

Introduction: The Road to Johannesburg

The inspiration for the Johannesburg conference came in 1996 during the Vancouver conference on crime prevention for practitioners. It was realised that South Africa had an important role to play in the international crime prevention debate, both as an example of successful initiatives, and as a learning opportunity for South Africans to become better informed about developments in crime prevention internationally. The result was the second international conference for crime prevention practitioners, Urban Safety – Safety for All. This publication is a representation of the proceedings. It has been structured around summaries of papers in order to assist practitioners to find specific issues. Thus, the structure is thematic, based on the elements of crime prevention: crime information, the roles of national and local government, the police, communities and partnerships, and monitoring and implementation. The aim of the report is to provide an overview of what is being done in crime prevention and by whom, in the hope that it will generate more discussion and debate to further the development of crime prevention strategies in countries around the world.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Mayor Nandi Mayathula, Southern Metropolitan Local Council, South Africa

The mayor welcomed conference delegates on behalf of Greater Johannesburg Mayor Isaac Mogase and read from the Final Declaration of the International Forum of Mayors, which met on 26 and 27 October, prior to the opening of the conference. The Final Declaration (reproduced as Appendix C) states that the mayors participating in the meeting will undertake to actively promote and contribute to the implementation of the action plan to foster urban safety and reduce delinquency, violence and insecurity. The action plan suggests, among others, that municipal authorities:

- adopt urban safety as a cross-cutting priority;
- initiate and support comprehensive crime prevention processes to develop and implement a strategy adapted to the needs of each city to prevent and reduce crime in a sustainable way;
- integrate Safer Cities programmes into their municipal or metropolitan police services;
- promote the creation of national Forums of Cities for Urban Safety; and

- that all stakeholders promote and facilitate the exchange of expertise and access to best and promising practices in the field of urban safety and crime prevention.

Mathole Motshekga, Premier of Gauteng, South Africa

South Africa was burdened by injustice in the past, but is now in the process of creating a system of justice for all. The government, through the country's Constitution, has certain obligations, as does the Gauteng provincial government. The creation of a system of alternative justice is one way in which crime can begin to be eradicated where it grows and which can address social fabric crimes (alcohol and drug abuse, for example) which law enforcement is not always best equipped to handle.

Community courts are one facet of an alternative justice system. These courts would be part of an integrated system that includes government departments, as well as local government structures, non-governmental organisations and schools. Community courts would allow the justice and police systems to operate more effectively by unclogging the system. The sentences passed in these courts could strive to reconcile litigants rather than alienating them and to educate and rehabilitate the offender through community service. Such courts would focus on certain family disputes, limited criminal jurisdiction, municipal bylaw violations and interpersonal neighbourhood disputes. It is necessary to find a way in which offenders of less serious crimes may serve their sentences within the community.

Klaus Toepfer, Director General, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

The role of local authorities continues to gain importance as the world becomes more globalised and more urbanised. Cities are places where social issues such as poverty, homelessness, crime and unemployment are becoming more far-reaching and complex than ever before. It has become imperative that the United Nations takes on a stronger and more effective role in addressing urban issues. One of the key challenges for cities is how to approach urban crime and violence. World-wide, urban crime and violence are estimated to have doubled over the past twenty years.

The UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has a key function in this regard, and is currently in a process of revitalisation to allow it to provide leadership on urban issues and to support governments and their partners in the management of human settlements.

Urban violence is multifaceted and includes common crimes, violent crime, drug-related offences and trade in women and children. It creates a feeling of insecurity among inhabitants, tearing the social fabric of cities and threatening the foundations of democratic institutions. Urban violence is, more than anything, the product of social exclusion. The measures to protect communities from deprivation, unemployment, homelessness and injustice will also protect them from crime and violence. However, the traditional criminal justice institutions can no longer stop or control the escalation of urban violence. Today, reducing crime is everyone's responsibility: local authorities, Habitat, and key local actors working together in partnership. If we learn to take responsibility and action, our cities can be places where life is led in dignity, safety, happiness and hope.

Joseph Tanny, Security Council, Côte d'Ivoire

To be able to prevent crime in cities and towns, we must work within a framework encompassing four elements:

- the creation or rebuilding of local networks;
- the promotion of environmental design that stimulates community interactions;
- the need to prevent social exclusion; and
- the need to incorporate citizens into a partnership for safety and security.

The successful undertaking of these measures will prepare us for an urban 21st century. Many African cities are examples of what happens when this framework collapses or does not exist. Citizens become victims of poverty or civil war. Crime becomes rampant in the wake of population displacements, illegal weapons and economic need.

In Côte d'Ivoire, thousands of refugees from Liberia have entered the country. While government policy has been to incorporate these people into the country, there have been repercussions from the massive growth of urban areas. For example, transmissions of communicable diseases and crime have increased and weapons and drug trafficking is in evidence. Thus, the need for a framework such as the one described above becomes all important.

Political conflicts in Africa prevent the suitable development of cities and the provision of security to citizens. While envisioning strategies for urban crime prevention, we must also work towards preventing the conflicts which make crime prevention that much harder. Only through these measures can the proper development of cities and the

stability of countries be assured.

Azhar Cachalia, Secretary for Safety and Security,
South Africa

This conference is an exercise in partnership, and its outcomes will be important in building partnerships for crime prevention in South Africa and further afield. From the perspective of the South African government, the outcome of the conference is critical in the evolving debate on safety and security in the country, and especially on how crime prevention programmes are and will be initiated in communities across the country.

This conference, building on earlier conferences on crime prevention and urban safety and the United Nations crime congresses, marks a milestone in strengthening existing programmes and networks of safer cities in Africa and other regions to reduce crime, violence and insecurity in an efficient and sustainable way.

Within South Africa, a key outcome of the emerging policy debate is to put crime prevention on the agenda of a range of roleplayers within society. Crime prevention programmes are most likely to be effective if developed locally, and not at national level, drawing in local players and local government. Four broad areas where local government may have a key role to play in crime prevention in South Africa are:

- effective management of municipalities performing their service delivery functions;
- alignment of functions within a crime prevention framework, especially encouraging co-operation and communication between police and local government;
- co-operation with the police to improve accountability of policing at local level; and
- initiate and co-ordinate crime prevention programmes with available capacity.

Crime prevention is
tough on crime,
tough on costs and
tough to do without

The shared experience of crime prevention practitioners will have a longer term impact on how crime prevention is conceptualised and implemented at local level and will be essential in strengthening crime prevention initiatives in South Africa, Africa and beyond.

OPENING PLENARY

Irvin Waller, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, Canada

Crime prevention is faced with a multitude of challenges including high rates of delinquency, violence and insecurity; fears and concerns of the public; lack of faith in the efforts of the police to combat crime; frustrations with criminal justice systems; scarce government resources to cope with crime; and the inherent risk to democracy and economic development if sustainable solutions to crime are not found.

High crime rates are attributable to many causes. Those identified in United Nations conferences include: disparity between income and expectations; the exclusion of youth; violence as a means of solving conflict within homes and communities; poorly designed and secured property; easy access to firearms, alcohol and drugs; and increasing impunity and unaccountability. Given these diverse causes, solutions must go beyond law enforcement and criminal justice to incorporate prevention. A prevention focus should include: potential victims, persons and families at risk, as well as the general public, who should be encouraged to promote collective and individual responsibility to discourage a culture that fosters crime.

Thus, to combat crime several steps must be taken:

- improve social and economic policies affecting excluded groups, particularly youth and those in urban areas;
- create national responsibility centres for crime prevention;
- increase safer city programmes;
- engage public support; and
- evaluate the process.

Alioune Badiane, Urban Management Programme:
Africa, UN Centre for Human Settlements

One of the major challenges at the end of this century is the need to develop practical strategies for alleviating the problems associated with urbanisation. While urbanisation is a powerful engine of growth and development, the cities where this phenomenon is occurring must be well-planned, managed and soundly governed. Because of the relative anonymity of city life, it becomes an attractive place for thieves, burglars, muggers, car hijackers and others, who can commit crime without fear of recognition.

Urbanisation also compounds issues affecting poverty - access to

water, transport, education, housing, security and health services - often for the worse. The role of city governments in local crime prevention is quite recent. It began ten years ago at the Mayors' International Conference in Montreal (1989) and Paris (1991). Today, several cities in Africa, including Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Johannesburg, Durban, Pretoria and Cape Town (South Africa), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) are adopting new crime prevention policies.

Blessed are those
who are flexible,
for they do not get
bent out of shape

All are aware that they cannot deal with urban violence and insecurity by repression alone, but that they need to focus on prevention, the education of police forces and awareness-building to address the root causes of urban violence. Based on experience in the Safer Cities programmes, preventive policy should be implemented and co-ordinated at the city level, while political guidance, monitoring and evaluation are performed by national government.

Good governance, sustainable development and security are indivisible. Public security is increasingly recognised as a key planning and management objective, as well as a central aspect of the quality of life and of economic and social development. Urban crime prevention must go hand in hand with a broader social development strategy. Public security must be considered as a public good for social well-being to be promoted by all institutions and civil society.

Michel Marcus, EU Forum for Urban Safety

In Europe, several cities have undertaken safer city approaches to reduce crime. These programmes have made use of partnerships and co-operation exchanges which allow for the shaping of experiences and the sharing of best practices.

There are common challenges facing both cities in Europe and those in developing countries. Notably, justice systems often function inadequately - or worse, not at all. The justice system is in crisis as a result of the increase in crime. The large amounts of money spent on fixing justice systems in countries around the world have not always improved the functioning of these systems. What is needed is a system that can assist policing which involves the roleplayers who are close to the situation in the community.

Robert Coates, National Crime Prevention Council,

United States

For crime prevention to succeed, it must involve the community it is meant to help, because crime flourishes when good people do nothing. Community involvement needs to be interactive and must be inclusive – everyone who wants to participate, should be allowed to. Cities around the world are facing common problems: crime, drugs, unemployment and victimisation. To make a safer world there should be a common vision.

Such a vision has two components: a vision of what is wanted; and a plan of action for viable strategies that are implementable. This vision should include educating people, motivating them based on their education and organising from a planned, central body. Such a vision must incorporate long and short-term goals, and should be partnership-focused.

In addition to vision, more practical information must also be gathered. This would include:

- identification of existing problems (crime, drugs, quality of life);
- verification of problems through analysis;
- identification of who is affected by these problems and who should be involved in their resolution;
- establishment of a community policing philosophy engaging all key stakeholders;
- initiation of community mobilisation strategies;
- establishment of realistic, manageable and measurable goals; and
- pursuit of strategies that have been effective world-wide.

Patti Pearcey, British Columbia Coalition for Safer Communities, Canada

Crime prevention efforts at the local level must inform and be informed by work at the national and international level. The heightened profile of crime prevention programmes was galvanised by international support. There is now a need to ensure that people at local level have the necessary tools to make their undertakings sustainable. It is in providing these tools that crime prevention practitioners become critical.

'Partnership' is the current buzz-word, but for it to become a sustainable alliance it must be based on equality and on the differing economic, social and political realities of our world. Information sharing becomes important in this regard.