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## Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

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### Use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice: Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime

## Action to promote effective crime prevention

### Report of the Secretary-General\*\*

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\*\* The footnote required in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 53/208 B, by which the General Assembly decided that, if a report was submitted late to the conference services, the reason for this should be included in a footnote to the document, was not included in the original submission.



## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2002/13 of 24 July 2002, entitled “Action to promote effective crime prevention”, the Economic and Social Council accepted the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, annexed to the resolution, with a view to providing elements for effective crime prevention; invited Member States to draw upon the Guidelines, as appropriate, in the development of strengthening of their policies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice; requested relevant United Nations bodies and other specialized organizations to strengthen inter-agency coordination and cooperation in crime prevention; requested the United Nations, in consultation with Member States, the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and other relevant entities of the United Nations system to prepare a proposal for technical assistance in the area of crime prevention, in accordance with the guidelines of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and requested Member States to establish or strengthen international, regional and national crime prevention networks.
2. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 2002/13 and includes recommendations for the consideration of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fourteenth session.

## II. Substantive background

3. Over many years, but in particular following the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000, UNODC has been addressing the question of crime prevention with renewed commitment, based on the plans of action for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century (General Assembly resolution 56/261, annex) and the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2).
4. The Vienna Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/59, annex) listed a number of follow-up actions concerning crime prevention, including comprehensive international, regional, national and local crime prevention strategies. The actions addressed and/or pursued in the Declaration reflect the belief that Governments and criminal justice systems alone cannot effectively reduce or prevent crime and that there is a need for far greater transversal cooperation and planned responses that include all levels of government, the community and civil society.
5. The United Nations Millennium Declaration opened the way for crime prevention to be recognized as essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (A/56/326, annex), since, for developing countries, poverty reduction and sustainable development must be built on certain fundamental values, one of which is freedom from the fear of violence (para. 6). Human security, encompassing economic, health, personal safety and security, is threatened by transnational organized crime, which exploits vulnerable groups such as women, children and slum dwellers (paras. 9, 19 and 26), but also by common street crime, which affects everyone.
6. The report of the Millennium Project, entitled *Investing in Development: a Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*,<sup>1</sup> emphasizes that, in

relation to other developing regions, Latin America is a highly urbanized region, with most of the extremely poor living in urban slums. Much of the urban population is either unemployed or employed in the informal sector, lacking a social “safety net” and access to essential services.

7. It should be added that, among those essential services, crime prevention must play a more prominent role, both regionally and globally. Most recently, this has been emphasized in the background paper for Workshop 3: Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Crime and Youth at Risk of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in Bangkok from 18 to 28 April 2005 (A/CONF.203/11 and Corr.1), which, in keeping with relevant United Nations crime prevention instruments, including the Vienna Declaration and the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the goals set forth therein, formulates a number of recommendations seeking to enhance crime prevention in particular in relation to urban crime and youth at risk.

8. It is within that broader context that the present report reviews and makes relevant recommendations on the question of crime prevention in the world, for the consideration of the Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13. The report thus covers in particular crime prevention developments in the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme from 2002 to 2005, a period during which the Eleventh Congress will be held and United Nations policymaking bodies and UNODC made a number of new inroads into the area of crime prevention, starting with the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime in 2002.

### **III. Development or strengthening of the policies of Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice**

9. States are adopting national strategies on crime prevention that place much greater emphasis on what can be done to prevent crime from occurring before the intervention of the criminal justice system and to complement the work of that system. Such an approach may focus on what can be done at the local level, closest to the communities where crime is committed, and may involve cross-cutting, multisectoral integrated policies and interventions, with support from national and subregional authorities. This has included significant investment in knowledge, research and evidence-based practice. In developing their crime prevention strategies, a number of countries and cities have focused on youth at risk of committing crime or being victimized, since they recognize the importance of investing resources in their health, education and protection. Such youth include those living in the poorest and most marginal circumstances, those already in conflict with the law, street children and those exploited by the illicit drug trade, sexually exploited or affected by HIV/AIDS, war or natural disaster.

10. In the report of the Secretary-General of 22 March 2004 on good practices in crime prevention (E/CN.15/2004/12 and Add.1), such strategies were reported by a number of Member States, including Australia, Mauritius and Turkey. The report described in detail the Hungarian National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention (paras. 16-25), as well as the recommendations on crime prevention of an expert

group meeting held in Durban, South Africa, on 28 November 2003 following the International Conference on Sustainable Safety: Municipalities at the Crossroads, held in that city from 25 to 28 November 2003 (paras. 4-11).

#### **IV. Strengthening inter-agency coordination and cooperation in crime prevention**

11. At the inter-agency level, developments in crime prevention are exemplified by the work of the Safer Cities Programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and that of UNODC and are supported by international and regional organizations such as the Council of Europe, the European Union Crime Prevention Network, the European Forum for Urban Safety, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime and other institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network.

12. The most recent example of inter-agency collaboration initiated by UNODC is the Workshop on Strategies and Best Practices for Crime Prevention, in particular in relation to Urban Crime and Youth at Risk, which will be held during the Eleventh Congress (see para. 8 above). The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime is organizing the Workshop in collaboration with UN-Habitat.

13. Another example, also related to the Eleventh Congress, is the organization by the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council, another member of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, of an ancillary meeting on urban security across the world: lessons learned, which will include discussion of approaches to urban insecurity in a global context; the role of the State and of public authorities with respect to the privatization of security; and the situation in Asian cities. UN-Habitat, the European Forum for Urban Safety and a number of other entities will also make contributions.

#### **V. Crime prevention networks at the international, regional and national levels**

14. As mentioned above, UNODC has been involved in several international, regional and national crime prevention initiatives, some of which have been formalized as networks (e.g. the Safer Cities Programme of UN-Habitat). Some of the activities mentioned were carried out within the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network. In addition to the ancillary meeting being organized by the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council at the Eleventh Congress, another member of the network, the American Society of Criminology, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, will organize an ancillary meeting at the Congress, on preventing youth violence.

15. Other non-governmental organizations and entities, though not members of the above formal networks, may be mentioned in the context of the Eleventh Congress, for example, the Violence Prevention Peace Promotion Strategy, which will hold an ancillary meeting on breaking the generational cycles of violence, crime and poverty in families, schools and communities.

16. The most recent initiative in which UNODC has been involved is the forum for non-governmental organizations of Central and Eastern Europe, to be held in Vienna on 27 and 28 November 2005: at the session on urban crime prevention, UNODC will address the issue of European cities in transition in the context of urban crime prevention.

## **VI. Technical assistance in the area of crime prevention: existing projects and proposals aimed at sustainable crime prevention**

17. In its resolution 2003/25 of 22 July 2003, entitled “International cooperation, technical assistance and advisory services in crime prevention and criminal justice”, the Economic and Social Council encouraged developing countries and countries with economies in transition to include in their requests for assistance from the United Nations Development Programme, in particular within its country programme framework, projects and/or elements on crime prevention and criminal justice.

18. In its resolution 2003/26, also of 22 July 2003, entitled “Prevention of urban crime”, the Council recalled its resolution 1995/9 of 24 July 1995, in which it had adopted guidelines for cooperation and technical assistance in the field of urban crime prevention, and requested UNODC, in consultation with Member States, institutes of the Programme network, UN-Habitat and other relevant entities of the United Nations system, to continue to assist Member States, upon request, to prepare proposals for the provision of technical assistance in the area of crime prevention, in accordance with the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, including through capacity-building and training.

19. Those two resolutions, together with Council resolution 2002/13 of 24 July 2002, provide the framework for charting a course of action in the area of crime prevention to be considered by the Commission at its fourteenth session.

20. In that context, at least three UNODC projects should be mentioned:

(a) Inter-agency partnerships for safer *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The following activities are envisaged:

- (i) Strengthening joint actions carried out by agencies engaged in social activities for the purpose of catering to the needs of the target population as a strategy to promote urban safety and prevent crime and social exclusion;
- (ii) Community crime prevention interventions designed for areas affected by drug trafficking and related crime problems;
- (iii) Redesigning strategies adopted by social work centres for their transformation into referral centres for children and adolescents;
- (iv) Fostering the participation of different actors in local communities, including young people, through committees to prevent social exclusion;
- (v) Fostering and facilitating actions aimed at assisting former delinquents and convicts, as well as those who have been given alternative penalties, as a strategy to prevent recidivism;

(vi) Fostering a close partnership between services providing health care for the mentally disabled and universities in order to expand their capacity to assist drug users and mentally disabled individuals with a view to ensuring their social reintegration;

(vii) Organizing campaigns to raise the awareness of the population of the effectiveness and importance of violence prevention policies, turning the beneficiaries of the project into agents actively involved in building a more equal and less violent society;

(b) Prevention of urban crime in the Dakar region of Senegal. The project comprises the following components:

(i) Providing judicial and police institutions and relevant municipal authorities with appropriate legal and administrative tools;

(ii) Furnishing local police services and judicial bodies with the material means necessary to fulfil their functions;

(iii) Improving the training of personnel working in an urban environment (social workers and police officers);

(iv) Proposing partnership initiatives involving various sectors of society and coordinated with state police and judicial authorities;

(v) Encouraging the active involvement of the population groups concerned, in particular through local surveys of the lack of security;

(c) South-South cooperation to determine good practices in crime prevention in the developing world (for Southern Africa and the Caribbean). The project involves:

(i) Upgrading national crime prevention strategies by review and evaluation and application of good practices in new projects and/or plans;

(ii) Increasing dissemination and exchange of lessons learned and good practices within and between the two regions by means of a publication and a website;

(iii) Enhancing the research capacity as regards the crime prevention strategies of national crime prevention commissions and the Caribbean Task Force on Crime and Security of the Caribbean Community, the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization by linking tertiary-level educational institutions to government policy units and by creating a cadre and regional network of experts. It is expected that a more holistic approach to crime reduction will ensue from the provision of direct inputs to various policymaking bodies.

The above selection of projects is intended to facilitate consideration by the Commission at its fourteenth session of the issues mentioned below.

21. The attention of the Commission is drawn to the report of the Executive Director of UNODC entitled "Development, security and justice for all" (E/CN.7/2005/6-E/CN.15/2005/2), submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-eighth session, in 2005, and to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fourteenth session, in section III.A of which, entitled "Alternative livelihoods and protecting the environment", it is indicated (para. 27)

that UNODC has initiated work in the area of promoting sustainable livelihoods to prevent crime in urban contexts, pursuant to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex II).

22. Promotion of sustainable livelihoods was also addressed in another report of the Executive Director submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-eighth session, on the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development (E/CN.7/2005/2/Add.2), in which it is noted (para. 4):

“Elimination of illicit crop cultivation can be achieved and sustained. ... Moreover, ... alternative development programmes need to include improved and innovative approaches. These should, inter alia, promote community participation and democratic values, include appropriate demand reduction measures, incorporate a gender dimension and observe environmental sustainability criteria.”

These conclusions are based on evidence obtained from an evaluation of alternative development projects carried out by UNODC.<sup>2</sup>

23. In its resolution 48/9, on strengthening alternative development as an important drug control strategy and establishing alternative development as a cross-cutting issue, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs recognized the need to develop alternative development programmes within the framework of national policies and international strategies on the basis of an integrated approach that should be accompanied by measures to strengthen the judicial system, the rule of law and good governance.

## VII. Conclusion and recommendations

24. The question of promotion of sustainable livelihoods has been a matter of importance for both the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, although from very different perspectives. The concept of sustainable livelihoods cuts across their respective fields of interest and the new internal structure of UNODC puts it in a unique position to draw on experience in the fight against both drugs and crime. However, the urban context of crime prevention projects itself now requires more incisive action based on UNODC expertise in providing technical assistance.

25. For the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the normative basis for developing crime prevention projects includes not only the guidelines for cooperation and technical assistance in the field of urban crime prevention (Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/9, annex) and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, but also the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I) and its Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

26. Relevant provisions of the Organized Crime Convention, dealing with economic development, technical assistance and crime prevention, provide that States parties shall take measures conducive to the optimal implementation of the Convention to the extent possible, through international cooperation, taking into account the negative effects of organized crime on society in general, in particular

on sustainable development (art. 30). States parties must also endeavour to develop and evaluate national projects and to establish and promote best practices and policies aimed at the prevention of transnational organized crime, and to reduce existing or future opportunities for organized criminal groups to participate in lawful markets with proceeds of crime, through appropriate legislative, administrative or other measures (art. 31). The Trafficking in Persons Protocol provides in its article 9 for a wide range of measures that States Parties shall take or strengthen, including through bilateral or multilateral cooperation, to alleviate the factors that make persons, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking, such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity.

27. Projects in these areas are and should be based on solid knowledge of good practices in promoting community safety in a variety of settings, in urban and rural areas, in the business sector and across borders. There is thus a need, subject to available resources, for pilot intervention projects in crime prevention and projects concerning the generation and dissemination of knowledge. The valuable experience gained from alternative development projects in the drug field certainly contributes to such a broad approach. The Commission may wish to formulate its own perspective on crime prevention and sustainable livelihoods where such factors as lawful markets, poverty, underdevelopment and lack of equal opportunity are addressed in principle as pertaining not only to various forms of transnational organized crime, but also to street crime of a local (urban) character and to activities of the black and “grey” market, all of which undermine the rule of law and require more crime prevention among impoverished and young people involved in various illicit activities.

28. Capacity in crime prevention is a renewable and sustainable resource that can flourish when community participation and democratic values are promoted. Crime prevention should be a well-targeted technical cooperation activity that, first and foremost, facilitates knowledge-based crime reduction. This should be done with a well-balanced, integrated approach, accompanied by measures to strengthen the judicial system, as has been done in the crime prevention projects cited as examples. This is the sense of “effective” crime prevention as the term is used in the present report, a long-term, sustained and continuous activity that UNODC may need to examine in a more comprehensive manner, subject to available resources. The Commission may wish to consider how comprehensive that approach should be. The deliberations of the Eleventh Congress will provide the Commission with viable bases for action.

29. In conclusion, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice may wish:

(a) To take note of developments in UNODC related to effective crime prevention;

(b) To invite Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network to apply the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime and to support the development of the UNODC technical assistance programme in sustainable crime prevention, including pilot intervention projects concerning the generation and dissemination of knowledge;



(c) To invite the Safer Cities Programme of UN-Habitat to strengthen its collaboration with UNODC and to prepare joint technical cooperation projects in crime prevention so as to attract donors interested in a cross-cutting approach that emphasizes the sustainability of such projects as their long-term goal.

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. 05.III.B.4, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> See the conference room paper of 28 February 2005 entitled “Alternative development: a global thematic evaluation; final synthesis report” (E/CN.7/2005/CRP.3). The evaluation report found, in particular, that alternative development: (a) implied long-term commitment of financial resources to human development, respect for human rights and coordinated comprehensive national and regional planning; and (b) required an appropriate policy framework that allowed illicit crop growers to be treated as candidates for development rather than as criminals.

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