

***Six United Nations guiding principles  
to make crime prevention work***

by

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## **Six United Nations guiding principles to make crime prevention work**

"Crime prevention cannot implement itself"

### **Introduction**

The origins of the United Nations' crime prevention movement can be traced back to the late 1980s. At that time, the Organisation started to stress the issue of informal crime prevention systems as of equal importance and complimentary to the operations of law enforcement and criminal justice systems in facilitating the State's protection from crime. Thirty five years after the adoption of the first legal instrument (the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, 1955), the United Nations, realising that the traditional criminal justice systems alone were failing to combat crime, started adopting new instruments, like the Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency ("The Riyadh Guidelines", General Assembly resolution 45/112, Annex), which focus on young people - the resource and promise of future generations.

Those Guidelines promote the idea that formal systems of control are to be complemented by society's informal social controls. They include a range of measures to be taken by those responsible, like parents, schools and religious bodies to educate children and young people to respect laws, to regulate the conduct of people as they go about their daily lives and to afford protection to people and property through routine precautions and security measures. The informal and formal systems of control depend upon each other for effectiveness.

In 1997, the General Assembly adopted another crime prevention resolution 51/60 – the "Declaration on Crime and Public Safety" and in the same year the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the resolution 1997/28 on "Firearm regulation for the purposes of crime prevention and public health and safety". However, the most technically viable instruments which have been adopted and evidently pursued by Member States, have entered the United Nations agenda through two other ECOSOC resolutions<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The use and application of only some United Nations soft law instruments are monitored periodically by the surveys of the Secretary-General. For the legislative background of the implementation mechanism see: The Application of United Nations Standards and Norms in Criminal Justice, Expert Group Meeting, Peace Academy, Castle Schlaining, Stadtschlaining, Burgenland, Austria, 10-12 February 2003, United Nations Office on

In 1995, the ECOSOC focussed on crime prevention through the lens of urbanisation, and in 2002 took a comprehensive look at crime prevention in general. Accordingly the ECOSOC adopted two new resolutions: "Guidelines for the Prevention of Urban Crime" (resolution 1995/9, Annex), and "Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime" (resolution 2002/13, Annex). They are both the outcome of intergovernmental and cross-national contributions to the incipient United Nations movement towards more operational and successful crime prevention on a global scale.

Against the background explaining why and how this incipient movement has been shaped, this article presents altogether six United Nations guiding principles to make crime prevention work<sup>3</sup>:

- I. the principle of the rule of law;
- II. the principle of socio-economic inclusion;
- III. the principle of community-centred action;
- IV. the principle of partnership;
- V. the principle of sustainability and accountability; and
- VI. the principle of evidence-based practice.

In the presentation of these six principles, the paper also draws on the additional research contributions to humane and effective crime prevention<sup>4</sup>. Some of them are connected with other United Nations developments that gave those principles their policy and operational context in which they function, but all the contributions explain their rationale.

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Drugs and Crime, Vienna, Austria, <http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/publications/standards%20&%20norms.pdf>. In 2004-2007, ECOSOC through its resolutions on the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice has mandated the UNODC to carry out a number of such surveys, including the 2002 ECOSOC guidelines (see doc. E/CN.15/2007/11, Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice). The law-making mechanism of such "soft law" instruments and their impact on domestic legislation and practice is analysed in: Sławomir Redo, "United Nations Criminal Justice Norms and Standards and Customary Law", (in:) *The Contributions of Specialised Institutes and Non-Governmental Organizations to the United Nations Criminal Justice Program*, ed. by M. Cherif Bassiouni, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1995, pp. 109-135, and in: *Impacto de los principios de las Naciones Unidas en la reforma penal*, (in:) *Congreso Internacional: Las Ciencias Penales en el Siglo XXI*, Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales, México, 2004, pp. 469-490.

<sup>3</sup> They are conceptualised and synthesised here on the basis of a much larger set of principles provided in both guidelines, developed with partly different legislative drafting techniques. While consolidating them, this article seeks to answer the calls of crime prevention experts to prioritise them, make their presentation more succinct, topical and compact, so as to facilitate their promotion and putting into field operation.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Erich Marks, Anja Meyer, Ruth Linssen, *The Beccaria-project: quality management in crime prevention*, (in:) Erich Marks, Anja Meyer, Ruth Linssen, *Quality in Crime Prevention*, Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt 2005, pp. 9-40.

## Background

Two imbalances (external and internal) that affect effective crime prevention have been noted by the United Nations.

Concerning the first imbalance, since the 1980s, especially in the developing world, there has been a shortage of basic urban services. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development ("*The Brundtland Commission*") reported to the United Nations General Assembly that "in the space of one decade, the developing world will have to increase by 65 % its capacity to produce and manage its urban infrastructure, and shelter – merely to maintain present conditions"<sup>5</sup>. In 1997, the Secretary-General assessed that the recommended result be, at best mixed, if not met<sup>6</sup>.

Cities in developing countries seem especially to be falling short in social services, because of rapid urban migration (mainly because of this process in developing countries, for the first time ever, in 2008, half of the world's population will live in cities). A prime example is Africa. There, the urban population increased nine-fold between 1950 and 2000, rising from 33 million to 295 million in half a century. In Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, urban population increased by more than five-fold each, from 232 million to 1.4 billion in Asia and from 70 million to 393 million in Latin American and the Caribbean<sup>7</sup>. Developing a balanced urban counteraction to crime, concomitant with migration, is one of the most important global changes in the years to come.

Secondly, in 2005-2007, the question of providing internally balanced social (read: crime prevention and criminal justice) services returned to the United Nations through the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. In 2005 and 2006, the Commission recommended, and the ECOSOC adopted, two resolutions (2005/22 and 2006/20) in which it first requested the UNODC to pay due attention to crime prevention with a view to achieving a balanced approach between crime prevention and criminal justice responses.

In 2007, the Commission heard statements emphasising that crime issues were linked to the level of inclusion of new arrivals, the ability of cities to provide the services needed and the extent to which those groups trusted and participated in the governing of the city. It was noted that there was a need to improve both the level of safety and the overall quality of life for ur-

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<sup>5</sup> A/42/427, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Note by the Secretary-General, section II, para. 71.  
[http://www.are.admin.ch/imperia/md/content/are/nachhaltigeentwicklung/brundtland\\_bericht.pdf](http://www.are.admin.ch/imperia/md/content/are/nachhaltigeentwicklung/brundtland_bericht.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> E/CN. 17/1997/3, Commission on Sustainable Development, Global change and sustainable development: critical trends, Report of the Secretary-General, paras. 189 and 205.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

ban residents and that human security and urban crime prevention were policy matters of high priority in many countries<sup>8</sup>.

In conclusion, over the course of twenty years (1987-2007), the United Nations addressed the question of two imbalances: an external imbalance (shortage of basic urban services amid rapid population growth), and an internal imbalance between preventive and justice responses to crime, in the wake of urbanisation.

Addressing the latter imbalance entails solving a practical question: how to respond to urban crime, whether with punitive or/and with social policy? The reflex response is punitive<sup>9</sup>, but it does not work.

A case in point is the experience of South Africa and the USA in combating gangs. There, street and prison gangs have a joint street/prison membership. Those imprisoned enjoy a higher status in the prison because of their original affiliation with a street gang. Imprisonment as such, merely changes the status of gang membership which is reactivated after their release<sup>10</sup>. In the absence of other life opportunities, rejoining the street gang is the only choice<sup>11</sup>. In a city habitat, under present conditions of governance, the State can neither satisfy legitimate basic security nor livelihood needs for marginalised youth. This makes room for gangs with their own version of support. This also perpetuates violence, but to a different degree across cities throughout the world<sup>12</sup>, probably because of a different policy response to the problem.

The range of the above responses can be graphically described (Figure 1).

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<sup>8</sup> E/CN. 15/2007/30, Report on the sixteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Control, chapter II. A., para. 16.

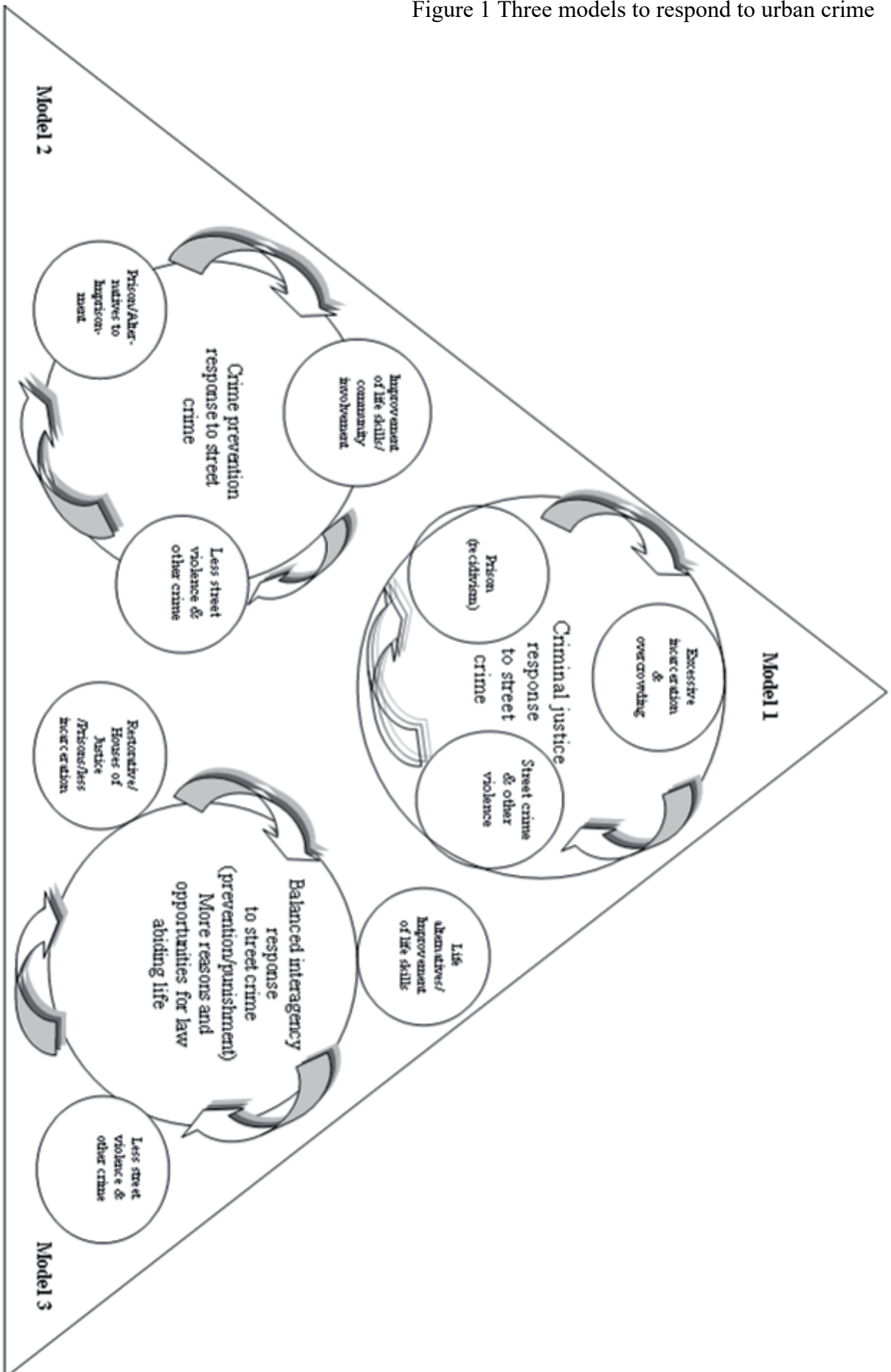
<sup>9</sup> Irwin Waller, *Less Law. More Order*, Westport, Connecticut–London, Praeger, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Jonny Steinberg, *The Number*, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Why street thugs are getting nastier, *The Economist*, 24 February 2005, [http://www.economist.com/world/na/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=3700336](http://www.economist.com/world/na/displayStory.cfm?story_id=3700336).

<sup>12</sup> There are also other reasons than the development of gangs involved in the spread of urban violence and other crime. For example, other violent entrepreneurs (e.g., organised criminals) may emerge who control a certain location and seek to increase their influence over new locations.

Figure 1 Three models to respond to urban crime



There are three models on one graph. Model 1 demonstrates the "criminal justice response" to "youth crime" (in brief). The model shows that street crime is self-perpetuating, enduring (incapacitation rather than rehabilitation) and additionally potentially detrimental, if it results in prison overcrowding. "Get tough" offers no viable solution. Furthermore, model 2, which can be called the "crime prevention response", offers a "soft" approach to youth crime: social and situational crime prevention with alternative life opportunities (sustainable livelihood for street/residence/community groups). Moreover, model 3 is the combination of both earlier models, where community-centered preventive and justice responses (prisons/restorative justice/houses of justice/sustainable livelihood opportunities for growing in culture of lawfulness through education and legitimate entrepreneurship) have been mixed.

The third model seems to be gaining popularity and working. Various research results (structural and delinquents/offender-based), come to similar conclusions. For example, the World Bank study<sup>13</sup> of the impact of crime and violence on the economic development of Brazil emphasises that counteracting the problem is far more than a criminal justice issue. No single intervention, no matter how well designed and executed, will solve the problem. There are multiple entry points likely to pay large dividends in reducing crime and violence. They include prevention programs targeting at-risk youth and gender-based violence, controlling the sale of alcohol, police reform, and integrated municipal (and state) public safety programs. While it is common to argue for either prevention or control responses to crime and violence, the two types of interventions are in fact complementary. A more efficient and professional criminal justice system - and especially police forces with new policing styles - is essential to lower levels of impunity. At the same time, many types of crime and violence are most appropriately and cost-effectively dealt with by prevention activities.

This is also the conclusion from the research in the United States, quoted in support of the above recommendation by the World Bank. That research found that a reduction of between 0.49 and 0.66 violent crimes by juveniles is achieved for each year of delinquent-custody (that is, counting equally one delinquent held for one year and six delinquents held for two months each, for example). Thus, the data suggests tougher enforcement reduces juvenile crime today. But the severity of the juvenile justice system during the last year (before becoming an adult) does not have a statistically significant impact on adult criminal behaviour.

This suggests that the deterrence or incapacitation effect of juvenile punishment is counterbalanced by the "criminal human capital/stigma" effects of being held in custody. Thus, a more punitive juvenile justice system may reduce juvenile crime today, but it will not reduce

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<sup>13</sup> Report No. 36525, Crime, Violence and Economic Development in Brazil: Elements for Effective Public Policy, World Bank, June 2006.

crime among today's juveniles when they are adults - since being held in custody increases the likelihood of a return to criminality or decreases that of a return to legal activity<sup>14</sup>.

Crime prevention works and there have now been numerous other confirmations of this, including most recently reviews and conclusions by eminent international crime prevention experts<sup>15</sup>. They all say: "*Let crime prevention work*".

### **I. Apply the rule of law: the principle of the rule of law<sup>16</sup>**

More than 120 years have passed since a British constitutionalist, A.V. Dicey (1885) made a first theoretical contribution to the development of the principle of the rule of law until its international working definition by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (2004). According to the latter, the rule of law refers to "a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency"<sup>17</sup>.

At the forefront of that concept of the rule of law stands prevention, which is "worth significantly more than a pound of cure", if security needs, the unequal distribution of wealth and social services, the abuse of power and ethnic discrimination are addressed through it<sup>18</sup>.

Between 1885 and now, the concept and the practice of the rule of law has been significantly advanced, to the point that sophisticated analytical models by the World Bank suggest that there is now a group of developed countries in the world with a very high level of observing the rule of law (Table 1)<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Steven D. Levitt, *Juvenile Crime and Punishment*, Journal of Political Economy, University of Chicago Press, 1998, vol. 106 (6), pp. 1156-1185.

<sup>15</sup> See articles by Anthony Bottoms, Hans-Jürgen Kerner and Irwin Waller in UNAFEI Resource Material Series No. 68, March 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Section 2.3 (c) (vii) and (d) (i) c. of the 1995 ECOSOC Guidelines ("Integrated crime prevention action plan"), section III.12 of the 2002 ECOSOC guidelines ("Basic principles"), and IV C. 25 (d) ("Social development").

<sup>17</sup> S/2004/616, Report of the Secretary-General on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies, para. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, para. 4

<sup>19</sup> The governance indicators presented here aggregate the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. This data is gathered from a number of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations. The rule of law measures the extent to which agents have confidence in, and abide by the

Table 1 Rule of law in selected developed and developing countries by percentile rank (2006)

Developed country	Rank (0-100)	Developing country	Rank (0-100)
AUSTRIA	97.1	BOTSWANA	67.1
CANADA	96.2	BRAZIL	41.4
CZECH REPUBLIC	73.3	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	39.5
FINLAND	98.1	EL SALVADOR	37.6
FRANCE	89.5	ETHIOPIA	30.0
GERMANY	94.3	GHANA	51.0
GREECE	67.6	GUATEMALA	14.3
ISRAEL	70.0	HAITI	2.4
ITALY	60.0	JAMAICA	33.3
NORWAY	99.0	KENYA	15.7
POLAND	59.0	MEXICO	40.5
PORTUGAL	82.9	NIGERIA	8.1
RUSSIA	19.0	REPUBLIC OF SOUTH KOREA	72.9
SLOVENIA	75.2	RWANDA	34.3
SPAIN	84.8	SOUTH AFRICA	58.6
SWEDEN	96.7	UGANDA	39.0

rules of society, in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. The percentile rank of a country indicates its position among 1 212 countries/territories in the world covered by the ranking. 0 corresponds to lowest rank and 100 to highest rank. There is no established convention for the designation of "developed" and "developing" country. In the latter category, some countries belong to the group of "least developed". The methodology for collecting the constitutive elements of the rule of law indicator is described in: A Decade in Measuring the Quality of Governance. Governance Matters 2006, Worldwide Governance Indicators, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Washington, D. C., 2006, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/1740479-115040258235\\_7/2661829-1158008871017/booklet\\_decade\\_of\\_measuring\\_governance.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/1740479-115040258235_7/2661829-1158008871017/booklet_decade_of_measuring_governance.pdf).

UNITED KINGDOM	93.3	Subsaharan Africa	28.8
UNITED STATES	91.9	Latin America	35.4
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	90.0	Caribbean	65.0

Source: Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay and Massimo Mastruzzi, Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996-2006 (July 2007), *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* No. 4280

Among them is Germany, one of the sponsors of the aforementioned 2002 ECOSOC resolution, with the crime prevention guidelines that stress the importance of applying the rule of law. The table also covers a number of developing countries among which there are notable exceptions showing high level of observance of the rule of law<sup>20</sup>. By and large, however, the difference between developed and developing countries is clear.

Accordingly, in the African countries, estimates suggest that court decisions cover less than 10 per cent of the urban crime (major and minor delinquencies included)<sup>21</sup>. In the slum areas of Africa (eg. Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa)<sup>22</sup> and Central America (eg. Guatemala<sup>23</sup>), known for their insecurity, their residents exercise "do-it-yourself" (mob) justice, without legal authority, by lynching or beating the alleged criminals to death, with a tacit approval of the police. The police not only look away, but are reluctant to enter the slum areas. Underpaid, under resourced, often corrupt, the police do not enforce the law consistently with international human rights norms and standards. They do not uphold the supremacy of law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, avoid arbitrariness and follow procedural and legal transparency. Why, then, do neither the victimised nor the authorities "*Apply the rule of law*"?

Such lawlessness has many reasons. The ECOSOC guidelines addressed some of them in the two subsequent principles.

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<sup>20</sup> Some other developed and developing countries included in Table 1 have also been included in other sections of this article.

<sup>21</sup> Juma Assiago, Promoting Urban Crime Prevention Strategies in Africa, [http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/safercities/documents/Urban\\_Crime\\_Prevention.PDF](http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/safercities/documents/Urban_Crime_Prevention.PDF), p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Is mob justice acceptable ? 13 October 2000, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/debates/african/965299.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/debates/african/965299.stm); Jeremy Clark, Kenyan police kill 11 in Nairobi gang crackdown, 7 June 2007, <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L07639405.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> Crime and Development in Central America. Caught in the Crossfire, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna May 2007, <http://www.unodc.org/pdf/Central%20America%20Study.pdf>, p. 81.

## **II. Include marginalised people in the legitimate socio-economic activities: the principle of socio-economic inclusion<sup>24</sup>**

Marginalisation is one of such reasons for lawlessness. Marginalised communities grow in violence; their members offend and victimise more vulnerable individuals (women, children) who physically and mentally suffer the effects of exclusion.

The source of marginalisation is the retreat of the welfare state, and the emergence of punitive policies toward members of marginalised communities. That retreat made more than 500 million workers additionally available at the supply side of a progressively global labour market<sup>25</sup>. Within that group, which is only partly formally registered as unemployed, there are an estimated 66 million unemployed young people. In 2005, the youth unemployment rate stood at 13.5 per cent (compared to 6.4 per cent for the overall global unemployment rate and 4.5 per cent for the adult unemployment rate). At least 50 of the countries for which data are available have youth unemployment rates of more than 15 per cent<sup>26</sup>.

In general, the youth (15-19 years of age) of this decade (2005) are less economically active than that of 1990. Females are less economically active than males, but all are more educated (the school enrolment ratio grew)<sup>27</sup>. In the 15-24 age category (most prone to drugs, crime and sexual exploitation), in the years 1995-2005, unemployment grew by almost 15 %. There are idler, but better educated youths around, on an oversupplied job market riddled with insecurity. Those 300 million unemployed, the "youth bulge" (approximately 25% of the entire youth world population), live below the US \$2 per day poverty line<sup>28</sup>. This bulge is disproportionately driven by population growth of developing countries. Every hour in: Istanbul (Turkey) 28 children are born, Mexico City (Mexico) +31, São Paulo (Brazil) and Karachi (Pakistan) +33, in Mumbai (India) +43, and in Lagos (Nigeria) +53. At the same time, in Los Angeles (USA) +20, in Tokyo (Japan) +5, in Seoul (Republic of Korea) +2, while elsewhere there is negative population growth: in London (UK), Milan (Italy) and Madrid (Spain) -3, and in Moscow (Russia) -5<sup>29</sup>.

Presently, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of youth (10-24 years of age) in the world - 33%, and experiences a very radical drop (1990-2005) of labour market opportunities

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<sup>24</sup> Section III. 8 of the 2002 ECOSOC guidelines ("Basic principles").

<sup>25</sup> Peter Lock, *Crime and violence: Global economic parameters* (2006), <http://www.libertysecurity.org/article940.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Youth Employment World Youth Report, 2003, [www.un.org/esa/socdev/uniyin/documents/ch02.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/uniyin/documents/ch02.pdf), p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> See further: U.S. Population Reference Bureau, *The World's Youth Population Data Sheet 2006*, page 6, <http://www.prb.org/pdf06/WorldsYouth2006DataSheet.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Lock, *op. cit.*

<sup>29</sup> Ricky Burdett, *Urban age project*, Urban Age Johannesburg Conference 2006, [http://www.urban-age.net/0\\_downloads/pdf\\_presentations/Johannesburg/A3\\_Burdett.pdf](http://www.urban-age.net/0_downloads/pdf_presentations/Johannesburg/A3_Burdett.pdf).

for youth of 15-19 years of age, especially men. It has also the fastest urbanising rate of all continents. Some 49% of the population lives there on less than US \$1 a day (70% in urban slums), and their numbers are expected to double every 15 years on average. Indeed, the estimated percentage of the populations living in slum areas is a very telling single measure of the socio-economic exclusion in most of the developing countries.

The formation of gangs is one of the results of exclusion. Gangs are "organisations of socially excluded"<sup>30</sup>. They are the symptom of the strengthening of sub-cultural identities by men and women who resist marginalisation. Even though there are no comprehensive statistics to document this process, results of fragmentary studies indicate that in several countries in Northern, Central and Latin America, and Africa the emergence of youth "gangs"/"organised armed groups" or other youth criminal associations is a fact of life<sup>31</sup>. And so it is in Asia (eg. India and Pakistan) and Europe (eg. France, Poland, Russia, United Kingdom).

Depending on the definition, there are at least tens of millions of gang members in the world today<sup>32</sup>. Consisting of the deprived, and materially and hedonistically motivated (more educated) youth, gangs offer youth a "home" and facilitate their pursuits. Drugs and crime are among them. Gangs are becoming a new common denominator and threat to urban security across the world.

Against these odds, it is widely argued that providing marginalised people with employment/education or involving youth in sport activities reduces the risk of their conflict with law. And indeed, particularly concerning the youth at risk, there is unequivocal empirical evidence that the better education youths receive, the less they offend, especially when they are later employed<sup>33</sup>.

But the matter of imparting such life skills is even more complex than this. While employment is superficially beneficial, as to detract from the criminogenic nature of unemployment, questions exist as to its blanket appeal in the reduction of youth crime; there are conditions of youth employment which may induce criminal behaviour<sup>34</sup>. These factors relate to the meaningfulness of the work. Youth employment may be low skilled and low paid. Where the em-

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<sup>30</sup> John M. Hagedorn, *The Global Impact of Gangs*, *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 2005, vol. 21, no. 2, p. 156.

<sup>31</sup> See: *Crime and Development in Central America*, op. cit., and *Neither War nor Peace. Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence. International Comparisons of Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence*, Viva Rio, Rio de Janeiro 2004, Coalition Against, <http://www.coav.org.br>.

<sup>32</sup> Hagedorn, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>33</sup> A total of 80 studies from Europe, North America and various international countries reveal a correlation between crime and unemployment (Lee Ellis and Anthony Walsh, *Criminology. A Global Perspective*, Boston, Pearson-Longman 2005, p. 194).

<sup>34</sup> Nicolas Williams, Francis T. Cullen, John Paul Wright, *Labour market participation and youth crime: the neglect of "working" in delinquency research*, *Social Pathology*, Fall 1996, Vol. 2, No 3, 195.

ployer interest in the youth is merely economic and there is no opportunity for personal growth, where there is no mentoring, where the youth is largely unsupervised and the work is not mentally challenging, the likelihood of criminality can be enhanced, and the inclusion process remains on paper only.

And likewise with education. What matters is not its formality but quality. Again, only such educational curricula which are meaningful and motivated by the implementation of the principle of inclusion into the culture of lawfulness, i.e. a rejection of violent, criminal or abusive cultural norms, can have a higher probability of crime prevention success<sup>35</sup>. However, high rates of geographical mobility impact negatively upon school performance, because it weakens the consensus of values, norms and goals<sup>36</sup>. In conclusion, and despite this challenge: "*Include marginalised people in the legitimate socio-economic activities*".

### **III. Focus on community: the principle of community-centred action<sup>37</sup>**

Mobility also affects community life, and weakens the sense of "belonging" - otherwise a powerful incentive for dealing with its problems. They can be tackled locally and with the insight of the local people. Their insight and support prevents moral deterioration in a community, and its physical degeneration which is a visible symptom ("broken windows") of an increase in crime. Where community integration exists, eg. strong community identity along ethnic or religious lines, residents can use this as a starting point for organising crime prevention activities. Juvenile delinquency, for example, may originate from boredom and a lack of both challenge and recreational facilities for young people in the area. The establishment of such facilities and a dispute resolution mechanism could prevent or settle consequent hostilities between neighbours. Where there are well planned crime prevention strategies with the increasing support of a culture of lawfulness, crime, delinquency and victimisation are reduced. The community is inherently safer, the quality of life enhanced, the load on the criminal justice system is reduced and the cost of crime plummets. Here again the need for a balanced preventive and justice response to crime comes into picture, through various conflict resolution mechanisms ("houses of justice"), noted in the background (Figure 1).

An essential element in focussing on the community is the family. The 2002 ECOSOC guidelines emphasise that violence is an intergenerational issue, transmitted from parents to children who carry them on and demonstrate it in school ("bullying").

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<sup>35</sup> Mayra Buvinic, Andrew Morisson, Michael Shifter, Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Framework for Action, Technical Study, Sustainable Development Department, International Development Bank, Washington, D.C., 1999.

<sup>36</sup> R. D. Crutchfield, M. R. Geerken, W. R. Gove, Crime rate and social integration, *Criminology*, vol. 20, no 3 /4, Nov. 1982, pp. 467-478; United Nations World Youth Report 2005, United Nations, New York 2005, p. 138.

<sup>37</sup> Sections 1.1 and 2.3 (b) (ii) and 3 (c) (vi) of the 1995 ECOSOC guidelines ("Local approach to problems" and "Integrated crime prevention action plan") and section III. 8, and IV. 16 of the 2002 ECOSOC guidelines ("Socio-economic development and inclusion", and "Community involvement").

There are many programmes that aim to provide parents and families with the skills to take better physical and psychological care of children and youth. There is evidence that they are very effective in preventing substance abuse and a range of other problematic behaviour. Studies of the World Health Organisation (WHO) indicate that there is also growing evidence that parenting practices can be powerful risk or protective factors for unhealthy behaviour of children and youth, across cultural settings<sup>38</sup>. However, there is also evidence, again from an extensive review done by the WHO, that family skills programmes and other kinds of family-based interventions are not frequently implemented, especially in low and middle income countries. Main implementation obstacles include the lack of implementation protocols adapted to local culture/situation and the difficulties of involving parents and guardians whose time and energy are already stretched to provide basic sustenance for the family.

There are a growing number of projects, evaluations and meta reviews of the influence of community-centred and family-based urban crime prevention in developing and developed nations, most of which equivocally document the benefits of this approach. What is needed is to develop and test an implementation model (which would include: guidelines, training materials for the parents/children/families) to be used in low and middle income countries, with a "*Focus on community*" and family.

#### **IV. Work on interagency basis: the principle of partnership<sup>39</sup>**

Traditionally, crime prevention and control has been the responsibility of the law enforcement, i.e., the police, as well as prosecutorial and correctional entities. But the urbanisation of crime has rearranged the landscape for its counteraction. Law enforcement alone or law enforcement as a centrepiece of local counteraction to crime no longer remains a tenable principle. The principle of partnership among various entities is now the only tenable one.

There are many national examples of such a new partnership approach. Not all worked. What works follows the meticulously reviewed experience of the "whole of government" approach in the United Kingdom<sup>40</sup>.

This approach is built on the assumption that because we know the causes of crime are complex and multifaceted, then preventive responses will be more effective if we combine the efforts of all the relevant government agencies (and community and business groups) into a

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<sup>38</sup> The WHO Child and Adolescent Health and Development Programme (ACH) has been working on this. See, e.g., Growing in confidence. Lessons from eight countries in successful scaling up of adolescent health and development programming, [http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/New\\_Publications/ADH/WHO\\_FCH\\_CAH\\_02.13.pdf](http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/New_Publications/ADH/WHO_FCH_CAH_02.13.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Section 2. 3 (b) of the 1995 ECOSOC Guidelines ("Integrated crime prevention plan"), and section II.5, III. 7, 9, 17 and 19 of the 2002 ECOSOC Guidelines ("Conceptual frame of reference", and "Basic principles").

<sup>40</sup> By Peter Homel, The whole of government approach to crime prevention, Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, No. 287, November 2004, pp. 1-6, author of the motto of the present article.

single coordinated strategy. However, using a detailed analysis of the experience of the British Crime Reduction Programme, it was found that implementing a whole of government approach can present many practical challenges and difficulties that need to be carefully planned for and managed in order that the improved benefits can be seen to outweigh the additional costs.

The conclusions are as follows:

As there are multiple entry points to prevent crime and violence, start with those that have potential for effective bilateral partnerships or joint inter-agency arrangements;

Avoid duplication of efforts (information systems; data requirements, etc.);

Achieve policy goals through problem analysis and assessment of best practice/best value evidence;

Find a way of including crime prevention within a broader social justice framework that will help to develop initiatives regenerating communities;

To this end, transfer economic and political resources to local institutions and residents, thus empowering communities, helping to integrate the marginalised youth, and enabling to tackle key community-level risk factors of crime and delinquency;

Continue towards coherent and effective central management.

In sum, "*Work on interagency-basis*", bottom-up.

## **V. Make crime prevention a renewable resource: the principle of sustainability and accountability<sup>41</sup>**

The full meaning of the above conclusion (and of the other conclusions stemming from the application of principles I-IV) can best be appreciated in the context of the principle of sustainability.

This is because of the aforementioned report of the "*Brundtland Commission*" (1987) through which the United Nations embarked on a ground-breaking mission of facilitating globally sustainable development as development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"<sup>42</sup>. The report highlighted three fundamental components to sustainable development: environmental protection, economic growth and social equity.

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<sup>41</sup> Sections III. 10 ("Sustainability/accountability"), IV. A. 20 ("Sustainability"), and B. 22 (c) ("Planning interventions").

<sup>42</sup> A/42/427, op. cit., para. 27.

Although that report did not directly deal with crime issues (this was the pre-globalisation era of crime), in the 1990s, the goal of alternative development for the prevention of illicit drug cultivation, and then the goal of crime prevention for sustainable development (ECOSOC resolutions 2002/13 and 2005/22, operative para. 4), both entered the United Nations drugs and crime agenda in their own ways. Making crime prevention work requires managing it successfully for the purpose of sustainable development ("smart growth"<sup>43</sup>).

The 2002 ECOSOC guidelines emphasise three dimensions of sustainability: programmatic, institutional and financial.

Programmatically, the guidelines declare that Governments and other funding bodies should strive to achieve sustainability of demonstrably effective crime prevention programmes and initiatives through, inter alia: (a) encouraging community involvement in sustainability and (b) reviewing resource allocation to establish and maintain an appropriate balance between crime prevention and the criminal justice and other systems, to be more effective in preventing crime and victimisation. Institutionally, the guidelines recommend establishing clear accountability for funding, programming and coordinating crime prevention initiatives. Finally, financially, the guidelines also declare that crime prevention requires adequate resources, including funding for structures and activities, in order to be sustained. There should be clear accountability for implementation and evaluation and for the achievement of planned results.

Behind this rather formalistic concept there is something more lively: the debate over the practical implementation of the concept of crime prevention as a renewable resource developed by the energies of community. How this resource performs, depends on the specific concepts and methods with which it is approached<sup>44</sup>. Surely, the performance should be measurable and accountable (base-line data, safety audits). This functional sense of sustainability is, perhaps, the most essential for successful crime prevention. It has numerous other practical and theoretical implications, including the need to revisit and reinterpret criminological theories, in terms of etiology and prevention of crime, and their field application, in line with the motto "*Make crime prevention a renewable resource*".

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<sup>43</sup> Richard H. Schneider, Ted Kitchen, *Crime Prevention and the Built Environment*, London and New York, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group 2007, p. 35.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., Rachel Armitage, *Sustainability versus safety: confusion, conflict and contradiction in designing out crime*, (in:) Graham Farrell, Kate J. Bowers, Shane D. Johnson (eds), *Imagination for Crime Prevention. Essays in Honour of Ken Pease*, Crime Prevention Studies, Vol. 21, Criminal Justice Press, Monsey, NY, USA, Willan Publishing, Cullompton, Devon, UK, 2007, pp. 81-110.

## VI. Apply knowledge: the principle of evidence-based practice<sup>45</sup>

Knowledge is not cast in stone. It is the best knowledge we have, at any given time, about crime, based on the best analytical work available and supporting empirical study<sup>46</sup>.

Verification of what works in crime prevention is based on various ever updated scientific research methods and protocols. In the developed world, where evidence and not ideology prevails, researchers found that the conclusions of the effectiveness of a programme are stronger the larger the number of people (such as youth at risk) that went through the programme, the more often the programmes have been tested in different locations, and the more the results were evaluated by an independent expert who compared them with those who went through the programme with a similar or identical group of people<sup>47</sup>. The conclusions echo the conclusions from a review twenty years later that had already shown that imprisonment did not work, but that programmes targeted to risk factors that lead to crime might work if given sufficient resources<sup>48</sup>. However, Governments should be the leaders in crime prevention, not only by providing resources and expertise, but also in training, qualifying and certifying all professionals<sup>49</sup>.

Particularly valuable practices have been pursued intergovernmentally by the European Union's Crime Prevention Network which employs a peer review process, and by non-governmental entities, like The Campbell Crime and Justice Coordinating Group which pursues systematic crime prevention reviews. These reviews employ scientific and explicit methods to identify, screen, appraise and analyse evaluation studies. This kind of rigorous review produces the most reliable evidence on what the science says about a particular question<sup>50</sup>.

In the developing world these conclusions and methods can only be partly pursued. The application of the ECOSOC crime prevention guidelines is still more rights- rather than evidence-based. What is so obvious in Europe, Northern America, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea and in a few developing countries (e.g. Brazil and South Africa), in the other countries is still a postulate which the international donor and research community should address, that is to "*Apply knowledge*".

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<sup>45</sup> Section B. 2.5 (d) of the 1995 ECOSOC guidelines ("Authorities at all levels") and section IV. B. 21 and 23 of the 2002 ECOSOC guidelines ("Knowledge base", and "Support evaluation").

<sup>46</sup> Per-Olof H. Wikström, Doing without knowing. Common pitfalls in crime prevention, (in:) Farrell et. al., op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>47</sup> Larry Sherman, quoted in Irwin Waller, Less Law..., op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> For crime prevention as an educational subject, see: Kauko Aromaa, Sławomir Redo (eds), For the Rule of Law: Criminal Justice Teaching and Training @cross the World, The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI), The Korean Institute of Criminal Justice Policy (Helsinki – Seoul 2008).

<sup>50</sup> See also: Erich Marks, Anja Meyer, Ruth Linssen, The Beccaria-project, op. cit.

## **Conclusion**

The six United Nations guiding principles to make crime prevention work have not only a substantive but also capacity-building sense. In either case they serve one purpose – to reduce crime in the world in a humane and effective manner. The ECOSOC guidelines, from which they are derived, are promoted and used by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in its own crime prevention project ideas and project documents, as the best practice which paves the way to the successful counteraction of crime. Indeed the Secretary-General of the United Nations argued that "prevention is worth significantly more than a pound of cure", and should be seen as the first imperative of justice (S/2004/616).

For the incipient global crime prevention movement this is certainly an encouraging statement for its "smart growth". Consequently, the international crime prevention and criminal justice community now has in its hands a weighty measure that not only challenges the traditional wisdom about what works in counteracting crime, but also which shows the new way worth pursuing.

## Content

Introduction .....	1
Lectures from the 1st Annual International Forum	
SŁAWOMIR REDO	
Six United Nations guiding principles to make crime prevention work .....	5
MARGARET SHAW	
Why Youth Are Essential Partners in Crime Prevention: An International View .....	23
ELIZABETH JOHNSTON	
The multiple Challenges of Youth facing Violence .....	37
DETLEF OTTO BÖNKE AND TOBIAS PLATE	
Crime Prevention Activities from the Perspective of the German Presidency of the European Union .....	43
Contributions from participants at the 1st Annual International Forum	
TIINA RISTMÄE	
Neighbourhood Watch as an effective crime prevention method in Estonia .....	53
ANNA KARINA NICKELSEN	
Crime Prevention in Denmark - Current status .....	63
JANINA CZAPSKA	
Crime prevention in Poland 18 years after the transformation .....	71
LIBOR GAŠPIERIK AND JANA MÜLLEROVÁ	
Criminological aspects of delinquency of juvenile and criminality of teenage offenders in the Slovak Republic .....	85
LUBOMÍRA PECKOVÁ	
Crime prevention Strategy in the Slovak Republic .....	91
ANGELOS GIANNAKOPOULOS, KONSTADINOS MARAS AND DIRK TÄNZLER	
Research Findings on Perceptions of Corruption in Seven European Countries within the EU-Project 'Crime and Culture' .....	99
WIESBADEN DECLARATION OF THE 12TH GERMAN CRIME PREVENTION CONGRESS "A STRONG YOUTH – A STRONG FUTURE" .....	125