KEY FINDINGS AND MESSAGES

INTRODUCTION

The theme of 'urban safety and security' encompasses a wide range of concerns and issues. These range from basic needs such as food, shelter and health, through impacts of natural disasters, such as those triggered by earthquakes and cyclones, to collective security needs, such as protection from urban terrorism or war. However, only a few of these concerns and issues can be addressed from a human settlements perspective through appropriate urban policy, planning, design and governance. *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements 2007* focuses on three major threats to the safety and security of cities: crime and violence; insecurity of tenure and forced eviction; and natural and human-made disasters.

Combined, these three threats to the safety and security of urban residents currently pose a huge challenge to both city and national governments, as well as to the international community. The report analyses worldwide trends with respect to urban crime and violence, security of tenure and forced eviction, and natural and human-made disasters. It pays particular attention to the underlying causes and impacts of these three threats to the safety and security of urban residents, as well as to the good policies and practices that have been adopted at the city, national and international levels in response to these threats.

The report places urban safety and security within the wider perspective of human security, which specifically focuses on the security of people rather than states and encompasses a wide range of biological, social, economic and political needs. It shows how poverty exacerbates the impacts on cities of the three threats to urban safety and security addressed in the report by influencing the levels of *vulnerability* and *resilience* of urban-poor communities.

The report illustrates how the poor are disproportionately victimized by the three threats to safety and security that it examines. The urban poor are generally more exposed to risky events (such as crime, forced eviction or disasters) than the rich, partly because of their geographical location within the city. The urban poor are more vulnerable to the outcomes of natural and human-made hazards than the rich because they are often located on sites prone to floods, landslides and pollution. The urban poor also have limited access to assets, thus limiting their ability to respond to hazards or to manage risk – for example, through insurance. Because the poor are politically powerless, it is unlikely that they will receive the social services that they need during disasters.

The report shows that the unequal distribution of risk and vulnerability is an important and growing component of daily urban life. It is often linked to the presence of millions of urban residents in slums, which are environments in which much crime and violence occur, where tenure is least secure, and which are prone to disasters of many kinds. These slums, which are presently home to about 1 billion urban dwellers worldwide, represent one part of what has been termed 'the geography of misery'.

CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Key findings

Global trends indicate that crime rates have been on the increase. For instance, over the period of 1980 to 2000, total recorded crimes increased from 2300 to 3000 crimes for every 100,000 people. This trend is, however, not replicated in all regions of the world. In North America and Western Europe, total crime rates fell significantly over the two decades, whereas in Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Africa, total crime rates increased.

Regional variations in crime and violence are more pronounced when specific types of crime are examined. In the case of homicides, which are indicative of violent contact crimes, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean report double-digit figures, while significantly lower rates are reported for Southeast Asia, Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean and the West Pacific region. At the national level, Colombia, South Africa, Jamaica, Guatemala and Venezuela have very high homicide rates, while Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Spain, Cyprus and Norway have considerably low rates.

Crime and violence are typically more severe in urban areas and are compounded by their rapid growth. A recent study has shown that 60 per cent of urban dwellers in developing and transitional countries have been victims of crime, over a five-year period, with victimization rates reaching 70 per cent in parts of LAC and Africa. In Latin America, where 80 per cent of the population is urban, the rapidly expanding metropolitan areas of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Mexico City and Caracas account for over half of the violent crimes in their respective countries. The homicide rate in Rio de Janeiro has tripled since the 1970s, while the rate in São Paulo has quadrupled. In the Caribbean, Kingston, Jamaica's capital, consistently accounts for the vast majority of the nation's murders.

In Africa, cities such as Lagos, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Nairobi account for a sizeable proportion of their nation's crime. Urban areas in Africa also have the highest reported levels of burglary, with victimization rates of over 8 per cent of the population. Although a non-violent crime, burglary is a serious offence in developing regions such as Africa. Here, burglary tends to be partly motivated by poverty, even though material possessions are fewer.

Robbery also poses a major threat to urban areas in many developing countries. This is because it not only results in injury and property loss, but also increases the general fear of crime and feeling of insecurity. In South Africa, the police in 2000 recorded 460 robberies for every 100,000 people, with 30 per cent of residents in Johannesburg reporting to have been victims of robbery. Regionally, the victimization rates for robbery are much higher in Latin America and Africa than in other regions of the world.

The fear of crime and violence is pervasive in both developed and developing countries. Public opinion surveys in the US and the UK repeatedly show that people rank crime among the top concerns they have in everyday life. In Nairobi, more than half of the citizens worry about crime all the time or very often. Likewise, in Lagos, 70 per cent of respondents in a city-wide survey were fearful of being victims of crime, with 90 per cent being fearful of the prospects of being killed in a criminal attack.

In addition to the above, residents of cities in developing, transitional and developed countries have to contend with increasing levels of domestic violence, child abuse, proliferation of youth gangs, corruption and various forms of organized crime.

Cities are increasingly becoming targets of terrorist attacks. Notable examples include the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001, the coordinated bombings of Madrid in March 2004, the London bombings of July 2005, and the bombing of commuter trains in Mumbai in July 2006. This Global Report notes that the incidence of terrorist attacks is significantly small in comparison to common crime and other types of violence. For example, the US National Counterterrorism Center reported 13 terrorist incidents in the US between February 2004 and May 2005 and, for approximately the same period, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) identified 10.32 million property crimes and over 1.36 million violent crimes. However, the impacts of terrorism on cities have been enormous. For example, the attack on New York left about 3500 people dead. It also resulted in the destruction or damage of about 2.8 million square metres of office space in Lower Manhattan and damaged the Port Authority Trans-Hudson train station at the World Trade Center.

A multiplicity of factors underlies the observed trends in crime and violence. These include social and cultural factors that might exacerbate or mediate crime. For instance, in cities such as Kabul, Karachi and Managua, violence is so interwoven into the fabric of daily life that it has become the norm for many slum dwellers. On the other hand, in Hong Kong and other parts of East and Southeast Asia, Confucianism-based family values and a generally compliant 'pro-social' population are major factors in keeping crime and violence low. Other factors associated with urban crime and violence include poverty; unemployment; inequality; intergenerational transmission of violence as reflected in the continuous witnessing of parental abuse during childhood; the rapid pace of urbanization; poor urban planning, design and management; growth in youthful population; and the concentration of political power, which facilitates corruption.

The impacts of crime and violence are multidimensional. Apart from injury and death, victims of crime and violence suffer long-lasting psychological trauma and continuously live with the fear of crime. At the national level, crime and violence are impediments to foreign investment, contribute to capital flight and brain drain, and hinder international tourism. In Jamaica, for instance, high levels of homicide have adversely affected tourism and contributed to brain drain. At the local level, crime and violence result in the stigmatization of neighbourhoods or even entire sections of the city. Such areas become 'no-go' zones and eventually lose out in terms of investment or provision of infrastructure and public services.

Key messages

Policies designed to reduce crime and violence fall into several broad categories. At the local level, these include effective urban planning, design and governance; community-based approaches, in which communities take ownership of the various initiatives; reduction of risk factors by focusing on groups that are likely to be perpetrators and victims of crime; and strengthening of social capital through initiatives that seek to develop the ability of individuals and communities to respond to problems of crime and violence. The combination of several of these approaches – all of which are specially suitable for implementation at the local level into a systematic programme, driven by a broad strategy and based upon a careful understanding of the local context – seems more likely to succeed than the *ad hoc* application of individual initiatives.

The preferred mechanism for supporting such a broad-based approach is usually the partnership mechanism. Local authorities can play an important role in organizing such partnerships, while central governments provide the resources, enabling environment and necessary policy framework. The best institutional structures for implementing such programmes are likely to be those that succeed in getting the key players involved in ways that commit them to the programme. Local authorities will often be the most appropriate leaders of such structures. Local communities need to be as fully involved as possible in these processes, not only in terms of consultation, but also as generators and implementers of such initiatives.

At the national level, there is a need to strengthen the formal criminal justice and policing systems. It is important that the police and the criminal justice systems are 'fit for purpose' in the modern world and are seen as key contributors to the fight against crime. A vital issue is the need for public confidence that the police and criminal justice

systems will play their part in this process effectively, and where this is not the case, the problems that give rise to this lack of confidence need to be vigorously addressed. Key elements of such action will include the active participation of senior managers in police and criminal justice organizations, resources and political support, and a willingness to try new approaches where existing approaches are not working.

Programmes aimed at strengthening the police, particularly in developing countries, should also address their welfare and poor conditions of service. In many African countries, the police earn a pittance and often lack the necessary resources and equipment to perform their duties. In countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa and Kenya, members of the police force have not been spared from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Furthermore, the living conditions in most of the existing police accommodation are appalling.

Prison reforms are one of the key policy areas through which central governments can contribute to tackling crime. By improving prison conditions and placing more emphasis on rehabilitation, the situation where prisons become finishing schools or 'universities' for criminals can be prevented. It is possible for re-offending, or recidivism, rates to be significantly reduced as a consequence of greater emphasis on rehabilitation. This will have a beneficial impact on crime because a high proportion is committed by previous offenders.

Support at the international level can help cities, particularly in developing and transitional countries, to improve their ability to implement measures effectively that address crime and violence. Such direct assistance should be part of a package that also includes continuing and strengthening international cooperation in tackling various types of organized crime, such as trafficking of drugs, arms and people – all of which have international dimensions. There are several examples of international support that have been of immense importance to particular cities. For example, assistance from the US has been a key factor in recent efforts at tackling crime and violence in Kingston (Jamaica). Likewise, Canada, The Netherlands and Sweden have contributed to Safer Cities projects in several African cities.

One particular type of international support that can be very helpful is in the field of training and staff development. There are already several examples of this practice. As part of its support for the reform of the Jamaica Constabulary Force since 2000, the UK government has been providing financial resources to support international police officers working alongside Jamaica's force in addressing crime. This has included Metropolitan Police officers working directly with their Jamaican counterparts, as well as training being offered by the Metropolitan Police to the Jamaica Constabulary Force.

SECURITY OF TENURE AND FORCED EVICTIONS

Key findings

More than 150 countries have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Governments in all of these countries are legally obliged to collect data and report on the scale and scope of tenure insecurity, forced evictions and homelessness (among other issues) in their countries. Despite this, there is a glaring lack of comprehensive and comparative data on security of tenure and forced evictions, both globally and within most countries.

In the absence of such data, perhaps the best indicator on the scale of urban tenure insecurity is the extent of informal settlements and other slums. Insecure tenure is, in fact, used as one of the indicators defining what constitutes a slum. Today, there are about 1 billion slum dwellers in the world. The vast majority of these, more than 930 million, are living in developing countries, where they constitute 42 per cent of the urban population. In the urban areas of the least developed countries, slum dwellers account for 78 per cent of the population. The proportion of slum dwellers is particularly high in sub-Saharan Africa (72 per cent of the urban population) and in Southern Asia (59 per cent).

The most visible outcome of tenure insecurity is the practice of forced evictions. Based on incidents reported to an international non-governmental organization (NGO) in a limited number of countries, at least 2 million people in the world are forcibly evicted every year. The actual figure is probably significantly higher. In addition, every year, several million people are threatened by forced evictions.

In Nigeria alone, an estimated 2 million people have been forcibly evicted from their homes since 2000. In Zimbabwe, an estimated 750,000 people were evicted in 2005 alone. In China, during the 2001 to 2008 period, it is estimated that 1.7 million people are directly affected by demolitions and relocations related to the Beijing Olympic Games. Evictions are not only found in developing countries, however. Each year, 25,000 evictions, on average, are carried out in New York City alone.

The main causes of large-scale forced evictions are public infrastructure development, international mega events (including global conferences and international sporting events, such as the Olympic Games) and urban beautification projects. Often, such evictions are undertaken with bulldozers, supported by heavy police presence, and the targets of such forced evictions are nearly always the residents of poor informal settlements or slums.

In addition to the millions of people subjected to forced evictions, perhaps an even higher number of people are subject to market-based evictions. This is a phenomenon directly linked to increased globalization and commercialization of land and housing. Through a process commonly known as gentrification, individuals, households or even whole neighbourhoods – most of them urban poor – are forced out of their homes, due primarily to their inability to pay higher rents.

Security of tenure is not necessarily related to specific tenure types. Tenure security is also related to a number of other cultural, social, political and economic factors and processes. A whole range of tenure types may thus offer security of tenure to urban dwellers. Even residents with title deeds living on freehold land may be evicted by the state in legitimate (and sometimes less legitimate) cases of expropriation or compulsory acquisition for the 'common good'.

As noted above, evictions are most prevalent in areas with the worst housing conditions. Furthermore, when evictions do occur, it is always the poor who are evicted. Furthermore, women, children, ethnic and other minorities, and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are most negatively affected by evictions. Invariably, evictions increase, rather than reduce, the problems they were aimed at 'solving'.

Just as particular groups are more exposed to tenure insecurity, particular events are also major factors affecting tenure security. Natural and human-made disasters, as well as armed conflict and civil strife, are major factors threatening the security of tenure of a large number of people every year. The groups most vulnerable to tenure insecurity in the aftermath of such events are, again, the poor, women, children, ethnic and other minorities, and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Lack of security of tenure is not only a problem in itself. It is part of a vicious cycle since it is often accompanied by poor or deteriorating dwellings and infrastructure, which, in turn, may lead to increased exposure to crime and violence, as well as to natural and human-made disasters.

Key messages

When evictions are being considered, it is essential that all alternatives to evictions are considered – in collaboration with the potential evictees themselves – before an eviction takes place. When evictions are unavoidable (e.g. in the case of non-payment of rent), such evictions should only be carried out in accordance with the law, and such evictions should never result in individuals being rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights. Under no circumstance should evictions be undertaken without acceptable relocation sites being identified in close cooperation with the evictees.

Interventions addressing the issue of security of tenure should always ensure that the requirements of all groups are adequately addressed. In essence, it is essential to prevent any detrimental discrimination with respect to housing, land and property. For example, land titles should be issued equally to both men and women. Similarly, slum upgrading programmes should consult with and consider the needs of both 'owners', tenants and sub-tenants.

When developing housing and urban policies, it is essential that governments adopt a framework based on housing, land and property rights, as elaborated in international law. Such a framework should take cognisance of the fact that there is a whole range of tenure types which may offer increased security of tenure to the urban poor. In some

cases, perceived security of tenure may even be improved simply through the provision of basic services and infrastructure. Perhaps the most important component of improving the security of tenure in informal settlements and slums is that governments at all levels should accept the residents of such settlements as equal citizens, with the same rights and responsibilities as other urban dwellers.

It is essential that states fulfil their obligations under international law with respect to the collection and dissemination of information regarding the scale and scope of tenure insecurity, forced evictions and homelessness. Without the timely collection of such data, it is, in effect, impossible for governments to verify whether they are contributing effectively to the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing according to their obligations as defined in the ICESCR.

Under international law, forced evictions are regarded as *prima facie* violations of human rights. Despite this, the vast majority of forced evictions carried out in the world are in breach of international law. A global moratorium on forced evictions could be an effective first step towards addressing this recurrent violation of human rights.

Application of international criminal law to violations of housing, land and property rights is also necessary. If such rights are to be taken seriously, there should be strong legal grounds on which to discourage the impunity almost invariably enjoyed by violators of these rights. All of those who advocate ethnic cleansing, those who sanction violent and illegal forced evictions, those who call for laws and policies that clearly result in homelessness, or those who fail to end systematic discrimination against women in the land and housing sphere – and all of those promoting such violations – should be held accountable.

NATURAL AND HUMAN-MADE DISASTERS

Key findings

Between 1974 and 2003, 6367 natural disasters occurred globally, causing the death of 2 million people and affecting 5.1 billion people. A total of 182 million people were made homeless, while reported economic damage amounted to US$1.38 trillion. Since 1975, the number of natural disasters recorded globally has increased dramatically (fourfold), especially in Africa. An even higher tenfold increase in the incidence of human-made disasters has been observed between 1976 and 2000. Between 2000 and 2005, average mortality from human-made disasters was lower (30 per event) than deaths caused by natural disasters (225 per event). A total of 98 per cent of the 211 million people affected by natural disasters annually from 1991 to 2000 were in developing countries.

The catastrophic impact of disasters on individuals has been illustrated in recent years by the toll of death (220,000 people) and homelessness (1.5 million) from the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004 and the Pakistan earthquake of October 2005, which killed 86,000 people and left millions homeless. Moreover, losses during disaster and

reconstruction deepen existing socio-economic inequalities, thus creating vicious cycles of loss and vulnerability. Especially in poorer countries, women and children tend to be most affected by disasters, as observed in the aftermath of the 2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The elderly and those with disabilities are often among the most vulnerable to natural and human-made hazards.

Economic losses associated with disasters have increased fourteen-fold since the 1950s and, during the last decade alone, disasters caused damage worth US$67 billion per year, on average. Wealthier countries incur higher economic costs due to disasters, while poorer countries face greater loss of human life. By destroying critical urban infra-structure, disasters can set back development gains and undermine progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Cities connected to regional or global financial systems have the potential to spread the negative consequences of disaster across the global economy, with huge systemic loss effects.

Large and megacities magnify risk since they concentrate human, physical and financial capital and are frequently also cultural and political centres. The potential for feedback between natural and human-made hazards in large cities presents a scenario for disaster on an unprecedented scale. Large urban economies that have sizeable foreign currency reserves, high proportions of insured assets, comprehensive social services and diversified production are more likely to absorb and spread the economic burden of disaster impacts. Smaller cities (less than 500,000 residents) that are home to over half of the world's urban population are also exposed to multiple risks, but often have less resilience against the economic consequences of disasters.

There has been a 50 per cent rise in extreme weather events associated with climate change from the 1950s to the 1990s, and the location of major urban centres in coastal areas exposed to hydro-meteorological hazards is a significant risk factor: 21 of the 33 cities which are projected to have a population of 8 million or more by 2015 are located in vulnerable coastal zones and are increasingly vulnerable to sea-level rise. Around 40 per cent of the world's population lives less than 100 kilometres from the coast within reach of severe coastal storms. In effect, close to 100 million people around the world live less than 1 metre above sea level. Thus, if sea levels rise by just 1 metre, many coastal megacities with populations of more than 10 million, such as Rio de Janeiro, New York, Mumbai, Dhaka, Tokyo, Lagos and Cairo, will be under threat.

Additional factors rendering cities particularly vulnerable include rapid and chaotic urbanization; the concentration of economic wealth in cities; environmental modifications through human actions; the expansion of slums (often into hazardous locations); and the failure of urban authorities to enforce building codes and land-use planning. The urban landscape, which is characterized by close proximity of residential, commercial and industrial land uses, generates new cocktails of hazard that require multi-risk management. The rapid supply of housing to meet rising demand without compliance with safe building codes is a principal cause of disaster loss in urban areas. Lack of resources and human skills – compounded by institutional cultures that allow corruption – distort regulation and enforcement of building codes.

Small-scale hazards, while less dramatic than major hazards, have serious aggregate impacts. This is illustrated by the incidence and impacts of road traffic accidents, which result in more deaths worldwide each year than any large natural or human-made disaster type. Traffic accidents cause extensive loss of human lives and livelihoods in urban areas, killing over 1 million people globally every year. At least 90 per cent of the deaths from traffic accidents occur in low- and middle-income countries. Young males and unprotected road users are particularly vulnerable to injury or death from traffic accidents. Traffic accidents cause substantial economic costs, amounting to an estimated US$518 billion worldwide every year. If no action is taken, traffic injuries are expected to become the third major cause of disease and injury in the world by 2020.

Key messages

Land-use planning is a particularly effective instrument that city authorities can employ to reduce disaster risk by regulating the expansion of human settlements and infrastructure. Evidence-based land-use planning at the city level requires accurate and up-to-date data. Technological innovation can help to fill part of this gap; but the global proliferation of slums also calls for more innovative and participatory land-use planning procedures.

The design of disaster-resistant buildings and infra-structure can save many lives and assets in urban areas from natural and human-made disasters. The technological and engineering expertise to achieve this is available; but implementation is a major challenge. Interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral training, research and partnerships, especially with the private sector, can enhance implementation capacity at the city level. Interaction between different practitioners is essential to avoid professional separation and to foster the integration of risk reduction within urban development and planning efforts. Governance systems that facilitate local participation and decentralized leadership are more effective, especially in the context of rapid and uncontrolled urbanization where capacities for oversight and enforcement are limited.

Governments need to improve risk, hazard and vulnerability assessment and monitoring capacity through increased investment, with support from the international community, where necessary. In addition to informing policy formulation, assessment data should feed into national initiatives that aim to build a culture of awareness and safety through public education and information programmes. Furthermore, risk knowledge should be communicated to relevant actors through effective early warning systems in order to enable timely and adequate responses to disasters.

It is especially important that disaster risk reduction is mainstreamed within national development and poverty reduction policies and planning. Examples of disaster risk reduction strategies that have been designed purposely to contribute to meeting individual MDG targets are available

worldwide. National initiatives should move from managing risk through emergency relief and response towards a more proactive pre-disaster orientation.

Greater partnership between humanitarian and development actors is required during reconstruction in order to reconcile demands for rapid provision of basic services against the more time-consuming aim of 'building back better'. Clear legislative and budgetary frameworks should also be in place to avoid uncoordinated and fragmented reconstruction activities by city governments, local actors, donors and humanitarian agencies.

Drawing on existing international frameworks for disaster risk reduction (e.g. the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005–2015), national governments should continue putting in place disaster risk reduction legislation and policy; strengthening early warning systems; incorporating disaster risk education within national education curricula; and instituting inclusive and participatory governance and planning in order to strengthen the resilience of cities and communities.

International frameworks are important in focusing the attention of multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as international civil society actors, towards disaster risk reduction. They can also facilitate advocacy and guide the development of disaster risk reduction strategies at national and city levels, including through internationally coordinated early warning systems for hazards such as cyclones and tsunamis.

Furthermore, many governments – especially in developing countries – require assistance from the international community in the form of finance, data and information, and technical expertise to establish or improve their disaster risk reduction systems. International assistance for disaster risk reduction should not focus on recovery and reconstruction efforts alone, but also on longer-term development objectives.