



UN-HABITAT

GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS 2007



SOLUTIONS³ *at a glance*

Solutions³ : UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme

The Safer Cities Programme was launched in 1996 at the request of African Mayors who wanted to **develop city-level crime prevention strategies** to address urban crime and violence. The programme, recognizes that crime and insecurity have been strongly affected by the impact of urbanization, and as such, have become a major preoccupation for many countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Programme Background

- The programme aims to create a culture of prevention and a safe environment for all urban inhabitants by strengthening the capacity of local authorities, the criminal justice system, the private sector and civil society partners.
- Crime does not happen spontaneously. It grows out of an unequal and exclusive society and out of a lack of institutional and social control. An exclusionary urban environment encourages crime and violence. Moreover, the criminal justice system, including police, courts and prisons, is poorly adapted to the rapidly changing urban environment and is unable to respond to the concerns and needs of urban dwellers, particularly the poor.
- In this context, the issue of urban crime prevention represents a key challenge for the sustainable development of cities and human settlements in general.
- A number of countries are in the process of reforming their police and justice systems with a greater appreciation of the urban environment. Inspired by international standards that increasingly recognize the central role of municipalities as key actors, local authorities are developing community-wide strategies for addressing crime and violence.
- To date, Safer Cities initiatives are well under way in several African cities Johannesburg, Durban, Dar es Salaam, Abidjan, Antananarivo, Dakar, Yaoundé, Douala, Nairobi. The programme has been extended to Latin America, Asia and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in order to cater for an increasing need for exchange of information, knowledge and good practice between national, regional and local governments as well as civil society and non-government organizations.

Key activities

Safer Cities Programmes in individual cities have been developed within a democratic framework in the fight against crime based on three principles: law enforcement for all, solidarity and crime prevention.

The Safer Cities Programme is not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the problems of urban crime and many cities in the world have made progress in tackling crime and violence using a similar approach but outside the realm of the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme.

One of the key characteristics of the Safer Cities Programme is that it encourages documentation, evaluation and reporting of what is being done so that there is an evidence base in relation to these activities. The Programme has developed a number of policy papers on issues related to crime prevention, gender-based violence and the role of police in good governance.

Solutions³ : UN-HABITAT urban disaster risk reduction strategy

UN-HABITAT Framework for Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction

- The Framework is the principal guide used by UN-HABITAT to support humanitarian agencies, local and national governments and **refine the practice of “building-back-better”**. Its key thematic areas are: disaster mitigation and vulnerability reduction; land and property administration; longer-term shelter strategies; local economic recovery; public participation and good governance; partnerships and capacity building.
- UN-HABITAT, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and some international NGOs, such as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, have championed the risk reduction agenda. These organizations are active in lobbying internationally for risk reduction and have emphasized the need for risk reduction in urban contexts. **Experts estimate that one dollar invested in risk reduction today can save up to \$7 in relief and recovery costs tomorrow.**
- **UN-HABITAT has provided advice** on post-disaster reconstruction planning following the 2003 earthquake in **Bam, Iran**, during which some 26,000 people lost their lives and an ancient citadel inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List was destroyed. UN-HABITAT helped develop a policy of supporting residents in reconstructing their own homes with improved seismic resistance, in preference to the established procedure of placing residents in temporary shelters.
- In **Maputo, Mozambique**, a city where more than 70 per cent of the population live in slums, rapid unplanned urbanization has brought flood-prone land into residential use. Here, slum upgrading has fostered risk reduction. The wider UN-HABITAT programme supports training and capacity-building, participatory land-use planning and physical interventions at the local level, with the participation of local government, community groups and state ministries.

UN-HABITAT's Sustainable Cities Programme

- Since its inception in 1990, the Sustainable Cities Programme has been a vehicle through which UN-HABITAT provides support to broad-based participatory management of urban development. Direct interventions in over 60 cities around the world have led to socioeconomic and environmental improvements on the ground.
- In **Kigali, Rwanda**, UN-HABITAT collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNDP on a project to rehabilitate the city's industrial zone. It resulted in significant economic savings and environmental improvements through more efficient water and energy utilization and cleaner production measures implemented by businesses with regard to materials and chemical spillage control.
- UN-HABITAT and UNEP are working with the Government of **Bhutan** towards applying eco-housing standards in all new government structures, through the training of local urban planners and designers.

United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security programmes

- UN-HABITAT is coordinating three United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security programmes in **Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Cambodia**, which focus on informal settlements upgrading. Recognizing that community empowerment is crucial for reconstructing war-affected societies, all programmes have adopted a community-based consultative planning process and have established community development councils as the most effective approach to improving living conditions and human security in informal settlements.