



An Urban Safety Governance Approach for safe, inclusive and resilient societies

Concept note for a Special Event at the 14th Crime Congress in Kyoto

Wednesday 9 March 2020

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.¹

UNODC has 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 its 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. UNODC, in close cooperation with national and local governments and other UN and civil society partners, aims to work in priority countries to assess risks to urban safety and enhancing good governance, 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.

¹ World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, ECOSOC

Objectives

This special 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 policymakers, who are grappling with the challenges of providing safety and achieving sustainable development in cities that face problems including violence, crime, corruption and violent extremism.

The event will highlight the results of pilot Urban Safety Governance Assessments which were carried out in Nairobi, Tashkent, Mexico City and Barbados in 2020, as well as announce the launch of an initiative in cooperation with the Government of Italy to work in Casserta on local resilience and organized crime.

Envisioned Participation

The event is envisioned to include an introduction by the Executive Director or Senior UNODC Representative, keynote speeches by the Minister of Justice of Japan, the Minister of Justice of Italy, and the Chief of Crime Prevention, Oakland, California. This will be followed by interventions from the Mayor of Iztapalapa (Mexico City, Mexico), the Nairobi County Commissioner from the Executive Office of the President (Kenya), and the Prosecutor General, Uzbekistan who will present their strategies and approaches on urban safety and good governance and the Resident Coordinator of Barbados who will emphasize UN coordination on urban issues. The event will be closed with the video message from the Executive Director of UN-Habitat discussing the importance of UN cooperation on issues related to safety and good governance in the delivery of the New Urban Agenda.

Format

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

- Introductory remarks by UNODC on effective and inclusive strategies to improve urban safety and good governance and the importance of multi-level governance and local policymaking embedded in national and global frameworks;
- Presentation by Chief of Crime Prevention, Oakland, California best practices related to urban safety and good governance and
- Presentation by national and local officials of the Urban Safety Governance assessment findings.

The special event will be held in English (with Spanish interpretation for one presentation).

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.