actually crime prevention has often been called something else—urban renewal, educational support, early childhood development, drug treatment.³⁰ There is also extensive experience in how to prevent crime from occurring by environmental design and urban planning. It is important to work with and include local communities in the design of crime prevention initiatives. A well-planned crime prevention strategy includes:

- (a) Social crime prevention measures that address social, economic, educational and health issues, targeting neighbourhoods, families and children and youth at risk;
- (b) Improving neighbourhood and community networks and conditions and strengthening community capacity;
- (c) Reducing opportunities for crime through situational and environmental design;
- (d) Preventing recidivism by promoting the reintegration of offenders.

27. This approach to crime prevention represents an evolution in understanding how to prevent urban violence. What was once seen as a matter of law enforcement is now recognized as a social, public health and good governance issue that can be tackled proactively.³¹ What is central to effective crime prevention is the key role of cities and local governments, guided and supported by strong national government commitment and leadership.

28. The key principles guiding effective crime prevention are that:³²

- (a) All levels of government should play a leadership role;
- (b) Crime prevention should be integrated in a cross-cutting way into all social and economic policies and programmes including employment, education, health, housing and urban planning, justice and social services;
- (c) Strategies should be built on cooperative partnerships between government institutions and ministries, community and non-governmental organizations, the business sector and civil society;
- (d) There must be adequate funding and other resources and clear accountability to ensure the implementation and sustainability of strategies;
- (e) Strategies and interventions should be based on sound knowledge about the causes of crime and effective practices;
- (f) All crime prevention initiatives must respect human rights and the rule of law;

(g) Account must be taken of the links between local and transnational organized crime;

(h) Crime prevention strategies should take particular account of the different needs of men and women and the most vulnerable members of society.

B. Towards effective urban crime prevention strategies and practice

1. The role of Governments in urban crime prevention

29. At the national and subregional levels, many countries have integrated strategies and mechanisms that facilitate the development of strategy and policy at the local level.³³ These have been developed in countries with very different historical, political and economic contexts. They include legislative and policy initiatives, often backed by major investment in resources.

Crime and disorder reduction partnerships in the United Kingdom

In England and Wales, legislation passed in 1998 (and subsequently amended) requires the local authority and police chief in every area to work together and with health-care and fire services in order to deliver a strategy to reduce crime, disorder and drug problems. Over 370 crime and disorder reduction partnerships have been formed. Every three years, each partnership must undertake an audit of problems, consult with community interests on their concerns, select priorities, adopt a new three-year strategy, agree on specific targets and implement action plans. Targets for the period 2005-2008 must also be agreed with the Government to ensure that the sum total of all local targets will achieve the national target of reducing crime by 15 per cent by 2008 (compared with the baseline period 2002-2003).

30. Argentina, Belgium, Chile, France, the Netherlands, Peru and South Africa have used national initiatives and city safety and security contract mechanisms to encourage and guide action at the city level. In the Philippines, crime prevention policies include a mandate to all city governments to develop integrated area/community public safety plans with the community, police and other agencies. Australia, Denmark and New Zealand have long-established cooperative crime prevention mechanisms at the level of the local authorities. Australia and Canada have invested in research and project development, especially in social and community crime prevention. Hungary has recently developed its National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention on the basis of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime. Many developed countries have placed particular emphasis on evidence-based research and practice and have established regional support networks to assist in the implementation of local strategies.

Comuna Segura: the safer community programme in Chile³⁴

Comuna Segura was launched as a pilot programme in 2000 by the Ministry of the Interior of Chile and will be established in 70 communities nationwide by 2005. The programme provides a framework and funding structure for community projects designed to reduce crime in targeted communities. Citizens are recognized as major

partners with their municipalities and the police. Community participation is encouraged through “community councils for citizen security” and plans are developed and implemented on the basis of careful diagnosis.

Other national initiatives include the Safe Neighbourhood Programme, begun in 2001, targeting the most vulnerable areas with drug problems, and the Quadrant Policing Plan, establishing community-based policing which was initiated in 1999.

*Community crime prevention in Peru*³⁵

Peru is emerging from 20 years of internal conflict that caused the loss of some 70,000 lives. It has begun to reform its police and respond to the increasing level of public insecurity using the National Citizen Security System. Created in 2003, the System mandates citizen security committees at the national, regional, provincial and local levels. The local committees are multisectoral: they are chaired by the mayor and their members include representatives of police and justice systems, health, education and civil society organizations. The committees develop local safety diagnoses and implement and evaluate their strategic safety plans. Six pilot cities have received funding and technical assistance to develop their local safety diagnosis. Strategic safety plans include improving public space and parks, establishing programmes for youth and against substance abuse and enforcing municipal regulations. The local committees have been encouraged by a competitive grants programme and tool kits, and the results have been evaluated.

2. The role of local authorities in developing comprehensive strategies

31. Providing a safe and secure environment for their citizens is one of the primary roles of local governments. Since crime and victimization occur at the local level, local governments have a key role in the development of safety and security, and such governments are in a strategic position to act effectively. Local authorities control land use, infrastructure, basic services, local social and economic policies and access to justice and above all they influence and shape local decision-making.³⁶ An increasing number of cities have taken on such a leadership role, developing integrated mechanisms in city administration and working cooperatively with local institutions and other partners to develop community-wide prevention strategies.³⁷ They work in cross-cutting or “whole-of-government” ways, using sound knowledge and information systems to aid their strategic planning and implementation.

32. The work of the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme exemplifies this approach. The Programme, established in 1996 at the request of African cities to address urban violence and security issues, now includes 15 city-level projects around the world. It helps to build the capacity of local governments to develop integrated crime prevention plans and initiatives, through good governance, improved criminal justice responses and social and situational approaches. It has two target groups: youth; and women and children.

Safer Cities Programme in Dar es Salaam

The Safer Cities Programme in Dar es Salaam was established in 1997 to coordinate and strengthen local crime prevention capacity, in partnership with the local stakeholders and communities. It has resulted in the appointment of a local coordinator and the establishment of a permanent office within the municipal council, as well as a network of neighbourhood coordinators. Safety audits on women's safety and victimization surveys of crime and insecurity have been carried out to provide the basis for the development of the city safety strategy. The Programme has focused on changing attitudes to crime, promoting a culture of adherence to the law. In response to the high level of youth unemployment, the Programme has provided skills training and cultural activities, including the recruitment and training of unemployed local youths to act as night-time security guards and a series of income-generating and skills training projects to support them.

3. Strengthening community policing and community partnerships

33. Work to involve civil society and strengthen communities and neighbourhoods has been carried out through a variety of community forums and targeted programmes. Countries are increasingly establishing community-oriented policing systems, as the Philippines has recently done. It is, however, not always easy to develop effective community policing or to transform local police services so that they are more proactive and work in partnership with local government and the community. In Cape Town, South Africa, a community action planning process has been used to bring local communities together with the police to map and analyse where crime occurs and to develop solutions, while the Western Cape has used a community participative strategy (Bambanani) to improve its service delivery methodology.³⁸ The development or extension of community policing to cities or slum areas provides another example of partnership alliances that help to build better relationships between the police and slum dwellers, in addition to increasing safety and security. In Mumbai, India, a partnership between socially excluded slum communities and the local police has been established. In the State of Enugu in Nigeria, community safety forums are being established to help strengthen informal policing, which has emerged in poor communities.

Community police stations in slum districts in Mumbai, India³⁹

Recognizing the need to improve relationships between slum dwellers and the police, the police in Mumbai have started a partnership with community organizations to provide police services in the slums. The slums house more than half of the city's population of 15 million. Slum police panchayats, each with 10 local representatives and a police officer, have been set up in 65 slums.

Informal policing and the development of local community forums in the State of Enugu in Nigeria⁴⁰

Concern about safety and the use of informal policing, including mob action, is widespread in Nigeria. Participants in a study in four states indicated that their

main safety and security concerns were personal protection from criminals, especially armed robbers; protection from harm associated with political thuggery; prevention of violent conflict; eradication of police corruption and brutality; and protection of property from theft and destruction. A series of community safety and security forums are being established, with partnerships involving the local government, the police and the informal policing structures and local stakeholders, including women and non-indigenous groups, to strengthen community representation, human rights and accountability.

4. Integrating the safety of women and girls into urban strategies

34. There is now growing action globally to prevent crime and violence against women and girls, including violence in the home and in public spaces, and trafficking. In a number of countries, national and municipal governments have begun to take account of gender and integrate women's concerns and needs into urban safety planning and prevention strategies.⁴¹ They have established partnership projects with community organizations, the police, the justice system and other services, and there is now an increasing range of good practice projects and tools from developed and developing countries. These include working with women from minority groups and recent immigrants. Local authorities, with the support of the national and regional authorities, have also begun to play a greater role in the prevention of trafficking in women and children.

35. There is an increasing range of data information systems and tools to assist in the development of local crime prevention strategies. Apart from police data, they include victim and participatory surveys, safety audits, social mapping, the use of accident and health data in violence prevention planning, regional observatories and centres monitoring crime and social problems, guides on developing, implementing and evaluating strategies and projects and evidence-based research and good practice. In the absence of accurate police data, for example, the local governments of Bogota and of Diadema, Brazil, have been able to reduce the incidence of homicides by using social and health data to pinpoint areas of high risk. The UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme has developed a local crime prevention tool kit. This builds on the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, and the experience of working with cities in developing countries and provides detailed practical guides on the process of establishing a local strategy; technical guides on the role of partners, environmental design, community policing, victim surveys and mapping techniques; examples of good practice; and training modules.

C. Youth at risk in urban areas: effective strategies and good practice

1. Inclusion and participation

36. Local governments are paying increasing attention to the needs of young people, especially youth at risk, in the development of their urban crime prevention strategies. This is often done as part of an overall youth plan rather than as a series of unconnected initiatives. Experience suggests that the most effective approaches are those which: (a) work to include, rather than exclude, young people; (b) work with a range of local services and partners, including community organizations; (c) balance investment in early intervention, social education and citizenship with

the development of “connectedness” with crime control approaches; (d) target and tailor programmes to strengthen the factors that protect specific areas or groups at risk, using well-designed and well-implemented programmes, including community-based alternatives to incarceration. The examples below illustrate some of the kinds of programmes and approaches that have been effective in building protective factors to reduce crime and victimization among youth.

37. Promoting the participation of youth at risk in urban crime prevention strategies is increasingly being seen as an important way to respond to their social exclusion and develop effective interventions. Young people are a major source of knowledge of their own needs and of what can be done, are well placed to talk with and influence their peers and can act as powerful researchers, trainers, advocates, and designers of programmes and projects.⁴² This can range from the analysis, design and implementation of projects in public spaces with young people,⁴³ to projects with youth gangs in Argentina, Brazil or Guatemala, street youth in South Africa or relations between indigenous youth and police in Australia. Prevention programmes targeting youth gangs generally aim to prevent youth from joining gangs or to help them leave gangs. They include school-based educational programmes and programmes in high-risk areas that target existing or potential gang members, offering alternative social networks, life skills, education and training and community support. Promoting the inclusion of street children through the development of city partnership projects can be an effective way of responding to their needs and minimizing the use of criminal justice responses.

Othandweni project in Johannesburg, South Africa

The goals of the Othandweni project in Johannesburg are: to act as a guardian for street children and provide alternatives to life on the street; to protect their human rights; to get children off the streets and reunite them with their families; to empower youth at risk; and to minimize institutionalization. The project began as a scheme for feeding street children and has expanded to include basic care, to act as a guardian in court proceedings, to provide sports, recreational and life skills, health-care education and support, especially in connection with HIV/AIDS, a refuge for abandoned babies and a training project for business and practical skills, all with a view to helping such children develop alternatives to the street. It works closely with a range of local authorities and community partners.

38. An increasing range of programmes (for example, in Australia, Canada, Costa Rica and Thailand) now respond to the particular experiences and needs of young men and young women, including young women’s vulnerability to sexual exploitation, child and youth sex tourism, witnessing family violence, and the development of gender sensitivity among both young men and women.

2. Integrated and comprehensive strategies

39. Schools help to transmit social values and “connectedness”, as well as education and life skills. They are a very effective site for the prevention of youth crime and victimization, especially when programmes work closely in an integrated way with parents, the police and other local services, their neighbourhood and community organizations.⁴⁴ Effective comprehensive approaches work to prevent

bullying in schools, provide support to at-risk children, promote educational and skills learning, and involve parents, local businesses and the community. Other school-based programmes provide incentives for youth to stay in school, a major factor protecting young people from offending. Mediation and restorative approaches have also been effective in a number of countries to prevent violence and the escalation of problems, and build skills and alternative ways of resolving disputes. This includes school-based conflict resolution, social agents mediating disputes in public spaces or on public transport, and neighbourhood-based forums for resolving disputes (for example, in Australia, Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States).

The “Together We Light the Way” project in Canada and Trinidad: promoting safe and caring communities through schools.

Together We Light the Way, a school-based early intervention project to build resiliency and responsibility in children 4-14 years of age, brings together partners from business, community service, the police, staff, students and parents to improve learning, employability, non-violent responses, attitudes, values and behaviour among students. The project has been developed, successfully evaluated and replicated in a number of provinces in Canada, with the support of the National Crime Prevention Strategy, and is being implemented in Trinidad as well.

3. Balanced and targeted approaches

40. Integrating prevention with both child development strategies and the wider youth justice system helps create a more balanced response to youth offending and victimization. In England and Wales, for example, all local authorities have been required since 2003 to adopt prevention strategies for persons up to 19 years old and to implement targeted initiatives to help those considered at risk of getting into difficulties. Many of the programmes are based on partnerships between local authorities and services and community organizations at the local level, with on-the-ground project technical support and advice from non-profit organizations.⁴⁵ Khulisa, a community-based organization in South Africa, works with the local authority and youth and correctional services to provide youth leadership, income generation and non-custodial programmes, education and training programmes in custody and post-release support and training to help reintegrate youth into the community. In Argentina, the Programa Comunidades Vulnerables (vulnerable community programme) has worked to support youth in the most vulnerable barrios of Buenos Aires, developing a range of life and job skills, education and cultural activities and micro-enterprise support. Mentoring programmes for youth at risk and youth already in conflict with the law, developed in countries such as France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, have been found to be effective in reducing offending. They include close one-to-one relationships with adult mentors, often combined with education and skills training programmes.

D. Challenges for effective and sustainable safety

41. While there have been many achievements, there are, nevertheless, barriers to developing effective, integrated crime prevention in urban areas. Integrating crime prevention with other services at all levels of government is not easy. Reducing corruption at the level of the local authority and police reform are major challenges for many developing and post-conflict countries and cities; re-training existing staff and the development of viable alternatives that promote safety and security require much persistence, time and resources. There is, however, considerable knowledge to be shared on how those challenges have been overcome. Much can be learned by exchanging experiences, both between cities and between countries.

1. Capacity-building

42. Implementing and sustaining strategies and programmes require both sufficient investment in programmes and resources beyond pilot initiatives and the embedding of strategies within existing local government practices. Structural changes to decision-making and management practices may be needed. Local governments need continuing support from Governments at the subregional and national levels. Many developing countries and cities endorse international guidelines and agreements on crime prevention but lack the resources, knowledge and capacity to put them into effect or sustain them. More targeted technical assistance and support need to be provided. This includes support for the development of strategies, management and data collection systems, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and communication tools. This can be facilitated by donor countries, as well as regional and city-to-city collaboration and exchange. Training, support and capacity-building need to be built into projects and initiatives, and more attention needs to be given to the needs of practitioners on the ground, including city managers and safety coordinators, for example, through city-to-city exchanges. The UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme brought together African mayors in 1998, 2002 and 2003 to exchange experience and strengthen capacity. It has also supported two conferences on youth at risk: one in Africa in 2002 and the other in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2004. The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime is developing an international training institute, and its city exchange programme is linking together the cities of Montreal, Bordeaux and Liège over a two-year period to develop responses to insecurity.

2. Empowering communities and civil society

43. Developing crime prevention partnerships and working collaboratively with the community can be difficult. It is often easier to focus on direct interventions, for example, with individual youth already in conflict with the law. Cities need to give greater attention to supporting and assisting partnerships with civil society, including the private sector. This includes the challenges of integrating gender issues and the prevention of intimate violence, as well as women's safety in public space, into all urban strategies. New approaches are needed that recognize the increasing complexity of family structures and diverse ethnic and cultural communities. Mobilizing and engaging representative and meaningful participation with communities requires local governments to actively develop partnerships that are truly inclusive and not restricted to token consultation. This means seeking the

views and engaging with ethnic minorities, or youth at risk, for example, in the gathering of data and information, analysis of problems and solutions and the design and implementation of initiatives. It means embedding that participation in ongoing decision-making in the city or neighbourhood.

3. Balancing short- and long-term objectives

44. Responding to immediate needs and public concerns about safety is not straightforward. Public or political pressures for tough criminal justice measures may not bring long-term benefits. For example, the use of curfews for young people, tough police crackdowns and reducing “incivilities” associated with panhandlers, drug abuse or prostitution can all increase the social exclusion of young people and other marginal groups. Similarly, too great an emphasis on situational or environmental prevention may benefit wealthier residents and the business community but deflect crime to other neighbourhoods, without addressing the factors leading to offending. Immediate responses to public safety are necessary after natural disasters or sudden increases in violence, but such responses need to be balanced with longer-term initiatives. Governments at all levels need to work to shift public opinion about crime and its causes and the gains from crime prevention, including through working with the media.

4. Context sensitivity

45. One of the most significant recent lessons for crime prevention is the importance of developing or adapting strategies and programmes to the context in which they take place. Much of the research on effective practice has been undertaken in developed countries, where resources and expertise are considerably greater than in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and the political, economic and social histories are very different. Natural disasters, conflicts or HIV/AIDS all bring difficult contexts and risks to urban areas, requiring specific solutions. Over the past 10 years, it has become clear that transplanting solutions developed in cities and countries on the North to the South is neither easy nor always appropriate.⁴⁶ One solution is to increase regional cooperation between countries in comparable circumstances. The UNODC South-South project (project GLOR78), for instance, links Southern Africa with the Caribbean, both developing regions with similar problems: high levels of youth violence and guns, high unemployment and income disparities and policing systems that are under reform. Another solution is to focus on particularly challenging cases of crime prevention, for example, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where UNODC is assisting the city authorities in *favelas* (low-income communities) in reducing drug trafficking and concomitant criminal problems (project BRAR75). Finally, at the international level, one of the solutions developed by UNODC is the electronic Global Youth Network against Drug Abuse (www.unodc.org/youthnet/), enabling sharing good practices among non-governmental organizations involved in drug abuse prevention.

5. Developing and sharing knowledge

46. Greater attention needs to be given to evaluating crime prevention interventions in specific contexts. Crime prevention strategies must be built on good information, as well as knowledge about effective practices, but not all approaches are easily evaluated. Measuring the costs and benefits of interventions takes time

and is often easier for situational or developmental prevention approaches, or single interventions, than for complex community-based strategies that use a range of interventions. Similarly, many early or community-based interventions can only expect to show effects in the long term.⁴⁷ Cities need to establish clear goals and targets, as well as good monitoring systems to help them assess whether they are meeting their goals. This will help them establish an evidence-based approach to prevention. It will allow them to be innovative where necessary, instead of relying only on approaches proven elsewhere. Not all programmes are replicable elsewhere, nor should cities expect to evaluate every strategy and project exhaustively. The implications for international agencies and donors is to avoid imposing rigid conditions and approaches based on assumptions from developed country models while still enabling context-related evidence to be accumulated and assessed. The development of tools such as indicators for crime prevention would assist local authorities in the evaluation of initiatives.

IV. Recommendations

47. The rapid growth of urban areas in many countries, coupled with poverty, growing income disparities and the breakdown of traditional family, social and cultural networks, place those urban areas, and the high proportions of children and young people living in unstable and poor urban environments, at high risk of crime and victimization. Urban youth in many countries experience high levels of violence and crime, associated with drug trafficking, the presences of small arms and sexual exploitation. This facilitates the growth of transnational organized crime, since urban areas provide a ready source of recruitment, clients and support for such activities. This situation presents a major challenge to which international, national, subregional and local governments must respond.

48. In keeping with the Millennium Development Goals and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime and the relevant international conventions and protocols, workshop participants may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) All Member States should be urged to adopt and implement the Guidelines on the Prevention of Crime and international standards and norms concerning the rights of young people;

(b) Governments should establish comprehensive strategies and policies that enable and support the development of policies relating to urban crime prevention and youth at risk at the local government level. Devolving powers to subregional authorities, working to reduce corruption and providing funding and accountability mechanisms are all important ways in which Governments can assist in tackling local crime problems in urban areas;

(c) Local authorities should establish integrated, strategic approaches to crime prevention, paying particular attention to youth at risk. This will require local authorities to take leadership and to work in a multisectoral way, involving all sectors of local services and administration, as well as with local community groups, non-governmental organizations, the media, the private sector and civil society;

(d) Such strategies should pay attention to the inclusion, rather than the exclusion, of youth at risk, including ethnic and cultural minorities, young women and young men, and should promote their participation in making decisions that affect them. The participation of youth in the design and implementation of strategies and policies should be actively encouraged;

(e) Such strategies should be gender-sensitive and include specific provisions for and target particular groups of at-risk youth, including those in the poorest urban areas, street children, those in youth gangs, sexually exploited youth and those affected by substance abuse, by war, natural disasters and HIV/AIDS. Strategies should promote community alternatives to incarceration and support for those released from custody and should use restorative approaches that focus on building individual and community capacities to resolve conflicts before they escalate;

(f) Interventions should target the most at-risk groups and areas, using, as far as possible, good practices and evidence-based approaches that are adapted or developed in relation to the local context, needs and realities. In doing so, subregional, national and local governments should help to strengthen the factors that protect the most vulnerable, including women and children, and limit the facilitating environment for transnational crime;

(g) The implementation of strategies and interventions should be monitored and evaluated in terms of their results as far as possible, in order to facilitate the adaptation and broader application of good practice and evidence-based knowledge. Greater attention should be given to the development of tools such as indicators for evaluation and to aid diagnosis and strategic planning;

(h) The international community, including donors, should work to facilitate and support the development of capacity-building at the local government level, for example, through city-to-city exchanges, and technical assistance and training, both between countries in the South and between the South and the North.

Notes

¹ See the reports of the Asian and Pacific, Latin American and Caribbean, African and Western Asian regional preparatory meetings for the Eleventh Congress (A/CONF.203/RPM.1/1, A/CONF.203/RPM.2/1, A/CONF.203/RPM.3/1 and Corr.1 and A/CONF.203/RPM.4/1, respectively).

² A number of definitions of youth are used internationally and the present paper is concerned primarily with young people aged 10-25.

³ Other binding and multilateral instruments of relevance to crime prevention include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I) and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Assembly resolution 55/25, annex II).

⁴ See also "Security system reform and governance", OECD Policy Brief, May 2004; and *Investing in Development: a Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (2005), p. 31.

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- ²¹ Etienne G. Krug and others, eds., *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002).
- ²² Verner and Alda, op. cit.
- ²³ *Policy Dialogue Series: Children, Youth and Urban Governance* (April 2004); and L. Chawla, *Growing Up in an Urbanized World* (Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2002).

- ²⁴ Resulting, for example, in the banning of street children and youth from public spaces and restrictions on access to housing or job opportunities.
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- ²⁶ *Kids Behind Bars* (Amsterdam, Defence for Children International, 2003).
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