United Nations System-wide Guidelines on **Safer Cities** and **Human Settlements**

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SAFER CITIES

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SAFER CITIES

FOREWORD

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

I am pleased to present the United Nations system-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements adopted by the first United Nations Habitat Assembly in May 2019. These UN system-wide Guidelines seek to catalyze actions towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, at a time when the demand for local safety action is at the topmost priority for Member States and citizens alike. In this perspective, as the focal agency of the United Nations for sustainable urbanisation, UN-Habitat is happy to lead UN systemwide actions to implement these Guidelines to enhance the role of cities and local governments in leading measurable improvements on the safety of citizens worldwide. UN-Habitat draws on the expertise it has gathered from over twenty-five years of work of its Safer Cities Programme to improve urban safety. The drafting of the document was a multi-step process that engaged actors from across the United Nations as well as external partners, ensuring that safety was addressed from all perspectives.

We now have the evidence of what works and does not work in making cities and human settlements safer. It is time now for countries and cities to leverage the required financial resources to implement actions on a wider scale in the creation of safer cities for all. To this end, I pledge to Member States and the UN system as a whole that UN-Habitat under my leadership will deliver on your expectations and be better able to implement your instructions, if we are given the necessary support to achieve the vision of "safer and secure environments to work, live, invest and play".

These Guidelines are not a prescriptive set of theoretic material but rather have drawn on the promising practices of local government, clearly articulating the principles and approaches of what cities and local governments have demonstrated that works in taking innovative measures in tackling urban crime, violence and insecurity. In doing so, local governments have demonstrated that as the level of government closest to the people, they are in the best position to empower and mobilize communities to tackle the root causes and modify the situations which breed crime. Some of them have organized communities holistically to face the challenge of crime and insecurity. As a result, they have gained considerable knowledge about what works and what is needed to make communities safer and more sustainable. Programs that tackle problems in early childhood and adolescence can demonstrate significant reductions in violent crime over time and reduce costs. Programs that confront residential burglary and car theft can achieve sustainable reductions of 50% or more, thus potentially human suffering and dollars.

I wish to reiterate the role of national governments as well as key to fostering a multi-level governance of safety framework in which these guidelines can be implemented. The complementarity of the criminal justice system actors with urban institutions lies at the core of the success of implementing these guidelines. While elected municipal officials must exert political leadership in partnership with the other levels of government to take on the task of preventing urban crime and violence, national governments must go beyond our traditional criminal justice system - police, courts, and corrections - if we are to prevent crime in our cities and human settlements. The national government must be a partner in financing local, comprehensive crime prevention and urban safety efforts.

We must continue to analyze the situations that generate crime and mobilize the collective effort of citizens and other stakeholders to change those situations. Our response must be innovative and be part of a long-range approach, while at the same time being responsive to immediate needs. We must bring together and use the best data on violent crime and delinquency and link these to urban and social planning data. It is here that the role of the private sector is key in partnership with the public sector to support the disaggregation of data at the city level which continues to remain a major challenge to assure the consistency in evidence-based policy and programming on safer cities and human settlements.

Partnerships with all levels of government which have the responsibilities for policy and program development. Partnerships with other public and private entities. Greater access to and sharing of best practices of preventing crime and victimization through a resource bureau on best practices. Greater access to technical assistance to develop comprehensive community-wide action plans. Better training for city leaders, crime prevention practitioners, and police. More rigorous evaluation tools to measure the scope and efficiency of prevention measures.

I call for technical and concrete assistance from sister UN agencies and the International Community to enable us to implement the preventive strategies envisioned in the UN systemwide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements and that will give our citizens better safety and security. A necessary key step in this direction will be for Member States and other non—state actors to engage in the review, monitor and assessment of the results of this process to ensure that all actors are effectively contributing in the co-production of safety for all to live, work and play.

As the 2030 Agenda shows, safety and security are key elements of the quality of life in urban centres from the perspective of sustainable social, cultural, economic development, civic vitality, and human rights. Without safety, there is no sustainable urban development, and without sustainable urban development, there is no safety.

I

Introduction

1. The United Nations system-wide guidelines on safer cities and human settlements have been prepared pursuant to resolution 26/4 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), on promoting safety in cities and human settlements, in which the Executive Director of UN-Habitat was requested to continue close consultations with the relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and to submit the guidelines for consideration by the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session.

2. The United Nations system-wide guidelines on safer cities and human settlements outline the elements of technical cooperation and assistance that are necessary to provide local governments, in collaboration with national and subnational governments, with a standard in responding to the challenges of delivering urban safety and security in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. The goal is to build and promote a participatory and inclusive vision of urban safety and security that contributes to social cohesion and a better quality of life, with which all inhabitants can identify. The guidelines complement the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/13, annex).

3. Making cities and human settlements safe is one of the key aspirations reflected in Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda. Similarly, in the New Urban Agenda, Member States committed themselves to promoting a safe, healthy, inclusive and secure environment in cities and human settlements, enabling all to live, work and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation, taking into consideration that women and girls, children and youth, and persons in vulnerable situations are often particularly affected (see General Assembly resolution 71/256, para. 39). They also call for the integration of crime prevention policies into urban strategies (ibid, para. 103), and interventions are a key commitment of the New Urban that give impetus to the work of countries and the international community at large in developing safer cities and human settlements.

ACT NOW
TO MAKE YOUR
CITY SAFE

II Vision

4. The vision is to have cities and human settlements where all people are safe and enjoy equal rights and opportunities, as well as their fundamental freedoms and rights. The guidelines support the role of local governments, in collaboration with subnational and national governments, in achieving the reduction and elimination of the incidence and fear of crime and violence, through integrated policy approaches to urban safety and security that include good urban governance, planning and management in accordance with each country's criminal policy structure. These policies will be collective and inclusive of all levels of government and all relevant stakeholders. Partnerships in the development and implementation of tools, strategies and approaches will drive the achievement of urban safety and security for all. In this process, local governments, in collaboration with subnational and national governments and all relevant stakeholders worldwide, will contribute to the realization of a road map for urban safety and security worldwide and thereby contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

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