International conference on the state of safety in world cities
Monterrey, 1-5 October 2007

Conference recommendations
Monterrey, 5th October 2007

Participants representing cities, national governments, intergovernmental agencies, NGOs and civil society, academic and expert organizations, from 5 continents gathered at the International Conference on the State of safety in world cities to discuss issues of urban safety with regards to governance, slum upgrading, youth, women, policing, small arms and migration. The recommendations emerging from such discussions are presented below.

The Conference participants recognized that urban safety is a multi-dimensional and complex issue and it is important to look at it through a human and urban development lens. Urban crime and violence do not exist in a vacuum, they are realities that emerge from social, economic and political configurations. A comprehensive approach to urban safety that addresses issues such as inequality, marginalisation and poverty needs to be applied. This integrated approach should involve all relevant stakeholders if we are to develop the trust and partnership required for fostering safer cities.

Notwithstanding the clear and shared understanding reflected in the conference discussions, the following key challenges remain:
- Translating international declarations into concrete actions that have impact on the ground;
- Harnessing the political will at all levels;
- Mobilizing adequate financial, technical and human resource capacity, particularly at the local authorities level, to tackle safety issues.

The conference concluded with the following set of recommendations:

- Repression and prevention are two faces of a same coin. This fact should be reflected in budget allocations for prevention, reversing the long held view that the largest share of resources should be devoted to repression alone;

- Local governments are key actors for urban crime prevention both for strategy formulation and for the coordination of service delivery and partnership building. Work however has to be carried out at other levels as well: at the <u>neighbourhood level</u> to empower communities, at the <u>national level</u> for coordination of different sectors and development and harmonization of policies, and at the <u>international level</u> for norm-setting and advocacy;

-Local authorities should be given adequate mandates and resources. They should be provided with sufficient financial and technical support to carry out those mandates;

- Safety is increasingly integrated as a key dimension in local policies and urban development strategies, however it should also be mainstreamed into national, regional and international policies; an understanding of how such strategies can be sustained beyond the life of a political administration is also growing;

- Formulation of crime prevention initiatives has to take into account local and community views, and proven solutions need to be adapted and localized to achieve result in different contexts. An evidence-based approach needs to be applied, but in a way which includes community participation and engagement, in an effort to ensure that interventions respond to the actual needs of local communities;

-Although many of the responses lie at local level, and innovation in policy as well as effective implementation should reside as much as possible with local level authorities and actors, the national government has a central role to play in providing an enabling policy environment and adequate resources, and in scaling-up pilot projects and urban safety initiatives. The national government can also be crucial in harnessing experiences and making them available across communities;

-It is critical to involve key sectors and stakeholders, including communities and vulnerable groups. Further, it is important to promote links between practitioners in an effort to avoid fragmented interventions by different urban management sectors such as safety, transport, planning, criminal justice and urban design;

- There needs to be dialogue between the police, the justice sectors and other relevant sectors, and communities to build trust and enhance the contribution of the justice system to prevention. This dialogue should be fostered at all levels;

- The existence of small arms and narco trafficking at local neighbourhood level escalates community and urban insecurity and efforts to control them are essential as are interventions to prevent their use;

-The collection, analysis and sharing of data among countries, cities and agencies within them, is critical. Capacity-building in this area should include developing a common understanding of definitions and concepts, establishing qualitative and quantitative observatories and expanding the use of innovative tools such as safety audits;

-The media has tended to play a negative role when it comes to addressing the issue of urban crime and violence. However, the media can also be a positive tool for the dissemination of information, good practices, and advocacy. The responsibility of the media in this respect is of crucial importance to help foster solidarity among different groups and communities, and for preventing exclusion and crime. Appropriate pro-active communication strategies should be developed on crime to mitigate and educate the media;

-Urban planning should be recognized and used as a mechanism for creating safer cities, with a special focus on the needs of women and children; planning approaches that recognize issues of the quality and management of public space, and use participatory mechanisms to engage communities and stakeholders, are among the most promising options for safer cities;

-We cannot separate women's safety issues from women's human rights, social and economic status and gender roles. Gender inequalities are exacerbated by lack of planning and management. Femicide should specifically be addressed, so should intrafamily violence;

-Safety issues should be a major aspect of plans for slum upgrading. Urban renewal projects should be seen as opportunities to include these concerns and perspectives at the core of government interventions;

- International declarations and agreements should be localized, shared and implemented; and they should be shared as a basis of reference for the programming and monitoring of progress;

We transmit these recommendations to UN-HABITAT for dissemination and further actions and to inform discussions at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum to be held in Nanjing, China in October 2008.