



Press Release

Marikina hosts regional workshop on safety for the urban poor in Asia-Pacific (June 15 - 17, 2010)

Marikina is host to the regional workshop entitled “Putting Safety First for the Urban Poor on the Local Agenda” from June 15 – 17. Along with the host city the meeting will be organised by CITYNET, UNESCAP, UN-HABITAT, Asian Coalition of Human Rights (ACHR), Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC).

Representatives from local governments, community groups and the police department will gather to identify challenges of safety for the urban poor, in particular looking at issues of governance and policing for urban poor communities, and collaboration between communities and local government actors. Participants from more than 10 cities will share experiences and showcase innovations that are aimed at making cities safer. They will discuss how to explore the issues further and develop a plan of action for the Asia-Pacific region.

Background

UN-HABITAT and UNESCAP are jointly implementing a project on “urban safety for the poor”, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups in Asia and the Pacific. The project aims to raise awareness on issues of urban safety related to crime and violence for the poor in Asia and the Pacific, through analysis and collection of information and through the identification of promising or good practices in promoting safety.

It is increasingly being realised that solutions to crime and lack of safety cannot be resolved by institutional mechanisms such as the criminal justice system alone, hence alternative mechanisms which give an important role to local governments and communities are being developed.



Children in Phnom Penh, Cambodia - vulnerable to urban violence.

What is CITYNET?

- CITYNET is an active network connecting hundreds of city/local governments and organisations mainly in the Asia-Pacific region working towards creating resilient, people-friendly communities for all. Programmes and trainings that promote the exchange of expertise and the building of partnerships form the basis for ensuring that governments have the means to cope with increasing populations and demands on our cities. For over 22 years CITYNET has expanded to become a unique and innovative international organisation working with various partners such as UNITAR, UNESCAP, UN-HABITAT, ADB and JICA to enable solutions to urban-related issues such as poverty, infrastructure, disaster risk reduction and environmental sustainability and climate change.
- By strengthening collaboration within its network, CITYNET targets connecting a thousand more local governments and partners in the near future. For more information please go to:

www.citynet-ap.org



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Throughout the region, communities and non-governmental organisations have developed innovative approaches to tackle urban safety, such as women's safety audits and community policing.

The project has aimed to document these practices and to share experiences between cities.

Hitherto, the project has completed a regional study that explores the linkages between urban safety and poverty in the region, developed an online resource facility (<http://asiapacific-safecity.org>) and is in the process of preparing city profiles and an on-line toolkit with training modules. The project's online resource facility showcases local initiatives and will allow the exchange of experiences and give access to information and tools for local governments and other stakeholders on how urban safety can be improved. The city profiles are short reports providing a brief overview on the safety situation for the poor in the city. Profiles on selected cities are complete or underway for the following countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Viet Nam and the Solomon Islands. In the Philippines and Cambodia the project has also undertaken more in-depth studies of the safety situation. It is expected that these reports will be compiled and shared widely across the region by early 2011.

Building on the momentum gained with the project as well as initiatives undertaken by CITYNET and its members, in particular SPARC and ACHR, the upcoming workshop in Marikina is an important opportunity to increase the visibility of the critical matter of urban safety and place it more firmly on the local governance agenda of the region's cities.

Participants

Local authorities are well-placed to work with communities to develop programmes addressing urban safety with and for the communities within their jurisdiction. For this reason, local governments and police representatives will be invited in order to enhance collaboration between communities, the police, and local government. Participants will include teams from more than 10 cities comprising representatives from urban poor communities/CSOs, police and local government. In certain cases, community leaders of communities with innovative programmes may also be invited. In addition, resource persons from academia or regional/international organisations would be invited to share their experiences.

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