

ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13

Action to promote effective crime prevention

The Economic and Social Council,

Bearing in mind its resolution 1996/16 of 23 July 1996, in which it requested the Secretary-General to continue to promote the use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice matters,

Recalling the elements of responsible crime prevention: standards and norms annexed to its resolution 1997/33 of 21 July 1997, in particular those relating to community involvement in crime prevention contained in paragraphs 14 to 23 of that annex, as well as the revised draft elements of responsible crime prevention prepared by the Expert Group Meeting on Elements of Responsible Crime Prevention: Addressing Traditional and Emerging Crime Problems, held in Buenos Aires from 8 to 10 September 1999,

Taking note of the international colloquium of crime prevention experts convened in Montreal, Canada, from 3 to 6 October 1999, by the Governments of France, the Netherlands and Canada, in collaboration with the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime in Montreal, as a preparatory meeting for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders,

Noting that the draft elements of responsible crime prevention were considered at the workshop on community involvement in crime prevention held at the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000,

Acknowledging the need to update and finalize the draft elements of responsible crime prevention,

Aware of the scope for significant reductions in crime and victimization through knowledge-based approaches, and of the contribution that effective crime prevention can make in terms of the safety and security of individuals and their property, as well as the quality of life in communities around the world,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 56/261 of 31 January 2002, entitled "Plans of action for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century", in particular the action on crime prevention in order to follow up the commitments undertaken in paragraphs 11, 13, 20, 21, 24 and 25 of the Vienna Declaration,¹

Convinced of the need to advance a collaborative agenda for action with respect to the commitments made in the Vienna Declaration,

Noting with appreciation the work of the Group of Experts on Crime Prevention at their meeting held in Vancouver, Canada, from 21 to 24 January 2002, and the work of the Secretary-General in preparing

¹ General Assembly resolution 55/59, annex.

a report on the results of that interregional meeting, containing revised draft guidelines for crime prevention and proposed priority areas for international action,²

Recognizing that each Member State is unique in its governmental structure, social characteristics and economic capacity and that those factors will influence the scope and implementation of its crime prevention programmes,

Recognizing also that changing circumstances and evolving approaches to crime prevention may require further elaboration and adaptation of crime prevention guidelines,

1. *Accepts* the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, annexed to the present resolution, with a view to providing elements for effective crime prevention;

2. *Invites* Member States to draw upon the Guidelines, as appropriate, in the development or strengthening of their policies in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice;

3. *Requests* relevant United Nations bodies and other specialized organizations to strengthen inter-agency coordination and cooperation in crime prevention, as set out in the Guidelines, and, to that end, to disseminate the Guidelines widely within the United Nations system;

4. *Requests* the Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat, in consultation with Member States, the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and other relevant entities in the United Nations system, to prepare a proposal for technical assistance in the area of crime prevention, in accordance with the guidelines of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention;

5. *Requests* Member States to establish or strengthen international, regional and national crime prevention networks, with a view to developing knowledge-based strategies, exchanging proven and promising practices, identifying elements of their transferability and making such knowledge available to communities throughout the world;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fourteenth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*37th plenary meeting
24 July 2002*

Annex

Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime

I. Introduction

1. There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of

² E/CN.15/2002/4.

countries. Effective, responsible crime prevention enhances the quality of life of all citizens. It has long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system, as well as other social costs that result from crime. Crime prevention offers opportunities for a humane and more cost-effective approach to the problems of crime. The present Guidelines outline the necessary elements for effective crime prevention.

II. Conceptual frame of reference

2. It is the responsibility of all levels of government to create, maintain and promote a context within which relevant governmental institutions and all segments of civil society, including the corporate sector, can better play their part in preventing crime.

3. For the purposes of the present Guidelines, “crime prevention” comprises strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes. The enforcement of laws, sentences and corrections, while also performing preventive functions, falls outside the scope of the Guidelines, given the comprehensive coverage of the subject in other United Nations instruments.³

4. The present Guidelines address crime and its effects on victims and society and take into account the growing internationalization of criminal activities.

5. Community involvement and cooperation/ partnerships represent important elements of the concept of crime prevention set out herein. While the term “community” may be defined in different ways, its essence in this context is the involvement of civil society at the local level.

6. Crime prevention encompasses a wide range of approaches, including those which:

(a) Promote the well-being of people and encourage pro-social behaviour through social, economic, health and educational measures, with a particular emphasis on children and youth, and focus on the risk and protective factors associated with crime and victimization (prevention through social development or social crime prevention);

(b) Change the conditions in neighbourhoods that influence offending, victimization and the insecurity that results from crime by building on the initiatives, expertise and commitment of community members (locally based crime prevention);

(c) Prevent the occurrence of crimes by reducing opportunities, increasing risks of being apprehended and minimizing benefits, including through environmental design, and by providing assistance and information to potential and actual victims (situational crime prevention);

³ See *Compendium of United Nations Standards and Norms in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.92.IV.1 and corrigendum).

(d) Prevent recidivism by assisting in the social reintegration of offenders and other preventive mechanisms (reintegration programmes).

III. Basic principles

Government leadership

7. All levels of government should play a leadership role in developing effective and humane crime prevention strategies and in creating and maintaining institutional frameworks for their implementation and review.

Socio-economic development and inclusion

8. Crime prevention considerations should be integrated into all relevant social and economic policies and programmes, including those addressing employment, education, health, housing and urban planning, poverty, social marginalization and exclusion. Particular emphasis should be placed on communities, families, children and youth at risk.

Cooperation/partnerships

9. Cooperation/partnerships should be an integral part of effective crime prevention, given the wide-ranging nature of the causes of crime and the skills and responsibilities required to address them. This includes partnerships working across ministries and between authorities, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, the business sector and private citizens.

Sustainability/accountability

10. Crime prevention requires adequate resources, including funding for structures and activities, in order to be sustained. There should be clear accountability for funding, implementation and evaluation and for the achievement of planned results.

Knowledge base

11. Crime prevention strategies, policies, programmes and actions should be based on a broad, multidisciplinary foundation of knowledge about crime problems, their multiple causes and promising and proven practices.

Human rights/rule of law/culture of lawfulness

12. The rule of law and those human rights which are recognized in international instruments to which Member States are parties must be respected in all aspects of crime prevention. A culture of lawfulness should be actively promoted in crime prevention.

Interdependency

13. National crime prevention diagnoses and strategies should, where appropriate, take account of links between local criminal problems and international organized crime.

Differentiation

14. Crime prevention strategies should, when appropriate, pay due regard to the different needs of men and women and consider the special needs of vulnerable members of society.

IV. Organization, methods and approaches

15. Recognizing that all States have unique governmental structures, this section sets out tools and methodologies that Governments and all segments of civil society should consider in developing strategies to prevent crime and reduce victimization. It draws on international good practice.

Community involvement

16. In some of the areas listed below, Governments bear the primary responsibility. However, the active participation of communities and other segments of civil society is an essential part of effective crime prevention. Communities, in particular, should play an important part in identifying crime prevention priorities, in implementation and evaluation, and in helping to identify a sustainable resource base.

A

Organization

Government structures

17. Governments should include prevention as a permanent part of their structures and programmes for controlling crime, ensuring that clear responsibilities and goals exist within government for the organization of crime prevention, by, inter alia:

- (a) Establishing centres or focal points with expertise and resources;
- (b) Establishing a crime prevention plan with clear priorities and targets;
- (c) Establishing linkages and coordination between relevant government agencies or departments;
- (d) Fostering partnerships with non-governmental organizations, the business, private and professional sectors and the community;
- (e) Seeking the active participation of the public in crime prevention by informing it of the need for and means of action and its role.

Training and capacity-building

18. Governments should support the development of crime prevention skills by:

- (a) Providing professional development for senior officials in relevant agencies;
- (b) Encouraging universities, colleges and other relevant educational agencies to offer basic and advanced courses, including in collaboration with practitioners;

(c) Working with the educational and professional sectors to develop certification and professional qualifications;

(d) Promoting the capacity of communities to develop and respond to their needs.

Supporting partnerships

19. Governments and all segments of civil society should support the principle of partnership, where appropriate, including:

(a) Advancing knowledge of the importance of this principle and the components of successful partnerships, including the need for all of the partners to have clear and transparent roles;

(b) Fostering the formation of partnerships at different levels and across sectors;

(c) Facilitating the efficient operation of partnerships.

Sustainability

20. Governments and other funding bodies should strive to achieve sustainability of demonstrably effective crime prevention programmes and initiatives through, inter alia:

(a) Reviewing resource allocation to establish and maintain an appropriate balance between crime prevention and the criminal justice and other systems, to be more effective in preventing crime and victimization;

(b) Establishing clear accountability for funding, programming and coordinating crime prevention initiatives;

(c) Encouraging community involvement in sustainability.

B

Methods

Knowledge base

21. As appropriate, Governments and/or civil society should facilitate knowledge-based crime prevention by, inter alia:

(a) Providing the information necessary for communities to address crime problems;

(b) Supporting the generation of useful and practically applicable knowledge that is scientifically reliable and valid;

(c) Supporting the organization and synthesis of knowledge and identifying and addressing gaps in the knowledge base;

(d) Sharing that knowledge, as appropriate, among, inter alia, researchers, policy makers, educators, practitioners from other relevant sectors and the wider community;

(e) Applying this knowledge in replicating successful interventions, developing new initiatives and anticipating new crime problems and prevention opportunities;

(f) Establishing data systems to help manage crime prevention more cost-effectively, including by conducting regular surveys of victimization and offending;

(g) Promoting the application of those data in order to reduce repeat victimization, persistent offending and areas with a high level of crime.

Planning interventions

22. Those planning interventions should promote a process that includes:

(a) A systematic analysis of crime problems, their causes, risk factors and consequences, in particular at the local level;

(b) A plan that draws on the most appropriate approach and adapts interventions to the specific local problem and context;

(c) An implementation plan to deliver appropriate interventions that are efficient, effective and sustainable;

(d) Mobilizing entities that are able to tackle causes;

(e) Monitoring and evaluation.

Support evaluation

23. Governments, other funding bodies and those involved in programme development and delivery should:

(a) Undertake short- and longer-term evaluation to test rigorously what works, where and why;

(b) Undertake cost-benefit analyses;

(c) Assess the extent to which action results in a reduction in levels of crime and victimization, in the seriousness of crime and in fear of crime;

(d) Systematically assess the outcomes and unintended consequences, both positive and negative, of action, such as a decrease in crime rates or the stigmatization of individuals and/or communities.

C

Approaches

24. This section expands upon the social development and situational crime prevention approaches. It also outlines approaches that Governments and civil society should endeavour to follow in order to prevent organized crime.

Social development

25. Governments should address the risk factors of crime and victimization by:

(a) Promoting protective factors through comprehensive and non-stigmatizing social and economic development programmes, including health, education, housing and employment;

- (b) Promoting activities that redress marginalization and exclusion;
- (c) Promoting positive conflict resolution;
- (d) Using education and public awareness strategies to foster a culture of lawfulness and tolerance while respecting cultural identities.

Situational

26. Governments and civil society, including, where appropriate, the corporate sector, should support the development of situational crime prevention programmes by, inter alia:

- (a) Improved environmental design;
- (b) Appropriate methods of surveillance that are sensitive to the right to privacy;
- (c) Encouraging the design of consumer goods to make them more resistant to crime;
- (d) Target “hardening” without impinging upon the quality of the built environment or limiting free access to public space;
- (e) Implementing strategies to prevent repeat victimization.

Prevention of organized crime

27. Governments and civil society should endeavour to analyse and address the links between transnational organized crime and national and local crime problems by, inter alia:

- (a) Reducing existing and future opportunities for organized criminal groups to participate in lawful markets with the proceeds of crime, through appropriate legislative, administrative or other measures;
- (b) Developing measures to prevent the misuse by organized criminal groups of tender procedures conducted by public authorities and of subsidies and licences granted by public authorities for commercial activity;
- (c) Designing crime prevention strategies, where appropriate, to protect socially marginalized groups, especially women and children, who are vulnerable to the action of organized criminal groups, including trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

V. International cooperation

Standards and norms

28. In promoting international action in crime prevention, Member States are invited to take into account the main international instruments related to human rights and crime prevention to which they are parties, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (General Assembly resolution 48/104), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) (General Assembly resolution 45/112, annex), the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and

Abuse of Power (General Assembly resolution 40/34, annex), the guidelines for cooperation and technical assistance in the field of urban crime prevention (resolution 1995/9, annex), as well as the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century (General Assembly resolution 55/59, annex) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annexes I-III, and resolution 55/255, annex).

Technical assistance

29. Member States and relevant international funding organizations should provide financial and technical assistance, including capacity-building and training, to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, communities and other relevant organizations for the implementation of effective crime prevention and community safety strategies at the regional, national and local levels. In that context, special attention should be given to research and action on crime prevention through social development.

Networking

30. Member States should strengthen or establish international, regional and national crime prevention networks with a view to exchanging proven and promising practices, identifying elements of their transferability and making such knowledge available to communities throughout the world.

Links between transnational and local crime

31. Member States should collaborate to analyse and address the links between transnational organized crime and national and local crime problems.

Prioritizing crime prevention

32. The Centre for International Crime Prevention of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat, the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network of affiliated and associated institutes and other relevant United Nations entities should include in their priorities crime prevention as set out in these Guidelines, set up a coordination mechanism and establish a roster of experts to undertake needs assessment and to provide technical advice.

Dissemination

33. Relevant United Nations bodies and other organizations should cooperate to produce crime prevention information in as many languages as possible, using both print and electronic media.