



# UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## **Urban Safety Governance: for safe, inclusive and resilient societies**

### **Concept note for a High-Level Event at the 14<sup>th</sup> Crime Congress in Kyoto**

**Wednesday 9 March 2021, 9.00 – 10.30 am**

#### **Background**

Urbanisation is closely linked with increases in economic and social development. Yet, alongside all the growth and advancement taking place, cities across the globe are undermined by chronic insecurity, violence and corruption, including those resulting from organized crime challenges originating beyond urban or national boundaries. The various illicit flows of drugs, arms, trafficked people and illicit funds intersect with individual vulnerabilities and local socio-economic conditions and give rise to complex security challenges. Aside from having an impact on the resilience of cities themselves, public institutions and states are also affected by the destabilising effects of these illicit flows and the associated challenges of organised crime, corruption, and terrorism.

While many responsibilities in the areas of justice and security often lie with the national government, cities have a key role to play in identifying risks of crime and vulnerabilities and ensuring that policies and programmes to counter and prevent these risks are tailored to the local context and implemented in a sustainable manner. In many countries, decentralised forms of governance have not been fully developed or adopted, leaving local governments facing increasing global challenges in areas where they have no legal authority nor capacity to act. Urban security is thus increasingly a concern for a wide range of policymakers ranging from international to the local level and a multi-level, cross-sectoral response is needed. With two-thirds of the world population expected to reside in cities by 2050, these challenges will only continue to become more acute in urban settlements the world over.<sup>1</sup>

UN-Habitat and UNODC have been working on urban safety issues for many years, in particular focusing on crime and substance abuse prevention in local contexts. After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, UNODC pledged their commitment to assist Member States to tackle violence and crime in an urban context, as well as working with multiple stakeholders within and outside the UN system, to develop a global framework to assist municipal administrations in creating inclusive, safe and secure societies at the local level. This framework, the urban safety governance approach, has now been developed, in close consultation with UN-Habitat and other key partners. Through joining forces, the two UN entities aim to work in priority countries to assess risks to urban safety, identify priority areas for intervention, taking into account institutional capacity at local and national level, and accompany these countries in translating the evidence gathered and priorities set into actionable policy frameworks that will ultimately increase the well-being of urban communities.

#### **Objectives**

Building on the experience of both UN entities in the area of urban safety, this high-level event will discuss effective multi-sectoral and inclusive approaches and strategies to improve the safety of cities and its communities and strengthen good governance at the urban level. The event will facilitate exchange of best practices on multi-level safety governance amongst local and national

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<sup>1</sup> World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, ECOSOC



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policymakers, who are grappling with the challenges of achieving sustainable development in cities where violence, crime, corruption and terrorism are of concern.

The event will also highlight the various areas of cooperation between UNODC and UN-Habitat and, from the basis of their 2018 Memorandum of Understanding, set a clear joint vision and way forward. This will be underlined through the signing of a Joint Cooperation Framework document between the two Executive Directors at the event.

## **Participation**

The event is envisioned to include the participation of the two Executive Directors of UNODC and UN-Habitat, as well as four representatives of national and local governments from various regions that will be presenting their strategies and approaches on urban safety.

## **Format**

To encourage dialogue and discussion of promising practices, the event will be organised as follows:

- Presentation by UNODC and UN-Habitat on effective and inclusive strategies to improve urban safety and good governance, highlighting the cooperation between the two organisations and the way forward;
- Interventions by government counterparts at the local and national levels on best practices related to urban safety multi-level governance and local policymaking embedded in national and global frameworks;
- Signing of the UN-Habitat – UNODC Joint Programming Framework.

The high-level event will be held in English.

## **Outcomes**

Highlighting the importance of inclusive and participatory approaches, the event will facilitate cooperation and exchange of policies and best practices amongst a wide range of stakeholders on the safety and good governance challenges and threats faced in cities, recognising that these are often connected to challenges originating beyond urban boundaries, in order to develop recommendations for how local, national and global level actors can work together towards safe, inclusive and resilient societies.

The event will also mark the start of the implementation of the UN-Habitat - UNODC Joint Programming Framework that will take into account the recommendations, lessons and best practices shared during this event.