



**ECOSOC • Integration Segment (27–29 May, 2014)**  
**SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION**

**BUILDING  
THE FUTURE**  
**we WANT**

**UNITED NATIONS  
COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION  
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**Contribution to the  
2014 United Nations Economic and  
Social Council (ECOSOC)  
Integration Segment**

## **Contribution of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to the ECOSOC Integration Segment on issues related to sustainable urbanization**

### **I. Introduction**

The present note has been prepared in view of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on strengthening Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and at the request of the Bureau of the ECOSOC, whereby the subsidiary bodies of the Council were invited to provide inputs to the Integration Segment of the Council to be held in May 2014.

### **II. Background**

There has been increased recognition, including within the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda process, that peaceful, non-violent and inclusive societies, based on respect for all human rights including the right to development,<sup>1</sup> are a cornerstone for sustainable development. With urbanization continuing at rapid pace in many parts of the world, ways to fight crime and violence in cities require Member States' urgent attention and resources. As shown in the UNODC Global Studies on Homicide (2011 and 2013), urban areas tend to have higher rates of homicide than rural ones, and cities tend to be home to both risk-factors as well as protective factors of crime. Such risk factors in urban settings cities may include high levels of income inequality, the potential for anonymity within a dense population and the existence of gangs or organized criminal groups. At the same time, cities are usually also home to numerous factors that can help prevent homicide and other forms of crime, such as higher levels of policing, better access to services such as medical care and educational facilities, and even infrastructure elements, such as street lighting and closed-circuit television, which allow for better monitoring of public safety. The presence of certain protective factors can often offset risk factors, but every city and neighbourhood has unique characteristics that can influence crime.

Crime prevention and community safety in the context of cities and urbanization has been one of the important issues under deliberation at the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. This is evidenced in particular by a number of resolutions in the area of crime prevention, such as "Guidelines for the prevention of urban crime",<sup>2</sup> "Strengthening prevention of urban crime: an integrated approach"<sup>3</sup>, and "Action to promote effective crime prevention".<sup>4</sup> All of the above standards and norms contain guidelines on urban and/or crime prevention issues and promote the need to bring together those responsible for housing, social services, education, the police and the law, in order to confront the circumstances that generate or facilitate crime and address the risk factors of crime.

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<sup>1</sup> One Member State has expressed its reservation about the reference to 'the right to development' in this note, providing the following explanation: "The term 'right to development' has not enjoyed consensus in the bodies competent to speak on that issue, and the determination of whether such a right is acknowledged by Member States is not within the competence of the Commission."

<sup>2</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/9, Annex

<sup>3</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/24

<sup>4</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13, Annex

In addition, the Commission serves as the preparatory body for the quinquennial United Nations Congresses on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and in the “Salvador Declaration on Comprehensive Strategies for Global Challenges: Crime Preventing and Criminal Justice Systems in a Changing World” annexed to its resolution 65/230, entitled “Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”, the General Assembly expressed concern about urban crime and its impact on specific populations and places and recognized the need to accelerate efforts to fully implement the United Nations guidelines on crime prevention and the prevention components of existing conventions and other relevant standards and norms. In the Declaration, Member States stressed that crime prevention should be considered an integral element of strategies to foster social and economic development in all States.

### **III. UNODC activities in support of the work of the Commission**

In 2013, in its resolution 68/188, entitled “The rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015”, the General Assembly requested UNODC to provide substantive contributions to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) with regard to efforts to complement the development of United Nations guidelines on safer cities, taking into consideration the Guidelines for Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the Field of Urban Crime Prevention and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, and to regularly inform Member States of the progress made in that regard, with a view to receiving comments. Consultations in this regard are currently ongoing and are envisaged to be tied with the preparatory process leading to Post 2015 Development Agenda and the Habitat III Summit in 2016.

At the operational level, UNODC, for which the Crime Commission acts as the governing body, has been supporting Member States, upon request, by providing technical assistance in the area of crime prevention in a comprehensive manner, keeping in mind that proactive preventative national and local solutions are needed in addition to effective, fair and humane criminal justice systems. Activities range from advisory services for the development and implementation of crime prevention strategies and action plans to sector-specific projects including on preventing youth crime and victimization, violence against women and children, access to justice or social reintegration of offenders. UNODC also supports local-level initiatives by engaging with local authorities in the conduct of local safety audits and the implementation of social prevention projects at city and community levels. UNODC does so in partnership with other UN agencies, civil society, and the private sector. In the context of urban crime and violence, UN-Habitat’s Safer City Programme is an important partner. In recent years, both organizations jointly developed technical assistance tools, such as the *Crime Prevention Assessment Tool*<sup>5</sup> and the *Introductory Handbook on Policing Urban Space*.<sup>6</sup>

### **IV. Possible action-oriented recommendations to ECOSOC’s integration segment.**

(a) Since sustainable urbanization can potentially function as an effective tool for the mainstreaming of crime prevention, security and justice objectives in socio-economic

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/09-82502\\_Ebook.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/09-82502_Ebook.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/11-80387\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/11-80387_ebook.pdf)

development plans, Member States are strongly encouraged to develop new or review existing crime prevention strategies and policy frameworks in order to ensure that they are evidence-based (based on national gender and age-disaggregated crime and victimization data and statistics), target causal factors and vulnerable populations and places, holistic and comprehensive and supported by adequate resources.

(b) Member States are strongly encouraged to mainstream crime prevention and community safety objectives into development and urbanization policy frameworks, as well as in the implementation of programmes that have a bearing on the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development and urbanization.

(c) Member States are urged to develop effective policies and strategies targeting at-risk young people, as well as involving them and local communities in working together to break the cycle of violence.

(d) The strategic and operational challenges related to the prevention of crime and violence and addressing its underlying drivers are best dealt with by maximizing consultation across all sectors of society, which creates ownership by all concerned including civil society and those groups most at risk. Member States are encouraged to pursue broad-based consultations in the development of their crime prevention strategies and plans.

(e) Member States are encouraged to take due account of the need for interventions to address not only post-conflict violence, but also surges in violence resulting from organized crime and interpersonal violence, which can flourish in settings with weak rule of law.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See UNODC Global Homicide Study, to be published in 2014, for more information on homicide and violence in post-conflict countries and on how violence related to crime can become a significant factor in the overall security situation.