



Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

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Agenda item 6

**National approaches to public participation in
strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice**

Report of Committee II: workshop 4

Addendum

Workshop on public contribution to crime prevention and raising awareness of criminal justice: experiences and lessons learned

Proceedings

1. At its 4th to 6th meetings, on 16 and 17 April 2015, Committee II held the workshop on public contribution to crime prevention and raising awareness of criminal justice: experiences and lessons learned. The Australian Institute of Criminology, an institute that is part of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, assisted in the preparation and organization of the workshop. The Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Background paper on workshop 4, on public contribution to crime prevention and raising awareness of criminal justice: experiences and lessons learned (A/CONF.222/13);

(b) Discussion guide for the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/CONF.222/PM.1);

(c) Reports of the regional preparatory meetings for the Thirteenth Congress (A/CONF.222/RPM.1/1, A/CONF.222/RPM.2/1, A/CONF.222/RPM.3/1 and A/CONF.222/RPM.4/1).

2. The workshop was moderated by Adam Tomison, Director and Chief Executive of the Australian Institute of Criminology.

3. At the 4th meeting, on 16 April, the Chair of Committee II made an introductory statement. A representative of the Secretariat then briefly introduced the agenda item. A panel discussion on the role of the media, social networks and new communication technologies was led by the following panellists: Murray Lee (University of Sydney (Australia)); Adrián Franco (National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico); and Peter Homel (Australian Institute of Criminology).

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The panel on public participation at the local level: initiatives to promote crime prevention and raise awareness of criminal justice — part one (rethinking the problem), was led by the following panellists: Matthew Torigian (Canada); Nick Crofts (University of Melbourne (Australia)); and Fatima Itawi (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces).

4. Statements were made by the representatives of Kuwait, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Canada, Algeria, Norway, Morocco, the United States, Pakistan, Oman and Finland.

5. At the 5th meeting, on 16 April, the panel on public participation at the local level: initiatives to promote crime prevention and raise awareness of criminal justice — part two (access to justice: strategies and approaches) was led by the following panellists: Myriam Khaldi (Avocats Sans Frontières); Martina Gredler (Sorooptimists International); Nicholas McGeorge (Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers)); and Shoji Imafuku (Japan). Part three of that panel, on regional initiatives, was led by the following panellists: Douglas Durán (Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders); Med S. K. Kaggwa (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights); Sean Tait (African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum); and Elinor Chemonges (Uganda). A statement was also made by a representative of the Doha Youth Forum.

6. Statements were made by the representatives of Kuwait, Lebanon, Canada, China, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the Russian Federation and South Africa. A statement was also made by the observer for the European Union.

7. At the 6th meeting, on 17 April, a panel discussion on the role of the private sector businesses in crime prevention and criminal justice was led by the following panellists: Martin Kreutner (International Anti-Corruption Academy), Margaret Shaw (International Centre for the Prevention of Crime) and Alice Scartezini (Caixa Seguradora Youth Expression Project).

8. Statements were made by the representatives of South Africa, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the United States, Thailand, Chile, Canada, the Russian Federation, Japan, Burkina Faso, India and Pakistan.

General discussion

9. Panellists on the first panel noted that new technologies and social media had facilitated unprecedented changes in the ways and speed with which information was circulated, which had had an impact on public participation in the prevention of crime. While those technologies created new opportunities for criminal activity, they also provided opportunities to detect, prevent and regulate crime, as well as reduce risks to community safety. It was noted that the police were best positioned to utilize those advantages, to communicate directly with the public, enhance transparency, build trust in their institution and encourage reporting of crime. Social marketing approaches were another tool for crime prevention, influencing the voluntary behaviour of individuals, including offenders or potential victims of specific crimes. Panellists stressed that evidence-based strategies ensured that such tools were effective, in particular in reaching out to youth.

10. Panellists on the second panel noted that, to be successful, local initiatives should be inclusive, multisectoral, evidence-based and sustainable. Panellists

described community policing models to improve community safety and well-being through community leadership, multisectoral responses and partnerships, knowledge- and information-sharing, evidence- and evaluation-based experiences, sustainable responses and a diversity of citizens' voices. Experiences from police-community partnerships in the response to HIV were shared. It was suggested that police engagement with communities at risk was important to the prevention of HIV infection and to increased public trust in the police. Experiences in building effective partnerships for crime prevention with both formal and informal security providers were presented as a participatory crime prevention model.

11. The third panel covered the role of different community actors in enhancing access to justice, supporting victims and assisting in rehabilitation of offenders. The first panellist described public participation in providing legal aid, and noted that communities facing high crime risks had a major role to play in preventing and resolving conflicts. Another panellist focused on empowering women with regard to crime prevention and presented information on how services provided by civil society organizations fit into an institutionalized justice system. Civil society organizations could assist victims of crime, in particular victims of gender-based violence. The role of volunteers in restorative justice and mediation processes for reducing recidivism and resolving local disputes was noted. With regard to volunteer probation officers, one panellist highlighted as advantages their local character, knowledge of the community, personal interaction with offenders and continual provision of support to offenders.

12. Panellists on the fourth panel shared experiences from Latin America and Africa. The first panellist described trends relating to violence and crime in Latin America, as well as recent initiatives to encourage public participation in crime prevention and restorative justice that highlighted the involvement of youth. He noted that rehabilitation programmes were crucial for tertiary prevention and that sufficient attention should be given to groups such as indigenous populations in crime prevention efforts. Several panellists reported on experiences in Africa with community participation in policy development and standard-setting, and presented information on new regional standards on detention. They elaborated on the community-rooted work of paralegals in pretrial detention settings. They concluded that the challenge was to internalize and operationalize standards, and that an inclusive regional approach was the best way forward. Finally, a panellist presented the recommendations of the Doha Youth Forum, which included strengthening public awareness and education on crime and violence, and had provided an opportunity for the voices of youth to be heard.

13. Panellists on the fifth panel outlined the important role of the private sector, and its responsibility towards society for the prevention of crimes such as corruption. They shared several examples of good practices from different countries. They also presented lessons learned from innovative initiatives involving local companies, youth and law enforcement. Changing economic factors challenged the ability of authorities to fund crime prevention programmes; public-private partnerships in support of such activities could have a significant impact on ensuring sustainability, as they had proven to be cost-effective for projects such as youth education, family support, urban renewal and housing matters.

14. During the discussion, several speakers recognized the benefits of technological developments for crime prevention, in particular for use by law

enforcement. The effectiveness of new media in informing the public of risks and ways to avoid them and providing an opportunity to participate in the development of local policies was highlighted. It was noted that such tools also presented challenges when they were used in the commission of crime. Speakers suggested that appropriate regulations and institutional frameworks were needed. Speakers also referred to the need for enhanced international cooperation, as well as for the sharing of practices and experiences. It was highlighted that capacity-building was needed to ensure that data and information were used in an effective manner, in order to enable local communities to identify safety needs and to provide them with support and thus prevent crime. Some speakers shared national approaches to respond to issues such as cyberbullying and online sexual exploitation of children. They referred to the added value of community-oriented policing and the need to detect, prevent and respond to criminal activity and encourage cooperation among relevant agencies and communities, and with the private sector. It was noted that many police forces had dedicated web pages and hotlines, with varying levels of resources.

15. A number of speakers noted that the engagement of civil society organizations should take place within the appropriate regulatory framework, in line with national legislation and in coordination with relevant oversight bodies, for example crime prevention councils, while also ensuring that organizations had the skills and knowledge for their functions. One speaker noted that any civil society activities should be framed and moderated by Governments, that non-local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could propagate ideas or value systems that were foreign to some countries, and that those NGOs should respect the economic, cultural, social and religious values of societies. Some speakers referred to the need to build trust and transparency in that regard. The need for innovative and cost-effective initiatives was mentioned in the context of financial constraints, as was the importance of ensuring the sustainability and continuity of efforts.

16. Some speakers expressed support for the involvement of civil society within the framework of the Organized Crime Convention and the Convention against Corruption, while other speakers stressed that the intergovernmental nature of the work of those bodies should be maintained. One speaker noted that such civil society participation should be understood in the context of grassroots or local NGOs.

17. Speakers noted that access to information and awareness of the law, including among civil servants, youth workers and farmers, was necessary for effective participation. It was recognized that processes for the empowerment of communities required a clear policy, and the identification of vulnerabilities, in line with national laws and national circumstances. Some speakers also acknowledged the importance of contributions by youth to policy discussions, including in the framework of youth forums at the United Nations congresses on crime prevention and criminal justice. Finally, it was suggested that approaches to public participation in crime prevention and criminal justice should be integrated into the work of UNODC in that area.

18. Some speakers acknowledged the contribution of public-private partnerships to addressing corruption and responding to youth violence. It was noted that businesses had a corporate social responsibility, and that their expertise in specific areas, such as the banking sector or private security, could offer valuable contributions to the work of law enforcement. Speakers shared national examples.

One speaker noted that public participation was essential in promoting a culture of lawfulness, and referred to a programme in her country in which convenience stores were used as shelters for victimized women. Some speakers noted that partnerships were at times difficult to implement, especially with regard to monitoring and evaluation. In that context, one speaker noted the necessity of appropriate oversight owing to the fact that corporate bodies could be engaged in illegal activities, including corruption. Reference was made to the work carried out in other appropriate frameworks to establish a legally binding agreement on transnational corporations and other business enterprises.

19. Reference was made to the added value of community-oriented policing, as well as to the need to detect, prevent and respond to criminal activity and encourage cooperation among relevant agencies and communities, and with the private sector.

20. In referring to human security and harm reduction, some speakers urged caution, as no agreed-upon definitions for those concepts existed. One speaker noted that the use of drug substitution therapy was not universally recognized as a method for drug treatment.

Conclusions

21. The conclusions of the discussion, as summarized by the Chair, are as follows:

(a) Rapid developments in media, social networks and new communication technologies bring undeniable potential benefits to society, in particular to law enforcement as a means of spreading information, encouraging reporting and cooperation with authorities, building trust, identifying community risks and providing safety tips. Exchanges among States and the sharing of best practices are important for addressing common challenges that emerge from these new developments, such as new forms of crime and victimization and the negative impact of the media, and for building national and local capacity to generate and analyse relevant data;

(b) Public participation can widen and strengthen efforts to prevent crime and deliver criminal justice services. To be effective, inclusive, evidence-based and sustainable, multisectoral approaches to public participation should be developed, in line with national laws and circumstances. A top-down approach to fostering public participation should be combined with a bottom-up approach in order to ensure that community concerns are appropriately reflected;

(c) Public participation in enhancing access to justice is useful in raising awareness, extending outreach and empowering members of the community, in particular those members of society recognized as vulnerable, as well as women and children. Members of the community, in line with national law and as appropriate, can play an important role in national criminal justice systems, for example in victim support, restorative justice programmes, legal aid, probation and reintegration of offenders into society;

(d) Public-private partnerships in crime prevention and criminal justice have potential benefits, for example in the area of preventing corruption and in empowering local communities to become involved in crime prevention initiatives that are aimed at improving the well-being of the community as a whole;

(e) An appropriate regulatory and institutional framework based on clear and targeted policies provides a framework for public participation, and may be complemented by measures to ensure that civil society organizations have the appropriate skills and knowledge, and by measures to build confidence, ensure transparency and prevent corruption.
