

## **Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?**

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The World Society of Victimology (WSV) points out that across the world about half a million people are victims of homicide each year. Further, hundreds of thousands of people are killed in conflict zones, including acts of terror. In addition, hundreds of millions of people all across the world are subjected to routine victimization, assault, robbery, sexual violence, harassment and intimidation every year. Crime statistics, however, do not reveal the true extent of crime and victimisation as much goes unreported. Reasons for under-reporting are many and varied but ineffective and inaccessible criminal justice systems are among the reasons.

Crime affects a communities' safety and people's sense of security. It, among other effects, has significant impacts on neighbourhood stability, urban development, education and social integration. Crime affects individual's quality of life.

Insecurity and fear of crime and/or victimisation can be as detrimental to communities and individuals as crime and victimisation themselves. Such may limit individual freedoms (such as freedom of movement, of expression and of religion), disrupt businesses, impede education or disturb everyday life.

Thus, crime and the fear are evidence of social and economic decline as well as an inhibitor to social and economic prosperity. Crime mirrors society. It is indicative of the political, social, economic and technological structures. Understanding how these structures affect communities and individuals helps to explain the victimization that has happened, the victimization that is happening and the victimization that might happen.

Crime is a threat for sustainable development, hence impedes the achievement of the United Nations Development Goals. Crime is a violation of human rights. Responses to crime, however, should be grounded on the rule of law.

The World Society of Victimology (WSV) holds that activities to reduce crime (for example, social and situational crime prevention programmes) and to prevent victimisation must be integrated into the United Nations (UN) sustainable development agenda. The WSV notes such agenda is premised on the fact that "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development". Reducing crime and violence, ending armed conflict, eliminating discrimination, ensuring inclusion and forging good governance are crucial to communities' and people's well-being but also essential for attaining sustainable development.

Such agenda has is broad agenda and has universal coverage. Crime, however, is not evenly distributed and its impact can be greater on those socially and economically disadvantaged or disenfranchised. Women and girls as victims of violence as well as disadvantage (much resulting from discrimination in all facets of life, especially education and decent employment) are a prime example.

Victims of crime must be treated with respect, dignity and compassion by all tasked to help them. They should have access to justice, everywhere. They are entitled to practical, medical, psychological and financial assistance, which should be accessible to all. Victims' rights are human rights. They are crucial elements of the rule of law. Victims' rights should know no borders, and the promise of such rights must become the reality for all. The WSV asserts that unless poverty is eradicated such reality cannot be achieved for far too many people throughout the world.