

CCPCJ Thematic Discussions on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration

Follow-up to the Kyoto Declaration. Advancing Crime Prevention , Criminal Justice and the RoL towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5/12/22 - The UNOPS Technical Guidance for Prison Planning (TGPP) – Brief Intervention

Thank you Mr* Chairman, Excellencies and distinguished guests for this important event and for allowing me to speak briefly today about the revised version of UNOPS Technical Guidance for Prison Planning.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are copies of the revised UNOPS Technical Guidance for Prison Planning, or the TGPP as it is sometimes referred to, in this room.

This guidance emphasizes a human rights-based approach to designing and planning prison infrastructure, identifying the minimum recommendations to ensure that prisons respect detained individuals' human rights and dignity as required by international standards and norms such as the Nelson Mandela Rules.

It also encourages planners and designers to exceed those minimum recommendations wherever possible. The recommendations are a baseline to work from and not a target to hit.

The TGPP provides project teams with guidance on the technical and operational aspects of prison design and will be of most use during the early stages of a project during the development of the brief and the emerging concept designs. The development of an accurate brief is essential if the concept designs are to reflect what type of prison is actually needed.

It is applicable to all prison projects that involve the planning and designing of new facilities and is equally applicable to all prison projects where existing facilities need to be rehabilitated. It is also supportive in the development of maintenance plans for both new and existing facilities.

The Guidance supports the UN Common Position on Incarceration, recognising that overcrowding in a country's prisons is likely to be because of issues within its wider Criminal Justice System and that building prison after prison will not address that problem. It also recognises that where prisons do need to be built or renovated, they need to be humane spaces where prisoners have hope for the future and the opportunity to rehabilitate before returning to society at the end of their sentences.

Although the scope of the guidance may be limited to prisons, it has flexibility so that it can be used in other rule of law projects that have detention facilities for prisoners. The principles and standards that can be found within the TGPP can be readily applied to projects where prisoners are held in places such as court houses and police stations.

You will see that throughout the new version of the guidance, gender and social inclusion considerations have been embedded, reflecting the latest thinking and requirements on this important subject.

The sections on prison infrastructure to meet the needs of prisoners with disabilities and women with children have been expanded upon to give sound practical guidance to planners and designers on what features and modifications have to be included in their environment to support them.

A new section on master planning helps to identify the level that a prison project sits, whether that might be:

- Standalone to meet an immediate need such as building a prison to address overcrowding in a region;
- At organisational level, perhaps in response to a plan to improve general prison capacity and operational delivery within the whole prison system, or;
- Nationally, as part of a wider reform of the Criminal Justice System to make it more joined up and effective.

No prison operates independently from the wider Criminal Justice System in which it sits. The higher the level of master planning, the higher the likelihood that a new build or rehabilitated prison will be more integrated into the criminal justice system and will serve society better.

In short, The TGPP fills the gap between international expectations for the treatment of prisoners and the relative lack of information on how to build a compliant prison, often in challenging circumstances.

We are grateful for the contribution of UNODC and others for their valued input into the latest version of the guidance. We believe that it will be a practical and positive tool that supports the Kyoto Declaration and other important international standards in the care and management of prisoners.

Mr* Chairman, distinguished delegates, and colleagues. I commend the UNOPS Technical Guidance for Prison Planning to you. Do reach out outside of this session if you have any questions or if UNOPS can be of service to you regarding its application.