

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**DAY ONE, 17 JUNE 2008**

**INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION AND CITIES SUMMIT**  
**([www.yourcitysummit.co.za](http://www.yourcitysummit.co.za))**

**“Youth and children championing community safety for a better world”**

**Organised By:**

**UN-HABITAT**

**Hosted By**

**THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Held at:**

**Durban ICC, 17th – 20th June 2008**

## **SETTING THE TONE:**

### **Ms N Masondo**

Director of Social Crime Prevention, Department of Community Safety and Liaison,  
KwaZulu Natal

Ms Noma Masondo, Director of Social Crime Prevention, Department of Community Safety and Liaison, KwaZulu Natal welcomed all delegates and international dignitaries to the Summit and invited Cllr L Naidoo, Deputy Mayor, eThekweni Municipality, to give the opening statement and welcoming address.

## **OPENING STATEMENT AND WELCOME ADDRESS:**

### **His Worship the Mayor Cllr L Naidoo**

Deputy Mayor eThekweni Municipality, South Africa

In the true Kwa-Zulu spirit, Cllr Naidoo stated that KZN prides itself on its rich cultural heritage. It is the confluence of Zulu, Indian and English influences. He then invited each delegate to partake of this rich diversity whilst attending the conference. He hoped that the conference would be the ideal forum out of which productive and useful information, coupled with strong recommendations, would emanate in order to assist all authorities and communities to address the challenges faced by the youth.

## **JOINT WELCOME MESSAGE:**

### **Mr N Ntombela**

Chairperson KwaZulu-Natal Youth Commission  
South Africa & International Youth Partners

“What unites us as young people is our humanity. What unites us as young people is our youthfulness and positiveness.”

Mr Ntombela informed the delegates that today’s youth is facing unprecedented challenges: HIV/AIDS, drug and substance abuse, crime, women and children abuse, human trafficking and poverty. These challenges affect young people the most, primarily because the youth are both the perpetrators of criminality and the recipients of its consequences. Any measures implemented to address these social and economic hurdles must be done so not only at a national level, but also at a continental level as activities which affect one African country can and will affect others as well.

**Gavin Shepherd**

Chair, Youth and Engagement Committee, Canada

“We are at a very important time, a critical point. The world is changing. Cities are becoming larger and there needs to be new ways of looking at how we do things. These new ways will come from the youth.”

Mr Shepherd stressed that any measures discussed and implemented to address the globally growing issue of youth crime must include the youth themselves as they are the experts who understand the conditions under which anti-social behaviour grows and flourishes. The youth must be made to understand what lies ahead for society, should current anti social trends continue. Addressing the underlying reasons for youth crime is a daunting task but one that is achievable. We can create safer cities, safer towns and safer villages for ourselves and the next generation. However, in order to do so it is imperative that, at this conference, which will be conducted with dialogue, politicians and all other interested parties listen.

**OPENING REMARKS:****Ms D Aitouyahia-Mcadams**

UNDP South Africa Resident Representative

Although South Africans live with a high crime rate, its government is playing a leading role in the development of youth initiatives in order to address the socio-economic challenges under which youth crime breeds. High youth crime levels are not confined to South Africa; this is a global problem, cutting across all communities, countries and populations. Demographically, the youth constitutes more than 50% of the world’s population overall, and 60% in developing countries specifically. These huge youth populations carry with them the burden of inadequate shelter, poor food security and a lack of employment opportunities.

Economic opportunities are primarily created in and around cities but if cities are poorly planned they become concentrations of social and economic problems, breeding grounds for gangs, child soldiers, often leading to the social exclusion of certain population groups and contributing to a growing income gap. Across the globe the most likely perpetrators and victims of urban violence are young males. However, a subtle change is being noticed as more and more young females are falling into the same criminal behaviour.

Good urban governance strives for inclusive cities. If the youth are the leaders of tomorrow, they must be included in the discussions of today, contributing to those decision-making processes which will impact on their lives. Their creativity and mobility must be utilised to improve society and no effort must be spared in building the capacity of young men and women to allow them to contribute towards more peaceful cities. It is imperative that society understands the complexities of youth. Whilst often the youth are

seen as the cause of problems, they do have the potential to act as agents of change, their energy and creativeness being used to feed development.

Several projects in place in Africa have demonstrated that the youth can make a positive contribution to the social and economic fabric of societies. In Liberia the UNDP and UN are supporting the Liberian government to overcome the legacy of 15 years of war in which two generations of children have had no exposure to formal education or any semblance of family life. There are ongoing efforts being made to turn around the threat posed by these unemployed youths.

In order to improve the prospects of today's youth the UN is committed to tackling all current negative issues affecting the youth. To this end programmes which promote sustainable human development are continually being developed and implemented. These programmes target urban governance, poverty reduction and improving the living environments of communities through music, sport and technology.

The objective of this summit is to develop an inclusive international framework involving children and the youth with the objective of producing a youth crime prevention protocol which will help to make our cities safer for all.

#### **MOTIVATIONAL REMARKS:**

##### **Mr. Luis Zamorano**

Director General of Urban Infrastructure and leader of the "Rescue of Public Spaces", Programme, Mexico

Mr Zamorano informed the delegates that the problems being posed by youth crime in South Africa are similar to those being faced in Mexico where ordinary citizens do not feel safe, do not visit public spaces and are experiencing a breakdown in the fabric of society. Studies have shown that public spaces are crucial to the social integration and networking activities of communities but public spaces are no longer visited by communities because they have been taken over by criminals.

It is simple to put in place infrastructure which improves public areas: recreational activities, trees and others physical elements. The success of public spaces is measured by the amount of people that utilise these spaces. Municipalities and local authorities are the best prepared to beautify public spaces as they are in touch with their constituencies at a grass roots level. Furthermore, it is important to invite the public itself to contribute suggestions and ideas as to how specific public spaces can be improved.

Various organisations in Mexico are addressing social problems which occur in public spaces i.e. drug dealing and drug abuse. Seminars and conferences are organised to educate the youth about the dangers associated with substance abuse and anti-social activities. Furthermore, communities themselves monitor the implementation of these and other programmes, holding local authorities accountable for delivery on agreed

implementation strategies. Because people want to leave their homes and utilise public spaces they are willing to get involved in solving problems inherent in their communities.

Before any social improvement programmes can be implemented, it is imperative to put in place:

- Co-responsibility – local authorities, municipalities and communities
- Sustainability programmes which will ensure the ongoing upgrading and maintenance of public spaces
- Responsiveness – local authorities must be able to respond to the concerns of communities

“We need to keep on struggling against crime delinquency, building citizens who are interested in learning from others. When listening (to other) experiences, we will be able to strengthen our own programmes.”

## **PRESENTATION ON SUMMIT BACKGROUND**

### **Ms M Shaw**

Director of Analysis, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC), Montreal

Ms Shaw stated that the purpose of the summit was to develop an international framework for involving children and youth across the world as active partners in community safety and urban crime prevention.

Studies show that by far the most “at risk” group of any population, both as victims and perpetrators of crime, are young black men between the ages of ten and 29. Youth crime is exacerbated by rapidly increasing urbanization resulting in the growth of informal settlements. Migration and immigration results in smaller pockets of ethnic minorities in cities and these pockets are easily exploited. Finally, poverty brings with it its own set of circumstances which allows criminal behaviour to breed.

However, there are effective strategies and practices which are being used in various communities and which have realised success. Each of these programmes illustrates that in order to address the problems associated with youth crime any approaches used must be inclusive, integrated, balanced and, above all, respectful of the rights of children and the youth.

## **DAY'S CONCLUDING REMARKS:**

### **B H Cele**

Executive Council for Transport,  
Community Safety and Liaison, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Honourable MEC for Transport, Mr Bheki Cele posed the questions: "What is to be done and who will do it?" Young people are not only the main perpetrators of crime; they also constitute the biggest number of victims of crime. Whilst they do not own the companies that produce guns nor the fields that grow cocaine, they are the biggest users of both. Governments must put systems in place to deal with the actual perpetrators and protect the youth.

He urged all present to protect women and children from rape and abuse, to be responsible for their sexual behaviour in order to curb the spread of HIV AIDS and to accept and welcome other nationalities into local South African communities. He pointed out that as South Africans we all take responsibility for the xenophobia which has recently plagued the country and apologised to all the delegates on behalf of all South Africans. "The best answer to it is that it does not happen again. We must fight with all passion, power and energy to ensure this."

He then tasked the Head of Department to put together a youth cohort that will lead, in using the bad negative data, to produce positive and good young citizens. All available and appropriate resources must be put to the success of this initiative.

"Today must be better than yesterday, and tomorrow better than today."