



The Consortium on Crime and Violence Prevention

International Dialogue on Citizen Safety

25 – 27 February 2015
Cape Town, South Africa

Safety at local level – A public good

Recent years have witnessed important developments in efforts to promote citizen safety. The initial discourse on law enforcement has shifted to embrace a crime prevention paradigm to more recently that of community safety and public health. The latter introduce important elements of community ownership and multi sectorial and developmental approaches to safety that extends far beyond crime prevention and the traditional criminal justice system.

South Africa has made considerable progress at a normative level to supporting a preventative and developmental approach to safety. In 1996 South Africa adopted the National Crime Prevention Strategy and in 1999 the White Paper on Safety and Security which established the prevention agenda and the necessary role of multiple actors.

In 2012, the Integrated Social Crime Prevention Strategy (ISCPS) of the Department of Social Development set out a framework for the promotion of social crime prevention nationally. This strategy sets out as its vision, “A safe South Africa, safe communities, safe families and responsible individuals.”¹ The ISCPS targets vulnerable groups of society, including “the poorest of the poor, and marginalised and disadvantaged groups”, and indicates that such groups should be comprised of children, youth, adults and older persons.

More recently the South Africa Vision 2030 The National Development Plan argues that a holistic approach needs to be adopted, in order to effectively address violent crime. Such an approach should address itself to the causes of such crime, and requires attention over the long term.

¹ Department of Social Development (2011) Integrated Social Crime Prevention Strategy. Pretoria: Department of Social Development.

However the challenges of implementation continue to undermine efforts and provoke renewed calls for repressive and punitive law enforcement approaches to safety. These are common through the world.

Recent debates in South Africa highlight several key areas to be considered in planning for implementation. These include.

- The importance of assessing the impact of community safety interventions
- Sustaining community involvement
- Policing informal settlements
- Integrating community safety into the development planning
- Monitoring safety work
- Building capacity at local level
- The Economics of Safety
- The role of local government in safety planning
- Urban Upgrading and Environmental Design

The United Nations ECOSOC 2002 resolution on crime prevention, gives effect to its guidelines in this regard. The guidelines sets out the following eight basic principles on which crime prevention action should be based on:

- Government leadership
- Socio-economic development and inclusion
- Cooperation/ partnerships
- Sustainability/ accountability
- Knowledge base
- Human rights/ rule of law/ culture of lawfulness
- Interdependency
- Differentiation

As South Africa develops its National Safety Strategy the learning's both nationally and internationally on addressing the implementation gap is invaluable.

The dialogue will explore the issues raised above in a facilitated dialogue between local and international practitioners, policy makers and academics.

The Dialogue

APCOF, in collaboration with various partners will be hosting a three-day international dialogue on crime and violence prevention in the context of citizen security in Cape Town between the 25 and 27 February 2015.

The purpose of the dialogue is to bring together international and local experts in violence reduction, citizen security promotion, crime prevention and stabilization to share experiences, identify good/ promising practices, discuss challenges and contribute to shared learning, that is part of a growing south-south dialogue on citizen safety.²

The following themes will be discussed at the dialogue:

² See V Barolsky & S Pillay (2009) *A Call for Comparative Thinking: Crime, Citizenship and Security in the global South* South Africa Crime Quarterly, No. 27 pages 15 – 21 for a view on the importance of comparative thinking in crime and violence prevention.

- Common understandings and definitions of citizen security and debates within this context;
- Citizen Safety Policy and Legislation – what prospects for implementation?
- Civil society participation in urban violence reduction. Evidence and challenges of effective cooperation;
- Understanding and capitalizing on community risk and resilience in urban violence reduction;
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of safety promotion at a local level;
- The intended and unintended consequences of urban violence reduction and citizen security activities, including on safety and security of residents, their human rights, gender implications, socio-economic wellbeing and wider issues of governance;
- The roles at a local level of the military, policing and civilian and private entities in promoting citizen safety;
- Building networks international, national and local on urban violence reduction and citizen – How useful are they?

Further themes specifically applicable to the current context of violence and crime in South Africa would also include:

- Debates around the common frame of reference and activities around violence and crime prevention from a development perspective;
- Debates on methodologies and indicators for measuring and assessing impact; and
- Policies and strategies relating to community safety and how this can be integrated in to municipal integrated development plans.

Outcomes

The dialogue is to bring together experts in violence reduction, citizen security promotion, crime prevention and stabilization sphere from Africa and Latin America.

It will provide one with a platform for sharing good practice between government, civil society and academia to craft an agenda on how best to implement crime and violence prevention initiatives in South Africa.

At the same time, the conference is intended to be outcome-oriented and frame a good reference for developments within the crime and violence prevention sector for South Africa and the participating countries. It is expected that the increased learning from a comparative perspective will serve as a foundations for concrete collaborations between organisations and country participant.