

**MAKING CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS SAFER AFTER COVID-19:
STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF SAFER CITIES TOOLS APPLYING A HUMAN
SECURITY FRAMEWORK**

STRUCTURAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK PAPER

This project applies the human security perspective to address urban security challenges in the context of the pandemic social recovery processes, while raising awareness and advocating for the use of urban human security tools to tackle urban crime and violence.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Today, half the world's inhabitants reside in cities, a phenomenon driven by the relentless migration of rural people to urban areas and the rapid demographic expansion of urban populations, especially in the poorest countries. Cities hold out the promise of the "urban advantage": concentrated economic dynamism, predictable access to services, and opportunities for democratic citizenship. Yet the right to the city is unattainable for hundreds of millions of people who live in poverty and exclusion, and affected by multiple forms of crime, violence and insecurity.

Responding to this pressing urban predicament of the 21st century, UN-HABITAT established the Safer Cities Programme (SCP) to empower local authorities and other stakeholders in delivering urban safety and security, mainly in low- and middle-income countries. Over the past 26 years, SCP has been strengthening the capacity of local authorities to use good governance, appropriate urban planning and management to reduce the incidence and impact of urban crime and violence. The Safer Cities approach embraces a holistic and integrative solution to urban safety and security challenges, equipping and emboldening cities to adopt strategies and action plans underpinned by inclusive partnerships. Through its support to urban safety and security programmes in over 100 cities and towns worldwide – in Africa, Latin America and Asia Pacific, 'safer cities initiatives' has demonstrated the importance of refocusing urban policymaking and planning towards addressing people's differentiated needs as a key step to create more equitable cities and address key drivers of crime and violence.

The project, *"MAKING CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS SAFER AFTER COVID-19: STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF SAFER CITIES TOOLS APPLYING A HUMAN SECURITY FRAMEWORK"*, builds on UN-Habitat's efforts to address people's complex and multi-dimensional experiences of insecurity in urban settings which are produced by crime, violence, and by a wide range of urban vulnerabilities and man-made and natural disasters. Research has shown that many forms of insecurity (personal, economic, community, food, etc.) interact in place and space affecting people's dignity, survival and productive livelihoods and that they require integral urban approaches. The UN systemwide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements, adopted in 2019, responds to the call for the integration of crime and violence prevention policies in broader urban strategies and intervention, including in slum upgrading and poverty reduction strategies (New Urban Agenda, 103). Likewise, UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-25 adopts safety as a cross-cutting theme across the domains of spatial inequality and reduction, livelihoods creation, climate change action and enhancing crisis prevention. UN-Habitat also locates SCP within a Human Rights and Social Inclusion (HRSI) perspective, with particular attention to the issues of gender, youth, and persons with special abilities. In this light, the SCP aims to assist local governments advance their safety policies in transversal and inclusive institutional arrangements, across municipal departments and reinforcing their partnerships with local stakeholders in the effort to deliver *a measurable improvement in safety and security for urban citizens*. Through this project, SCP will raise awareness of how to integrate human security to policy design, implementation and evaluation and produce tools that allow local governments to improve security policies and co-produce security for all. By placing a specific spotlight on current municipal safety strategies in Mexico and South Africa, SCP will build a global

dialogue, awareness and advocacy with its network of cities to advance systematic approaches and consider the pragmatic and policy implications of the human security perspective and how this concept can be used to address key drivers of urban crime and violence more effectively. Local appraisals of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on particularly vulnerable neighborhoods, communities and groups will allow local governments in select cities in Mexico and South Africa to use a human security approach to better understand local security challenges from a people-centred perspective, as well as to identify strategic steps to improve current policies and interventions so that they can enhance human security in the context of the post-pandemic recovery. These processes will inform the production of compelling evidence on the applicability of the human security approach in cities, as well as to tangible tools in the form of an urban human safety and security monitor and a curriculum which will be made available to global audiences through a virtual platform. UN-Habitat intends to advocate for this dialogue in the development policy debate globally, including at the World Urban Forum, seeking to create the critical mass needed for durable changes in urban policies and planning. Knowledge derived from the in-country experiences in Mexico and South Africa will be showcased internationally as the basis for an enhanced normative policy framework on safer cities informed by the principles of human security. Through the programme UN-Habitat will also advocate for an inter-agency cooperation framework on urban human security at country level in Mexico and South Africa through the UN Resident Coordinating System and in line with the common country assessment (CCA) reports. It will also mobilise the focal government ministries in the two countries to identify the pilot cities and convene a global network of learning cities to accompany the process in Mexico and South Africa through a peer review process.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: URBAN HUMAN SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SAFER CITIES POLICIES

The concept of security has been traditionally conceived in relation to the state and its interests. Under the dominant approach of ‘national security’, security has been associated to the protection of national territory, government, citizens and economic interests against militarized threats. As authoritarian States transitioned into democratic States, the concept of security evolved to include the interest of citizens and attempts have been made to improve State’s capacity to protect their lives and property. Today, democratic States are espousing law enforcement models that encourage citizen participation and that are premised on the principle that the protection of citizens by law enforcement must be respectful of the law and human rights; and that safety and security are a common responsibility for all. Despite some improvements, mainstreaming a human rights-based approach to security has been difficult to achieve, especially in places where high levels of violence and crime have become key concerns. In these contexts, security policies are often guided by a notion of security associated to State’s capacity to restore and/or maintain order, and to eliminate and control those actors that are seen as producers of violence, crime and disorder and who challenge state’s power and supremacy. This is a barrier to the implementation of policies that create environments conducive to peaceful coexistence and prevent and reduce the factors that generate crime, violence and insecurity.

A major shift in security thinking and practice came in the 1990s when the notion of ‘human security’ has proposed as a new approach to understanding and addressing global development challenges. Human

security refocuses security policies on the protection and wellbeing of people and communities, rather than states, recognizing that individual's real and perceived sense of security is determined by their vulnerability to threats that can affect them across several dimensions: economic, personal, community, political, environmental, food and health. This people-centred and multidimensional understanding of security strongly resonates with those who are most vulnerable to the convergence of contemporary urban challenges, such as inequality, poverty, rapid and unplanned urbanization, pandemics, transnational organized crime, and climate change. Their experiences of (in)security are not only determined by fear of being harmed by others in different spaces (i.e. home, school, street, public transport, police station) and by distress of being victims of property crimes, but also by the humiliation of being discriminated and the constant anxiety of being at risk of losing one's home and livelihood due to environmental disasters, evictions, economic crises, pandemics or wars. The notion of human security has been subject to intense debate in academic and policy circles, but rarely rethought with those for whom is most relevant. Participatory and action-oriented research undertaken with vulnerable groups and communities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has confirmed that human security is understood by those on the ground, as the certainty and assurance of being protected from multidimensional threats to one's live, livelihood and wellbeing, and the capacity to exercise and defend one's rights without being exposed to additional risks for doing so (Kloppe-Santamaria and Abello Colak 2019; Pearce and Abello Colak 2021). Carried out in what is considered the most violent region in the world, this research has also demonstrated that there is a strong connection between intense and persistent experiences of human insecurity, especially among women and young people, and the reproduction of violence and crime. High levels of human insecurity affect people's choices, behaviors and capacity to plan their future, as well as their attitudes regarding violence, violent actors, and activities that can make them more vulnerable to violence. Addressing people's experiences of human insecurity in cities is thus key to addressing the reproduction of urban violence and mutating forms of crime.

Human security has evolved into an actionable approach for States. On 10 September 2012, the General Assembly adopted by consensus General Assembly resolution 66/290 on a common understanding of human security. The resolution provides clarity on the principles that underpin the human security approach and its application. Human security is a people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented framework that considers the broad range of conditions that threaten the survival, livelihood and dignity of people. By identifying the concrete needs of populations under stress, human security highlights the complexity of the challenges and promotes integrated solutions that ensure greater coherence and stronger impact. This is particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic social recovery process. The pandemic revealed the complex interconnection of factors that can threaten peoples' lives and individual and collective wellbeing, as well as the importance of embracing multidimensional approaches to protect people and communities.

The human security approach allows to identify priorities based on the actual needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of States and people; and advance solutions that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all peoples and communities. In this regard, it resonates with lessons learnt with regards to the kind of

practices that work to tackle urban crime, violence and insecurity. The UN systemwide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements demonstrate that local governments are in the best position to empower and mobilize communities to tackle the root causes and modify the situations which breed crime, violence such as human insecurity, and that the best way to do it is from a citywide, community-based, partnership driven, comprehensive evidence-based, and people-centred perspective. Improving human security in cities by applying human-centred security policies can also increase support for crime prevention strategies that focus not only on reducing crime indicators, but that enhance community safety by: increasing trust between populations and state institutions who genuinely care for people's daily problems, promoting state responses to crime that do not reproduce violence and create further risks to people, promoting the use of peaceful methods of conflict resolution, and encouraging the active participation of people and communities in finding solutions relevant to their local contexts.

The articulation of several local government safety strategies implemented worldwide, and the input of the academia and other partners in the Global Network on Safer Cities has raised awareness of a notion of 'safer cities' that integrates crime prevention policies to broader urban strategies and interventions, including slum upgrading (NUA, 103) while addressing the socially destructive impacts of urbanization policies. This programme will help advance this notion of safer cities by answering the following questions: How can we know (and measure) that a city is safe(r) from a human security perspective? And how can we improve urban safety after the COVID-19 pandemic in ways that address people's complex security needs and expectations, as well as the pandemic's multidimensional consequences? This requires not only identifying the multiple and interconnected threats that affect people's security, recognizing that people's experiences of urban life differ along the lines of gender, age, race and ethnicity, abilities, socio-economic condition, sexual orientation, etc., but also that crime and violence are systemic phenomena with multiple causes and effects that become prevalent in contexts of human insecurity.

III. THREE RELEVANT CASES FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE HUMAN SECURITY FRAMEWORK IN URBAN AREAS AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE AND CRIME

Adopting an 'urban lens' through which to view human security is necessary not only because people's experiences of (in)security are shaped by socio-spatial relations (Angarita Canas and Sanchez Henao 2019), but also because the massive growth of urban populations is generating numerous demands and pressures for public authorities. Studying urban settings enables a better understanding of on-the-ground dynamics, practices and processes that further human security, and of conflict-generating trends that hinder it, and thus is key for improving local authorities' capacity to provide human security.

A. Co-Constructing 'Human Security Agendas' from below: Tijuana, Apatzingán, Acapulco and Guadalupe (Mexico)

In the context of an alarming increase in violence and insecurity levels in Mexico and building on the experience of co-constructing knowledge on human security with residents of poor and violence-affected

communities of Medellin, Colombia¹, a diverse team of researchers that included community leaders from vulnerable neighborhoods in Acapulco (Guerrero), Apatzingán (Michoacán), Guadalupe (Nuevo León) and Tijuana (Baja California), worked with residents to co-produce 'Human Security Agendas'. The participatory process involved the identification of key problems affecting human security in selected neighborhoods and proposals to address them. These proposals on how to improve human security in each context included ideas for local state institutions, civil society organizations and communities themselves. The knowledge exchange across the four cities allowed the identification of lessons relevant to the national government. The agendas demonstrated that it is possible and necessary to involve those who are most affected by violence and crime in the process of understanding local dynamics of human insecurity and how these reproduce violence and crime. Another lesson is that participatory processes and the grounded knowledge they produce are key to develop local security strategies and foster new types of relations with the local authorities which help address the conditions that fuel violence. The process also showed that 'the violence that sweeps across Mexico cannot be explained exclusively as a result of re-organisation in the criminal world and the race for the exploitation of illegal economies - especially drug-trafficking since 2007. The issues are more complex, with multiple economic, personal, community, environmental, political, health and food insecurities and types of violence interconnected in a context of growing criminal economies, corruption and impunity. These issues cannot be resolved with a unidimensional security policy. On the contrary, it requires recognizing the threats, risks, anxieties and fears that affect personal and collective well-being and rights, and the capacity to exercise and defend such rights' (Kloppe-Santamaria and Abello Colak 2019). A truly effective municipal safer cities programme needs spaces and processes that enable people's participation, that allow people to safely discuss the problems they face, develop proposals and know that they will be listened to by policy makers across institutional sectors.

B. Afghanistan Safer Cities Programme

The Human Security principles of people-centred, context specific, comprehensive and prevention-oriented framework have been applied in interventions in Afghanistan, with impressive achievements. The Afghanistan Safer Cities and Urban Peacebuilding Programme (AUPP) promoted safe, secure, and inclusive cities, working in eight strategic cities of Afghanistan (Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Herat, Kunduz, Nili, Bamyan and Farah) addressing the complex relationship between governance and peace. This three-year programme (2015-18) on urban safety was implemented by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, with technical assistance from UN-Habitat and funding support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The programme reached over 4 million people across eight major cities and established approaches to make Afghanistan cities safer, accountable and more productive. The Programme benefited nearly 380,000 people in 110 prioritised safety projects implemented by community members, more than half of them being female.

¹ Since 2009 the Observatory of Human Security at the University of Antioquia in Medellin, Colombia, in collaboration with Dr. Alexandra Abello Colak and Prof. Jenny Pearce at the LSE, have been developing participatory methodologies for working with vulnerable communities to better understand dynamics of human insecurity and chronic violence.

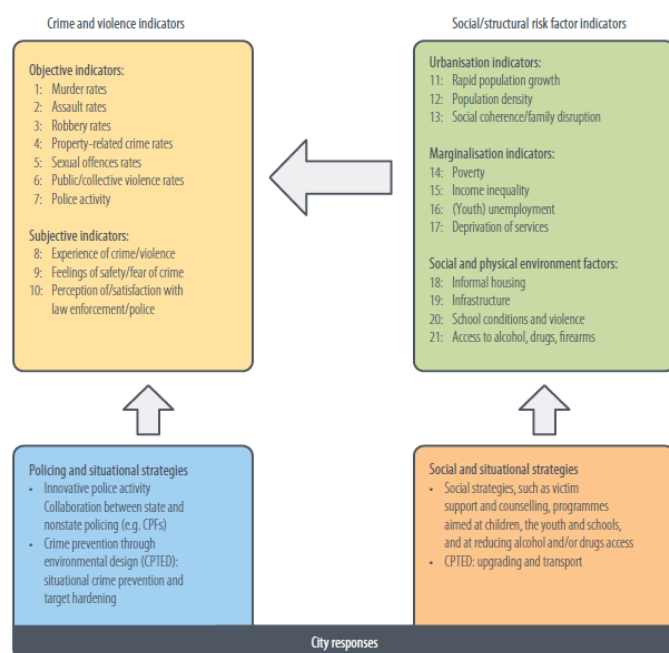
Over two thousand women were involved directly in urban development processes, community policing, and safety projects implementation. Other positive results include improved governance and safety processes, coordination, and enhanced interactions with citizens and communities.

The implementation of this programme revealed that people's definition of safety goes beyond conflict-related issues. Responses on what people considered to be the biggest threats revealed environmental hazards (48%), traffic/road safety (40%) and crime (41%) as top challenges, with terrorism/war (23%) coming in at the fourth position. When asked about the major factors affecting long-term stability, survey respondents identified economic factors (55%) and terrorism/war (25%). Environmental issues (9%) and housing concerns (5%) occupied very low third and fourth positions. Urban residents also had high levels of fear for their safety, low confidence in the police to protect them and very low satisfaction levels with municipal service delivery. This contributed to people resorting to Community Development Councils or Shuras for the provision of basic services. When respondents were asked what municipalities could do to better support vulnerable groups, answers were almost evenly split between holding meetings with them (30%) and making social (37%) and economic (31%) assistance available. Related to this, respondents asked for improvements in physical conditions, such as the provision of public spaces and safer roads, to increase their safety in cities. This implies that addressing urban safety in Afghanistan requires multifaceted and multidimensional responses.

C. South Africa Safer Cities Programme – Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg

The South Africa Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) frames the importance of urban safety - with emphasis on public space and participatory governance (inclusive particularly of vulnerable groups) and underscores social crime prevention, i.e., interventions and programmes that emphasise prevention alongside law enforcement and policing, with a focus on vulnerable groups and targeting risky behaviors early on.

Research by the South Africa Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG) revealed the impact of socioeconomic drivers on levels of safety and crime, as well as the impact of perceptions of crime on the growth, development and the livability of cities. The research also found a relationship between the fear of crime and movement and a diminished quality of life as a result of high crime and violence levels in cities. This suggests the need for urban planning, design and infrastructure development that emphasizes safety. The concept of urban safety relevant in this context refers to people's safety, integrity of investments and the sustainability of urban development as well as the freedom of movement and access to public spaces and participation in school, public life and income-generating activities. 21 indicators were identified, to standardize the description and measurement of urban safety in South African cities. These indicators, when adapted to take into account each city's unique context, provide a basis for comparison, assessment and planning. For some of the indicators, the data exists and is available at municipal level, but for others additional research is required to make them useful and comparable. These indicators refer to social and structural factors (urbanisation, marginalisation and the state of the social and physical environment) that can be sources of threats to human security thus are relevant to the development of human-centred monitoring tools (see below).



IV. ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK IN THE CONTEXT OF MEXICO AND SOUTH AFRICA

A. UN Resident Coordination at Country Level

MEXICO

The United Nations system in Mexico includes more than 25 agencies, funds and programmes. Using different approaches and based on their mandates these entities work on sustainable development in Mexico in collaboration with key stakeholders from several Government spheres and various sectors of society. In 2020, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Mexico 2020-2025 (Cooperation Framework) was signed with the Mexican Government. It was the first document of its kind to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and built from a collaborative and inclusive approach. Based on a joint analysis of the country's situation, four areas of work and two cross-cutting areas were defined and prioritized. These are: Equality and inclusion; Prosperity and innovation; Green economy and climate change; Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; Migrants and refugees; and Peace, justice and the rule of law. This project will fall in the latter priority of **peace, justice and the rule of law**, though it relates closely with other priorities in ending poverty and inequalities from a human rights-based approach using comprehensive and inclusive social policies.

A brief overview of Mexico socio-economic challenges

For the United Nations System in Mexico (UNS), the greatest challenge was to continue its support to those who need it the most, both through humanitarian work and by assisting federal, state, and municipal governments with strategic actions to tackle the health emergency and its socioeconomic consequences. This involved reorganizing UN's work to better respond to the needs of particularly

vulnerable groups, such as informal workers, domestic workers, whose means of subsistence were lost or reduced and who are not covered by social protection schemes; women, children and adolescents (C&A) victims of violence during lockdown; migrants and refugees with limited access to medical care, hygiene measures, and social distancing; rural and indigenous communities with insufficient access to quality and culturally appropriate health and information services; and C&A and young people who lack computers or internet access, essential to pursue their learning and training remotely from home.

Prior to the pandemic, Mexico had been struggling to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. Structural problems related to low economic growth, inequalities, lack of diversification in the productive structure, and environmental degradation, not to mention the fragile functioning of the Rule of Law, hindered the progress towards SDGs by 2030. The pandemic made things worse by heightening existing challenges, bringing about new issues to be tackled, and reversing progress already made. The pandemic highlighted the economic model's structural problems, the shortcomings of the social protection system, rifts in the welfare regime, and the challenges posed by care as a human right. According to the most recent multidimensional poverty measurement conducted by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), almost 42% of the population (52.4 million people) were living in moderate to extreme poverty in 2018. Furthermore, almost 49% of the population received an income that was below the income poverty line and 17% an income that was below the extreme income poverty line. CONEVAL estimates indicate that there is a high risk that the effects of the pandemic may reverse any progress made prior to 2018 on the reduction of social deprivations. According to the UNDP, for the first time since 1990, the Human Development Index for Mexico is on a downward trend. The percentage of people with a working wage worth less than the basic food basket increased by 36 to 45% between the first and third semester of 2020. Jobs lost during the pandemic are principally informal and/or low-income positions in micro and small enterprises. This implies that the most vulnerable households, specifically those headed by women and where children and adolescents (C&A) live, were the most affected with a resulting increase in poverty and exacerbation of inequalities.

The Democratic index of Mexico has revealed a decrease in the country's democratic level since 2014. The reasons for this include violence and insecurity, access to justice, and impunity. According to international human rights mechanisms, Rule of Law has been weakened by violence affecting the most vulnerable population groups, particularly C&A, women, migrants in transit, LGBT+ communities, human rights defenders, and journalists, along with barriers hindering access to justice, high levels of impunity, corruption, and lack of transparency and accountability of institutions. A key challenge is the entrenchment and legalization of a militarized approach to public security that has been proven detrimental for the protection of human rights in the country and for developing security strategies and policing approaches capable of offering protection, especially to the most vulnerable groups. Civil society organizations and The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances have called for abandoning such militarized approach and strengthening civilian forces and oversight of public security.

For the first year of implementation of the strategic priority on peace, justice, rule of law, interventions from agencies in the UNCT Mexico were centered on two of the three outcomes of this area, addressing critical factors that affect, reproduce, and perpetuate violence, particularly that against women, C&A; and promoting the guarantee and practice of fundamental rights and freedoms for specific groups. The outcome area on the prevention and penalization of violence, especially against women, girls, and adolescents was driven by the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women, a multi-stakeholder partnership between the UN, the European Union, the Government of Mexico, and civil society. In 2020, Spotlight implemented a strategy for safe, free, and temporary hotel accommodation for women who were the victims of violence and their children in 13 municipalities in 11 states.

SOUTH AFRICA

The United Nations system in South Africa includes 17 agencies, funds and programmes operating in Pretoria and working on sustainable development in South Africa in collaboration with key stakeholders from several Government spheres and various sectors of society. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for South Africa 2020-2025 (Cooperation Framework) signed with the South African Government identifies four strategic priorities: Inclusive, just and sustainable economic growth; human capital and social transformation; effective, efficient and transformative governance and climate resilience and sustainably managed natural resources. This project will be located under the strategic priority of Human capital and social transformation. The UNSDCF is implemented through Joint Work Plans agreed with Government Ministries and Agencies and carried out with a range of implementing partners. In this respect, a MOU was signed between the UN system and the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) on SA's District Development Model (DDM) as a guiding framework for local implementation.

A brief overview of SA's socio-economic challenges

Notwithstanding some gains in terms of access to sanitation and drinking water, reductions in infant mortality, in the number of people living on less than USD 1.9 per day and people reporting hunger, South Africa continues to grapple with the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. This is evident through numerous service delivery protests countrywide. The South Africa Multidimensional Poverty Index (SAMPI 2016) shows that the root causes of poverty are unemployment (40%), limited education (14%) and poor access to water and sanitation (7%). By September 2019, the unemployment rate was 29.1%, with women unemployment at 30.9% and men at 27.7%. For youth (15-34 years), who constitute 35.1% of the population, unemployment rate was at 38%. With respect to youth (15-24 years), the national unemployment stands at 58.2% for the narrow definition of unemployment, and at 70% for the expanded definition. Since 2008, South Africa has also experienced incidents of xenophobic crimes resulting in loss of lives, looting and destruction of businesses belonging to African foreign nationals².

² During the most recent xenophobic attack in September 2019, South African businesses in Nigeria and Zimbabwe were attacked and destroyed in retaliation.

South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world with a Gini-coefficient of 0.68, exhibiting the vestiges of Apartheid. The Government managed to reduce inequality from 0.72 in 2006 to 0.68, but inequality remains a challenge. According to the Living Conditions Survey (LCS 2014-15), 25.2% of the population are food poor (R441 per capita per month), 40% are below the lower-bound poverty line (R647 per capita per month) and 55.5% below the upper bound poverty line (R992 per capita per month). Gender inequalities and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) continue to be major challenges despite wide-ranging intervention programmes anchored in a progressive constitution. The unacceptably high levels of gender-based violence and femicide prompted the President to declare an 'Emergency Action Plan' with a fund of R1 billion to fight Gender-Based violence and femicide. Indicators of gender inequality show that poverty levels are still high among women, earnings of women are still lower compared to men's and comparable health indicators such as HIV prevalence also show a higher prevalence among women and girls compared to men.

With the advent of COVID-19, the Government responded by instituting lockdown measures that disrupted key industries such as construction, manufacturing, mining, transport and agriculture. The public health emergency also created protection challenges for marginalized and vulnerable communities. Initial assessments indicate that women have borne the brunt of the socioeconomic, human rights and protection impacts of the pandemic. South Africa's existing challenges with regards to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were expected to escalate during and post lockdown. Prior to the pandemic, a Demographic Health survey indicated that one in five women (17%) aged 18 to 24 had experienced violence from a partner in the past 12 months; 6% of women older than 18 experienced sexual violence by a partner; whilst a woman is murdered every four hours in South Africa with half of the cases perpetrated by an intimate partner. It has been difficult to measure the impact of the lockdown periods on cases of SGBV, but Police complaints in the first week of lockdown alone saw a 37% increase from the weekly average reported in 2019. UN-Women and the UN Gender Theme Group's survey of GBV during lockdown indicated that out of 15,404 female respondents, 19% of women experienced physical abuse; 11% of female respondent were forced to have sexual intercourse or perform other sexual acts, and 28% of female respondents experienced emotional abuse. South Africa is also host to a significant population of undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, amounting to 266,694 people of concern: 78,398 refugees and 188,296 asylum seekers. The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has adapted its programming within the context of COVID-19 in order to maintain its support to these populations; however, they remain particularly vulnerable in the context of increased social unrest.

The UN response has sought to prioritise immediate support to at risk and vulnerable individuals and communities, enhance community-based protection, and advocate for social cohesion through monitoring, coordination, and direct implementation. It is working towards ensuring that the needs of vulnerable populations are understood and integrated within national responses and that social assistance and livelihoods are protected. The UN system support to this sector focuses on several key priority areas and pillars. These are: Strengthening capacity of Government agencies, social service providers, civil society and other stakeholders to engage in an inclusive response targeting persons in

need. The UN has advocated for adherence to the Nelson Mandela rules which led to the Government considering granting parole to 19,000 prisoners. UNHCR, IOM, ILO and OHCHR have all provided guidance to the Government as a whole, and to specific Government Departments on responding to the needs of prisoners, persons in detention, persons with disabilities, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. UN-Women has also worked towards ensuring that response plans have a gender perspective, and to providing training on GBV prevention and responses to increase capacity.

B. National Development Plan and Policies Shaping Urban Safety in Mexico and South Africa

B.1. MEXICO

The 2019-2024 National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, “PND”) published in July 2019, specifies the national objectives, strategy, and priorities for Mexico’s comprehensive, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development. The PND seeks to guarantee the right to work, housing, security, education, and health care and to develop the general well-being of the population, with particular emphasis to senior citizens, persons with disabilities, low-income minors and young people, and native communities. One of the PND’s principal regional projects is the Mayan Train. This infrastructure project has a route spanning 1,525 km and is being built through the states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan and Quintana Roo. It connects the main cities and tourism sites of the Yucatan Peninsula.

Policy framework on urban safety and security in Mexico

A major development was the publication of the National Peace and Security Plan 2018-2024 (*Plan Nacional de Paz y Seguridad*), which includes eight specific areas of action to address Mexico’s complex security challenges:

- Combat corruption and restore justice systems;
- Guarantee employment, education and health conditions through economic development;
- Respect and promote human rights;
- Re-cultivate societal ethics;
- Restructure the war on drugs;
- Establish a council for rebuilding domestic peace;
- Restore the function and dignity of the penal system;
- Implement the specific actions of the 2018-2024 plan.

This new Security and Peace Plan contains five main elements:

- Reconsider the role of the armed forces in national security;
- Create the National Guard (*Guardia Nacional*), with the goals of preventing crime, preserving public security, and combating criminal activity;
- Form 266 national, state, and regional Coordination Zones (*Coordinadas*) across the country by 2021;
- Establish operational guidelines.

In addition to the creation of the National Guard, a new Secretary of Security and Citizen Protection (*Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana* or SSPC) was established in the Cabinet, a position now completely independent from the prior placement of this role under the National Commission of Security in the Secretariat of the Interior (*Secretaría de Gobernación* or SEGOB). The Security and Peace Plan establishes 266 Coordination Zones (*Coordinadas*) across Mexico into which Guard units have been deployed. A recent measure with serious implications for urban safety is the reform to the National Guard, created to replace the disbanded federal police force. The national government has announced its intention to place this force under the full authority of the Ministry of Defense. By moving it away from the Secretary in charge of Citizen Security and Protection, this reform institutionalizes and increases the role of the armed forces in policing tasks in the country, reduces interest in necessary police and justice system reforms and makes harder the protection of human rights.

B.2. SOUTH AFRICA

The National Development Plan (NDP 2013-2030) and its Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF 2014–2019), an implementation modality, is currently the policy blueprint for eliminating poverty and reducing unemployment and inequality in South Africa. Following the 2019 General Elections, the Government revised its MTSF and outlined priorities for the sixth administration for the period 2020-2024. The new MTSF integrates emerging issues like climate change and sustainability, youth unemployment, gender equity, gender-based violence, global and regional needs for trade and investments, migration, peace and stability. While the NDP aspired to increase and sustain economic growth poor economic performance and weak governance, including public financial mismanagement, have contributed to junk status downgrades of the credit sovereign ratings of the country. The economic downturn has also been attributed to fluctuations between drought and floods, due to climate change and thus strategies have been adopted to mitigate and adapt its impact. However, climate change's impact is complicating Governments' efforts to respond to socio-economic challenges like poverty, inequality and unemployment. The performance of other key sectors such as manufacturing and transport also deteriorated while mining, construction and finance exhibited modest growth.

Policy framework for urban safety in South Africa

The issue of safety and security features strongly in strategic policies and plans. Chapter 12 of the National Development Plan (NDP) is entitled "Building Safer Communities" and proposes an integrated approach, the demilitarisation of police and special provisions for vulnerable groups including youth, women and children. The government has developed 14 Outcomes that reflect the desired developmental impacts to be achieved in order to meet various national objectives. The aim of Outcome 3 is that "all people in South Africa are and feel safe" (The Presidency, 2014). This safety and security outcome is driven by the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster with various departments, safety and security MECs and community policing forums (CPFs) identified as delivery partners. However, a barrier to making cities safer in South Africa is the lack of a clear and coherent framework that pulls together the different policy intentions and directs, aligns and integrates urban safety interventions, planning instruments and investments by all government sectors. Many of the urban safety policy building blocks are in place at

national, provincial and municipal levels, but they are fragmented and uncoordinated. As a result, there is no common understanding of what municipalities should do in order to enable and implement integrated responses to making communities safer. The mandate of municipalities to promote community safety (i.e., respond to and prevent crime and violence) is not sufficiently elaborated, and so community safety fails to attract the required political buy-in and prioritisation. Consequently, municipalities struggle to motivate for and secure adequate (and sustained, long-term) funding, capacity development and other kinds of support to effectively contribute to community safety.

The Vision 2030 of the NDP states that: “In 2030, people living in South Africa feel safe at home, at school and at work, and they enjoy a community life free of fear. Women walk freely in the streets and children play safely outside”. The NDP proposes that local government should play a more prominent role in responding to community safety and violence prevention and recommends the use of more innovative approaches, as well as strengthening mechanisms for community participation to identify safety needs and strategies and taking into account safety of women, children and other groups in environmental designs.

Other key policy processes shaping urban safety are the 2016 White Paper on Safety and Security and the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF). The first one advocates a developmental approach to creating safer communities through addressing risk factors on different levels. It also advocates more effective and integrated planning and implementation by government, informed by a sound knowledge base and active community participation. The White Paper recognizes that the mandate of municipalities, represents the most inclusive range of interventions required to create an enabling environment for delivery of services which impact on the safety and wellbeing of communities. The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF, COGTA, 2016) on the other hand, is a policy response to South Africa’s current and projected urbanisation trends. It provides a national framework for how best to manage urbanization and presents urban safety as a cross-cutting issue for urban development and governance. The framework highlights the urban concentration of violence and crime in South Africa, as well as the need for an urban approach, as part of the national response to making the country safer. Noting key challenges for urban safety such as in inequality, unemployment, poverty, lack of social cohesion, availability of opportunities and motives for crime and victimization, and lack of engagement and support to communities to develop strategies that address the multidimensional nature of urban violence and safety, the document also recommends a careful consideration of public transport as a key space of intervention and regeneration processes and urban planning process that that prioritize people’s safety.

C. National Ministerial Focal Points for the Project

South Africa: The Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the Urban Safety Reference Group

The Urban Safety Reference Group (USRG) under the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) is the first institutionalized forum enabling practice-based learning on urban safety and violence prevention to inform urban policy, planning and management. The USRG provides a basis for cities to collectively raise the profile of the topic of urban safety nationally, and advocates for necessary

policy, legislative, institutional or fiscal reforms to empower cities and local government more generally to make a more pro-active contribution to violence and crime prevention. It has become a valuable platform for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing amongst practitioners from the South African Cities Network (SACN) member cities as well as other key government actors. Through the USRG city practitioners interact with their national counterparts as well as with international urban safety networks, such as the United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLGA), Global Network on Safer Cities, and the African Forum for Urban Safety (AFUS).

The USRG is convened by the SACN with the support of the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention (VCP) Programme, a joint South African-German intervention coordinated by the South African Department of Cooperative Governance and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It comprises safety managers and practitioners from the SACN member cities and other relevant institutions and departments.

Mexico: The Ministry of Security and Civilian Protection

The Secretariat of Security and Citizen Protection (Secretaría de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana or SSPC) is the recently created cabinet-level agency of the government of Mexico responsible for supervising public safety and security. This ministry gives coherence to the work on prevention on crime and violence and the enhancement of public safety in the country.

D. Selected Cities and their Safety/Security Policies

DURBAN (ETHEKWINI), SOUTH AFRICA

The eThekweni Municipality in the Kwa Zulu Natal province was selected as the pilot city in South Africa for this project. The socio-economic characteristics of this municipality shaped by the presence of diverse cultures, rapid urbanization and migration demand a multi-dimensional approach to urban security. The project provides an opportunity to foster a paradigm shift in municipal safety strategies by advancing a bottom-up and community-based approach to urban human security and promoting the appropriation of indicators to monitor security responses and impacts from a human-centred perspective.

The 2035 Kwa Zulu Natal Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, the Kwa Zulu Natal Provincial Department of Human Settlements' (DHS) Annual Performance Plan, and the Kwa Zulu Natal Provincial Department of Community Safety and Liaison's Annual Performance Plan provide eThekweni Municipality with guidance on urban safety issues at the provincial level. At the municipal level, the eThekweni Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2021/22 (IDP), the Municipal Spatial Development Framework (MSDF), eThekweni Municipality Social Development Strategy 2017-2022, eThekweni Built Environment Performance Plan (BEPP), eThekweni Safer City Strategy, Durban Resilience Strategy, the Imagine Durban Long Term Plan, and the eThekweni Vulnerable Groups Policy, all provide local guidance to eThekweni's urban safety landscape.

With the support from the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme, the eThekweni Municipality has directed resources to address ongoing challenges of crime and violence through a myriad of programmes,

interventions and practices. The city has also been working towards the establishment of a City Safety Laboratory to enhance the quality and consistency of its evidence-based safety strategy, policy and practice to deliver safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities. Through this project, city administrators and practitioners will be equipped with tools to address safety challenges in a multi-dimensional perspective and taking into account the impact of the pandemic on communities and vulnerable groups. Bringing together its current strategies on Safer Cities, City Resilience, Human Settlements and Social Development, key actors in this municipality will be able to engage and develop a Human Security Plan at the pilot neighbourhood of Kwandengezi building on existing security responses to better respond to people's multidimensional security needs. This will promote collaborative work across line departments and reinforce human safety and security as a transversal policy priority.

CIUDAD JUAREZ, MEXICO

In recent decades, Ciudad Juárez has been the site of some of the worst drug-related violence in Mexico. The city's crime levels, and local industries shutting down due to the global financial crisis, have combined to create high levels of unemployment. However, concerted efforts by the government, civil organizations, and local residents to strengthen law enforcement and risk mitigation systems have begun to gain momentum.

The City Resilience Strategy and City Crime & Violence Prevention Strategy have formed the foundational pillars for this project. In addition, the city's inter-departmental coordination framework has also been brought to bear on the project implementation.

To build on these strategies, Ciudad Juárez has been selected as a pilot project to reinforce a multi-dimensional approach to address the ongoing threats, which puts both public safety and economic development at risk. The municipality has selected the 16 September neighbourhood to advance the human security participatory appraisal to inform interventions that protect the city's most threatened, vulnerable, and transient populations. Ciudad Juárez continues to experience an influx of migrants from other parts of Mexico and countries to the south.

Through its Human Security Plan, Ciudad Juárez must continue to focus funding and technical capacity on improving its deteriorating infrastructures and services and to confront this confluence of challenges. The Human Security Plan will encourage a long-term, cross-cutting view that will help the government, private sector, civil society as well as ordinary citizens to understand and address security in a structured way from bottom-up and in a multi-dimensional integrated inclusive approach based on the participation of stakeholders from various levels of government (municipality, state, national) and from the academic community, civil society, and companies or representatives of the private sector, as well as on multilateral and bilateral cooperation with development organizations. The Plan will also form a key part of Ciudad Juárez 2040 Vision which was adopted in 2023.

E. Unpacking the Project Elements

This project will enable local authorities in two particularly relevant cities to use the human security perspective to better understand local security challenges and improve responses in ways that address the complex and multidimensional security needs of particularly vulnerable communities and groups and strengthens state-community relations and collaboration.

Through a process that includes: i) a training and awareness phase for specially created ad-hoc *working groups*³ in both cities, ii) the implementation of '*Human Security Participatory Appraisals*' in these cities, and iii) the production of *City Stakeholder Engagement and Action Frameworks* for the establishment of 'Safety Laboratories'⁴; the project will allow key actors at the municipal level adapt and apply the human security approach to the social, institutional and policy context in each city while addressing key drivers of urban violence and crime.

The human security appraisals will build on the learning accumulated by each municipality in the implementation of their own safety interventions and on participatory methodologies that have been used in other contexts to enable those who are subject of interventions (i.e. residents of targeted communities, vulnerable and at-risk groups) to share their knowledge regarding the problems that affect their security based on the dimensions of human security, and of how their experiences of human insecurity affect dynamics of violence and crime locally. The appraisals will be triggering processes for collaborative work between civil society organizations, residents of particularly affected communities and representatives of different municipal agencies. These will help identify context-specific challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has created or intensified in each city from a human security perspective and will enable a participatory assessment of how well-equipped current security policies are in each city to address such challenges. Based on local diagnoses, the appraisals will also be geared towards identifying local priorities and integrated responses that help improve local security policies. By collaborating with municipal actors and representatives of diverse groups in targeted communities, the process will raise awareness across municipal departments, as well as across institutional, social, community and private actors, increasing local capacity for evidence-based and participatory decision-making processes.

The project will also inform knowledge exchange and dialogue across these and other cities and provide key insights for integrating human security to urban safety monitoring tools through the design of the *Urban Safety and Human Security Monitor*. This Monitor will include new indicators of urban safety in line with the principles and dimensions of human security identified and validated with local actors in both cities to ensure that they are adapted to local contexts, but also applicable and relevant across regions

³ Co-facilitated by UN-Habitat, the working groups will be task forces of representatives from different municipal departments and civil society actors.

⁴ These action frameworks will be geared towards i) ensuring the sustainability of the process of incorporating human security as a strategic driver of security provision in these cities, ii) the creation of partnerships for concrete interventions/strategies or practical solutions to prevent, overcome and build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, and iii) the institutionalization of civil and community participatory and accountability mechanisms at the local level.

and continents. This monitor will be a people-centred global benchmark for safety and security in cities and will be a composite index, based on comparable indicators that complement traditional indicators such as incidence of violence and crime, and public perception of insecurity. The Monitor on Urban Safety and Human Security is a key tool to stimulate global, regional and national awareness and policy discussions to strengthen the case for evidence-based policy and practice on how to improve human security in urban settings. By stimulating the generation of data on multiple dimensions of human security in cities, the programme will address the limitations of existing measurements of security that are unable to capture the complexity of peoples' daily experiences of insecurity, violence and crime.

Another key component of the project is the development of a *capacity building curriculum* informed by the lessons emerging from the work in the two pilot cities and including case studies of human security practices in other cities. The curriculum will consider available resources, local capacity gaps and local strategic priorities and will be useful to local governments, practitioners, civil society organizations, journalists and citizens. The development and publication of this curriculum on human security in urban settings will provide easily accessible tools to better understand and respond to threats to people's safety in cities by considering multidimensional and differentiated experiences of human insecurity along the lines of gender, race, socio-economic, cultural and legal status differences, etc.

Through inclusive and participatory approaches, the project will not only benefit local stakeholders, including women, youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable and marginalised groups with whom local governments will be able to create local mechanisms of engagement and dissemination, but it will also support the consolidation of communities of practice on urban safety and human security and the development of North-South, South-South City-to-City (C2C) learning regarding importance of addressing human security challenges in cities. To enable such learning exchange and global awareness of urban human security challenges a virtual environment designed as a web-based portal will be produced. This will disseminate the Urban Safety and Human Security Monitor and the Curriculum on human security in urban settings and allow the exchange of academic and practical knowledge on how to make cities safer from a people-centred perspective.