GLOBAL CONFERENCE

The Inaugural African Forum for Urban Safety (AFUS) Learning Exchange
“Towards Collective Action for the Creation of Safer Cities Vision 2030”

June 29 – July 1 2016
Durban, Republic of South Africa

CONCEPT NOTE
I. BACKGROUND

In all cities across the world, safety is a key determinant of the quality of life of urban dwellers. Crime, violence and insecurity can affect all aspects of daily life: at home, in the neighbourhood, at school, at the market and in other public spaces, in transportation and in the business and commercial districts of our cities. Some group are more vulnerable to become victims and to feel more insecure. This include women, children, youth and the elderly. At the same time, we know that some factors in the urban environment and in the social fabric of our communities can lead young people to become offenders and engage in delinquent and criminal behaviour.

The concern about urban safety is largely shared by local authorities, national governments and international organisations as well as civil society organisations and citizens in general. The way to respond to this challenge has however considerably evolved in the last 30 years. For a long time, the criminal justice system (police, courts and prisons) was the main institutional actor in change of maintaining law and order of insuring safety on the streets and of preventing crimes. This sole response has showed its limitations for many reasons: constraints and, in some cases deficiencies, of the criminal justice system, lack of confidence and too little impact on crime, violence and insecurity.

It became clear that in order to foster sustainable safety in our neighbourhoods and cities, a more global approach was necessary. Safety must be a concern of all institutional and community stakeholders. To act on the causes and situation breathing crime and insecurity requires sharing expertise and resources, planning and coordinating targeted actions and engaging citizens in a concerted effort. In that perspective, the role of local authorities in fostering this process in mobilising communities and in developing crime prevention strategies has been more and more recognised. It is in this context that the Safer Cities Programme was set by UN-Habitat after the Habitat II world conference in Istanbul in 1996.

The purpose of this conference is to highlight what has been done in Africa through the Safer Cities Programme in the last 20 years, to describe the achievements and difficulties encountered and to measure the challenges ahead of us. Developing and providing sustainable safety to communities requires a long-term commitment and effort. We should draw the lessons from the initiatives and the activities undertaken since 1996. We should especially develop a renewed vision for the coming years, built on the success so far, and to identify the conditions that are necessary to ensure continuous progress in making African cities safer as we work towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) and the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063.

1.1. Urban insecurity in African cities and towns

The urbanisation process in Africa is accompanied by an increase of insecurity, crime and urban violence. The changing societies of African cities are characterised by a loss of cultural traditions and identity and by the young age of their inhabitants.

On the other hand, the local governments are often insufficiently equipped to master the urbanisation process and particularly to provide basic services. The physical result is the creation of stigmatised neighbourhoods in the poor areas and an “architecture of fear” in the well-off neighbourhoods. The informal settlements become a growing ground for deviant behaviour. This
situation generates lawless areas and economic decline, further enhances poverty and ultimately threatens the democratic foundation of society.

As mentioned above, primary victims affected by crime are the poor people, especially women, youth and children, who lose the possibility to appropriate the city. In addition, most women in Africa live in patriarchal societies, where their participation in society is restricted. Their access to education and economic development is difficult and male domination legitimates various forms of gender violence (and in particular domestic violence).

Crime trends also indicate that offenders are becoming younger which corresponds to a worldwide trend, where the average age is estimated to be 10 years of children dealing with petty crime, drugs and prostitution. In addition, in Africa, the emerging phenomenon of radicalisation and violent extremism demonstrates the urgent need to review prevention approaches and basic services delivery with the idea of tapping into the potential ways in which young people can increasingly own and identify with cities and neighbourhoods in developing and implementing strategic responses for the creation of safer cities.

In addition to the social causes such as exclusion and the disruption of cultural traditions, some institutional factors contribute to an increase in crime rate. Among them is the inadequate criminal justice system, the trafficking in small arms and the incapacity of local authorities to provide basic services.

1.2 The Responses in Africa

Responses at state level

Faced with increasing delinquency, the state often takes to repressive actions characterised by large operations and mass arrest. These measures may reassure the well-off public about the capacity of the state in crime control and may generate fear among poor, but are not effective in a long-term perspective.

In some countries, more structural actions have been undertaken, often involving the reform of the justice system and of the police, in order to make them more accountable and accessible. Municipal police have been introduced in some countries (for instance, in South Africa, Tanzania and Burkina Faso); respect of human rights has becomes more and more a requirement for the police force; and conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms have been developed (for instance, the Ward tribunals in Tanzania). Finally, most countries are participating in regional and international efforts to curb global links with local impacts on violent extremism, organised crime, money laundering and arm trafficking.

Responses at city level

Since the mid- and late 80’s, numerous conferences of national and local elected officials, experts and researchers, criminal justice practitioners and non-governmental organisations paved the way for new crime prevention policies at the city level as reflected in the 1995 ECOSOC Guidelines on Urban Crime Prevention. In the past 20 years, experiences show that it is at the city level that global challenges such as exclusion, environmental management and crime prevention are most effectively addressed. These recommendations
have led to the gradual development and integration of crime prevention approaches as a necessary complement to sustainable urban development as reflected in the recently adopted Post 2015 development agenda – SDG 11 on Making Cities and Human Settlements Safe, Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient.

The international experiences highlight some core elements:
- Safety cannot be achieved without sustainable urban development and vice versa, sustainable urban development will not be achieved without safety.
- Crime and insecurity are best tackled by developing local approaches supported by regional and national governments;
- Prevention as a strategic tool for good governance contributes to the reaffirmation of citizenship and common values;
- Prevention is best done by multi-sectoral partnerships expressed in local coalitions, tackling the causes and manifestation of crime in a rigorous way.

Among the actions that cities have taken in the past years in various cities of Africa to increase their capacity in crime prevention are: the establishment of municipal police forces and an increased control of public space (such as the use of CCTV in Johannesburg); the mobilisation of communities and local leaders (Dar es Salaam, Dakar); the support to groups of citizens organising to provide security services (Durban, Dar es Salaam); the development of preventive actions targeting youth at risk, women or street children (Abidjan, Douala, Dakar); the collaboration with the private sector for the creation of job opportunities (Douala) or for the organisation of public space use by informal traders (Durban, Johannesburg, Antananarivo).

Responses of civil society

Civil society's response to urban crime has mostly taken the form of private security guards, neighbourhood watch systems and public 'mob' movements. In addition, communities and groups are developing innovative approaches in the direction of prevention and management of the risk of crime based on their traditional, cultural or political background.

Examples of civil society inputs in Africa

- In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the Sungu-Sungu groups have been created. They involve the creation of community-based watch groups, which have created new employment opportunities for the inhabitants in the different neighbourhoods and strengthened the collaboration among different sectors of society (traders, youth, residents) under the guidance of the local authority (Ward). Analogous experiences whether defined as community safety forums, community policing forums, etc. exist in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Cameroon just to mention a few.
- GROOTS, COVAW and CREA in Kenya; KZN Coalition on Violence Against Women and other like-minded NGOs have also developed an original approach to dealing with gender violence both in the private and public realms that attaches as much
importance to strategic responses involving both the victim and offender. The approach is based in the appreciation that a safer city for women in indeed a safer city for all.

- In South Africa, as well as in Nigeria and Kenya, the business community has come together with local government to promote city improvements by negotiating with the various local informal and formal actors for better management of public space and improved control.

Depending on the local contexts, actors from the civil society are capable and successful in developing initiatives in the field of security. The most successful examples build on the local culture to develop innovation to address the new faces of insecurity in the cities. In some cases, these initiatives can become a city policy shared by the majority of inhabitants. Their effectiveness is greatly increased when these initiatives are inserted in the framework of local coalitions.

1.3 Governance of Safety and Crime Prevention

The response to crime constitutes a process closely related to the building the local governance of safety as well as multi-level governance of safety mechanisms. Good urban governance encompasses the relations between levels of government and civil society. It is a tool to enhance citizenship and the citizen as the key actor in the co-production of safety for all and as part of the production of ‘the city’.

Tackling crime and insecurity effectively requires actions which involve civil society and mobilise all institutional partners, in an effort to develop and implement bottom-up, rather than top-down policies. This challenge requires the development of solidarity practices, city consultation processes and institutional reform, which enhance citizenship and inclusion.

At the same time security is a pre-condition of governance because where communities live in fear and movement is restricted, participation in the city life is difficult, particularly for the less protected, such as the poor and women. Therefore, local coalitions building safer cities are a key component of urban governance.

Common approaches of crime prevention have been adopted by cities from the South and the North and key issues of governance have emerged from these experiences.

The need for a decentralization process

The decentralisation of the function of crime prevention and control adds a particular aspect to the process of decentralisation and for the need to connect national crime prevention policies with national. Traditionally, the institutions dealing with law enforcement and crime prevention are placed at the national level. These activities are usually a prerogative of the central state and many governments are reluctant to decentralise them. This constraint forces a permanent dialogue between levels of government.
The need for local government and civil society partnerships

Partnership is the key tool for prevention; key actors within the city are involved during the diagnosis and formulation of a strategy as well as during the implementation and evaluation phases.

Partnerships add synergies, specific competencies and a broad consideration of all interests to the prevention policy. Partnership facilitates the identification of the main issues and the subjective and objective perceptions of insecurity. It facilitates consensus, identifies and co-produces the modalities to implementation. It ensures continuity despite local political changes and helps to root prevention within civil society.

1.4 Priority Areas of Intervention

Prevention covers a broad range of issues, but some are presently more important because they target the main causes of crime:

- **Integrated Youth Policies at the Municipal level**: Over the years, analysis of crime patterns has shown multiple and interrelated causes of youth crime and violence, which need to be addressed through a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach.

- **Violence against women as governance issue at city level**: Issues that affect women are often overlooked. With regard to violence, whether in the private or public arena, women are the main victims of sexual harassment and assault. This means that in cities, many women restrict their movements or activities because they feel unsafe. In addition, violence against women is deeply rooted into social and cultural practices and is regarded as a private issue. The nature of intervention of the local authority in this field needs to take into account the local African cultures and constitutes an area of innovation for the prevention approach and good governance.

- **Situational prevention and management of the public space**: Crime is often facilitated by poorly designed, controlled and managed public spaces (building, streets, markets, etc.). Actions aiming at enhancing ownership of the public space by specific communities or groups of users, including informal sectors, have proved to be effective in making it safer.

- **New approaches of the criminal justice system**: For instance, to community policing, mediation, conflict resolution, alternative sanction to jail, mobile courts.

- **Measures to reinforce socialisation** targeting groups at risk particularly children and young adults. Socialisation can be supported at the family and at school levels and with specific local programmes.

- **Measures that relate to the perception of insecurity**, have an important impact on the feeling of insecurity and on the willingness of the public to be involved in prevention activities.
1.5 The Safer Cities Approach in Africa

Major Steps Since 1996

Starting in 1997, considerable efforts were put into the actual implementation of the Safer Cities approach in a number of large urban centers in Africa. These projects have necessitated long and complex discussions and negotiations with the local authorities involved, national ministries, funding agencies and other strategic partners. Nevertheless, comprehensive urban safety initiatives were rolled out in the following cities and countries:

- Johannesburg (South Africa) 1997
- Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) 1997
- Abidjan (Ivory Coast) 1998
- Durban (South Africa) 1999
- Antananarivo (Madagascar) 1999
- Bamako (Mali) 2000
- Nairobi (Kenya) 2001
- Yaounde (Cameroon) 2001
- Douala (Cameroon) 2003
- Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) 2009

Results of some crime survey in African cities in the 1990's

- 59% of the people of Durban were victims of at least one crime between 1993 and 1997 (1)
- 53% of households in Dar es Salaam were burgled between 1996 and 2000 (2)
- 18% of the residents of Nairobi claim to have been victims of physical assault in 1999 (3)

In almost all cases, the process involved:

- A project formulation phase
- The creation of a local coordination team
- A local safety diagnosis and/or victims’ survey
- The mobilization and sensitization of municipal actors and other institutional and community partners
- The creation of a steering committee and of collaborative mechanisms
- The elaboration of an urban safety and crime prevention strategy
- The development and implementation of an action plan and targeted pilot projects
- The monitoring and evaluation of the project

In two cases (Tanzania and Ivory Coast), these initiatives opened the door for an extension of the Safer Cities approach to other cities within the country.

Another preoccupation of the UN-Habitat has been to develop a thematic approach within the context of Safer Cities. Research, networking, mobilization of stakeholders and programme development were undertaken on the issue of women’s safety, the prevention of youth delinquency and violence and the contribution of policing to the safety in urban space.

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II. ABOUT THE AFUS CONFERENCE

The conference is organised by the eThekwini Municipality of Durban – the permanent secretariat for the African Forum for Urban Safety (AFUS) in partnership with the UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities Programme.

eThekwini Municipality of Durban has a unique approach to the prevention of urban crime and improvement of urban safety and social cohesion. The Municipality Safer Cities Unit projects an integrated area-based approach involving the criminal justice system, all the social services and youth and women and their families. This approach has proved its worth and delivery impact over the past 17 years of implementing its city safety plan. The city provides useful practices for other countries and cities, along with relevant tools.

The success of eThekwini’s Safer Cities Strategy and the level of support from the highest level of municipal leadership and local institutions involved in building urban safety justified the selection of Durban as the permanent secretariat of AFUS and the venue for the conference. Its experiences will add to and enrich the experiences which will be drawn from other areas in South Africa and Africa as a whole during the conference.

This conference is of special significance as it will be the first AFUS Learning Exchange that brings together key players in the field of urban safety, security and crime prevention to position urban safety at the core of local government agenda - building on 20 years of expertise by UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities Programme.

This learning exchange will review lessons from Safer Cities practice as a contribution towards attaining the AU’s Agenda 2063 Vision and the newly endorsed UN SDGs. Particularly goal 11 which aims to Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient, and sustainable. Further, this conference will be a part of the participatory process to Habitat III taking place in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016.

During the conference there will be learning site visits to the Warwick Junction in Durban. Final site visits will be confirmed in the final programme.

A key outcome of the conference is the creation of a network of cities and public and private organizations working with safer cities to establish an online regional resource facility that enables and facilitates peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and joint knowledge generation, support and collaboration.

III. JUSTIFICATION

This conference responds to a set of needs identified through the analysis of causes of urban crime, violence and insecurity.

3.1 Addressing urban crime and violence at the local level through integrated coordinated policies.

According to the United Nations, Africa is indeed the most rapidly urbanizing region and a significant percentage (nearly 90%) of the expected additional 2.5 billion people globally who will move to urban areas by 2050 will be located in Africa (UN 2014). Today, it is now clear from
practice that the assumption that with development would come prosperity, and with prosperity, greater safety and better security for people and communities is a simplified way of addressing safety.

Urban crime and violence occurs in different contexts, has multiple causes and requires multiple responses. The various causes should be analysed locally and the responses developed locally through the joint efforts of key city and neighbourhood actors. Experiences over the last two decades shows that responses at the local level to crime and violence are more effective than exclusive, centralised policies. In fact, responses at the local level facilitate greater involvement of local actors, starting with the citizen as the key actor, with back-up support from the community.

Experiences also show that safety is beyond just physical protection, but also speaks to the ability of people to make choices they consider necessary for their own lives.

3.2 Post 2015 Development Agenda: The key role of the local authorities in addressing safer cities for all (SDG 11).

The newly endorsed UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Goal 11: to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This comes in clear recognition of the global consensus that successful urbanization is a foundation for global development, and how it is experienced by the majority of the world’s citizens (UN2015a).

The SDG 11 clearly recognises that cities and local authorities have an important role to play in dealing with urban crime, violence and insecurity. Important international policy processes in defining city safety are underway. UN-Habitat is charged with the responsibility to develop UN system-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities in collaboration with other UN agencies; and to have these Guidelines complement the 2002 UN Guidelines on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice developed by UNODC.

The explicit links between these development objectives and safety is unprecedented in terms of the objectives of the UN and the international community, and provides a mandate to make such debates a central concern for the Africa Union and its related sub-regional bodies in a continent where the security governance is increasingly challenged by the multiple forms and manifestations of crime, violence and insecurity.

Cities are the future of communities and are very likely to be the key to achieving the Post 2015 Development Agenda. However, the challenge for many cities is how to respond to the complex interactions of crime, violence and insecurity at the local level. Local authorities should strive to ensure that safety and security approaches at the local level are coordinated and promoting a type of city build that enhances the principles of social integration, cohesion, inclusion and that provides the right of all citizens to the benefits of urban life. In particular, cities have a responsibility in the following:

- **Citizen’s empowerment and participation**: Local authorities should find ways of integrating the role of citizens, families and neighbourhoods in early prevention and enhancing community support and cohesion advancing the notion of safety as a public good. Genuine participation from communities and other stakeholders, including the private sector is critical for developing and implementing effective and inclusive policies and laws to enhance safety and security in cities. Evidence based programming and participatory approaches to crime prevention and community safety are important for the
co-production of safety for all. Urban crime prevention and safety policies and programmes can only be effective when communities are consulted and when interventions are based on evidence and tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of key populations. The role of youth and women in creating safety and security in cities is key.

- **Local governance of safety**: Addressing the wide range of root causes of crime and violence requires coordination between the different tiers of government as well as amongst the various departments and sectors of governance, including education, housing and urban planning, economic development, justice etc. As well, addressing urban challenges by coalescing key local stakeholders around an agenda of leadership in and for cities, geared at a renewed urban partnership between government (local and national) and private actors (community and business). City leaders, such as mayors and their peers, have a core responsibility in spurring leadership for urban safety and can act as catalysts of pervasive multi-level efforts.

- **Urban planning and design for social integration**: Reinvigorating urban design through gender and age inclusive and adequate public spaces (including streets) as places for people to meet, as sites for social interaction and exchange, as landscapes of economic vitality especially for the urban poor and for the construction of citizenship and the framework for social and territorial cohesion and the coproduction of safety for all.

- **Innovative financing for building safety though slum upgrading**: Addressing the impact of crime on the urban poor, through proactive social and cultural investments using the notion of social urbanism as a form of crime prevention and innovative financing approach which incorporates both urban regeneration and planning and social and economic initiatives to reduce inequalities.

- **Rule of Law and human rights**: In terms of shaping good governance, trust in rule of law and an enabling environment are vital to encourage long-term investment. Promoting inclusive rules and regulations in line with international human rights standards and the collective capacities for implementation around laws and institutions of governance could shape the culture and conviviality of ‘safe, inclusive and connected public spaces’ and enhance the ‘right to the city for all’ which integrate vulnerable communities such as the poor, migrants, women and children and people with disabilities who together participate in the co-production of safety for all. Establishing clear legal and operational framework regulating public private cooperation and the engagement of civil society and at large to make security policies more inclusive and ready to address a wider spectrum of challenges and threats.

Local authorities are also the driving forces of essential partnerships. Such partnerships should bring together all the local key players of a city; partnerships should also be developed between cities in order to promote exchange of experience.

3.3 **Integrating new technologies on safer cities**

Technology can be applied to enable better use of data in planning municipal government investments towards realizing safer cities. Today, while security technologies such as CCTV have shown that they can reduce significantly property crime, it is now more important for cities to focus on technologies that promote the governance of safety to tackle the roots of crime and violence.

The concept of Governance (consistent with UN-Habitat Safer Cities guidelines as well as UNODC and WHO guidelines) can be helped by the application of technology to bringing together data from different sectors including youth services, family and early childhood services, school curricula
and data in the health sector. Technology’s use in the policing sector may also help more proactive and preventive policing but this must be used with caution in high violence countries. Plans can also be shared with citizens and influenced by their perspectives.

Current municipal safer cities data collection tools can now be better integrated into city data frameworks to promote the SDGs Vision 2030, in particular to measure, monitor implementation and outcomes of municipal crime prevention and urban safety strategies.

3.4 Enhancing exchange of experiences focusing on Africa
Existing safety practices of cities in Africa can now be compared and analysed with a view to learning lessons that can be replicated in other African cities. Similarly, national criminal justice reform practices and the approaches of civil society institutions on prevention and community safety should now be linked to municipal policies debates.

IV. OBJECTIVES

4.1 Synthesis of present experiences on safer cities in the context of human settlements and urban development.
Regarding the value and delivery of safety at the local level, several community practices coexist at the local level facilitated by a range of role players at both the national and local government levels on the prevention of crime and violence to preventive approaches co-exist. These include approaches addressing the planning and design of neighbourhoods, diversionary measures, community safety governance, policing urban spaces, among others. Although the learning exchange will mainly focus on African experiences and the development of a strategy adapted to Africa, it will also take into account practices from other regions. These include practices of social urbanism, safe smart cities, safety and peace building, gender safety, and measures targeting youth social capital and social cohesion.

4.2 Learning Lessons from “Safer Cities” pilot projects and consolidation into a legacy City Safety Lab project for the City of Durban
Comparison and analysis of approaches related to safer cities pilots in Africa will be carried out and their social impact assessed.

The learning exchange will also highlight the role of the city as a co-ordinator of local coalitions involving the criminal justice system, civil society organisations and other key local partners in activities, which develop the co-production of safety for all.

With this dual focus, the learning exchange will provide the participants, their institutions and cities with tools which will support them in modifying, consolidating or reformulating their approaches concerning urban safety in general, and ‘safer cities’ in particular.

The preparatory synthesis work and the learning exchange discussions will allow the elaboration of an Africa Urban Safety regional policy/strategy paper and a cities declaration focused on the conference themes to form part of a wider international debate on urban development emerging from Habitat III – Safer Cities in the New Urban Agenda.

4.3 Creation of a network of cities and public and private organisations working with safety at the local level – that are committed to exchange knowledge, policies and tools to enhance
information exchange and advocacy on better measures for local governments to implementing the SDG 11 safety targets.

The establishment of a network of cities and public and private organisations working with prevention will enhance the formulation of policies at the national level in response to the Post 2015 development agenda and will also help to disseminate and improve city policies. The network will also act as a means for the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt in this field. Lastly, the network will act as a lobby group to facilitate the participation of non-state actors in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of city safety policies that concern them.

V. EXPECTED OUTCOME

a. Publication of Learning Exchange proceedings and a strategy paper (manifesto “Durban Engagement”) for the African region
b. The establishment of a network database of cities and non-state actors (CBOs, NGOs, Private sector, academia, etc) working with safer cities
c. The establishment of an African Institute of Learning (Centre of Excellence) including an online regional resource facility on safer cities.
d. A city declaration on principles of action in the field of safer cities.
e. A legacy project for the City of Durban – documentation of Durban Safer Cities and forward-looking review promoting interdepartmental monitoring and measurement framework for the city safety strategy.
f. The Safer Cities good practices publication.

VI. METHODOLOGY

a. The preparatory work and discussions at the Learning Exchange will focus on safer cities in Africa – towards Africa Vision 2063. The ‘safer cities approach’ reflects the objectives of the municipal practices on safety and security that local coalitions or local communities are implementing together with the local government. At the same time the Learning Exchange will address the regional online resource framework of the AFUS, which provides the mechanism of engagement to the above mentioned objectives and practices. During the preparatory phase, it will be necessary to establish a scheme of analysis for at least five of the municipal safer cities practices in Africa, taking into account UN-Habitat’s Guidelines on Safer Cities.
b. The Learning Exchange must also consider the role of the principal city partners involved with safer cities, in particular the role of the local authorities and the criminal justice system, the role of youth, women, private sector, among others. This Learning Exchange recognises the pivotal importance of action at the local level. In fact, it is only at the local level that the impact of crime and violence can be assessed, the degree of tolerance determined, and responses formulated, implemented and evaluated.
c. The methodology will emphasise the specific conditions for each region (regional or sub-regional guidelines) in Africa and the possibilities of replicating successful experiences, taking into account traditional laws, ethnic values and religion.
d. Finally, the methodology will consider Safer Cities in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Africa Union Vision 2063.